



Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL

Hepburn Shire Council Aquatics Strategy

REPORT

APRIL 2022

Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd

Head Office:

304/91 Murphy Street
Richmond VIC 3121
ABN: 30 605 962 169
Phone: (03) 9698 7300
Email: info@otiumplanning.com.au
Web: www.otiumplanning.com.au

Local Office:

Contact: Kate Maddock, Managing Director
Phone: 0419 316 540
Email: kate@otiumplanning.com.au

Otium Planning Group has offices in:

- Auckland • Brisbane • Cairns • Christchurch • Melbourne • Perth • Sydney

OPG, IVG and PTA Partnership has offices in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing.

Document History				
Document Version	Date	Checked	Distribution	Recipient
1.0 Issues and Options Report	September 2021	M Kuhn K Maddock	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur
2.0 Draft Aquatics Strategy Report	January 2022	M Kuhn	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur Kendall Sinclair
3.0 Draft Aquatics Strategy Report (with edits)	January 2022	M Kuhn	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur Kendall Sinclair
4.0 Draft Aquatics Strategy (with edits)	February 2022	M Kuhn K Maddock	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur Kendall Sinclair
5.0 Draft Aquatics Strategy (Final Draft)	February 2022	M Kuhn	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur Kendall Sinclair
6.0 Aquatics Strategy (Final)	April 2022	M Kuhn	Hepburn Shire Council	Kathie Schnur Kendall Sinclair

© 2022 Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd. This document may only be used for the purposes for which it was commissioned and in accordance with the terms of engagement for the commission.

The Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government for their funding contribution to this project.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Project Timeline.....	3
2. Demographic Review	4
2.1 Project Area	4
2.2 Resident Profile.....	4
2.3 Health and Wellbeing of Hepburn Shire	5
2.4 Key Findings from Demographic Review	6
3. Strategic Review	8
3.1 Hepburn Council Strategies and Plans	8
3.2 State Government and Industry Strategies.....	13
3.3 Aquatics Facility Planning in Hepburn	14
3.4 Key Findings from Strategic Review	19
4. Current Aquatics Facilities Review	20
4.1 Hepburn Shire Aquatics Facilities Provision	20
4.2 Daylesford Outdoor Pool	20
4.3 Clunes Outdoor Pool	24
4.4 Trentham Outdoor Pool	28
4.5 Creswick Splash Park	31
4.6 Calembreen Park Toddlers Pool.....	33
4.7 Summary of Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Operating Performance Summary	35
4.8 Council’s Weather Closure Policy.....	38
4.9 Key Findings of Centre Review	38
5. Market Research Analysis.....	39
5.1 Catchment Analysis.....	39
5.2 Participation Rates.....	41
5.3 Facility Trends.....	43
5.4 Key Findings from Market Research Analysis.....	45
6. Stakeholder and Community Engagement.....	46
6.1 Stakeholder Interviews and Workshops	46
6.2 Community Survey	53
6.3 Key Findings from Stakeholder and Community Engagement.....	57
7. Strategic Directions	59
7.1 Key Issues.....	59
7.2 Strategic Recommendations	61
7.3 Facility Hierarchy and Provision	61
7.4 Strategic Directions.....	62
8. Warranties and Disclaimers	69
Appendix 1: Community Survey Results	70



Executive Summary

The development of the Hepburn Shire Council Aquatics Strategy commenced in April 2021 and aims to provide a 10-year priority plan to guide the future strategic direction, infrastructure development priorities, asset management and maximise participation and programming opportunities to contribute to the health, wellbeing and liveability of the communities of Hepburn Shire.

Together with the Project Consultants, Otium Planning Group, Council Officers have undertaken a suite of planning and community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy.

The Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy is a summary of the market research, current operating information and broad community engagement. It will guide the future strategic direction, infrastructure development priorities, asset renewal and upgrades, operational improvement and activation of aquatics provision throughout the Shire.

Several key stakeholders were engaged to guide the development of the Aquatics Strategy. They include Sport and Recreation Victoria, Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre (DIAC) Advocacy Group, Creswick and District Aquatic Centre Advocacy Group and Central Highlands Rural Health.

The Aquatics Strategy includes:

- Strategic Review and Background Research
- Demographic Review
- Current Facilities Operational Review
- Market Research and Industry Trends
- Community Engagement Findings
- Vision
- Objectives
- Facility Hierarchy and Provision
- Strategic Recommendations and Actions.

The Aquatics Strategy is consistent with the Hepburn Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 key focus area: A healthy, supported and empowered community and Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. This includes optimising the use of public spaces to increase participation and community connections which is supported by the provision of leisure and recreation facilities such as outdoor community pools, which encourage healthy and active lifestyles to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

The Aquatics Strategy provides market research, current operating information and broad community engagement. It provides a guide on the future strategic direction, infrastructure development priorities, asset renewal and upgrades, operational improvement and activation of aquatics provision throughout the Shire.

There are a number of Strategic Direction Recommendations and Actions arising from the Aquatics Strategy including consideration of priority projects including outdoor aquatic facility upgrades assessment and outdoor pool and waterplay upgrades. These Strategic Recommendations and Actions will require further detailed planning work including feasibility, business case and funding strategy to fully understand Council's ability to fund the facility upgrades identified.

The Aquatics Strategy supports the identified need for access to an all-year-round indoor aquatics facility to support the needs of Hepburn Shire residents. The evidence that supports the need includes:

- **Hepburn population demographics** - the younger and older demographic profile of the Shire requires access to indoor aquatics facilities to support the key areas of learn to swim programs, therapy, aquatics programs and recreational swimming. The travel and climate conditions make it difficult for some residents to access aquatics services in neighbouring municipalities i.e., Ballarat and Macedon Ranges.
- **Identified Community Need** - extensive feedback from the community engagement process identified a strong need and desire for access to a year-round aquatics facility for learn to swim, therapy, aquatics programs and recreational swimming.
- **Current facilities barriers to participation** - evidence that the existing Hepburn aquatics facilities are underutilised due to ageing infrastructure, cold water temperatures, poor accessibility and facilities are not meeting identified community needs.

Further detailed planning work including feasibility, business case and funding strategy is required to fully understand Council's ability to fund, develop and operate an indoor aquatics facility.

As outlined in Strategic Direction 7.4.2 in the Aquatics Strategy, further detailed investigation and the development of a feasibility study/business case is needed. The further work that needs to be undertaken includes aquatics provision options, preferred location, facility components and concept plan, capital cost estimate, financial operating model and funding strategy.

The most significant challenge for Council in determining a future indoor aquatics facility is the affordability to build and operate such a facility. This includes the ability to attract sufficient capital funding for a new facility and the ability to sustain the ongoing operational cost.

The high order indicative costs associated with implementing the actions arising from the Strategic Directions and Actions outlined in the strategy are estimated to be \$5.9M - \$7.98M. This includes Facility upgrades compliance and OH&S works, Management and Operation, Facility Programming and Activation, Asset Management Plan, Outdoor pool and Waterplay Upgrades and further Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning.

Funding the implementation of the Strategic Directions and actions would be subject to achieving funding as part of future Council budgeting processes and seeking external partner funding opportunities where applicable. The Strategic Direction Recommendations and Actions arising from the Aquatics Strategy are not currently included in Council's long term financial plan and would require significant external funding.

The further work undertaken as part of Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning will identify the capital and operating costs associated with an Indoor Aquatics Facility and this will need to be further considered by Council at the appropriate time.

1. Introduction

The Hepburn Shire Council Aquatics Strategy will guide the future strategic direction, infrastructure development priorities, asset management, operational development, and activation of aquatics provision throughout the Shire over the next 10 years.

Hepburn Shire has five public aquatics facilities:

- Daylesford Outdoor Pool
- Clunes Outdoor Pool
- Trentham Outdoor Pool
- Creswick Splash Park
- Calembreen Park Toddlers Pool.

The four outdoor pools are reported to be nearing their end of life and not fit for purpose for many residents in the community. There is a growing demand and expectation from the community for access to year-round warm water facilities that cater for learn to swim, therapy, aquatics programs and recreational swimming. It is because of these reasons, that a long-term strategic plan for aquatics facilities provision is an important project for the Hepburn Shire Council to guide its investment strategy for the next 10-20 years.

1.1 PROJECT TIMELINE

The following graphic shows the key project stages and tasks undertaken to inform the final Aquatics Strategy report.

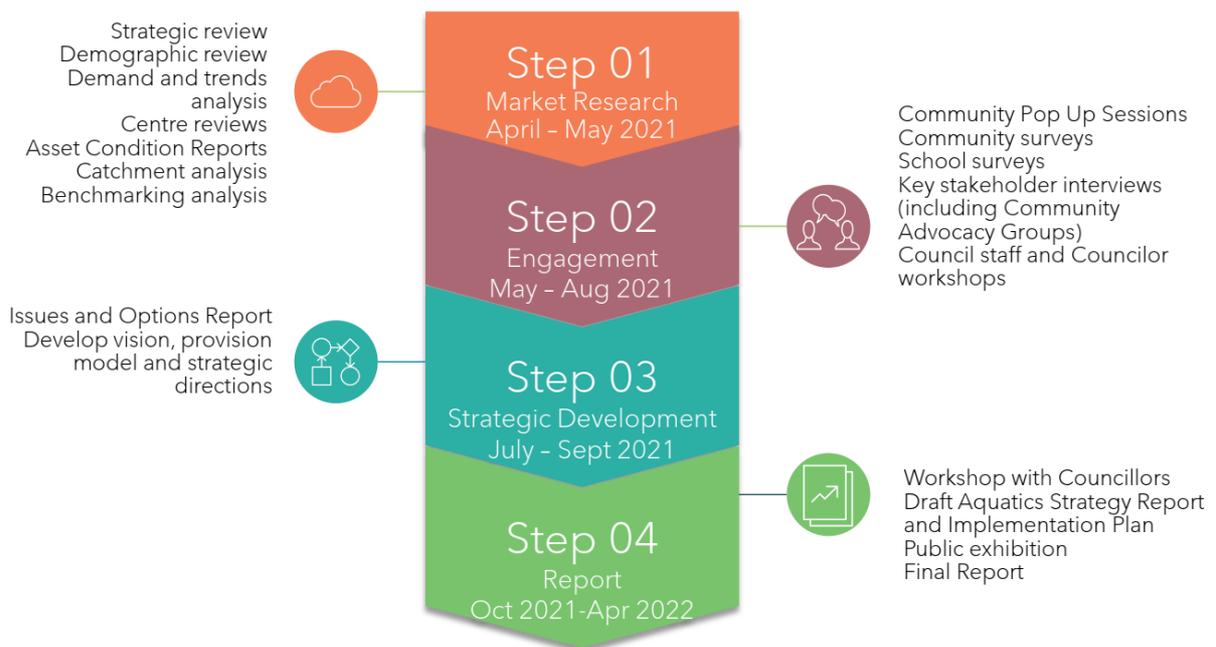


Figure 1: Project Plan Milestones

2. Demographic Review

Who are we planning for?

This section profiles the population and demographic characteristics of the Hepburn Shire community. These characteristics will influence the aquatics and leisure services and facilities needed for the community into the future.

2.1 PROJECT AREA

Hepburn Shire is renowned for its heritage buildings, parks, reserves and native forests. Located in central Victoria, the Hepburn Shire includes the townships of Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Trentham and many other small villages and hamlets. Within easy access to Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne, Hepburn Shire's neighbouring municipalities include Macedon Ranges, Ballarat, Mount Alexander, Central Goldfields, Pyrenees and Moorabool.

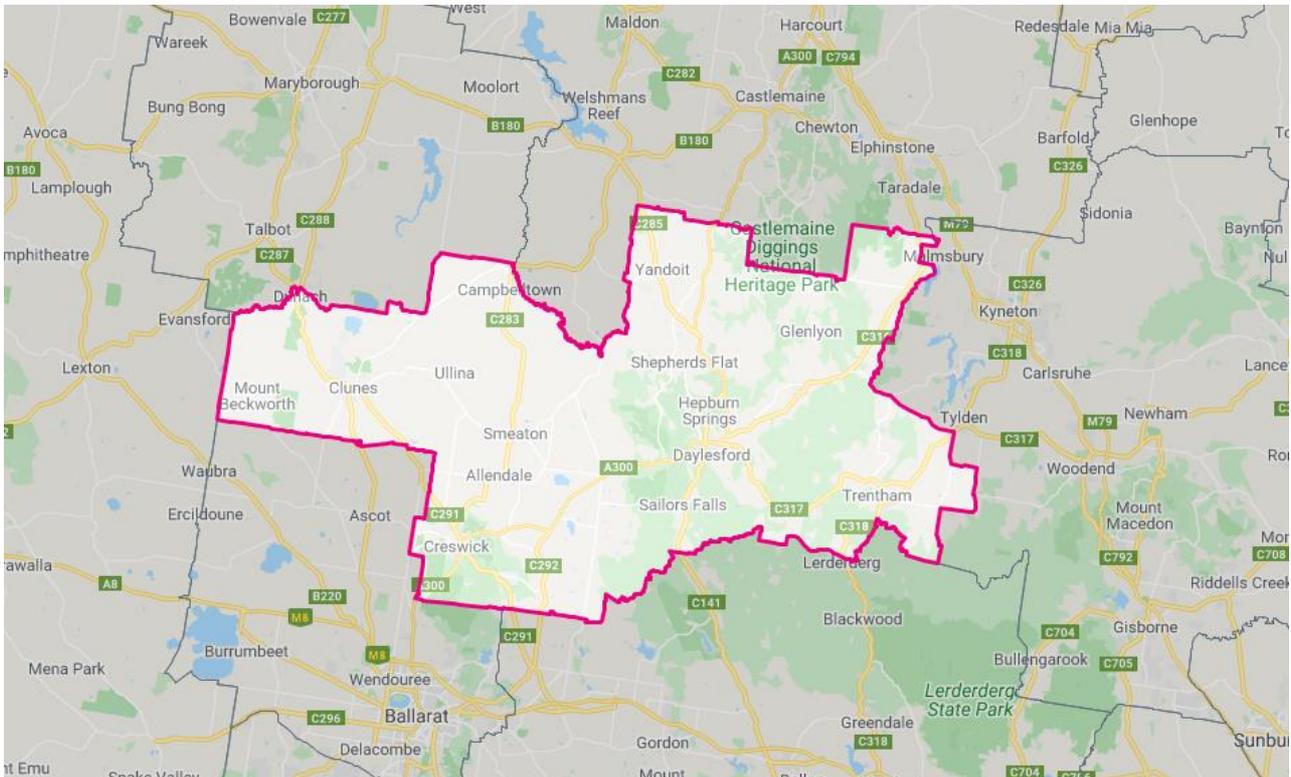


Figure 2: Location Map

2.2 RESIDENT PROFILE

The resident profile is based on the 2016 ABS Census data and has been sourced from Remplan, an online company that analyses ABS Census data.

Population

- Hepburn Shire has experienced a population increase of 963 residents from 14,368 in 2011 to 15,331 in 2016, representing an annualised rate of 1.31%. The 2019 Estimated Residential

Population (ERP) is 15,975 which represents an annualised growth rate from 2016 to 2019 of 0.96%. In 2021 the population reached 16,157.

- Victoria in Future 2019 provides projections of population and households for Local Government Authorities and forecasts an additional 1890 residents by 2036, representing a 0.6% increase in population. The 2036 population projection, in the most recent Council Plan 2021-25, estimates it will increase to 17,700.
- Hepburn Shire has an ageing population, with 35% of the population aged 60+ years and 17.27% aged between 50 and 59 years. This is much higher when compared with the whole of Victoria which is 20.96% for 60+ and 12.42% for 50 to 59 years age groups. The 0 to 19 years represents 19.38% of the population which is low when compared to the State average of 24.25% for that age group.
- There are a higher number of two person families (32.77%) in Hepburn Shire when compared to Central Highlands (30.29%) and lower number of couples with children (19.36%) compared to Central Highlands (26.10%).

Diversity

- There is a lower level of cultural diversity in Hepburn Shire when compared to the State, with 10% of the population born overseas compared to the Victoria state average of 28.3%.

Disadvantage and Social Capital

- The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage for Hepburn Shire in 2016 was 995. This score ranks Hepburn Shire 351 out of 544 local government areas across Australia. It should be noted that 77.96% of localities within Hepburn Shire rated within the 1000-1099 SEIFA, showing a greater spread of advantage within the Shire. There are some areas of Hepburn Shire that are more disadvantaged than others including Clunes (924) and Creswick (972).
- The varying levels of advantage across the Shire are represented in the differences in household income data. The three most common cohorts are earning between \$52,000 to \$64,999 per annum (9.34%), \$104,000 to \$129,000 per annum (8.80%) and \$41,600 to \$51,999 per annum (8.33%).
- A total of 875 people (or 5.74% of the population) in 2016 reported needing assistance in completing core activities due to disability. This is less than the 5.86% recorded for the Central Highlands Region.
- A total of 33.34% of the population reported not being in the labour force which reflects the high number of older adults in the Hepburn Shire. This compares to 28.71% and 27.17% in Central Highlands and the whole State respectively. Unemployment rates are low in Hepburn Shire, with the 2% unemployment rate recorded sitting below Central Highlands (2.96%) and the State (3.26%).
- Property prices are comparatively lower with the most common cohort (4.38%) paying a monthly mortgage repayment of between \$1200 and \$1399, which is below the \$2000 to \$2199 monthly mortgage payment range for Victoria (4.36%).

2.3 HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF HEPBURN SHIRE

The Hepburn Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 was developed through a collaborative approach with support from the Health and Wellbeing Working Group. This working group included partners from Central Highland Rural Health, Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership, Health Futures Australia, Women's Health Grampians and four local Neighbourhood Centres. The Plan informed the 2021-2025 Council Plan and reviewed the health profile of the municipality, with key findings identified listed below:

- 37.6% of adult residents diagnosed with anxiety or depression.
- 45.9% of people are pre-obese or obese.
- 54.7% of people don't meet Australian Guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption.

- 65.5% of people meet physical activity guidelines.
- 20.6% of residents have sought help from a mental health professional.
- 15.6% of people have asthma.
- 9.1% of people drink sugar-sweetened drinks daily.
- Residents have higher mortgage and rental stress rates than the Central Highland and Victoria average.

Four priority areas were established to inform the Health and Wellbeing Plan. They include tackling climate change and its impact on health, increasing healthy eating, improving mental wellbeing and preventing all forms of violence. While the priority areas are described separately, there are important correlations between the priorities which creates greater opportunities for action and effect in many areas.

The VicHealth Indicators 2015 results provide the following key insights:

1. *Hepburn Shire residents have an increased perception of safety compared to the rest of the State.* 94.4% of Hepburn Shire residents agreed that they felt safe walking alone in their local area during the day and 69.2% agreed they felt safe walking alone after dark. This is higher than the Victorian average with 92.5% and 55.1% respectively.
2. *Hepburn Shire residents experience a significantly higher level of resilience and neighbourhood connectedness when compared to the rest of the State.* Hepburn Shire residents reported an average resilience score of 6.7 out of 8, higher than the state average of 6.4. Just over three quarters (77.4%) of Hepburn Shire residents felt that they live in a close-knit neighbourhood, and 86.5% felt that people within their neighbourhood could be trusted. This is significantly higher than the state averages of 61.0% and 71.9% respectively.

Additionally, the VicHealth Indicators 2015 found that when compared to the rest of the State, Hepburn Shire residents experience similar levels of:

- a. Wellbeing and life satisfaction
- b. Physical activity levels
- c. Fruit and water intake per day
- d. Alcohol intake per month.

The local impact of COVID-19 has been significant. A health and wellbeing survey conducted by Central Highland Rural Health reported some concerning statistics including:

- Overall levels of physical activity decreased.
- There was an increase in feeling lonely three or more days per week.
- 20% more people were anxious five to seven days per week.
- 29% of people increased alcohol consumption.

2.4 KEY FINDINGS FROM DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW

Hepburn Shire has an older population with 51.59% of the population aged 50 years and over. This is significantly higher when compared to the Central Highlands region (40.49%) and the State (33.38%). The high number of older adults within the community reflects a need for therapy based programming and warm water provision.

Comparatively, the number of children and teens aged 19 years and under (19.38%) is lower when compared to Central Highlands (25.33%) and Victoria (24.25%).

There are varying levels of disadvantage throughout the Hepburn Shire which is represented in the differences of household income. While the second most common cohort of the population (8.80%) earns between \$104,000 to \$129,000 per annum, there are a significantly higher than average number of low-income households with 45.8% of residents earning less than \$400 per week. Therefore, providing accessible and affordable facilities and programs are important to encourage participation.

Opportunities exist to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of Hepburn Shire residents. Most alarmingly, 52.5% of people are pre-obese or obese. Additionally, a high percentage of residents (37.6%) have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression and over 54% of residents don't consume enough fruit or vegetables.

Aquatics and leisure facilities and programs play a key role in increasing physical activity levels, with the health, social and wellbeing benefits associated with visitation assisting in addressing some of the identified health priorities.

3. Strategic Review

What strategic commitments will underpin decision making?

This section includes a review of relevant strategies. The review identifies key strategic objectives and principles that will guide Council’s decision making when considering the aquatics and leisure service and facility provision into the future.

Strategic Links

Council has a number of service planning and strategic documents that are important linkages to the planning and delivery of aquatics facilities in Hepburn.

The Hepburn Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Activate 2020-2030, articulate Council’s vision and overarching frameworks used to make key decisions and deliver service priorities. The Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Playspace Strategy and Council’s strong focus on community engagement help inform the Aquatics Strategy.

The diagram below shows the strategic links between Hepburn Shire Council’s key strategic documents, plans and policies.



Figure 3: Strategic Links Overview

3.1 HEPBURN COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Council Plan 2021-2025

Hepburn Shire Council’s 2021-2025 Council Plan stipulates a vision; Hepburn Shire - an inclusive rural community located in Dja Dja Wurrung country where all people are valued, partnerships are fostered, environment is protected, diversity supported, and innovation embraced.

In aspiring to achieve the above and to create strong alignment with the needs and aspirations of the community, Council has identified five key focus areas:

1. A resilient, sustainable and protected environment.
2. A healthy, supported and empowered community.
3. Embracing our past and planning for the future.
4. Diverse economy and opportunities.
5. A dynamic and responsive Council.

Specific key strategic activities that relate to the provision of aquatics and leisure services and facilities include:

- Increase the availability and accessibility of services in the Hepburn Shire area to support liveability, health, and wellbeing.
 - Promote partnerships with health service providers to improve shared community health outcomes.
 - Developed services networks to increase community awareness and access to local services.
- Optimise the use of public spaces to increase participation and community connection.
 - Finalise and implement the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy.
- Improved mental wellbeing within the community.
 - Ensure Council services, activities and facilities are accessible and inclusive to remove barriers to participation.
- Build and maintain quality infrastructure that supports and promotes liveability and active living in the community.
 - Continue to provide strong management and maintenance of our infrastructure.
 - Ensure sustainable and accessible infrastructure that promotes healthy recreation, physical activity and social connection.
 - Advocate for and partner in the delivery of Council's priority projects.
- Strong asset management and renewal.
 - Continue to invest in asset maintenance, renewal and upgrade programs.
- Adapt to and mitigate climate change to reach net-zero community emissions by 2030.
 - Review procurement policies and procedures to ensure they provide a focus on sustainable practices.
 - Promote the use of environmentally sustainable practices through planning processes and the Environmentally Sustainable Development Policy.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

The plan sets four priorities that guide action over four years. The priorities have been determined based on review of health-related data, community engagement and health partners consultation.

The four priority areas of the plan are:

1. Tackling climate change and its impact on health.
2. Increasing healthy eating.
3. Improving mental wellbeing.
4. Preventing all forms of violence.

Under the improving mental wellbeing priority area there are two strategies Council has committed to:

- Adopt a co-benefit approach to improving mental wellbeing, supporting active living and healthy eating initiatives.
- Ensure Council services, activities and facilities are diverse, accessible and inclusive to remove barriers to participation.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2022 (DAIP)

The Hepburn Shire Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is currently under review.

The purpose of this DAIP is to continue to improve and monitor a range of community services and facilities in partnership with the community and other agencies to promote wellbeing, safety, social independence, and inclusion in the community. Apart from the usual physical aspects of access, great change can occur by thinking differently about how people with a disability can be included in all aspects of community life. The DAIP aims to prompt and guide such thinking to create a more inclusive community.

Key Objectives

The four key objectives of the DAIP will align with the same Victorian Disability Act S38 objectives:

Objective 1: to ensure all Council services, recreation and infrastructure is accessible to people with a disability.

Objective 2: to ensure that non-discriminatory practices are followed at all times with existing staff and when employing new staff and that people with a disability are encouraged to apply for positions at Council.

Objective 3: to ensure that Hepburn Shire Council provide opportunities for people with a disability to participate in events, meetings or celebrations and feel valued and included in the community.

Objective 4: to ensure that all corporate, strategic planning and communications actively help make tangible changes to negative attitudes and practices in regard to people with a disability.

There are several key actions that are aligned with the Aquatics Strategy including:

- 1.3.4 Recreation - ensure that any future planning and development of parks and open spaces - recreation, sporting and playgrounds are disability friendly.
- 1.3.5 Playgrounds - when renewing playgrounds, include 'all abilities' features.
- 1.3.7 Accessible Public Toilets - audit existing accessible public toilets and make recommendations for placement and upgrade where relevant.
- 1.3.8 Investigate the feasibility of installing a 'Changing Places' facility in Daylesford and Creswick.

Youth Strategy 2022 - 2030

The Hepburn Shire Youth Strategy 2022- 2030 is currently being developed. Some initial engagement feedback has highlighted the importance of the outdoor pools to the youth cohort across the shire. In particular the following comments were received:

- There is a need for safe spaces for young people to congregate.
- The youth currently identify the outdoor pools as a safe space to socialise, exercise and have fun.
- Youth need access to better food choices to community facilities they attend.

- Youth Employment - the Junior Lifeguard Program should continue to be offered as part of the future Aquatics programming.

The previous 2016-2021 Youth Strategy outlined the following guiding principles in delivering projects and initiatives:

- Encourage opportunities for learning and participation.
- Ensure we are providing a safe environment in our activities and events.
- Provide access to information and technology.
- Be mindful of the transport issues that young people face in Hepburn Shire.
- Promote fairness and acknowledge diversity in young people.

The 2016-2021 Youth Strategy Action Plan has some initiatives which aligns with the aquatics strategy including:

Social Theme: Space Activation

- Build on current out of hours youth activities in libraries/hubs and pilot new activities in these and other civic spaces.

Transport Theme: Transport

- Transport options for young people have been identified as a challenge for young people in Hepburn. This concerns transport for education, social and employment needs.

Early and Middle Years Strategy 2022-2030

The Early and Middle Years Strategy 2022-2030 is currently being developed and aims to plan and prepare for family growth and the development needs of early years and middle years children. It will provide direction for the development and coordination of services, programs, infrastructure, activities, and local community development processes that impact children aged 0 - 12 years living in Hepburn Shire.

The Draft Strategy has been developed after significant community and stakeholder engagement and includes three focus areas with a number of strategies. The Strategy was released for community engagement in March 2022.

Focus Areas:

1. Play and Participate
2. Grow and Develop
3. Our Future Need

Focus area one is aligned to the aquatics strategy through the following actions:

- Provide age-appropriate, accessible and welcoming playgrounds, parks, open space and infrastructure to help children and families to live a healthy and active lifestyle.
- Strengthen children's links to the community, through community and social support groups.
- Organise and promote child-friendly events and activities to support social connection, diverse interests, and parent peer support.

Positive Ageing Strategy 2022-2030

Hepburn Shire has commenced the development of its first ever Positive Ageing Strategy. Positive ageing is the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and fully engaging in life as you age.

Hepburn Shire has a higher proportion of people over the age of 55 years compared to the Victorian average and is following the international trend of a rapidly growing ageing population.

Based on the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities Framework and the Commissioner for Senior Victorians' report Ageing Well in a Changing World, the Hepburn Shire's Positive Ageing Strategy will respond to feedback from the community and service providers. The strategy will set the direction for Council in its response to its ageing population and guide the provision of services and resources to its residents so that they can 'age well' in an 'age-friendly' community.

During the recent community engagement activities there has been feedback about the growing need for an indoor aquatic facility that has warm water and hydrotherapy facilities, which is aligned with the aquatics strategy.

Activate 2020-2030

The intention of the Activate 2020-30 Strategy is to provide a regional framework and 10-year action plan that enables a coordinated and collaborative approach aimed at increasing participation in sport and active recreation for liveability, health and wellbeing for the following municipalities:

- Ararat Rural City Council
- City of Ballarat
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council.

The Activate 2020-30 shared vision is that the Central Highlands and Grampians Pyrenees communities are the most active, healthy and liveable in Victoria. This will be achieved via the four strategic pillars identified as working together, activating places and spaces, creating quality physical activity environments and community cohesion through sport and active recreation.

The Clunes Recreation Reserve Masterplan Implementation is the sole key action identified within the Strategy that relates to the provision of aquatics facilities within the Hepburn Shire.

Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2016-2021

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy provides the following vision for recreation and open space within the Shire: Hepburn Shire features a diversity of quality, accessible and sustainable recreation and open space facilities supported by passionate community members. The vision is supported by five pillars to guide Council's priorities and service delivery:

1. Facilities
2. Community Support and Development
3. Sustainability
4. Utilisation and Participation
5. Policy and Management.

The Strategy recognises that recreation (in all forms; passive, active, structured or non-structured) provides opportunities for residents and visitors to improve their fitness, which enables protecting against poor health outcomes, reducing social isolation and creating a higher awareness of environmental influences.

Specific to the provision of aquatics services and facilities, the Strategy outlines the following actions:

- Action the outcomes of the Creswick pool consultation undertaken in 2016-17.
- Explore the potential to extend the Daylesford outdoor swimming pool's season through the use of sustainable heating technology.
- Prepare or review master plans for Calembreen Park (Creswick), Clunes Recreation Reserve and Trentham Recreation Reserve.

Playspace Strategy 2020-2030 - Play is for Everyone

Play is for Everyone is the vision of the Strategy; Hepburn Shire will have a network of engaging, inclusive and sustainable play spaces that are reflective of our people and our places. The following planning principles have been developed to guide the planning, management and maintenance of play spaces in the Hepburn Shire:

1. Strategic
2. Activated
3. Multifunctional
4. Well maintained
5. Inclusive
6. Economically sustainable
7. Environmentally sound
8. Shire wide.

In relation to the provision of aquatics and water play features within play spaces, the Strategy outlines:

- That water play/aquatics play is not supported for a local level play space but may or may not be included at a municipal or regional level play space dependant on local need and site context suitability.
- A long-term action to renew the Creswick Skate and Splash Park (inclusive of outdoor fitness).

3.2 STATE GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY STRATEGIES

The Royal Life Saving Society Australia: The Social, Health and Economic Value of the Australian National Aquatic Industry 2021

In July 2021, The Royal Life Saving Society Australia released a report detailing the social, health and economic value of the National aquatics industry. The report is assessed on Council-owned pools, public-access privately owned pools and swimming pool sports; it did not include privately owned pools that are not publicly accessible or aquatics theme parks. Key findings of the report include:

- Victoria has 570 aquatics facilities, with 94% of residents living within a 20-minute drive of a facility.
- On average, indoor aquatics facilities receive five times more visits annually than an outdoor swimming pool. This reflects their ability to support recreational needs of people all year round.
- Rates of social return on investment are detailed as:

- **Regional Australia:** \$2.18 social return for each \$1.00 spent operating existing aquatics facilities and \$1.97 for each \$1.00 spent if a new aquatics facility is constructed in a regional location.
- **Indoor aquatics facilities:** \$3.61 social return for each \$1.00 spent operating existing indoor facilities and \$3.04 for each \$1.00 spent if a new indoor facility is constructed in an area with unserved demand.
- **Outdoor swimming pool:** \$2.80 social return for each \$1.00 spent operating current outdoor facilities and \$2.38 for each \$1.00 spent if a new outdoor pool is constructed in an area with unserved demand.
- The aquatics industry is one of the largest employers in the sport and recreation sector; 33,600 average annual full-time roles supported by the aquatics industry Australia wide.
- Nationally, the aquatics industry makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Australians, providing:
 - \$1.65 billion in physical health benefits
 - \$238 million in mental health benefits
 - \$399 million in reduced absenteeism benefits
 - \$174 million in reduced drowning benefits.

Active Victoria 2018-2021

Active Victoria was launched by the State Government as a strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria. It plans to cater for growing demand and to enhance Melbourne's (and Victoria's) reputation as Australia's sporting capital. The framework includes the following six key directions:

- Meeting demand
- Broader and more inclusive participation
- Additional focus on active recreation
- Build system resilience and capacity
- Connect investment in events, high performance and infrastructure
- Work together for shared outcomes.

The development of an Aquatics Strategy for the Hepburn Shire correlates with key directions of meeting demand, connecting investment in infrastructure, additional focus on active recreation and broader and more inclusive participation.

3.3 AQUATICS FACILITY PLANNING IN HEPBURN

Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre ('DIAC') Community Advocacy Group – Scoping Study 2018

This scoping study was undertaken by the DIAC Advocacy Group to create a community led vision for the facility and assist with lobbying of Council.

In 2018, DIAC completed a scoping study to explore the project opportunities. Key considerations relating to facility trends and priority components proposed in the report are detailed in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1: DIAC Scoping Study (2018) key facility considerations

Consideration	Notes
Aquatics facility trends	<p>Aquatics facilities have evolved from being primarily outdoor pools to being recreation and community centres with a range of facilities. Trends identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm water pools for use by healthcare professionals to prescribe water-based exercise programs. Aquatics therapies continue to experience explosive growth due to the ageing population. • Outdoor pools are being replaced by larger, all-inclusive aquatics facilities to consolidate resources and lower operating costs. • Water play/splash pad areas are becoming increasingly popular as they embody accessibility, safety, innovation and affordability objectives. • The addition of supporting amenities such as gym, spa, sauna, café and in some instances allied health services transform a pool into a recreational hub and to assist in financial viability. • The inclusion of universal access as a legislated requirement when constructing new facilities. • Increasing community expectation to meet environmentally sustainable design targets. Consideration is to be given to water and power efficiencies such as harvesting of rainwater, thermal pool coverings, solar heating, and efficient appliances, fixtures and fittings.
Priority facility components	<p>The above identified trends should inform facility features to ensure that a Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Facility is viable and sustainable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest priority is placed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eight lane 25-metre pool; research indicates the need for sufficient space to cater for programming and casual use needs. ○ Depth of 1.1 metres to accommodate learn to swim and encourage casual use. ○ Business case to explore options for an adjustable floor to allow use for competition swimming. ○ Warm water pool to allow therapeutic and programmed use. ○ Water play area to attract families with children. ○ Change rooms to be suitable for school group use. ○ Office and administration area. • Lower priority components to be explored where budget permits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gymnasium; include equipment and free weights exercise area. ○ Café: dependant on proposed site of facility this may not be necessary. ○ Childcare facilities; priority component for small number of survey respondents.

The 2018 DIAC Scoping Study also identifies the following:

1. **Cost** - Architect estimates an indicative opinion of cost between \$10 million and \$12 million, dependant on the quality of facility and finish (Otium can confirm this is not consistent with industry benchmarking for similar size indoor aquatics facilities. A small indoor aquatics facility is likely to cost between \$17 million to \$22 million based on current quantity surveyor estimates).
2. **Funding opportunities** - a combination of community fundraising, philanthropic funds, sponsorship and commercial partnerships, and State and/or Federal Government grants are identified as possible funding sources.
3. **Location** - a number of sites were identified and assessed against criteria to consider visibility, profile, topography, site conditions, orientation opportunities, car parking and traffic accessibility (including proximity to public transport and bicycle networks/trails) and capacity for future expansion.

8.3. Option to Redevelop Existing Pool

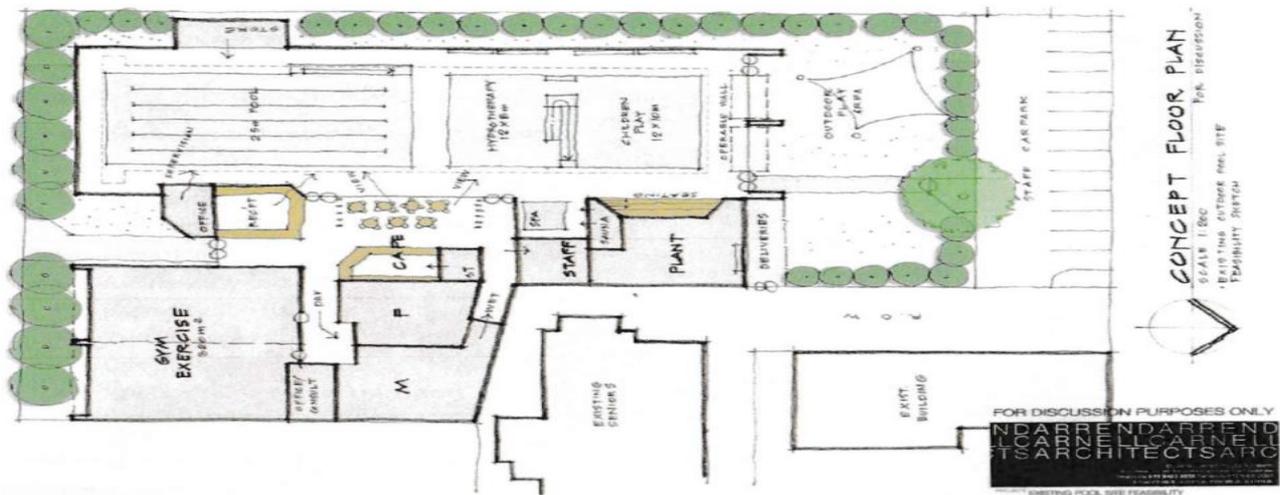


Figure 4: DIAC Advocacy Group - Concept Plan Existing Outdoor Pool Site

Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre ('DIAC') Community Advocacy Group - Interim Business Plan 2021

The members of DIAC prepared a draft Business Plan in late 2021 for an indoor aquatics facility in Daylesford. This is an extension to the work undertaken on the previous Scoping Study that was developed in 2018. The Business Plan was provided to Council Officers for consideration in the Aquatics Strategy.

The Business Plan includes a budget model based on specific assumptions and information sourced from the Kyneton Sports and Aquatic Centre. There is also reference and comparisons to other Otium work undertaken recently for the Gannawarra Shire Council with regards to an indoor facility model in Kerang.

The Business Plan notes a revised capital cost estimate between \$11 million (based on quantity surveys obtained by DIAC) and \$20 million (reference to the Gannawarra Aquatics Strategy prepared by Otium).

An annual operating budget is proposed in the Business Plan based on specific fees and charges assumptions, labour cost projections and other expenditure forecasts. This budget modelling also informed a five-year projection for the indoor pool operation.

Creswick Pool Consultation Report 2016 and Concept Plan

Hepburn Shire allocated internal funds of \$30,000 in 2016/17 to undertake community consultation in Creswick to assess the level of interest for a potential swimming pool within the Creswick area. The Consultation process aimed to understand a range of topics from the level of need, location, design, use, cost and funding. It was decided to undertake the consultation element using internal Council staff rather than commission an external consultant.

Key interest groups were consulted including the Creswick RACV Resort, John Curtin Aged Care Facility, Melbourne University, Creswick & District Aquatic Centre Group, local schools, Friends of Calembreen Park, Doug Lindsay Recreation Reserve Committee and Hepburn Health.

The concept design on the following page was presented by the Creswick and District Aquatic Centre Advocacy Group to Council Officers. This group have been strong advocates for an aquatics facility in the town for many years and this design has been created to provide a vision for the facility. The design has not been costed through a quantity surveyor.

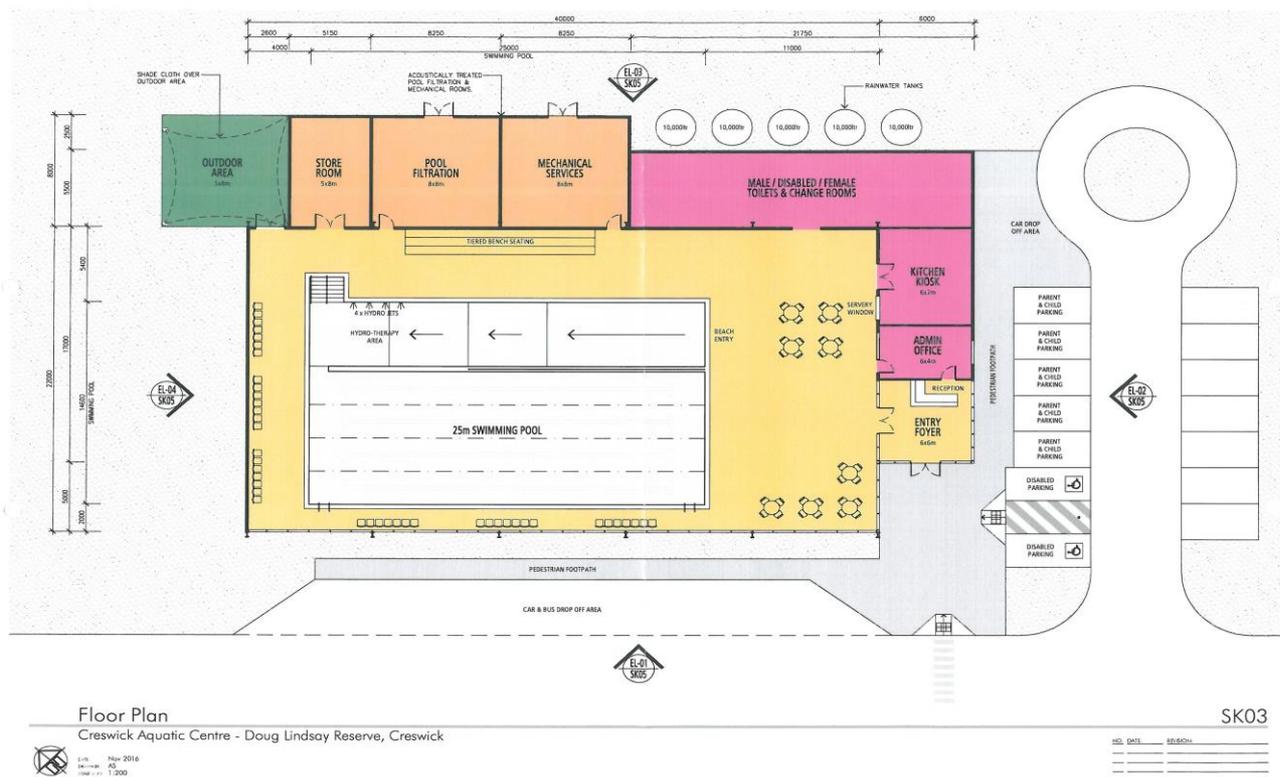


Figure 5: Creswick Aquatic Centre Advocacy Group Concept Plan

The following conclusions and recommendations were presented in the report from the research and consultation undertaken with the Creswick community.

Three key actions were suggested in the report:

1. Build a new indoor aquatics facility at Doug Lindsay Recreation Reserve - design and costings to be finalised.
2. Upgrade Calemben Park - focus on middle pool and amenities upgrades.
3. Partner with John Curtain Aged Care Facility or Hepburn Health to build a hydrotherapy pool.

Suggested Next Steps from the Report

1. Develop concept plans and cost estimates for capital and operation.
2. Apply for a planning grant to undertake a feasibility study through Community Sports Infrastructure Fund.
3. Further consultation with the community to present the outcomes of consultation, potential design option and sources for funding. Test the community response for an indoor pool in Creswick once full capital and operational costs are available.
4. Review the Calemben Management Plan 2010 for future upgrades and include in Recreation Priority Planning for future works.

Otium has confirmed with Council Officers that this report and proposed actions did not progress further in terms of funding, design or cost estimates. However, Council did acknowledge the community's feedback and decided to develop an Aquatics Strategy to further investigate the provision of aquatics facilities across the entire Hepburn Shire. Council allocated funding in the 2020/21 budget which was matched by Sport and Recreation Victoria through a grant to develop the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy.

Calembeen Park Management Plan 2009

This plan was commissioned by Council and the Friends of Calembeen Park in 2009. The Management Plan aims to provide the local community and Council with clear directions about the future management, maintenance and improvement of use of Calembeen Park. Key management principles identified include conservation, trail connections, activities, sustainable management, maintenance, historical interpretation, signage, traffic management and entry presentation.

Consultation to inform the Management Plan indicated that Calembeen Park is highly valued by residents for its capacity as a local swimming area and park and for its historical relevance and unique landscape. The focus of the Management Plan should be to return Calembeen Park to a quality recreation space and swimming destination.

Outcomes of the consultation resulted in a vision for the future of Calembeen Park to include the following statements:

- It will provide a swimming baths area that is managed and maintained to safe standard.
- The reserve will provide a tranquil setting for passive recreation such as swimming, sailing, walking, picnics and be accessible for all to enjoy.

The following actions were identified to align with the management principles and are relevant to swimming and aquatics at the park:

1. Protect water quality.
 - a. Regularly test water for E-Coli and other contaminants. It is suggested that a minimum of four tests take place throughout the year, with most occurring during the warmer months in the lead up to a swimming season and during a swimming season. It is recommended to test in October (pre-season), November, January, February.
2. Activities.
 - a. The reserve is to be maintained for passive recreation only. Suitable developments to provide for passive activity include:
 - i. Development of more picnic facilities, shade and seating.
 - ii. Provision of quality swimming and diving facilities.
 - iii. Development and improvement of walking/cycling paths.
 - iv. Protection and enhancement of native vegetation.
 - v. Interpretation of baths and other areas (restoration and signage).
 - vi. Development of facilities that improve accessibility.
 - vii. Replace diving tower and if fencing is required, design fencing that is more sympathetic to the surrounds.
3. Managing risk.
 - a. Provide lifeguard supervision for the diving tower and look to extend this role for a one season period to encompass a level of supervision of behaviour in the water.
 - b. Monitor and improve water clarity.
 - c. Remove dangerous equipment installed by community members (i.e., Tarzan rope).
4. Minimal built form onsite.
 - a. There is to be minimal built form on the site reflecting the intent of the reserve as a tranquil area with a natural and historic landscape.
 - b. Built form is to reflect the natural and historic character and the capacity for access.

3.4 KEY FINDINGS FROM STRATEGIC REVIEW

In aspiring to achieve objectives identified in the 2021-2025 Council Plan, Hepburn Shire identifies a key goal of continuing to activate the existing outdoor swimming pools and strengthen their role as a community resource, including the recommendation to finalise the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy. This is supported by other general yet relevant activities relating to the provision of aquatics facilities, such as:

- Improving access, maintenance and renewal planning and programs for Council assets, including opportunities to reduce Council's energy consumption.
- Promoting and encouraging inclusive, accessible and equitable access to sport and recreation opportunities in the Shire, including the associated health benefits.

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2016-2021 acknowledges the role that all forms of recreation play in the general wellbeing of residents and visitors. Of relevance are the following actions specified within the Strategy:

- Action the outcomes of the Creswick pool consultation undertaken in 2016-17.
- Explore the potential to extend the Daylesford outdoor swimming pool's season through the use of sustainable heating technology.
- Prepare or review master plans for Calembreen Park (Creswick), Clunes Recreation Reserve and Trentham Recreation Reserve.

Additionally, the Playspace Strategy 2020-2030 provides the following guidelines relating to water play:

- Water play/aquatics play is not supported for a local level play space but may or may not be included at a municipal or regional level play space dependant on local need and site context suitability.
- A long-term action to renew the Creswick Skate & Splash Park (inclusive of outdoor fitness).

These actions from the Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2016-2021 and the Playspace Strategy 2030 will be considered in this Aquatics Strategy.

There is a long history of planning and community lobbying regarding the provision of an indoor aquatics centre within the Shire, with community advocacy groups established in Creswick and Daylesford and each with their own facility concept plans developed. In addition to considering renewal opportunities for existing aquatics infrastructure, this Aquatics Strategy will also explore the demand and merit of an indoor facility, it's role within the network of existing facilities and possible locations.

It is acknowledged that there are a number of natural water bodies that exist within the Shire that are used for aquatics facilities, and these are not included in the scope of this report.

4. Current Aquatics Facilities Review

What aquatics facilities do we have in Hepburn Shire?

This section reviews each aquatics facilities components, usage trends, asset condition and compliance and operational performance.

4.1 HEPBURN SHIRE AQUATICS FACILITIES PROVISION

Hepburn Shire has three outdoor pools and two unsupervised aquatics spaces:

- Three of these aquatics facilities are owned and managed by Council (Daylesford Outdoor Pool, Clunes Outdoor Pool and Trentham Outdoor Pool – all seasonal facilities).
- Creswick Splash Park is owned and maintained by Council. It is a zero-depth, unsupervised aquatics play space.
- Calembreen Park Toddlers Pool is located next to Calembreen Lake which is natural water body. It is a fenced shallow seasonal toddler pool and is not supervised.
- There are also several natural water bodies across the Shire that are used by local residents including Lake Calembreen, St Georges Lake, Bluewaters, Hepburn Pool, The Blowhole, Sailors Creek, Vaughn Springs, Tipperary Spring, Lake Daylesford and Jubilee Lake.
- The Hepburn Bath House is also located in the Shire; however, this facility is seen as a commercial/tourist spa that does not provide for the aquatics needs of residents.

4.2 DAYLESFORD OUTDOOR POOL



Figure 6: Aerial view of Daylesford Outdoor Pool

Overview

The Daylesford Outdoor Pool was built in 1972 making it nearly 50 years old. The facility is open for the summer season which is approximately 14 weeks per year. The facility is located in the town centre, off the main street and at the rear of the Council's Town Hall building.

The facility is managed internally by Council staff.

The table below outlines the aquatics components at the Daylesford facility.

Table 2: Daylesford Outdoor Pool facilities

Pool	Size	Depth
Main Pool	50 metres x 13.4 metres x 6 lanes	1 metre shallow end to 3.4 metres deep end
Toddler Pool	7.3 metres x 6.1 metres	0.3 - 0.4 metres
Diving Board at the deep end	1 metre board	3.4 metres

Other features of facility include:

- Amenities and change rooms - very small and in poor condition. Evidence of asbestos ceiling.
- Reception, kiosk and office area.
- Shades structures and grassed areas.
- Plant and storerooms - small sheds with compliance issues with access and chemical storage.

Usage

The facility caters for lap swimming, recreational users, school groups and families. The cold temperature of the water is one of the key challenges for encouraging great use. This has been confirmed through the community engagement findings as a barrier for participation.

The length of season and closures for cooler weather days are also barriers for growing the usage of the facility. As an example, the facility was closed for 33 days out of 92 schedule operating days due to weather closures in 2020/21.

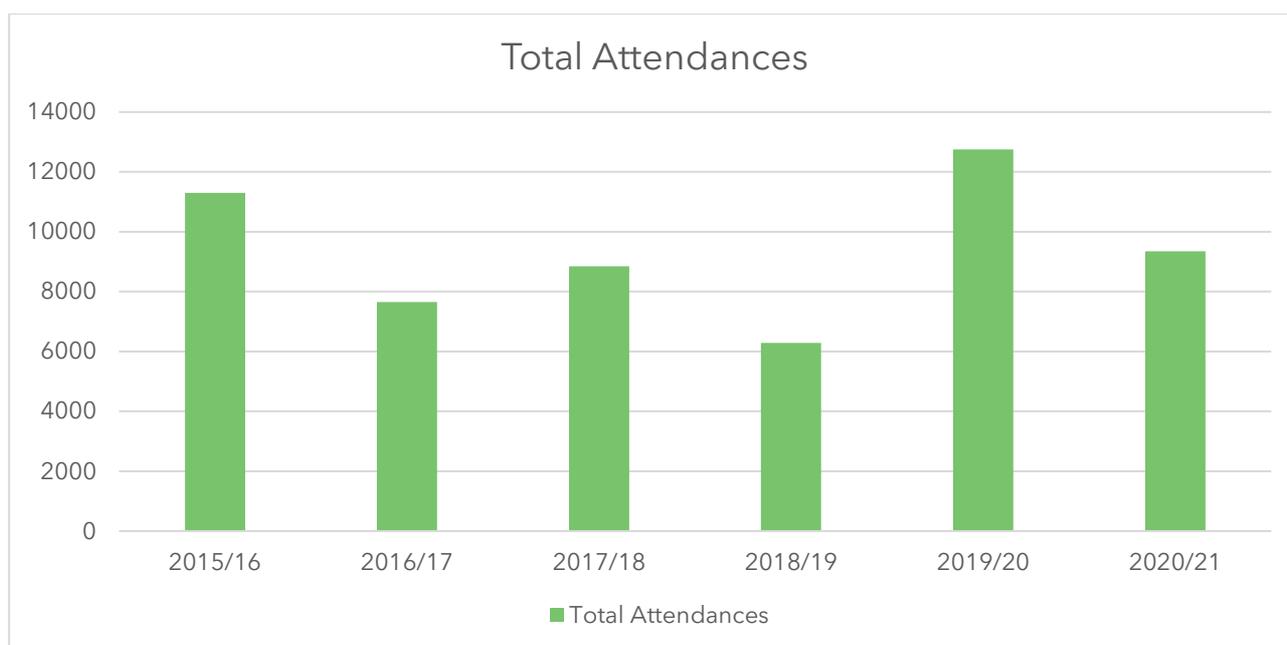


Figure 7: Daylesford Outdoor Pool Attendance Data

The following trends are evident from the attendance data:

- The visitations have fluctuated over the last six years with weather closures being a major factor in this trend.
- Over the last six years the lowest visitations were in 2018/19 6,286 and the highest visits were in 2019/20 12,753.
- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 visitations increased sharply recording the highest visitations ever recorded.
- Interesting to note that 2015/16 was the second highest visitations over the last 6 years which coincided with Council assuming the internal management of the facility after decades of external contract management arrangements.

Operating Revenue Summary

The graph below provides a summary of the total revenue for the last five years between 2016/17 to 2020/21.

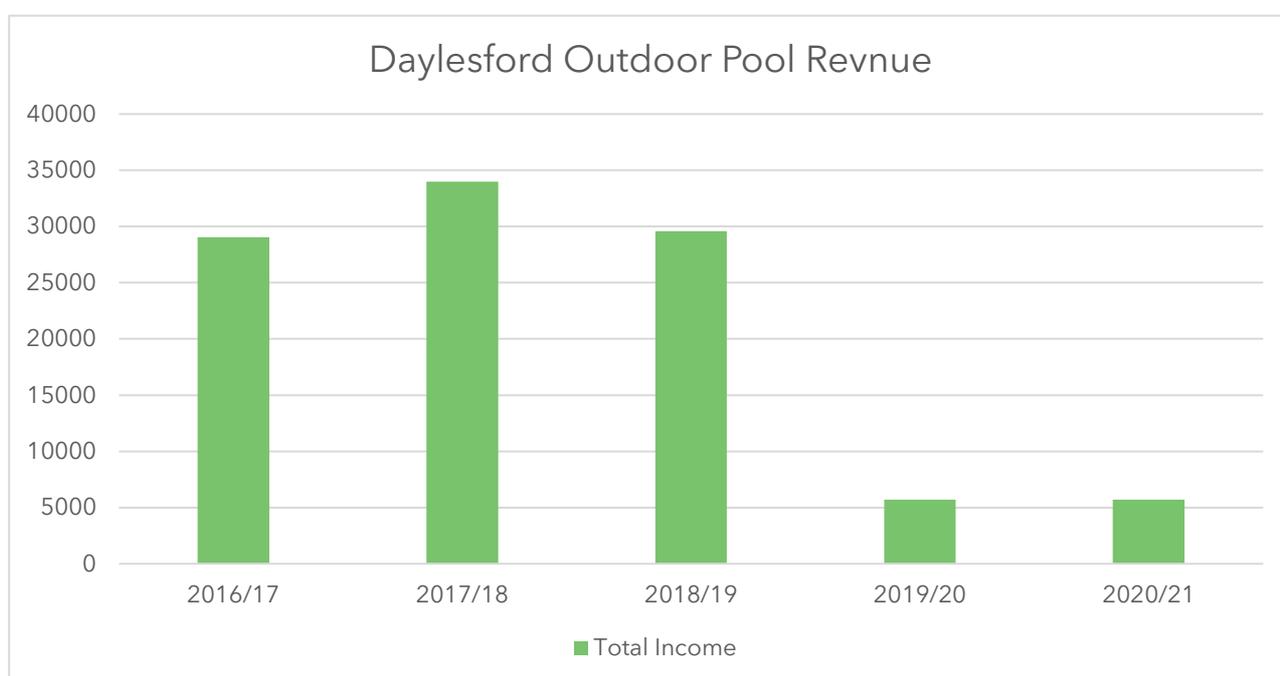


Figure 8: Daylesford Outdoor Pool Operating Revenue

The following trends are evident from the revenue data:

- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 income has decreased sharply.
- The highest income of \$33,996 was achieved in 2017/18.
- The lowest income of \$4,363 was recorded in 2020/21.

Asset Condition and Compliance

The following is a summary of the JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report. The objective of the assessment is to provide direction on the asset management and allocation of resources for the development and maintenance of aquatics facilities.

The following observations were made by JWC Engineers during the site visit:

- The main pool is now likely to be some 50-60+ years old and is now only in fair condition from an aesthetic viewpoint. While nearing the end of its expected life there is still some remaining life of approximately 10-20+yrs. The remaining life will largely depend on stable ground

conditions continuing to remain, and preventing reinforcement corrosion, there is no indication otherwise.

- The main issue is leakage. Installation of a water meter on the make-up water, and leak testing is recommended. Expansion joints are likely required to be re-sealed.
- The water treatment plant is much newer than the pool, estimated to be 20 years old, and overall, it is in reasonably good condition.
- The hypo fill area requires a spill containment parking slab for the tanker. To be constructed where the tanker now parks at the rear of the Town Hall building.
- The electrics are an ad-hoc mixture of old and new and the older boards should be replaced and possibly consolidated with other elements.
- The site is small and constrained with the only available land to the north of the main pool. There is no opportunity to expand the site.

The items in the table below are remedial works required in the short to medium term (up to 5 years).

Recommended Works - Daylesford Outdoor Pool

Table 3: Short term Capital Works and Maintenance Priorities

Item	Description	Cost Estimate
1	Install water meter on make-up water to Water Treatment Plant.	\$1,000
2	Leak test main pool and pipework. Allowance includes for some remedial works to expansion joints.	\$30,000
3	Hypo fill point requires spill containment tanker parking slab/valves drainage and an expanded fence enclosure.	\$40,000
4	Replace/upgrade old switchboards in plantroom. Undertake electrical check of plantroom electrics, including RCD's.	\$15,000
5	Connect backwash tank discharge to sewer, utilising a small pump.	\$10,000
6	Provide weather protective covers for solar pool covers.	\$2,000
7	Contingency fund.	\$20,000
	TOTAL	\$118,000

Potential Redevelopment Option

The JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report notes that, if redevelopment of Daylesford Outdoor Pool is a potential future option, the following comments are provided for consideration:

- The pool shell is likely to remain serviceable for another 10-20+ years. This could potentially extend further if ground conditions remain stable and any initial reinforcement corrosion is kept at a minimum by prompt treatment.
- The 13.4m pool width is insufficient to meet current day expectations of 8 x 2m lanes.
- Conversion to a wet deck is not considered a viable option due to the age of the pool. Conversion would involve significant structural works plus changes to pipework and this could expose and cause adverse impacts on adjacent infrastructure. There would be similar issues with a disabled access (DA) ramp into the shallow end of the pool.
- The water treatment plant is adequate for the current pool spaces albeit that the toddlers pool is connected into the main pool system when preferably it should have its own dedicated system. The main equipment generally has 10-20+ years of life remaining but noting that pumps and dosing equipment have less economic life than filters and pipes etc and their replacement will likely be at the lower end of this range. Filter laterals may also need attention in this shorter time frame.

- Heating of the pools was discussed with Officers on the inspection day. Given the limitations of the existing solar heating, alternative options of electric heat pumps or gas fired boilers could be explored.
- Disinfection options were discussed with Officers on the inspection day. Alternatives to the traditional sodium hypochlorite-based disinfection typically default to calcium hypochlorite and on-site chlorine generation systems. Of these two options, calcium hypochlorite dominates; it needs only a simple mixer system to create required chlorine solution for dosing. It is being adopted largely because being a solid powder (or briquette) it is safer to handle than liquid sodium hypochlorite. But it is also more expensive. On-site chlorine generation systems are essentially a saltwater pool with the salt water (brine) solution located in the plantroom. They do not have a strong track record of reliable operation and only produce a low percentage strength chlorine solution. This means they often need to be supplemented with sodium hypochlorite, manually dosed, on busy days.
- The toddlers pool and main building do not warrant being retained in any redevelopment due to their age, small size, functionality issues and low asset value. Their removal would leave this upper tier level open for any new development.
- Any new water space, including a splash play area will require its own dedicated water treatment system(s).

4.3 CLUNES OUTDOOR POOL



Figure 9: Aerial view of Clunes Outdoor Pool

Overview

The Clunes Outdoor Pool was built in the 1960's making it approximately 60 years old. The facility is open for the summer season which is approximately 14 weeks per year. The facility is located adjacent to the Clunes Recreation Reserve and Clunes indoor stadium. The facility is managed internally by Council staff.

The table below outlines the aquatics components at the Clunes facility.

Table 4: Clunes Outdoor Pool facilities

Pool	Size	Depth
Main Pool	25 metres x 5 lanes	1 metre shallow end - 3 metres deep end
Toddler Pool	4.5m x 3.6m	0.35 metres

Other features of facility include:

- Amenities and change rooms
- Reception, kiosk and office area
- Shade structures and grassed areas
- Plant and storerooms.

Usage

The facility caters for lap swimming, recreational users, school groups and families. Despite having a solar heating system one of the key challenges for encouraging greater use is the water temperature. This has been confirmed through the community engagement findings as a barrier for participation.

The length of season and closures for cooler weather days are also barriers for growing the usage of the facility. For example, the facility was closed due to weather closures for 4 days out of 92 scheduled operating days for the 2020/21 season.

The graph below provides a summary of the total visitations for the last six years between 2015/16 to 2020/21.

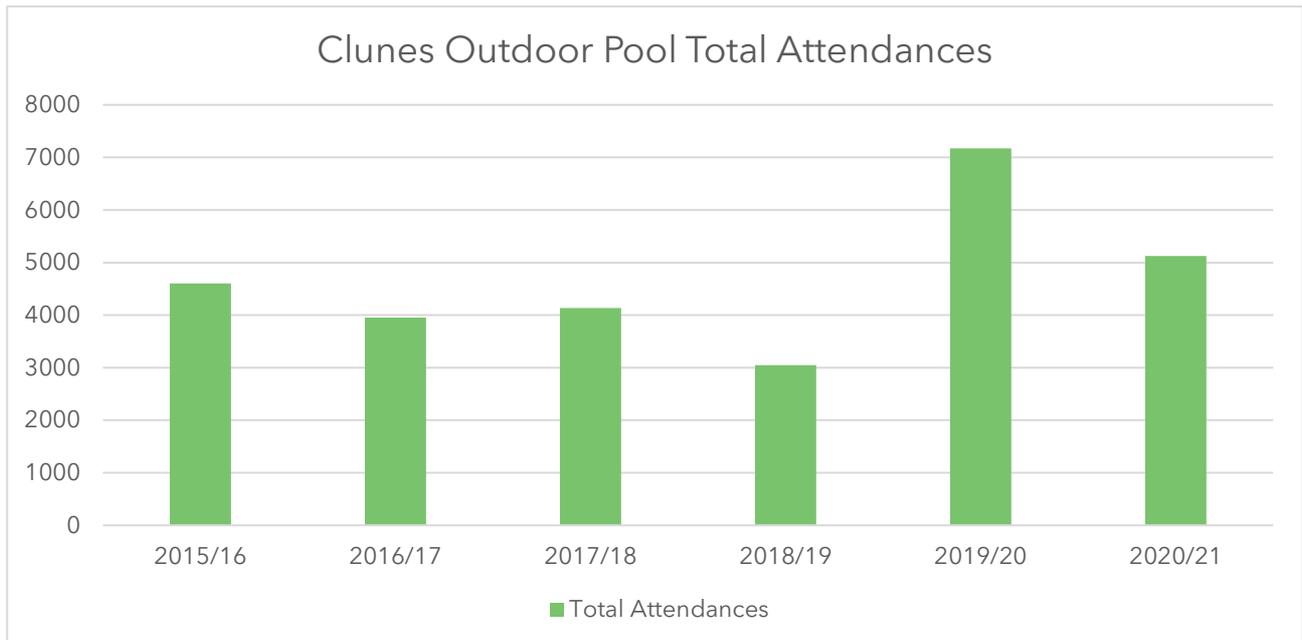


Figure 10: Clunes Outdoor Pool Attendance Data

The following trends are evident from the attendance data:

- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 visitations increased sharply recording the highest visitations ever recorded. Although visits dropped slightly in 2020/21 it was the second highest attendance level in the last six years.
- Over the last six years the lowest visitations were 3,049 in 2018/19 and the highest visits were 7,170 in 2019/20.
- Interesting to note that 2015/16 was the third highest visitations over the last 6 years which coincided with Council assuming the internal management of the facility after decades of external contract management arrangements.

Operating Revenue Summary

The graph below provides a summary of the total revenue for the last five years between 2016/17 to 2020/21.

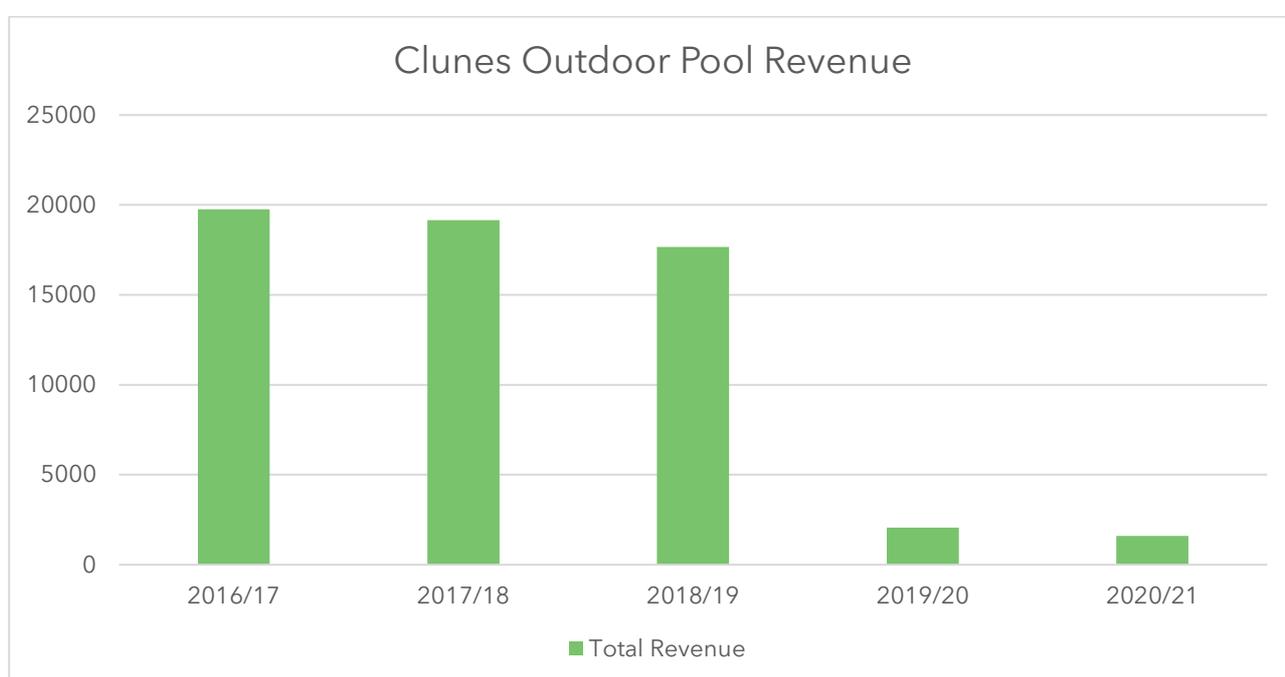


Figure 11: Clunes Outdoor Pool Operating Revenue

The following trends are evident from the revenue data:

- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 income has decreased sharply.
- The highest income of \$19,757 was achieved in 2016/17.
- The lowest income of \$1,604 was recorded in 2020/21.

Asset Condition and Compliance

The following is a summary of the JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report. The objective of the assessment is to provide direction on the asset management and allocation of resources for the development and maintenance of aquatics facilities.

The following observations were made by JWC Engineers during the site visit.

- The main pool is now likely to be approximately 60 years old, has a low build quality and is now deteriorated to fair condition. While nearing the end of its economic life the shell remains functional and is likely to remain so for the next 15-20 years. Remaining life expectancy will largely depend on ground conditions continuing to be remain stable (and there is no indication otherwise) and continuing to manage leakage.

- As for most older pools the main issue is leakage. Installation of a water meter on the make-up water to establish a data base, and formal leak testing is recommended. Hydrostatic and dye testing should focus on the expansion joints and pipework. Expansion joints are highly likely required to be renewed and this work is in the Recommended Works table.
- The toddler's pool is a small, domestic type fibreglass pool. It is a very basic installation, in poor condition. It has a low asset value and retaining it in any redevelopment is not warranted.
- Any new toddlers pool or splash play area will need its own dedicated water treatment plant. Although site space is very limited the logical location for this is along the east boundary.
- The main water treatment plant is much newer than the pool estimated as approximately 20years old, and overall, it is in good condition.
- The water distribution system into and from the pool has been influenced by the additional pipework to the pool installed as part of the Water Treatment Plant replacement. This presents some risk of short circuiting which could adversely affect water quality. This risk however can be mitigated, particularly on busy days, by taking water samples directly from the pool in likely dead spots i.e., not relying solely on the automatic system and managing bather numbers accordingly.
- The original pipework will remain a risk (relative to the newer pipework), as evidenced by the drainpipe / valve failure and total water loss in February 2021. There is little that can be done in terms of planned maintenance to mitigate risk of the older pipe and thus reactive maintenance can only be expected to increase over time.
- The hypo fill area requires a spill containment parking slab for the tanker. This is a significant amount of work and if the current parking spot is retained it will involve legal assessments on land ownership and use. Alternatively, it may be feasible to relocate it to inside the site. This project needs further investigation of design options and land issues before proceeding.
- The site is small and constrained. There is no opportunity to expand the site.

The items in the table below are remedial works required in the short to medium term (up to 5 years).

Table 5: Short Term Capital Works and Maintenance Priorities

Item	Description	Cost Estimate
1	Install water meter on make-up water to Water Treatment Plant	\$1,000
2	Leak test main pool and pipework. Allowance includes for some remedial works including renewal of expansion joints.	\$25,000
3	Hypo fill point requires spill containment tanker parking slab/valves drainage and an expanded fence enclosure.	\$50,000
4	Undertake electrical check of plantroom electrics, including RCD's. Allowance includes for some nom. remedial work.	\$5,000
5	Connect backwash tank discharge to sewer, utilising a small pump.	\$15,000
6	Provide weather protective covers for solar pool covers	\$3,000
7	Paint 'lane' lines on pool floor	\$1,000
8	Contingency fund	\$20,000
	TOTAL	\$130,000

Potential Redevelopment Options

The JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report notes, in terms of redevelopment, the fact that the main pool has some remaining life and the relatively young water treatment plant, coupled with the linkage to the newer oval pavilion building supports retaining the facility. There is potential for numerous cosmetic improvements, depending on budgets.

Replacement of the toddler's pool is recommended and there is opportunity, albeit limited by space constraints, for a splash play area.

4.4 TRENTHAM OUTDOOR POOL

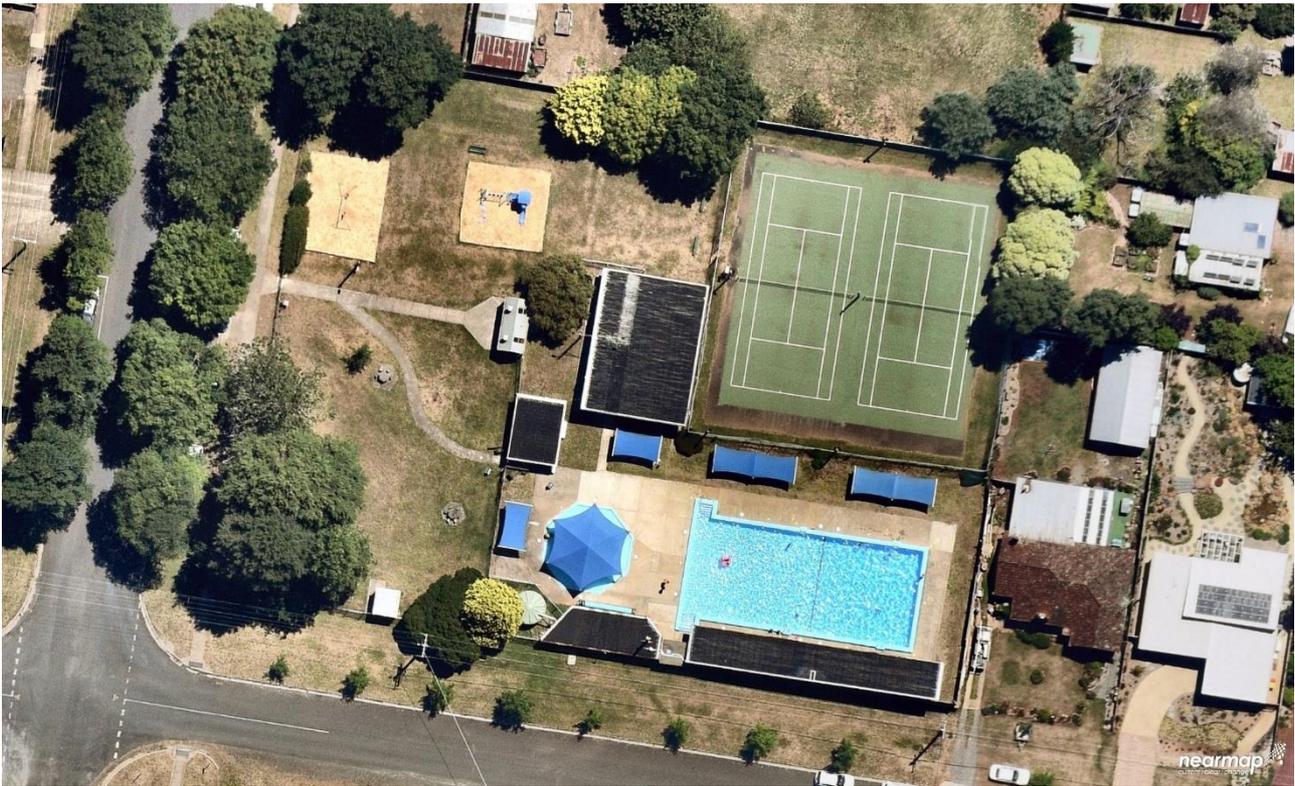


Figure 12: Aerial view of Trentham Outdoor Pool

Overview

The Trentham Outdoor Pool was built in the 1960's making it approximately 60 years old. The facility is open for the summer season which is approximately 14 weeks per year. The facility is located centrally in the township and is adjacent to the Trentham tennis courts and neighbouring park. The facility is managed internally by Council staff.

The table below outlines the aquatics components at the Trentham facility.

Table 6: Trentham Outdoor Pool facilities

Pool	Size	Depth
Main Pool	25 metres x 10.6 metres x 5 lanes	1 metre shallow - 2.6 metres deep end
Toddler Pool	9.2 metre hexagonal shape	0.2 metres - 0.3 metres

Other features of facility include:

- Amenities and change rooms
- Reception, kiosk and office area
- Shade structures and grassed areas
- Plant and storerooms.

Usage

The facility caters for lap swimming, recreational users, school groups and families. Despite having a solar heating system one of the key challenges for encouraging greater use is the water temperature. This has been confirmed through the community engagement findings as a barrier for participation.

The length of season and closures for cooler weather days are also barriers for growing the usage of the facility. To emphasize this the facility was closed due to weather closures for 33 days out of 92 scheduled operating days for the 2020/21 season.

The graph below provides a summary of the total visitations for the last six years between 2015/16 to 2020/21.

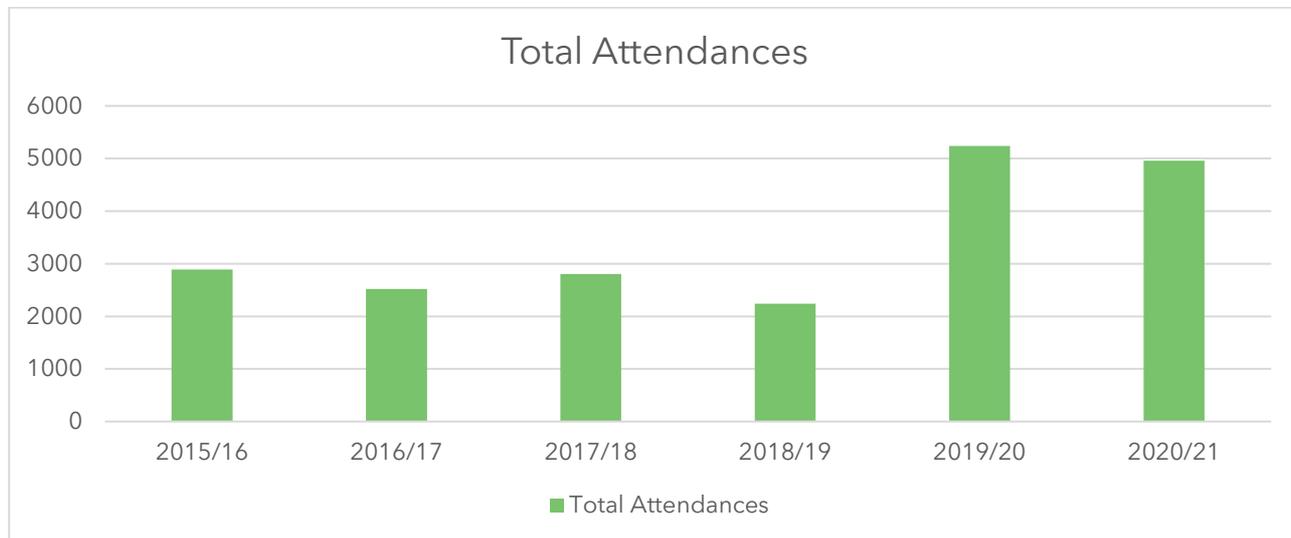


Figure 13: Trentham Outdoor Pool Attendance Data

The following trends are evident from the attendance data:

- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 visitations increased sharply reaching the highest visitations ever recorded. Although visits dropped slightly in 2020/21 it was the second highest attendance level in the last six years.
- Over the last six years the lowest visitations were 2,239 in 2018/19 and the highest visits were 5,241 in 2019/20.
- Interesting to note that 2015/16 was the third highest visitations over the last 6 years which coincided with Council assuming the internal management of the facility after decades of external contract management arrangements.

Operating Revenue Summary

The graph below provides a summary of the total revenue for the last five years between 2016/17 to 2020/21.

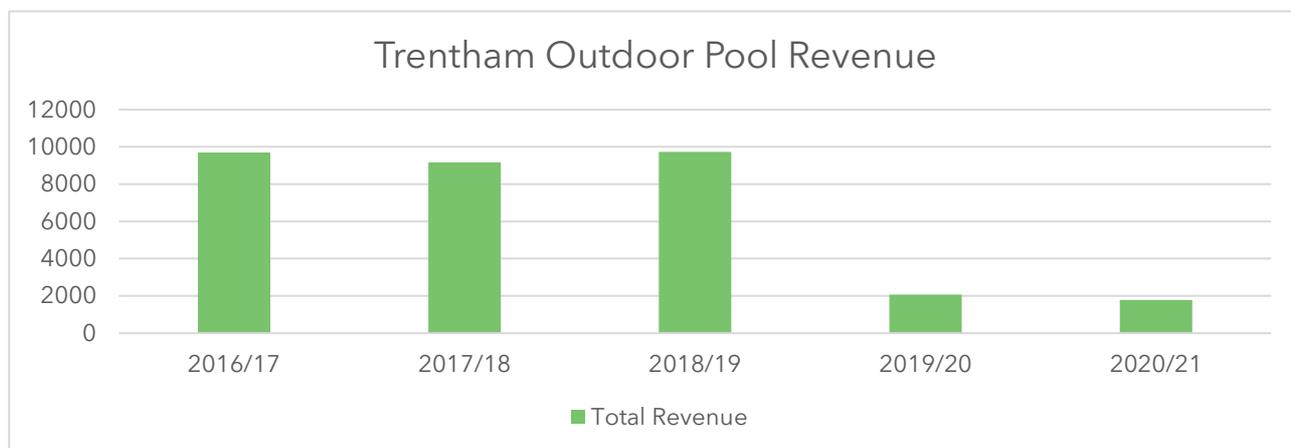


Figure 14: Trentham Outdoor Pool Operating Revenue

The following trends are evident from the revenue data:

- Since the introduction of the free entry policy in 2019/20 income has decreased sharply.
- The highest income of \$9,729 was achieved in 2018/19.
- The lowest income of \$1,776 was recorded in 2020/21.

Asset Condition and Compliance

The following is a summary of the JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report. The objective of the assessment is to provide direction on the asset management and allocation of resources for the development and maintenance of aquatics facilities.

The following observations were made by JWC Engineers during the site visit:

- The main pool has suffered from floor uplift at some stage which represents a technical structural failure. The resultant cracks have been repaired. While the shell is nearing the end of its economic life, it is functional and is likely to remain so for the next 10-20+ years. Remaining life expectancy will largely depend on ground conditions continuing to be remain stable (there is no indication otherwise) and continuing to manage and control leakage.
- The prime issue is leakage, even more so than at Clunes and Daylesford. Trentham has a greater leakage rate than the other two pools and this is suspected to be due to the pool uplift event/cracks many years ago. Installation of a water meter on the make-up water to establish a data base, and formal leak testing is recommended. Hydrostatic and dye testing should focus on the expansion joints and pipework. Expansion joints are highly likely required to be renewed and this work is in the Recommended Works table.
- The main shade structure is in poor condition and appears to lack structural robustness. Replacement is recommended.
- The toddler's pool is quite large. It is a basic installation but still serviceable and serves its purpose.
- The main water treatment plant is much newer than the pool, estimated about 20 years old, and overall is in good condition.
- The original pipework under the concourse is a long-term risk but unfortunately there is little that can be done in terms of planned maintenance to mitigate this risk. Reactive maintenance can only be expected to increase with time until ultimately pipes will need to be replaced.
- The site is small and constrained. The only direction for expansion is further into the Reserve to the west, moving closer to Market St.

Recommended Works - Trentham Outdoor Pool

Table 7: Short Term Capital Works and Maintenance Priorities

Item	Description	Cost Estimate
1	Install water meter on make-up water to Water Treatment Plant.	\$1,000
2	Leak test main pool and pipework. Allowance includes for some remedial works including renewal of expansion joints.	\$25,000
3	Main pump foot valve, rectify opening in inlet grille.	\$1,000
4	Acid mixing tank, provide compliant nesting bund tank. Remove incorrect Cal-hypo label from door.	\$1,000
5	Replace main shade structure along south side of pool.	\$40,000
6	Undertake electrical check of plantroom electrics, including RCD's. Allowance includes for some minor remedial work.	\$3,000
7	Connect backwash tank discharge to sewer.	\$10,000
8	Provide weather protective covers for solar pool covers (only 1 seen onsite).	\$2,000
9	Contingency fund.	\$20,000
TOTAL		\$104,000

Potential Redevelopment Options

The JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report notes, in terms of redevelopment, the fact that the main pool has suffered a technical structural failure, albeit some time ago, restricts opportunities to essentially maintaining the status quo.

4.5 CRESWICK SPLASH PARK



Figure 15: Creswick Splash Park

Overview

The Creswick Splash Park was installed in 2016 in the town centre, opposite the new Creswick IGA store. It forms part of a broader recreation precinct which also includes the skate park, shelters, BBQ facilities and outdoor gym equipment. It's a vibrant and highly popular facility for locals and visitors.

Facilities include:

- Zero depth splash pad approximately 15 metres x 10 metres with a variety of interactive waterplay features including tipping buckets, water tunnels, and sprays.
- Plant room.
- Shade structures and picnic areas.
- Paved and grass surrounds.

Usage

Visitation data is not collected for this site.

Asset Condition

The following is a summary of the JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report. The objective of the assessment is to provide direction on the asset management and allocation of resources for the development and maintenance of aquatics facilities.

The following observations were made by JWC Engineers during the site visit.

Splash Park

- Facility is five years old and consists of two components, the splash park and adjacent is the Green River.
- One splash park water feature has been abandoned due to poor performance/operational issues.
- Play surface is bare concrete, no soft padding, but conversely there are no climbing water features.
- All water from Splash Park drains separately to a new balance tank, then to the treatment plant. The original balance tank had to recently be supplemented with this tank, with increased volume.
- Treatment plant and feature pumps are located in two small sheds along northern boundary. Auto-dosing is installed for sodium hypochlorite and sodium bisulphate chemical treatment of water.

Green River feature

- There is a simple 'river themed water feature' built under separate contract.
- River is approximately 35 metres long and gently snakes down a 5-metre-wide concrete pathway towards Midland Highway/service road.
- River pathway also serves as primary walkway from the street (Midland Highway) to picturesque creek frontage and pedestrian bridge. This dual purpose indicates the flat and gentle nature, in fact water ponds in the 'river' in places.
- River water only runs, from mains water pressure, with button activation by the public. However, the flow is hardly noticeable with water taking minutes to migrate a few metres downslope. Hence it is little used.
- The pragmatic solution is to abandon this river feature, on the basis that the water-side infrastructure has low asset value. If high pressure pumps were added then that would add significant cost, raise safety issues and start to compromise the walkway functionality.
- The plant is still as new but heat build-up in the sheds on hot days is an issue that has affected some electrics. Staff have put additional shade overhead to reduce this problem.
- Both the sodium hypo and acid mixing tank need to have higher walled bunding tanks (as per Clunes, Daylesford and Trentham) to meet regulations.

Council Officers mentioned lack of shade and seating for parents while children were playing on Splash Park. Currently parents look into the setting evening sun from existing shade structure, another shade structure on the west side looking east could be considered. The closest toilets are on other side of busy Midland Highway which is not ideal. Consideration of a public amenities block adjacent to the Splash Park would be beneficial for users.

Recommended Works - Creswick Splash Park

Table 8: Short Term Capital Works and Maintenance Priorities

Item	Description	Cost Estimate
1	Acid mixing and hypo dosing tank, provide compliant nesting bund tank.	\$1,000
2	Allowance to improve shading arrangements/ventilation if needed over both plantrooms.	\$10,000
3	Contingency fund.	\$5,000
TOTAL		\$16,000

4.6 CALEMBEEN PARK TODDLERS POOL



Figure 16: Aerial view of Calembreen Park Toddler Pool

Overview

Calembreen Lake was the original swimming hole for the Creswick community. It has a long history dating back to the early 1900's. Council recognised that the reserve provided an opportunity to create a more formal swimming baths for Creswick. Dressing sheds, spectator seating and landscaping was completed which created one of the more popular swimming spots available in the region at the time.

Over time, limited resourcing and risk management issues have resulted in the loss of much of the historical infrastructure. Although the area is still picturesque there are a number of ongoing challenges with asset renewal and upgrades within Calembreen Park that will need to be considered.

The facility includes:

- Toddlers Pool on the banks of the lake, in a fenced area.
- Intermediate pool, shallow section of the main lake. This area is not chemically treated, natural water body.
- Amenities and change rooms.
- Plant room.
- Shade structures and picnic areas.

Usage

No usage data is collected for this site.

Asset Condition and Compliance

The following is a summary to the JWC Asset Condition Assessment Report. The objective of the assessment is to provide direction on the asset management and allocation of resources for the development and maintenance of aquatics facilities.

The following observations were made by JWC Engineers during the site visit:

- The toddlers pool structure is nearing the end of life.
- Simple and basic pool shell 12 metre x 4 metre with 250mm to 400mm depth.
- The toddlers pool abuts the lake but is separated/surrounded by a pool safety fence.
- Treatment plant is estimated at approximately 30 years old. It is a simple domestic type of sand filter system located in a very small timber shed and well away from pool.
- Disinfection is with sodium hypochlorite and pH control is with hydrochloric acid, both delivered in 15 litre containers. It does have a new water chemistry control system (1 yr. old) but no remote telemetry. Maintaining water quality is a challenge for Council staff.
- Numerous pipe blockages occur due to leaves etc. Saw-cuts in the concourse above wall nozzle inlets show that these pipes have been replaced. Pipe blockage problems appear reasonably frequent, and this could possibly be linked to poor geotechnical conditions from the proximity to the lake.
- Leaking drain valve to lake requires investigation/repair.
- Filter backwash discharges directly out through rear wall of this shed, onto ground and drains into the lake.

There are a number of safety and compliance concerns with this pool. It is not staffed during summer which exposes Council to a level of risk for incidents. Compliance with current health department water quality regulations is a concern also as water is drawn from the lake which is filled with stormwater. There have been previous recordings of E-Coli existing in the water supply which is a significant concern for parents and toddlers using the pool. Daily water tests are undertaken on the toddler pool when in operation to ensure compliance with Health Department regulations.

Recommended Works - Calembeen Park Toddlers Pool

Table 9: Short Term Capital Works and Maintenance Priorities

Item	Description	Cost Estimate
1	Leak test pool and pipework. Allowance includes for some remedial works including renewal of expansion joints.	\$10,000
2	Re-align plantroom pipework to improve performance and OHS safety.	\$5,000
3	Increase separation distance between hypo and acid to improve safety.	\$1,000
4	Upgrade plantroom electrics, including RCDs to ensure compliance. Allowance.	\$5,000
5	Connect backwash discharge to sewer. This will require tank, pump and 60m pipe to public toilets.	\$10,000
6	Contingency fund.	\$20,000
	TOTAL	\$51,000

Potential Redevelopment Options

- The pool and plant are both basic and old.
- The pool shell has cracks around the perimeter and replacement nozzles and pipework saw-cuts in slab indicate previous pipework problems, possibly due to poor geotechnical issues from being so close to the lake.
- The ad-hoc plant and plantroom has OHS issues and regulatory non-compliances such as the backwash discharge going to ground and returning to the lake.
- There is no solar heating; roof area is scarce.
- Both the pool structure and plant room have reached the end of their economic life.

4.7 SUMMARY OF HEPBURN AQUATICS FACILITIES OPERATING PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Limited financial data for each site was available for the operating performance analysis section. Prior to the 2020/21 season all Council financial data was aggregated for reporting purposes.

Combined Hepburn Outdoor Pool Attendance Data Overview

The following graph shows the aggregated annual attendance data for the last six years.

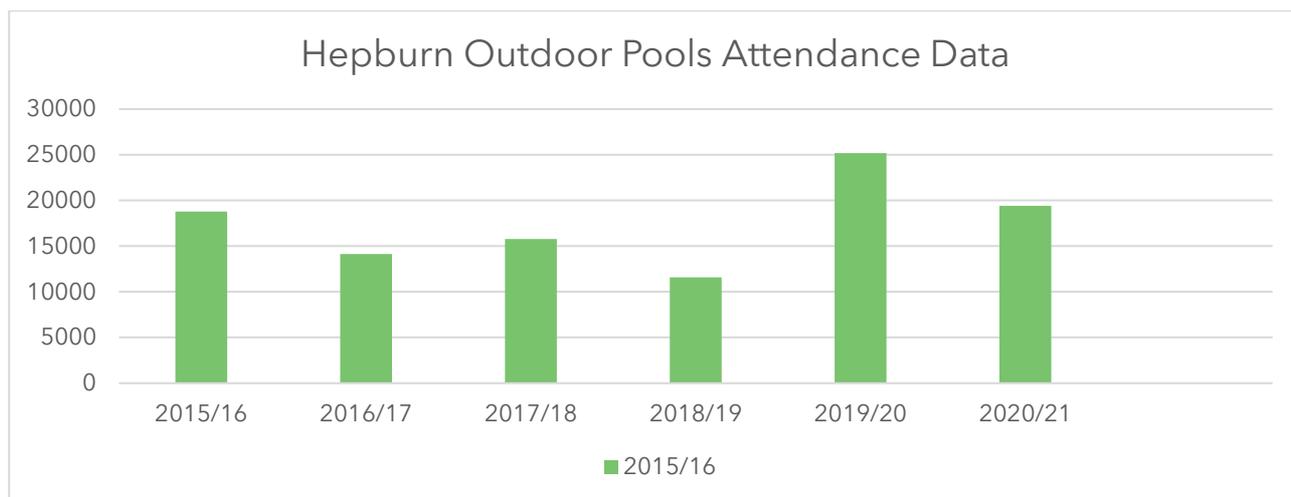


Figure 17: Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Annual Attendance Summary

The attendance summary indicates the following trends:

- The graph shows an overall increase in visitations for the Hepburn Council managed aquatics facilities over the past two seasons.
- The three outdoor pools attracted the highest recorded attendances of 25,164 visits in 2019/20, which was driven by a new free entry policy adopted in 2019.
- There was a slight decline in 2020/21 however each facility had a significant number of closures due to weather conditions and maintenance closures. They were also closed for five days due to COVID lockdowns.
- The lowest visitations of 11,574 was recorded in 2018/19 and highest visitations of 25,164 was achieved in 2019/20.

Operating Revenue Comparison

The following graph shows the annual operating revenue for each outdoor pool for the last five years.

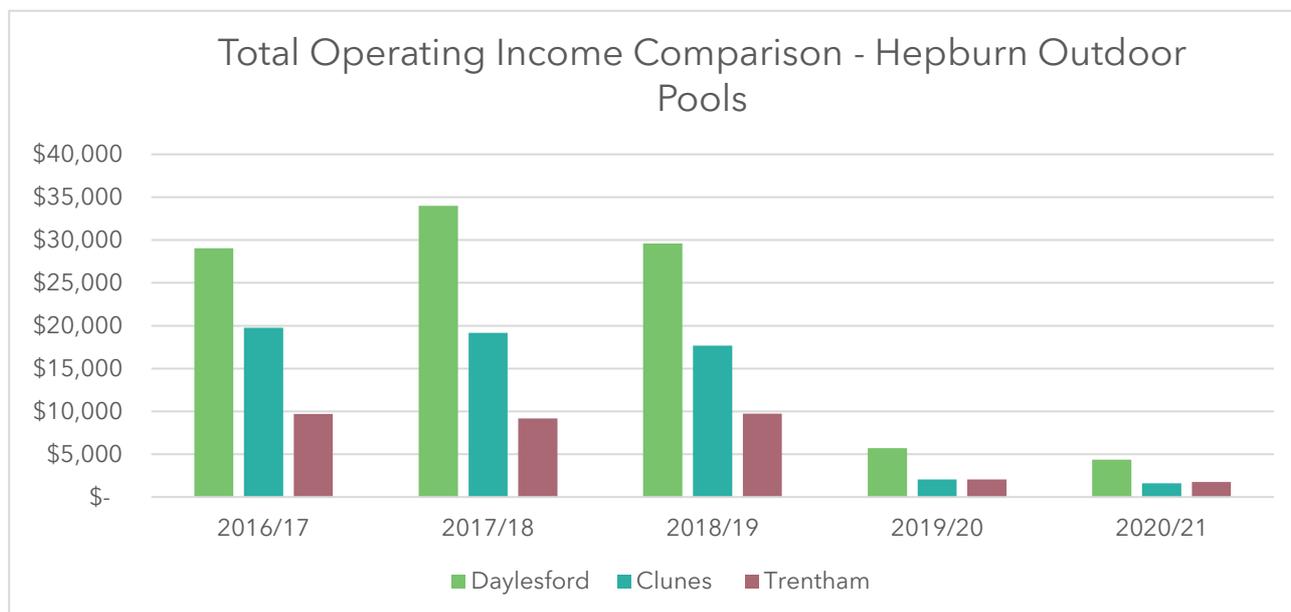


Figure 18: Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Operating Revenue

The operating revenue summary indicates the following trends:

- The graph shows a decline in revenue over the past five years across all three outdoor pools. This is attributed to the free entry policy adopted in 2019. Revenue in 2019/20 and 2020/21 is only kiosk sales income.
- The Daylesford Outdoor Pool generated the highest income compared to the other two pools over the five years. The peak year for income was 2017/18.
- Clunes and Trentham Outdoor Pools attract far less visitations and revenue compared to Daylesford which is expected due to lower population catchments.
- The average annual income between 2016/17 and 2018/19 was \$59,265 per season prior to the introduction of the free entry policy. This compares to the average income \$8,786 per season for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Annual Operating Performance

The following graph shows the combined financial performance for the Hepburn aquatics facilities over the last six years. This includes Daylesford Outdoor Pool, Clunes Outdoor Pool, Trentham Outdoor Pool, Creswick Splash Park and Calembreen Park Toddlers Pool.

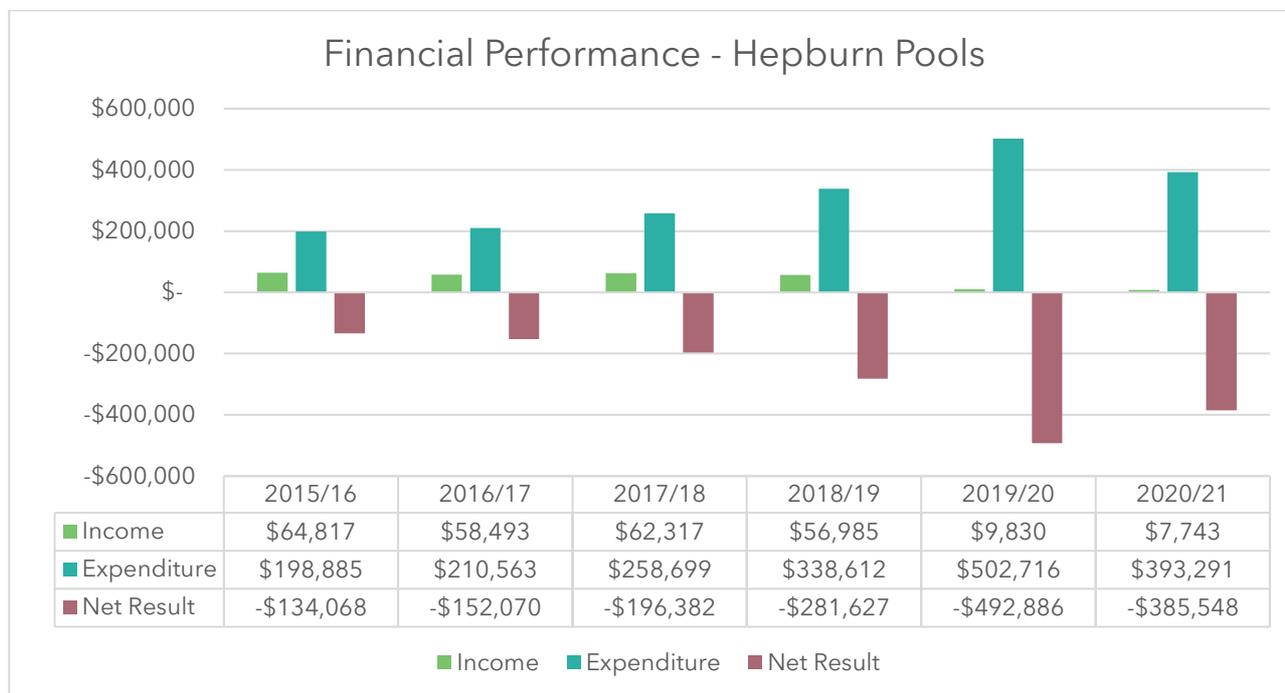


Figure 19: Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Annual Financial Performance Summary

The combined financial performance summary indicates the following trends:

- Total income gradually declined between 2016/17 and 2018/19, then dropped sharply in 2019/20 after the commencement of the free entry policy adopted by Council.
- Conversely expenditure increased significantly over the same period. Expenditure increased by 153% from \$198,885 in 2015/16 to \$502,716 in 2019/20. This is attributed to higher staff costs with Council assuming the internal management of the three facilities in 2019/20. Prior to this a hybrid management model was in place with subcontracted lifeguard staff sourced through Momentum One.
- The net performance declined significantly over the six-year period. The operating deficit grew from a loss of \$134,068 in 2016/17 to \$492,627 deficit in 2019/20. This equates to a 267% increase in the operating subsidy to operate the outdoor pools. The key factors for the decline were the introduction of the free entry policy combined with higher staffing and maintenance costs since Council assumed the internal management control of the facilities.
- Council commenced an annual maintenance contract in 2019/20 to address numerous asset management issues across the pools. This was additional expenditure added to the net operating results, which was not included between 2016/17 and 2018/19. Council spent \$98,000 in 2019/20 and \$86,000 in 2020/21 on maintenance.
- It should also be noted that seasonal pools typically see up to 30% swing in revenue annually depending on the weather conditions, particularly during the peak summer holiday periods. An example was the 2020/21 season which had 33 days of closures at Daylesford and Trentham in due to poor weather and COVID disruptions.

4.8 COUNCIL'S WEATHER CLOSURE POLICY

The current Weather Closure Policy across the three outdoor pools states that during the operating season the pools close on days of 21 degrees or less.

The current weather closure policy is causing high levels of frustration from the community. It was raised in stakeholder discussions, at the Community Pop Up sessions and in the community survey results. The community sees the current policy as not providing consistent or reliable opening hours. During each season a significant number of days and hours are lost due to the closures. For example, in 2020/21 both Daylesford and Trentham closed for 33 days out of a total 92 days that the pools are officially open during summer. This indicates that the pools were closed for over 30% of the season. This is a similar trend each year.

4.9 KEY FINDINGS OF CENTRE REVIEW

The following table provides a summary of the operational performance of Hepburn aquatics centres across the last six years.

Table 10: Summary of Overall Operational Performance - 2015/16 to 2020/21

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	6 Year Average
Visits	18,795	14,121	15,782	11,574	25,164	19,430	17,477
Income	\$64,817	\$58,493	\$62,317	\$56,985	\$9,830	\$7,743	\$43,816
Expenditure	\$198,885	\$210,563	\$258,699	\$338,612	\$502,716	\$393,291	\$317,127
Operational Surplus / Deficit	-\$134,068	-\$152,070	-\$196,382	-\$281,627	-\$492,886	-\$385,548	-\$273,311
Income Per Visit	\$3.45	\$4.14	\$3.95	\$4.92	\$0.39	\$0.40	\$2.88
Expense Per Visit	\$10.58	\$14.91	\$16.39	\$29.26	\$19.98	\$20.24	\$18.56
Operating Cost Per Visit	\$7.13	\$10.77	\$12.44	\$24.33	\$19.59	\$19.84	\$15.68

The operating indicators show:

- Visitations ranged from a high of 25,164 in 2019/20 and a low of 11,574 in 2018/19. The average annual visits were 17,477 over the six years. There was a sharp increase in visitations in the 2019/20 with the introduction of the free entry policy. This new policy was embraced by the community, and it was further validated from the positive feedback gained at the Pop-Up sessions, online survey and stakeholder consultation sessions.
- Income fluctuated between 2015/16 and 2018/19 due to weather conditions and facility closures. There was a sharp decline in revenue in 2019/20 with the introduction of the free entry policy. The only sources of income in the last two years have been kiosk sales and private bookings.
- While revenue has declined, expenditure has grown significantly over the last six years. The key factors behind this change are higher wages costs, new maintenance agreements and internal management model commencing in 2019/20.
- The operating deficit has grown by 188% from \$134,068 to \$385,548 over the last six years. This is due to declining revenue levels and higher operating costs as explained above.
- Despite growing usage, introducing free entry has impacted the cost per visit which has increased by 178% from \$7.13 to \$19.84 over the past six years.

5. Market Research Analysis

What is the demand for aquatics and leisure services and facilities in Hepburn?

This section analyses the catchment of facilities, participation demand and aquatics facility trends.

5.1 CATCHMENT ANALYSIS

Leisure and sporting facility trends and benchmarking generally indicates that local or municipal facilities have a primary catchment radius of approximately 5km and a secondary catchment radius of 10km.

In general, approximately 75% to 85% of users will reside within a 0km to 5km radius of a facility with the remaining 15% to 25% coming from areas within the 5km to 10km radius of the facility. Regional facilities, providing unique and varied facility components and a larger number of services will draw users from a much wider catchment than a local/municipal facility. In rural Victoria a 20km catchment area is observed for regional facilities.

The size and shape of the catchment area will be influenced by a number of factors including the range and quality of facilities and services offered, natural and built barriers i.e., freeways, travel times and the availability of competing facilities. In metropolitan Melbourne, it is common for facilities to share catchment areas, particularly the secondary catchment areas.

The Catchment Map on the following page shows:

- The facility catchment areas of the five Hepburn aquatics facilities.
- The catchment areas for the indoor facilities surrounding the Hepburn Shire boundaries including the Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre, Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre and Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre.
- Primary and Secondary catchment shaded zones surrounding each aquatics facility.
- Plotting of other aquatics facilities which surround Shire's outdoor pools and the Hepburn Bathhouse.

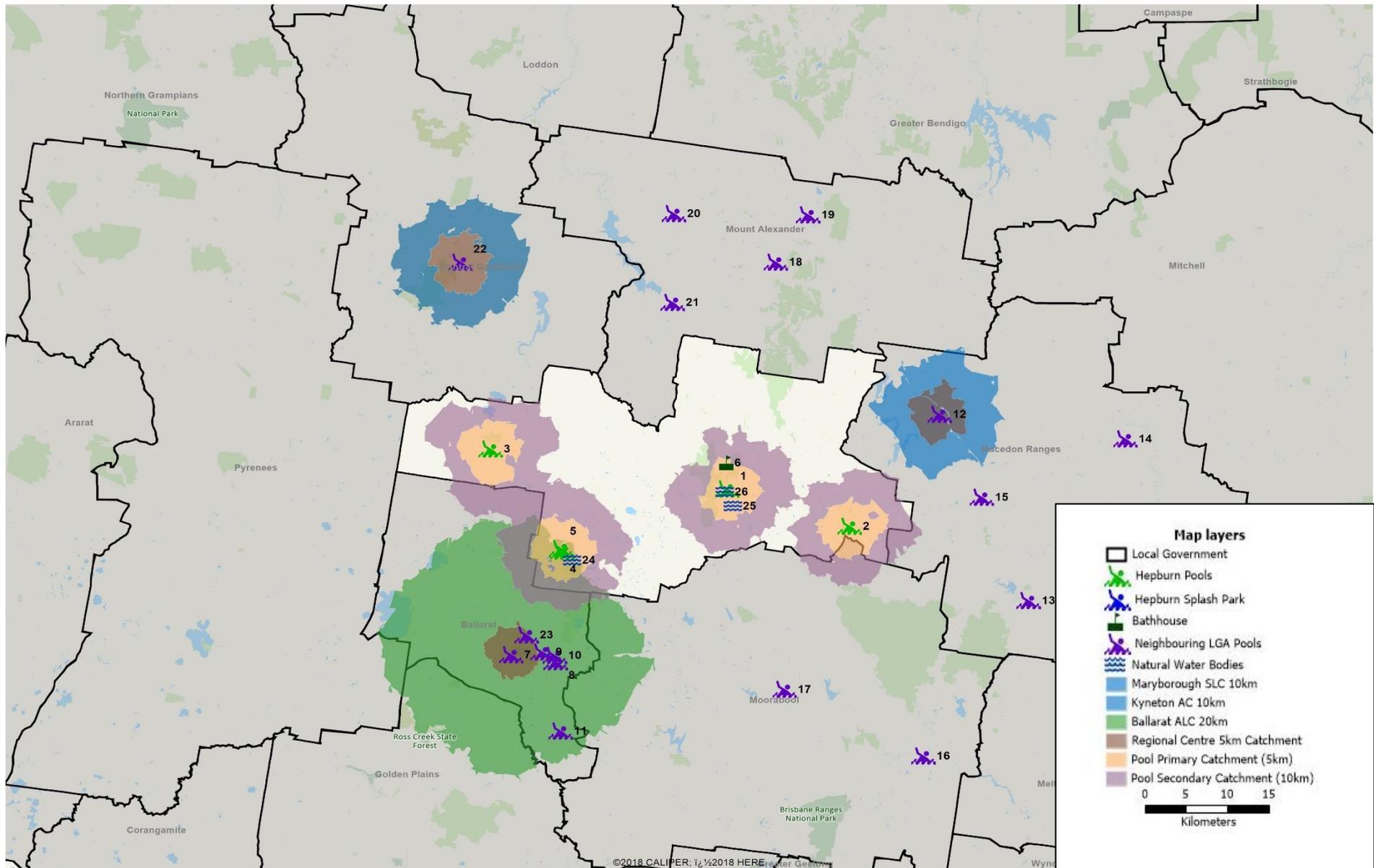


Figure 20: Hepburn Aquatics Facilities Catchment Map

5.2 PARTICIPATION RATES

AusPlay is the national population tracking survey funded and led by the Sports Commission (formerly known as the Australian Sports Commission) and follows on from the previous Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) and Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia'. Annually, about 20,000 interviews are conducted with adults aged 15 and over and about 3,500 interviews with parents/guardians of children under 15 years of age.

Key participation statistics show:

- The annual population estimate of Australian Adults (15+ years) participating in swimming was 2,984,880 or 14.8% of the adult population.
- Overall, females accounted for 56% of participants and males 44%.
- Swimming participation rates increased steadily from early adulthood to their peak in the 35 to 54-year age groups.
- Conversion to club participation was low with only 6% of participants a member of an organised swim club.
- An estimated 1.5 million children (Under 15 years) participating in organised swimming out of school e.g., learn to swim or squad classes. This accounts for around one third of all Australian children.
- The peak participation rates for children in organised out of school swimming were five and eight years.
- Adult swimmers participated regularly with a median frequency of 48 sessions per annum for a duration of 45 minutes.
- The highest rating reasons for participating in swimming was 'physical health/fitness (51%) and 'fun/enjoyment (34%)'.
- The highest rating reasons for drop out were not enough time/too many commitments (19%) and poor health or injury (16%).

In 2013, The Australian Sports Commission commissioned the CSIRO to research future sports trends, including the impact of megatrends - patterns of social, economic or environmental changes that influence sports participation (Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sports sector over the coming decades, Australian Sports Commission, 2013).

The research found activities supported by aquatics and leisure facilities including swimming, aerobics and fitness/gym participation rates per capita have increased in recent years and remains within Australia's top 10 sport and recreational activities.

The key megatrends profiling the types of participants identified in the Australian Sports Commission's the Future of Australian Sport report that can support greater participation in swimming and fitness/gym include:

- A perfect fit - personalised sport for health and fitness.
- More than a sport - achieving health, community and overseas aid objectives via sport.
- Everybody's game - sports that respond to demographic, generational and cultural change.

OPG research has identified a range of general sport and recreation participation trends that are likely to impact on local communities in the future. These are:

- **A gradual ageing of the population.** As life expectancy increases, birth rates stay low and the "baby boomers" of the 1950s and 1960s grow older. This is placing a demand on providing specific older persons programs.

- **Flexibility in the times when people recreate.** As demands on people's time increases and work practices change, people are seeking to take their sport and recreation at different times, over a broad spread of hours and at facilities that offer a lot of activities under the one roof. Health and fitness facilities are particularly attractive and getting easier to use, as many are open 12 to 16 hours per day, 7 days a week, with some now also open 24/7.
- **Increased variety in sport and recreation options.** People's sport and recreation options are changing towards newer more varied activities offered over a greater range of timeframes compared to previous decades where limited variety in activities and scheduling occurred. This has supported the trend to more multi-use facilities to attract a broader range of users as well as multiple programs to meet different needs at the one facility.
- **Constraints to sport and recreation participation.** Lack of time, lack of facilities close by, family and work constraints, health problems and cost of service or use of facilities are the main constraints to many people's sport and recreation participation. The development of targeted markets of users, programs and services at many health and fitness centres has assisted in reducing some of these participation constraints.
- **Changing employment structures, trading and work hours.** These trends often make participation in traditional sport and recreation activities difficult and therefore people are looking for facilities that are open longer hours and have a lot of activity options at the one site. This makes opportunities such as indoor sports courts attractive as their long opening hours and days open per year means usage can be made in a wide range of social, training, competition and educational settings.
- **Different people want different activities.** The different population characteristics sees the need for facilities to offer potential users a much more varied range of programs and services than previously offered. All year round available indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities also provide the greatest diversity of activities throughout the different seasons impacted by the areas weather.
- **Provision of high standards and quality of facilities and services.** People are more and more looking for high standard, high quality facilities and services to meet their sport and recreation needs. This has also seen the trend for indoor facilities becoming very popular as they allow activity in safe and secure spaces in all weather and environmental conditions. This leads to indicating that building low standard, low-cost facilities will not attract the maximum user market. The development by a number of peak sporting bodies of sport specific facility standards and guidelines has also placed pressure on facility providers to meet higher standards of provision.
- **Desire for activities to be affordable.** The development of multi-purpose fitness and indoor sport centres has enabled the high operating cost activities to be cross subsidised by more profitable activity areas such as health and fitness, food and beverage and entertainment areas. This has enabled many facilities to keep general entry fees low to encourage use whilst seeking users who want special services to contribute at a greater level to the cost of such activities. In general, there is a greater reliance on locally accessed and lower cost opportunities by those without the resources to travel and pay for more expensive activities.
- **Recognition of strong links between physical activity and health.** Preventative health care and active lifestyles are very important to many people and health and fitness and indoor sport activities are becoming a large part of people's activity choices. There is increased recognition of the strong links between involvement in recreational activity and good health, and the development of appropriate activities and services, which support this.
- **Expectations of equity and access.** Today's society expects all abilities and people with disabilities to be catered for in public facilities. This has seen improved design features to increase accessibility to and within such facilities. Added to this is the growing array of programs and activities offered to people of all abilities, physical condition and skill levels.
- **Sustainable Development.** In addition to the trends above there are specific trends relating to leisure and sporting facility development such as sport facility planners and operators need to respond to community demand for more sustainable and eco-friendlier infrastructure.

5.3 FACILITY TRENDS

Aquatics and Leisure Facility Usage Trends

There has been a much greater emphasis in the development of a variety of water spaces within public aquatics centres including:

- Program pools designed for learn to swim and a variety of aquatics programs.
- Warm water pools which are used for rehabilitation and therapy, one of the highest use spaces within public aquatics and leisure centres.
- Water play including large, enclosed slides, water jets and other leisure play opportunities.

Health and fitness programming have also advanced with a greater emphasis on programs for older adults as well as a much broader range of opportunities including Pilates, Yoga and Boot Camp.

Components that contribute to successful contemporary aquatics and leisure facilities are summarised in the figure below.

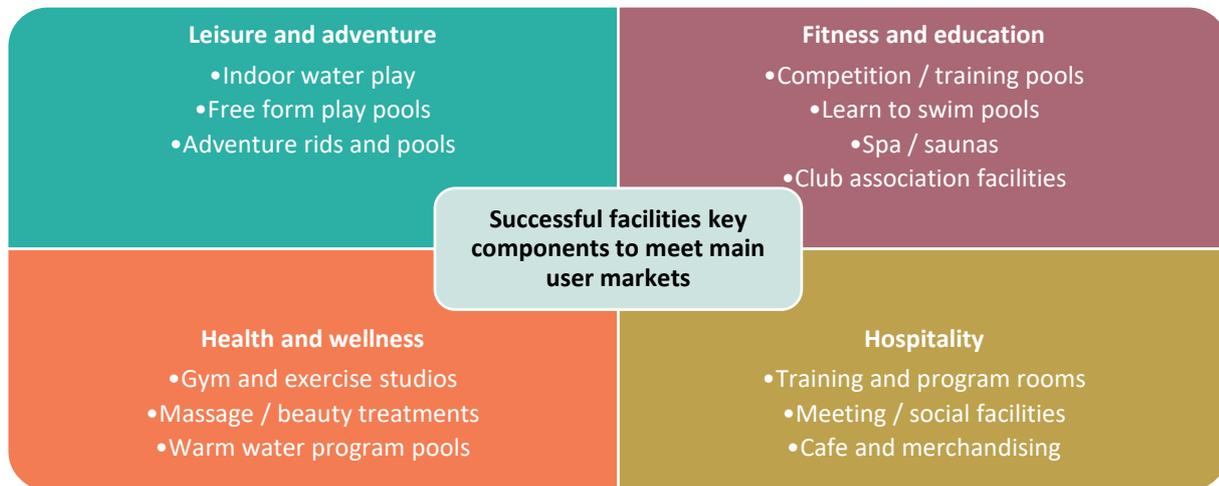


Figure 21: Successful Aquatics and Leisure Facility Model

Detailed planning and comprehensive feasibility studies show targeted user profiles with the majority of aquatics facility market research indicating complexes must equally cater for four distinct aquatics user markets, summarised in the figure below.

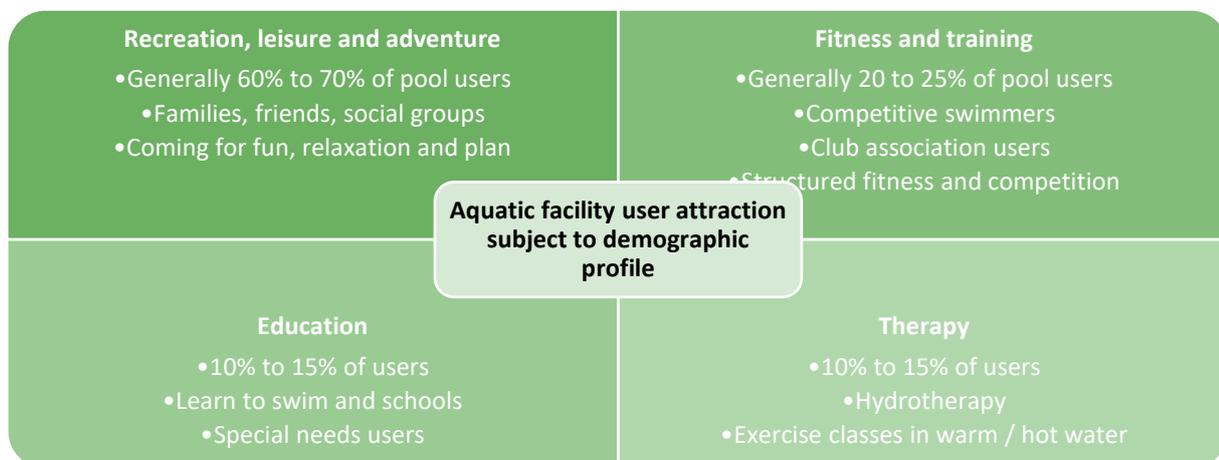


Figure 22: Main Aquatics and Leisure Facility User Markets

Research was completed to understand the user catchments of Hepburn residents who use the two neighbouring indoor aquatic facilities in Ballarat (Regional size facility) and Kyneton (Municipal size facility). The following table captures current member and learn to swim data from both facilities.

Participation data from Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre and Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre

The table below shows the number of Hepburn Shire residents using the Ballarat and Kyneton indoor aquatic facilities, as members or Learn to Swim enrolments.

Table 11: Participation Data - Indoor Facilities Outside Hepburn Shire

Postcode	Birch Ward	Cameron Ward	Coliban Ward	Creswick Ward	Holcombe Ward	Kyneton Members	Ballarat Members	Kyneton LTS	Ballarat LTS
3352				Bullarook, Mollongghip, Sulky, Wattle Flat		0	2	0	2
3363				Creswick, Creswick North, Dean, Langdons Hill		0	77	0	24
3364		Lawrence, Smeaton, Werona, Campbelltown, Kooroocheang		Allendale, Blampied, Kingston, Newlyn, Newlyn North, Bald Hills, Cabbage Tree, Mount Prospect, Rocklyn, Smokeytown, Springmount, Broomfield		0	36	0	6
3370		Clunes, Ullina, Glengower				0	23	0	18
3444			Tylden South			3	0	0	0
3458			Newbury, North Blackwood, Trentham, Little Hampton, Fern Hill			30	1	6	0
3460	Basalt, Daylesford					16	10	3	13
3461	Dry Diggings, Elevated Plains, Franklindford, Hepburn, Hepburn Springs, Korweinguboora, Musk Vale, Porcupine Ridge, Sailors Falls, Sailors Hill, Shepherds Flat, Yandoit, Yandoit Hills, Leonards Hill		Bullarto, Bullarto South, Lyonville, Musk	Eganstown,	Coomoora, Wheatsheaf, Denver, Drummond, Glenlyon, Mount Franklin, Clydesdale, Strangways	20	7	12	17
Total						69	156	21	80

5.4 KEY FINDINGS FROM MARKET RESEARCH ANALYSIS

No aquatics facility in Hepburn Shire provides for a successful integrated aquatics and leisure facilities providing a range of contemporary 'wet' and 'dry' elements that appeal to broader market segments including:

- Leisure and social
- Health and wellness
- Aquatics education and learn to swim
- Therapy and rehabilitation
- Competitive and recreational swimming
- Food/beverage and merchandise services.

Providing equitable access to aquatics and leisure facilities (and other services like health, education, cultural, recreational and other community services) in rural and regional areas is a challenge, particularly in smaller townships. Particularly with the capital and operational costs of aquatics and leisure facilities having risen significantly over the last 10 to 20 years.

Participation data gathered from surrounding indoor aquatics centres in Ballarat and Kyneton shows that 326 Hepburn Shire residents currently use these facilities on a regular basis as members or Learn to Swim enrolments. Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre services 156 members and 80 Learn to Swim participant, with the largest percentage of these users living in the Creswick Ward. Kyneton Aquatic Centre services 69 members and 21 Learn to Swim enrolments, with the largest percentage of these users living in the Coliban Ward.

These factors raise some key questions for Council:

- What is the financial capacity to provide capital funding to future aquatics facility projects?
- What is the impact of funding pool improvements or new on other services and facilities?
- How will we support small township outdoor pools?

6. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

What do residents like or dislike about Hepburn Shire aquatics facilities?

This section summarises the findings from stakeholder interviews, workshops and community surveying undertaken for the project.

A detailed community engagement plan was developed to ensure Hepburn residents had the opportunity to provide input into the development of the Aquatics Strategy. The extensive consultation and engagement included:

- Councillor workshop
- Stakeholder interviews and workshops (9 completed)
- Resident Community Survey (799 responses)
- Pop up sessions in each major township (Approx. 150 residents attended)
- School survey (7 school responses)
- Written submissions (13 submissions).

The following provides a summary of the key issues identified.

6.1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND WORKSHOPS

Councillor Workshop

A workshop was held in April 2021 with Councillors and the Executive Management Team to identify and capture current successes, required improvements and strategic considerations relating to the provision of aquatics facilities within the Hepburn Shire. Key findings are detailed in the figure below.

Benefits of current services / facilities	Required improvements	Strategic considerations and issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities; available in summer months and in each main township (albeit limited in Creswick). Family friendly, safe environment with qualified lifeguards. • Health and wellbeing; recreation, exercise and therapy is catered for in some capacity at existing facilities, providing health and therapeutic benefits. Good social spaces for kids and teenagers, school carnival use. • Success; Creswick Splash Park and 2020/21 free entry. • Community interest; significant lobbying for new indoor facility in Daylesford and Creswick. Use of natural water bodies in Creswick and Daylesford is attractive to some residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity and access; distance and cost of travel, cool climate, lack of ramps and warm water programs are barriers. • Facilities; limited indoor facilities for warm water and learn to swim programs. Clunes needs shade, activation and repairs. • Partnerships; to be enhanced with health sector, Parks Victoria, schools and neighbouring Shires with indoor facilities (Ballarat, Maryborough, Kyneton). • Sustainability; ESD, salt water chlorination and other energy efficient opportunities. Additional income generating opportunities to be explored. • Hepburn Bathhouse; focused on tourism market with limited local access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability; capital and operational budgetary pressures and constraints. • Location; pressure from Daylesford and Creswick for indoor facility. Opportunity to repurpose land at existing sites (i.e Daylesford Outdoor Pool/Town Centre). • Weather; Clunes generally has better weather and has solar heating. Icy roads in Winter discourages early morning and late evening use (particularly near Daylesford). • Hepburn Bathhouse; barriers include price, mixed change rooms and deep water. • Tourism; a new indoor facility has potential as visitor destination.

Figure 23: Feedback from Councillor Briefing Workshop

Staff workshop

An internal staff workshop was conducted in May 2021 to understand the internal sentiment on issues and opportunities with aquatics provision in the Hepburn Shire, with representatives from the following teams in attendance:

- Environmental Health
- Community Care
- OH&S
- Parks and Open Space
- Sustainability
- Information and Communications Technology
- Environment and Waste
- Sport and Active Recreation
- Youth and Disability
- Operations and Facilities
- Events
- Economic Development
- Asset Management.

Key themes captured in the workshop are described in table below.

Table 12: Hepburn Shire Internal Staff Workshop

Theme	Benefits / Successes	Barriers / Challenges
Accessibility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility issues at Daylesford pool deters users. • Lack of lifts, ramps and inclusive signage.
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhouse management has been good in providing local employment. • Junior lifeguard program has been a successful program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resourcing for maintenance. Reactive rather than preventative. • More resourcing required to support the pools. • Training for lifeguards/staff; Child Safe Standards and managing behaviour of youth. • Aquatics Officer resourcing is stretched with other department responsibilities.
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry has been very well received. • Clunes and Trentham pools; high local visitation, using COVID-19 sign in protocol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to learn to swim programs and aquatics activities. • Weather Policy is 21 degrees; closed for many days in the season.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level maintenance for outdoor pools. • Hang out space for youth; enjoy with friends on hot days. • Healthy choices café has been difficult but valuable. • Daylesford pool is great location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature of water is a concern, barrier for primary schools. • Poor quality of changerooms. • No asset management plan. • Lack of data on buildings. • Sustainability Strategy expires 2021. • Lack of indoor facility. • Lack of heating. • Duck waste is a hygiene issue that is difficult to manage. • Introduction of synthetic grass and improved grounds. • Compliance with regulations; water quality, pools need the right equipment.
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community perceptions; tensions between users. • Lack of promotion of pools.

Community Pool Advocacy Groups

Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre (DIAC) Advocacy Group

The DAIC Community Association was formed in 2018 with the purpose to:

- Explore the feasibility of establishing an indoor aquatics centre in the Daylesford/Hepburn Springs region.
- Develop an indoor aquatics centre that is community based and operated.
- Raise funds for the building and ongoing operation of an indoor aquatics centre.

The DAIC Community Association is led by a committee and membership has grown to 400 members in 2021. The Facebook page has received 468 likes. A 0-0-200 philosophy is adopted, which aims for a \$0 net operating loss, zero greenhouse emissions and 200,000 visits annually.

Daylesford has a tourism population market with an average of 800,000 overnight stays annually which is a potential market catchment for the new facility on weekends.

In 2016-17 the DAIC Association negotiated a \$400,000 Community Bank sponsorship pledge. There is flexibility on expenditure and delivery timeframes for this funding.

The DAIC Association have had some contact with local and State MP's, Sport and Recreation Victoria however have not yet met with Federal MP's.

To prioritise a wellness focus, the proposed scope of facilities is similar to the Kyneton Toyota Sports and Aquatic Centre, incorporating:

- 8 lane 25-metre pool at 1.1 metre depth
- Warm water exercise pool
- Water play/splash pad facility
- Small café/merchandise facilities
- Childcare services.

An aquatics centre to this scale would enhance wellness models currently in place and delivered by a local GP. The 'Spring in Your Step' program was developed with some Federal funding, and while it was created to improve cardiac health it has now extended to improve mental health conditions. The 40-50-minute sessions are run twice per week and designed by an exercise physiologist with assistance from a dietician, nutritionist, podiatrist and physiotherapist. The program has a waiting list of 50 people.

In consideration of the above, the following sites have been identified by the DAIC Association as potential opportunities for the development of an indoor aquatics centre:

- Daylesford Secondary College
- Victoria Park
- Daylesford Lawn Tennis Club
- Daylesford Dharma School
- Daylesford Outdoor Pool site
- Daylesford Hospital.

Creswick and District Aquatic Centre Inc. (CDAC) Advocacy Group

The CDAC Inc. was formed in 2012 with the purpose to begin working on the planning and development of an indoor, hydrotherapy and swimming facility for the use of all residents and visitors to the Hepburn Shire. CDAC are registered as a community/charitable organisation and as a registered fundraiser with Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The CDAC is led by a community volunteer committee and membership has grown to approximately 200. The Facebook page has received 517 likes.

Initial interest and fundraising for the project was derived from attendance at local markets, indicating great community support for an aquatics facility in Creswick. CDAC receive ongoing financial support from Bendigo Bank and Creswick Lions, with many local businesses also providing letters of support and donations of goods for fundraising.

Various community consultation phases over time have provided the following feedback:

- Generally speaking, Creswick residents would not travel to a facility in Daylesford.
- Approximately \$10,000 is spent on bus costs in transporting local school students to Ballarat for school swimming lessons.
- A facility is needed for older adults and kids/families.
- Some concerns around rate levy.

CDAC have visited indoor aquatics facilities at Ballarat, Kyneton and Maryborough, and in 2016 developed a concept design which was based on the Belfast Aquatics facility in Port Fairy. With a priority on families and health and wellbeing, the recommended scope includes learn to swim and warm water facilities with an accessible beach entry. While the concept includes a four-lane pool, the CDAC would prefer a six-lane facility with hydro jets.

Council conducted a scoping study process in 2016 to determine sites. RACV Resort was considered, and high-level discussions initiated regarding the potential location of a warm water exercise pool at John Curtin Aged Care Complex. The preferred site was identified as Doug Lindsay Reserve, however due to unfavourable site conditions this has not been supported by Council.

The preferred site is required to be easily accessible and visible from the main street and ideally within walking distance from John Curtin Aged Care Complex, local schools and kindergartens.

CDAC outline concerns regarding Calembeen Park facilities including water quality and E-Coli, and risks associated with no surveillance and glass/debris. Opportunity identified to convert the existing toddlers pool to a splash park. Calembeen Park is considered an intermediate swimming area.

The Creswick Splash Park was created with the conversion of an old bowling green to open park space including BBQ area, skate park, outdoor exercise equipment, pedestrian walking track and the water splash park.

Hepburn Shire Advisory Groups

Disability Advisory Committee

The Disability Advisory Committee work closely with Council to address barriers to access and inclusion issues within the community, and to monitor the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. Representation within the Committee includes eight residents with lived experience of disability ranging from sensory, mental health, neurological, physical and intellectual impairment.

Discussion and feedback captured from the Committee is documented in the following table.

Table 13: Feedback received from Disability Advisory Committee

Discussion points	Feedback / Comments
Current provision of facilities and programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's good • Barriers for accessibility/use • Opportunities for improvement • Community insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locality is ok; schools are located close to facilities. • Free entry has been well received by the community. • Facilities don't work, accessibility issues at all sites. • Appropriate change facilities need to be provided they are in poor condition, very outdated and not accessible. • Cold water is a barrier. Daylesford pool is unusable as hydrotherapy pool. • Travel - Bendigo is 45 mins for access to warm water pool. Hydrosplash program/rehabilitation programs at Ballarat and Kyneton are good. • Project was underway for existing Daylesford site but ceased due to insufficient funding. Included a hoist but only proposed beach entry. Committee supported Council's decision not to proceed. • Creswick splash park has received very positive feedback, great location and safe. • Creswick has better public transport connection. • Hepburn Bathhouse doesn't work for people with disabilities due to poor accessibility.
Future demand - if a new indoor facility was considered then what components are important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for co-design/ co-location with public transport proximity, library, community hub, health services. • Health and wellbeing aspects should be a priority. • A publicly accessible facility for the whole community is needed. • Challenges with operating costs and attracting skilled staff (lifeguards).

Central Highland Rural Health (CHRH)

Two discussions were held with staff from Central Highland Rural Health, with included the Management team and CEO.

The staff are well aware of the community aspiration for an indoor facility. They received regular feedback from the community about the lack of suitable warm water therapy facilities in the Hepburn region. There is some evidence that a hydrotherapy facility would be well used by the ageing population to provide rehabilitation programs, social connection opportunities and a more reliable service than the outdoor pools. The cold climate of Hepburn is a significant barrier for residents to use the outdoor pools. Accessibility of existing facilities is also a major challenge for many residents.

Opportunities for co-location with health services is an opportunity they would genuinely explore. Having a viable allied health presence at a future indoor facility could be challenging as CHRH have problems already attracting qualified staff to the region and there is a high percentage of low socio-economic residents who could not afford private allied health services.

The Daylesford Hospital is currently under review with a Master Plan in the early stages of scoping. Health Planners are currently conducting a site review of the existing Hospital buildings. The CEO confirmed a hydrotherapy facility is unlikely to be included in the Hospital site Master Plan given the high demand for other acute rehabilitation services.

Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) - Grampians Regional Office

An update was provided by the SRV staff on the feasibility study scope and engagement activities. There was some discussion about the evidence and need for an indoor facility within Hepburn Shire to service a growing ageing population. They also understand the importance of accessibility aquatics and learn to swim programming to the local communities.

Discussion about inter municipal linkages with the aquatics facilities network was highlighted by SRV staff and that the Aquatics Strategy needs to consider broader regional planning considerations, including better access and use of existing indoor facilities across the region.

Gender neutral change room and amenities was highlighted, along with Universal Design principles for new and existing aquatics facilities.

They also stated that aquatics facility provision should be linked to Hepburn Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

School Interviews and Online Surveys

School Interviews

Online interview sessions were offered to all school with Hepburn Shire. Only two schools took up the opportunity which were Creswick North Primary School and Daylesford Secondary College. A summary of the discussions follows.

Creswick North Primary School

- A small rural school of 36 students, who expect to grow as the Creswick town population expands.
- They use Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre for annual swimming lessons - which is a 15-20-minute drive each day for two-week intensive program. It's an expensive activity for families to fund.
- They also use the natural water bodies of St Georges Lake for the fishing program and Calembreen Park is used by students' afterschool during summer.
- With no pool in Creswick local kids are forced to travel to Ballarat for swimming programs during and after school.

Daylesford Secondary College

- Further follow up with the school is planned as the interview was interrupted due to COVID matters.

Online School Survey Summary

A total of seven local schools completed the online survey. These schools included Hepburn Primary School, Creswick Primary School, St Michael's Daylesford Primary School, Creswick North Primary School, St Augustine's Creswick Primary School, Newlyn Primary School and Daylesford Primary School.

The following insights have been gathered from the responses:

- Six schools (75% of respondents) currently use Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre for learn to swim programs, school carnivals and fun days.
- One school uses the Daylesford Outdoor Pool for a carnival, one school uses Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre for swimming lessons and one school uses the Swim and Survival Academy in Wendouree for swimming lessons.
- All schools generally use the facilities for 1-2 hours for swimming lessons and fun days, and school carnivals for 4-5 hours.
- Most schools use the aquatics facilities in terms 1 and 4. One school conducts their swimming program in term 3.
- Most schools use bus transport, a combination of large buses and minibuses depending on the school size.
- Most schools travel between 15 - 45 minutes to attend an indoor aquatics facility outside the Shire. One school travels up to 15 minutes to the Daylesford Outdoor Pool.
- All schools rated the indoor aquatics facility they use as good to excellent. They highlighted the quality of staff, access to indoor pools, distance from the school, and the whole is able to attend as the key reason for choosing the facility.
- All school stated they would be more encouraged to use a facility in the Hepburn Shire if it was an indoor heated facility.
- Swimming programs range between \$50 - \$110 per student depending on the length of the program. This cost includes lesson and bus travel costs.

Community Engagement Pop Up Sessions

Community Pop Up sessions were conducted during the survey open period. These sessions provided the communities with an opportunity to meet with the project team to share the feedback. There were approximately 150 residents who participated. Attendees were provided with either hard copy of the community survey or a QR code to enable them to complete the survey online. The following locations were used:

- Daylesford – Farmers Market
- Clunes – outside the IGA store
- Creswick – outside the IGA store
- Trentham – Due to the June 2021 storm event and COVID restrictions delaying the in-person town Pop Up session, two video conference sessions were undertaken.

Key themes emerging from the Pop-Up sessions were:

- Residents highly value the existing aquatics facilities.
- Creswick Splash Park is a popular facility for younger children and families.
- Opening hours of the current pool is limiting some residents from accessing facilities. Earlier openings and morning sessions requested.
- The outdoor pools are important for teenagers to socialise and gather during school holidays.
- Cold water is a barrier for some residents.
- Residents would like to see more programming including events, learn to swim and aquatics exercise classes.
- Interest in an indoor facility within the Shire, however some concerns over Councils financial capacity to afford both the capital and ongoing operational cost.
- Travel distance to pools is a barrier for some residents.
- Free access to the pools has been well accepted and encourages more people to use the pools.
- Accessibility at the outdoor pools is poor.
- More maintenance and upgrades needed at the ageing outdoor pools.

Written Submissions

Council received thirteen written submissions including seven community organisations (Daylesford Rotary Club, Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre Association, Daylesford Football Netball Club, Daylesford Men's Shed, Riding for the Disabled Association Daylesford – (RDA Daylesford), Hepburn Football Netball Club and Daylesford and Hepburn United Soccer Club), one school (Daylesford Primary School) and five resident submissions. The key themes from the feedback provided were as follows:

Indoor Aquatics Facility

- There is strong support for an indoor aquatics facility within Hepburn Shire.
- Any future indoor facility should cater for all age groups and offer learn to swim programs and opportunities for older adults to access warm water facilities.
- It was suggested that an indoor aquatics facility should be located in Daylesford or Hepburn Springs as a central location in the Shire and has the largest population base.
- An indoor aquatics facility with a gym, childcare and other program spaces would be well used.
- The significant tourism market in the region is an opportunity to improve the viability of an indoor aquatics facility.
- An indoor aquatics facility in Daylesford is necessary and long overdue for community.

- An indoor aquatics facility would lead to substantial health benefits across a spectrum of ages from children, youth, middle age and elderly adults.
- An indoor aquatics facility would provide local employment, be a drawcard for future residents and further boost tourism revenue in the region.
- One submission offered financial contributions from community groups and willingness to assist with community fund raising activities to contribute the ongoing operational costs of an indoor aquatics facility.
- The Daylesford community has campaigned for over 20 years for an indoor heated pool and Council needs to demonstrate its commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of their residents through the provision of this important infrastructure.

Access

- The current facilities accessibility challenges were highlighted as a barrier to use.
- The existing outdoor pools are old and inadequate for the needs of many residents.
- Evidence that Hepburn school students are not reaching national swimming and water safety benchmarks.
- The travel distance to Ballarat and Kyneton makes it difficult to bus students regularly for learn to swim programs.

6.2 COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online community survey was undertaken to determine the community's feedback on the current aquatics' provisions across the Hepburn Local Government Area. The survey was open from 14 May 2021 to 23 August 2021. A total of 965 residents started the survey, with 799 fully completing responses. The survey was "live" for a total of 14 weeks, after several extensions were offered to the community due to COVID and Community Pop Up session disruptions. The full survey report is included as Appendix 1.

Survey Respondent Profile and Satisfaction Ratings

The following respondent profile is summarised below:

- Females represented 72% of total responses compared to Males at 25%. 3% of respondents preferred not to specify their gender.
- The largest age cohort who responded to the survey was 40-49 years at 24%, followed by 50-59 years and 60-69 years with both recording 21% of total responses. The 30-39 age group contributed 16% of responses. These four age categories represented 82% of total completed responses.
- The largest survey participation came from Daylesford, Hepburn and Hepburn Springs residents (41%) and Creswick/Creswick North (24%), which is indicative of the larger population bases in these towns.
- A total of 50.06% of respondents had visited a Hepburn Shire aquatics facility in the past 12 months. Of those who visited a Hepburn aquatics facility, Daylesford had the highest response of 57.55% of all respondents.
- Daylesford Outdoor Pool and Calembeen Park Toddlers Pool as facilities had a majority rating of poor. The quality of the pools, change rooms and grounds were the key issues highlighted in the responses. Water temperature was also raised as an issue for many residents.
- The programming across all pools was rated poorly, with Clunes receiving the highest rating of adequate.

- The top five issues of importance for residents were:
 1. Temperature of the water
 2. Range of programs and services offered
 3. Learn to Swim programs
 4. Maintenance
 5. Cleanliness.

Facility Usage Summary

The key findings from the visitation characteristics were:

- Three-quarters of visitors were at the pools for more than 1 hour, with the most common duration 1-1.5 hours.
- Typical visitation times were during normal working hours (9am -5pm), accounting for 91% of all responses. This may be a representation of the typical respondents' characteristics, who were predominately either women in typical parental ages, or those in age cohorts who may be retired or working reduced hours.
- Almost all respondents were travelling from home, by car either on their own or with others, to the Shire pools.
- Frequency of pool usage varied significantly with 54.09% visiting the pool weekly, of which 22.96% visited 2-3 times a week. This also means there are almost as many people visiting less frequently as there are those who visit weekly.

The top four reasons for using the aquatics facilities were relatively consistent:

- Close to them and easy to get to
- Only swimming pool in the area, they are aware of
- Family/friends use it
- Outdoor pool.

Respondents were asked to identify the main activities that they undertook at the pool, with four clear activities emerging across the five sites:

- Cool down from hot weather
- Recreation swimming/fun
- Take child to pool
- Lap swim/ fitness.

Respondents Who Don't Use Hepburn Aquatics Facilities

A total 397 surveys or 50% of total respondent Respondents stated that they hadn't used a Hepburn Shire Aquatics Site in the past 12 months. They were asked to select up to three reasons as to why. The graph on the following page details the most common responses.

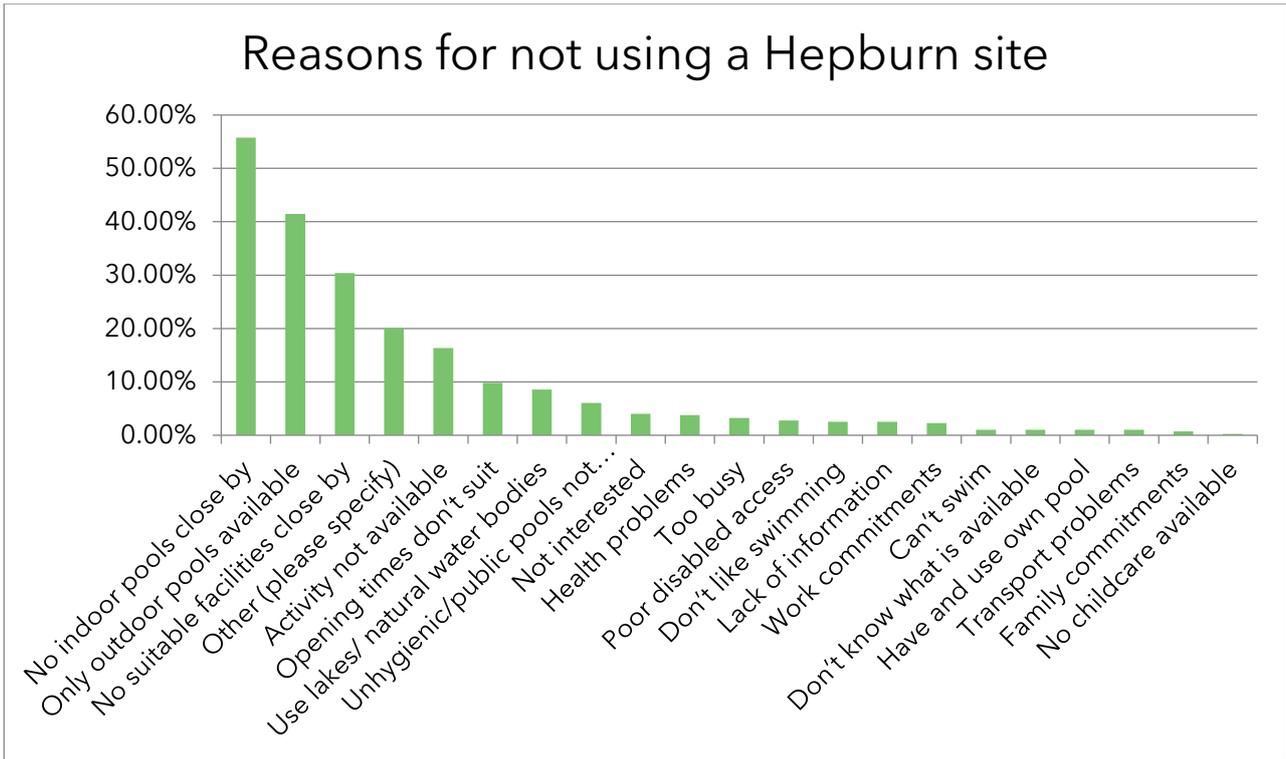


Figure 24: Reasons for not using a Hepburn Shire Aquatics Facility

The most common responses for not using an existing Hepburn Shire facility were:

- Lack of an indoor pool within the Shire.
- Poor access to suitable water temperature, these responses included access to indoor or heated pools.
- The respondent travelled outside the LGA to use other facilities.

Respondents were also asked if they use neighbouring LGA facilities, in particular Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre and Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre, as shown in the following graph.

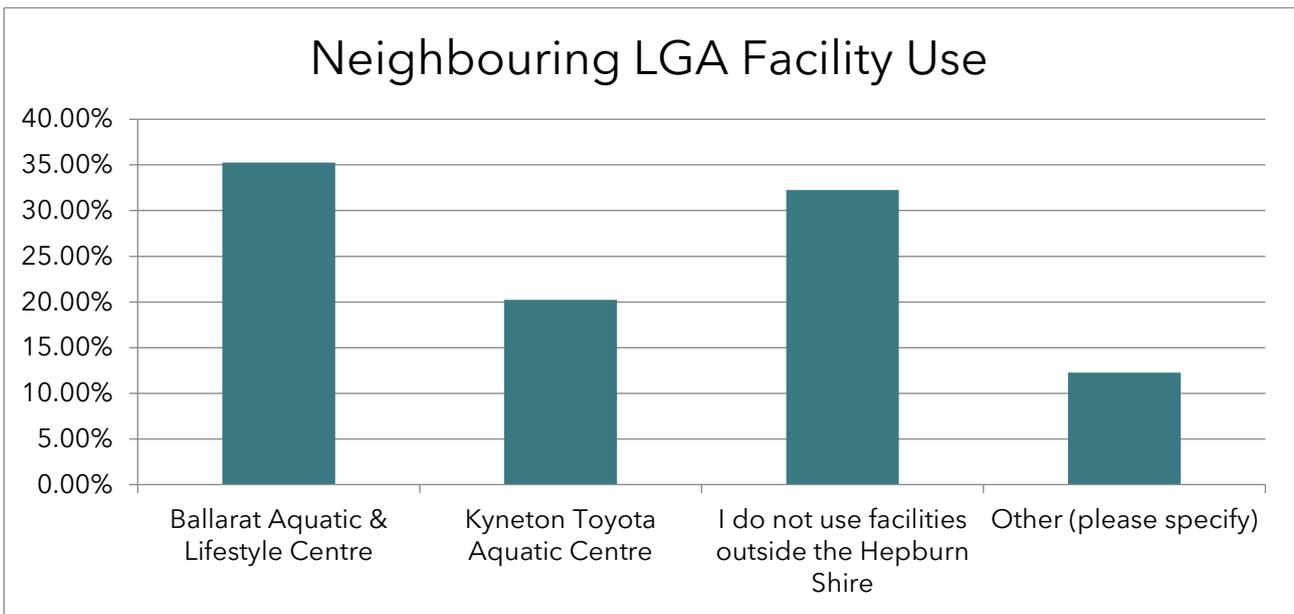


Figure 25: Non-Hepburn Aquatics Centres Use

Those who selected other also identified facilities across Victoria, including Swim and Survive Ballarat, Eureka Pool, and Bendigo Indoor Aquatics Centre.

The respondents who stated that they visit centres outside of the Hepburn Shire were asked to identify why they were visiting these centres. The results indicate the facility offerings were most likely reason to visit a centre.

What Would Encourage Greater Utilisation

Of the 799 respondents who completed the survey, 755 stated that they would like to make greater use of aquatics centres. These respondents were then asked to identify the three facilities or features that would encourage them to use aquatics facilities more. The graph on the following page details the most common facilities and features that would encourage the greater use of aquatics centres.

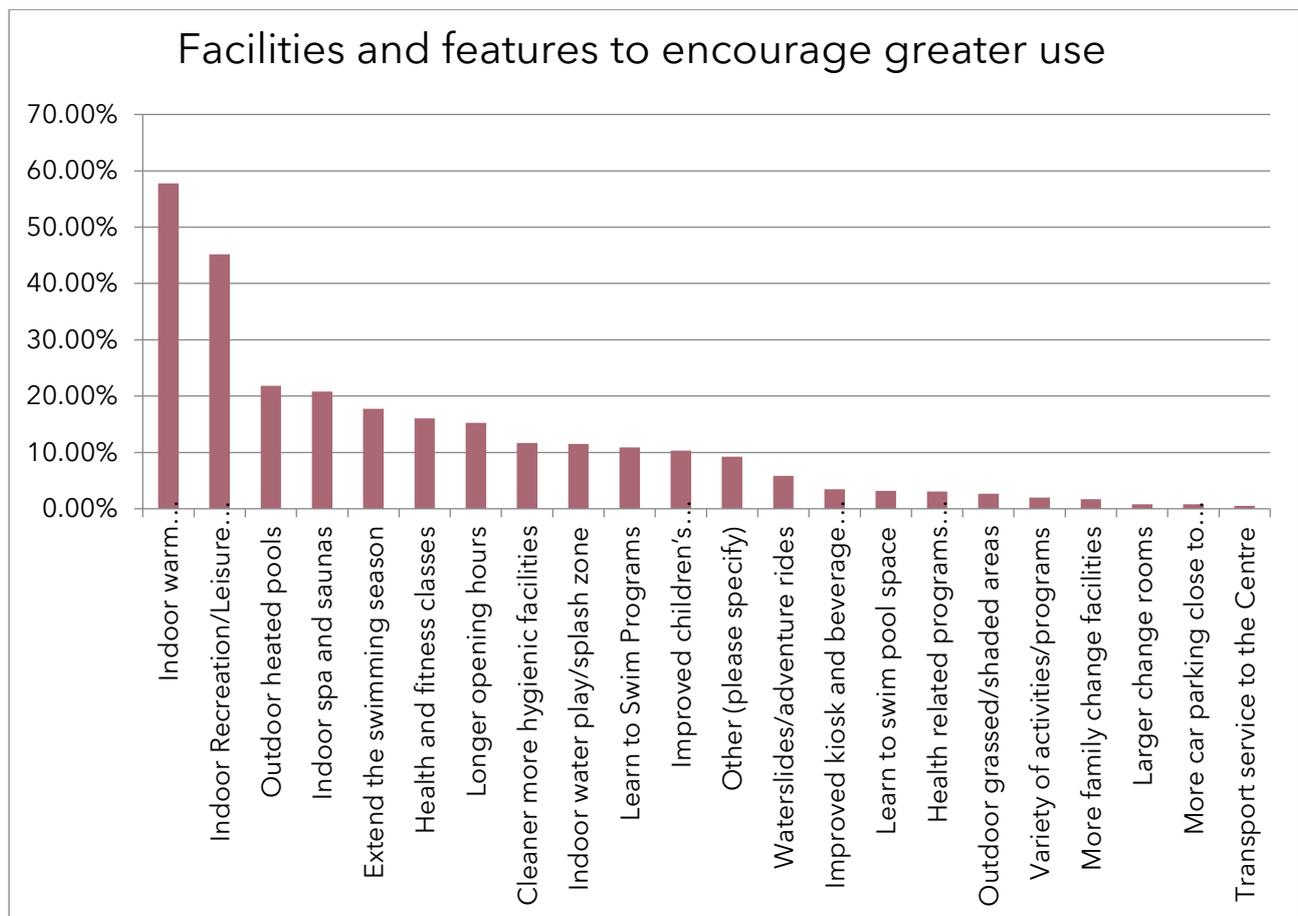


Figure 26: Facilities to encourage greater use

The top three responses from the graph above were:

- Indoor warm water program pool
- Indoor recreation and leisure pools
- Outdoor heated pools.

Additional Comments from Respondents

Respondents were asked to make any additional comments on aquatics facilities in Hepburn Shire. There were 379 comments made and these were categorised into nine themes. The table on the following page details the themes and response rate of the additional comments.

Table 14: Summary of Additional Comments Themes provided by Community Survey Respondents

Theme	Referenced	Response percentage
Heated pool	1. Heated/warm pool or hydrotherapy 2. Either indoor, outdoor or non-specified (if indoor then indoor tag has been applied)	34.04%
Indoor	3. Indoor pool facilities 4. Aquatics centre 5. Includes any reference to extending operating hours and supporting facilities as a result of indoor facility being built.	47.49%
Cost/affordability	6. Capital or operating (effect on rate base) 7. Accessibility; if built or added to existing facilities (i.e., Hepburn Bathhouse, travel costs) 8. Free entry to facilities 9. Fundraising and grants	12.14%
Operations/maintenance	10. On existing facilities 11. Opening hours / season length / scheduling 12. Maintenance and improvements 13. Cold pool temps 14. ESD opportunities to explore	22.69%
Programs/services	15. Learn to swim, aqua classes etc	21.37%
Travel/weather	16. Travel as a barrier 17. Currently travelling to other facilities 18. Cool climate 19. Weather policy	27.18%

These comments followed the theme throughout the survey that the community believed there was a need for improved access to aquatics facilities, in particular heated or indoor pools, to provide increased service capabilities and more access year-round.

6.3 KEY FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is significant interest from key stakeholders and the broader community in the aquatics facilities provision across the Hepburn Shire. The feedback gathered indicates the outdoor pools, although highly valued, are not fit for purpose for many ageing residents, who are a significant proportion of the population with 34% over the age of 60. The other key issue is younger children have limited access to year-round swimming lessons.

An indoor aquatics facility is strongly supported by stakeholders and residents. There are two very active and passionate community advocacy Groups in Daylesford and Creswick that have undertaken significant lobbying, research and preliminary assessments for an indoor facility over the last ten years.

The Community Engagement Survey received significant interest with 799 residents completing the online or hard copy surveys. The majority of responses came from residents in the Daylesford, Hepburn and Hepburn Springs towns (41%) and Creswick/Creswick North areas (24%).

Close to 50% of the survey respondents stated they don't use an existing Hepburn aquatics facility.

The main reasons for not using an existing facility included lack of an indoor facility (56%), the only pools available are outdoor facilities (41%) and no suitable facilities close by (30%). Other factors such as cold-water temperature, lack of suitable programs/activities and unsuitable opening times were also key issues for some residents not using the existing aquatics facilities.

A significant number of respondents use indoor aquatics facilities outside the Shire. They include Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre (35%) and Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre (20%). The key reasons for using these Centres were the availability of indoor pools, warm water program pools and the variety of programs and activities offered.

The future improvements that would encourage greater use of aquatics facilities include provision of an indoor warm water pool, indoor recreation and leisure pools, outdoor heated pools, indoor spas and sauna, extended swimming season, health and fitness classes and longer opening hours.

Of the seven schools that responded to the school survey 75% use the Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre for school carnivals, swimming lesson and fun days. The Daylesford Outdoor Pool is used by one school for a carnival and one school uses Kyneton Toyota Aquatic Centre for swimming lessons. All schools indicated they would use an indoor facility within Hepburn Shire if it were developed in the future. There is support for an indoor heated year-round facility within the Shire.

Council received thirteen written submissions including seven community organisations (Daylesford Rotary Club, Daylesford Indoor Aquatic Centre Association, Daylesford Football Netball Club, Daylesford Men's Shed, Riding for the Disabled Association Daylesford - (RDA Daylesford), Hepburn Football Netball Club and Daylesford and Hepburn United Soccer Club), one school (Daylesford Primary School) and five resident submissions.

All submissions expressed strong support and need for an indoor aquatics facility that is accessible, caters for all ages and abilities, provides access to warm water programs and offers a variety of learn to swim and other aquatics programs year-round.

7. Strategic Directions

The following section summarises the key issues identified through the market research, facilities review and stakeholder engagement stages of the project. Strategic directions will address these issues together with an aquatics facility network approach to meet the identified community needs.

7.1 KEY ISSUES

Aquatics facilities and services support the strategic commitment to healthy and active communities.

Hepburn Shire has a number of strategies that have key objectives to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. These include the Council Plan 2021-2025, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Activate 2020-2030 and the Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2016-2021. A key focus in each of the strategies is providing quality infrastructure that encourages active and healthy lifestyles and social inclusion opportunities.

Current aquatics facilities do not cater for all key user markets

The existing outdoor pools are ageing, and do not cater for the key user markets adequately. A successful aquatics facility should cater for the following four key user markets:

1. Recreation, leisure and adventure (water play, recreational swimming, families, socialising, fun).
2. Fitness and training (training, competitive swimming, swim clubs).
3. Education (Learn to Swim, school swimming lessons and special needs programs).
4. Therapy (hydrotherapy, aqua exercise classes, rehabilitation).

There are also barriers for some of Hepburn's population demographics including older residents and young children who are seeking warmer water for water therapy, aquatics programs, recreational swimming and learn to swim programs. These barriers include cold water temperatures, irregular opening hours due to weather closure policy, poor accessibility compliance and lack of suitable activities and programs.

The natural water bodies scattered throughout the Shire are also frequently used by local residents. The use of some of these areas (particularly Calembreen Park) provide some level of health and safety risk to users. It's important to note that Calembreen Park is Crown land and controlled by the State Government Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP). Hepburn Shire Council has a role as Committee of Management in the day-to-day operation of the site but the liability for risks and health and safety issues is the responsibility of DEWLP.

The feedback gathered from key stakeholders and the community survey support the need for a contemporary indoor warm water program pool to support year-round rehabilitation, water therapy and swimming lessons.

Facility catchment, accessibility and cold climate challenges

Hepburn Shire has some unique characteristics that make it challenging to cater for the changing needs of its townships and communities. The outdoor pools cater for a limited market given they are not contemporary year-round facilities. With an ageing population there is a growing need for greater access to indoor year-round warm water pools with good accessibility features such as ramps and compliant change rooms.

The long travel distances between towns and poor public transport result in the existing facilities being very localised to its user catchments. Determining a potential location for an indoor aquatics centre is

challenging given the population distribution across the Shire. Any future solutions will need to consider how the Hepburn facilities work as a complementary network with other neighbouring shire aquatics facilities.

The cold climate of Hepburn Shire creates some constraints (cold pools and icy roads) for accessing aquatics services. The need for flexible operating hours and warmer outdoor pool water temperatures was highlighted throughout the community engagement activities.

Asset renewal – short to medium term priorities

There are significant asset renewal, compliance and maintenance priorities across the aquatics services offered by Council that will need to be planned for over the next 10 – 20 years. This will be further impacted if Council decides to invest in modern technology solutions for more effective water heating, energy efficiency initiatives and improve accessibility compliance to pools and change rooms.

Council has recently funded the installation of a solar system at each outdoor pool, as a means of increasing the water temperature. The technical audit has identified that the current system is inefficient due to that the volume of water. For solar systems to be effective, a larger surface area is required for the solar panels. The water temperature increase is negligible and has not improved user comfort. An option to improve this would be the installation of electric heat pumps.

Calembeen Park Toddlers Pool and broader lake precinct pose significant health and safety risks to users which need to be addressed in the short to medium term. These risk issues are also highlighted in the Calembeen Park Management Plan 2009.

Management model options review

The management of the outdoor pools has varied over the last 10 – 20 years impacting the usage and operating performance of the facilities. The pools are currently operated by Council, which has increased the operating costs in the last two years due to higher wage rates of the local government award.

The operating deficit has also grown significantly since the introduction of the free entry which removed payment of entry fees for use of the outdoor pools. However, usage has increased dramatically which is a positive outcome in supporting residents' participation in active and healthy lifestyles.

A review of the management model options should be considered. This would include investigating the various models in the market and/or shared services model between other surrounding councils.

Affordability of a new facility – capital and operational costs

The most significant challenge for Council in determining a future indoor aquatics facility is the affordability to build and operate such a facility. This includes the ability to attract sufficient capital funding for a new facility and, more importantly, the ability to sustain the ongoing operational cost.

Opportunities to ensure residents across the Shire can access aquatics services should be considered. This may include bus services or alternate models of provision i.e., supporting learn to swim businesses.

Potential Partnerships

It was evident from the key stakeholder interviews with the regional health providers that future partnership opportunities should be further explored. This could include co-location opportunities, integrated programming and a shared focus on community health and wellbeing alliances.

Opportunities for partnerships with governments, private sector operators, schools, community organisations and commercial businesses should be explored for funding, sustainable management models and shared use/facility location opportunities.

7.2 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above key issues, the vision and objectives of the Hepburn Aquatics Strategy are:

Vision

“Provide access to sustainable, affordable year-round aquatics facilities that brings Hepburn residents together to enjoy health, wellbeing, education and leisure experiences.”

Objectives

- Objective 1:** Access to affordable, accessible and inclusive aquatics facilities that support participation opportunities and key program needs for all, including people with a disability, children, youth and older adults.
- Objective 2:** Existing facilities are well managed and maintained to meet current design and operational industry standards.
- Objective 3:** Facilitate access to a network of complementary facilities that support health and wellbeing outcomes for all, including people with a disability, children, youth and older adults.
- Objective 4:** Future design of facilities will be operationally sustainable and based on contemporary universal and inclusive design principles.

7.3 FACILITY HIERARCHY AND PROVISION

Given the diverse and dispersed characteristics of the Hepburn Shire population, the provision of aquatics facilities will be provided using a network approach. With a small population catchment, providing multiple indoor aquatics facilities within the Shire is not achievable or affordable for Council.

The aquatics provision strategy is a combination of:

- Council owned aquatics facilities including outdoor pools, splash parks and the exploration of one future indoor facility.
- Facilities and services available from the private sector (e.g., swim schools, commercial day spas/bathhouse, private gyms and personal training studios).
- Regional and Sub Regional facilities in adjoining municipalities of Ballarat (Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre), Macedon Ranges (Kyneton Aquatics and Sports Centre) and Central Goldfields (Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre).
- Natural water bodies including lakes, waterholes and mineral springs.

Table 15: Hepburn Shire Aquatics Facility Hierarchy

Service Hierarchy	Population Size	Typical Travel Time to the Facility	Service Level Objective
Local Local rural township catchment population	1,000 - 10,000	0 - 5 mins drive time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a local aquatics experience i.e., pool or water play/leisure water • Usually linked to other community facilities to share management and operation cost
District Major townships centre and district catchment population	10,000 - 40,000	5 - 10 mins drive time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide program pool combined with water play/leisure water • Consider provision of limited dry/gym facilities
Sub Regional Major township centre with highest population area servicing a municipal catchment	40,000 - 70,000	10 - 30 mins drive time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to separate program and leisure water • Larger dry/gym facilities • Additional limited facilities
Regional Regional city catchment population servicing across municipal boundaries	70,000 - 150,000	30 - 45 mins drive time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More extensive program and leisure water • Consideration of indoor 50m pool and complementary warm water pool • Increased gym and program space • Additional complementary amenities, food and beverage

7.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The future development options are based on the following localised trends:

- Need for funding investment to address the operational and technical issues identified via the detailed facility audits of the ageing facilities.
- Opportunity to integrate key facilities and service areas at one location to support year-round access to aquatics facilities to support learn to swim and therapy-based activities.
- New leisure and water play opportunities to continue to support the informal leisure/social/family markets and access to an aquatics experience in small townships.
- Consider opportunities to support indoor health and fitness programs and services.
- Improvements to disability access, amenities, improved shade, more seating and landscaping.
- Maintaining the existing pools is the priority in the immediate to medium term. However, if the cost of these works cannot be afforded over the long term, Council may be forced to close one or more of the existing pools.
- Need to consider the future management arrangements of the facilities to ensure the long-term sustainability of operations.

Based on the above the strategic directions for the Hepburn Aquatics facilities are as follows, noting that further detailed planning work is required to fully understand Council's ability to fund the future development options identified.

7.4.1 Strategic Direction 1: Facility Upgrades - Compliance and OH&S Works

Undertake recommended upgrades identified in Technical Review audits to meet current compliance and OH&S requirements.

The key findings that support this strategy include:

- Ageing assets at all sites that are reaching end of life.
- Management and mitigation of risks identified in the Technical Review Audits.
- Ensure Council meets contemporary OH&S and compliance regulations.

Action Plan: Facility Upgrades - Compliance and OH&S Works

Table 16: Strategic Direction 1 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical review audit at the three outdoor pools.	Short	\$350,000 - \$400,000
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical review audit at the Creswick Splash Park.	Short	\$15,000 - \$20,000
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical review audit at the Calemben Park Toddler Pool.	Short	\$50,000 - \$60,000
Total		\$415,000 - \$480,000

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.2 Strategic Direction 2: Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning

The Aquatics Strategy identifies the need for access to an indoor all year-round aquatics facility to support the needs of Hepburn Shire residents.

Further detailed planning work including feasibility, business case and funding strategy is required to fully understand Council's ability to fund, develop and operate an indoor aquatics facility.

The scope of the detailed investigation should include exploring Aquatics Provision Options, Facility Benchmarking of similar size aquatics facilities within the rural and regional areas, Facility Components, including universal and inclusive design principles, Concept Plan, Capital Cost estimate, Financial Operating Model, Site Assessment, Funding Strategy (Council and External).

The evidence that supports the need is:

- **Hepburn population demographics** - the younger and older demographic profile of the Shire requires access to indoor aquatics facilities to support the key areas of learn to swim programs, therapy, aquatics programs and recreational swimming. The travel and climate conditions make it difficult for some residents to access aquatics services in neighbouring municipalities i.e., Ballarat and Macedon Ranges.
- **Identified Community Need** - extensive feedback from the community engagement process identified a strong need and desire for access to a year-round aquatics facility for learn to swim, therapy, aquatics programs and recreational swimming.
- **Current facilities barriers to participation** - evidence that the existing Hepburn aquatics facilities are underutilised due to ageing infrastructure, cold water temperatures, poor accessibility and facilities are not meeting identified community needs.

Action Plan

Table 17: Strategic Direction 2 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council accept the identified community need for access to a year-round indoor aquatics facility to support the needs of the Hepburn Shire residents.	Short	N/A
That funding be provided in the Council budget for further detailed investigation and the development of a feasibility study/business case that will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatics provision options • Preferred location • Facility components and concept plan • Capital cost estimate • Financial operating model • Funding Strategy 	Short	\$70,000 - \$100,000
Based on the outcome of the feasibility study and business case develop an advocacy plan to seek internal and external funding (state and federal governments) including broader partnership opportunities to support the development of an indoor aquatics centre.	Medium/Long	\$50,000 - \$60,000 (Funding and Advocacy Strategy)
Total		\$120,000 - \$160,000

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.3 Strategic Direction 3: Management and Operation

To ensure the management and operations of the facilities is financially sustainable for Council and aligned to industry trends and compliance requirements, Council will undertake a detailed assessment of the options available and associated costs and benefits for the future management of the facilities. This would include:

- **Inhouse Model**
- **External Contractor**
- **Company Limited by Guarantee**
- **Lease.**

The key findings that support this strategy include:

- The increasing operational cost to Council over time under an in-house management model.
- Challenges in attracting and retaining high quality and qualified aquatics staff.
- The need for contemporary corporate systems and adequate internal expertise in aquatics.

Action Plan: Management and Operation

Table 18: Strategic Direction 3 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council undertake an annual review of the performance of all facilities in meeting key performance measures and progress made on the strategy.	Short	Existing Resources
That Council undertake a Management Model Review to consider the costs, issues and benefits of the various options available.	Short	\$20,000 - \$30,000
That Council determine the most suitable option for the future management of the aquatics facilities and develop an implementation plan.	Short	N/A
Total		\$20,000 - \$30,000

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.4 Strategic Direction 4: Facility Programming and Activation

Undertake a review of the current programming of the outdoor pools. Develop and implement new programming and activation opportunities across the outdoor pools to encourage greater participation outcomes. This may include more regular aquatics programs, special events, family fun days, community partnership activities and promotions, themed activity days and increased school use.

The key findings that support this strategy include:

- Significant community feedback for more programs and activities to be offered over summer at the outdoor pools.
- Maximise the free entry to all outdoor pools to increase community use and participation.
- Create more vibrant facilities and increase participation through innovative programming and activities.

Action Plan - Facility Programming and Activation

Table 19: Strategic Direction 4 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council undertake a review of the aquatics programming schedule for each outdoor pool.	Short	Existing Resources
That Council review the weather policy to enable greater access to the outdoor pools.	Short	Existing Resources
That Council develop and implement a programming and activation plan for each outdoor pool.	Short	\$10,000 - \$20,000
That Council undertake an annual review of the programs and seek community feedback for improvements via the annual outdoor pool survey.	Short/Medium	N/A
Total		\$10,000 - \$20,000

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.5 Strategic Direction 5: Asset Management Plan

To ensure the aquatics facilities are maintained in accordance with industry standards, Council will implement an Aquatics Facilities Asset Management Plan and site-specific maintenance plans for all aquatics facilities in line with Technical Assessments.

Action Plan: Asset Management Plan

Table 20: Strategic Direction 5 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council implements an Aquatics Facilities Asset Management Plan and maintenance plans for all aquatics facilities in line with Technical Assessments prepared; and align Council's operational and renewal budgets.	Short	\$30,000 - \$40,000 (if outsourced)
Total		\$30,000 - \$40,000 (if outsourced)

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.6 Strategic Direction 6: Outdoor Pool Upgrades

Further investigate identified upgrade options to the three outdoor pools in Daylesford, Clunes and Trentham. This includes the provision of warmer water, amenities, plant rooms and associated infrastructure.

Investment in outdoor pool upgrades will be subject to the prioritisation of the implementation plan. The priorities will be assessed each year in line with the Council budget process and external funding opportunities.

The key findings that support this strategy include:

- The current outdoor pools are highly regarded by the local community as important community facilities for all ages.
- The need for warm water temperature for patrons, which was consistent feedback from the community.
- The need to improve the accessibility, functionality and usage of the existing outdoor pools to cater for broader user markets.

Action Plan: Outdoor Pool Upgrades

Table 21: Strategic Direction 6 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council undertake a cost benefit analysis of installing electric heat pumps to replace the ineffective solar heating system, to increase the water temperature for bather comfort.	Short	\$20,000 - \$30,000 (Cost Benefit Analysis Report) \$1.8M - \$2.2M (Heat pump and plant room installation)
That Council develop an asset management plan and provides the required funding in the Capital Works program for the replacement, upgrade or renewal of facility infrastructure as it reaches end of life. This includes change rooms, shelters, seating and plant room equipment.	Short/Medium	\$1.5M - \$2.5M (Asset renewal/upgrades)
Total		\$3.32M - \$4.73M

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.7 Strategic Direction 7: Water Play Upgrades

Develop concept plans and cost estimates for the addition of water play facilities at the three outdoor pools to cater for the growing expectations of different aquatics experiences for families and children. This should include consideration of the enhancement of features at the Creswick Splash Park and further investigation and exploration of the identified replacement options for Calembreen Toddlers Pool to ensure compliance with industry guidelines.

Investment in water play upgrades will be subject to the prioritisation of the implementation plan. The priorities will be assessed each year in line with the Council budget process and external funding opportunities.

The key findings that support this strategy include:

- The current outdoor pools are ageing and lack contemporary water play facilities for families and children.
- Creswick Splash Park is a popular destination for families which will require renewal in the future.
- The current Calembreen Toddlers Pool is an ageing asset reaching end of life. It also does not comply with current Royal Life Saving Society Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation.

Action Plan: Waterplay Upgrades

Table 22: Strategic Direction 7 Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Timing	Indicative Cost Range
That Council further investigate water play options and costs for the outdoor pool sites to enhance the facilities for families and children and attract higher participation.	Short/Medium	Existing Resources
Consideration of feasibility and concept plans for water play and toddler zone to replace the ageing toddler pool infrastructure at the outdoor pool sites.	Medium	\$40,000 - \$50,000 (Feasibility and Concept Plans) \$1.8M - \$2.2M (New waterplay and plant rooms)
That Council upgrade or renew infrastructure as it reaches end of life at Creswick Splash Park. This includes Splash Park features, shelters, seating and plant room equipment.	Medium/Long	\$150,000 - \$250,000
That Council investigate and explore options for water play experiences at Calembreen Park to ensure a low-risk environment for toddlers and children.	Short/Medium	\$10,000 - \$20,000 (Scoping Study)
Total		\$2M - \$2.52M

Note Timeline Scale: Short Term 1 - 3 years, Medium Term 4 - 7 years and Long Term 8 - 10 years

7.4.8 Strategic Recommendations Indicative Cost Summary

The table below provides a high-level summary of the total indicative cost range estimates for the Strategic Recommendations Actions outlined on the previous pages.

Table 23: Strategic Recommendations Cost Indicative Range Summary

Strategic Recommendation	Indicative Cost Range
7.4.1 Facility Upgrades - Compliance and OH&S Works	\$415,000 - \$480,000 *
7.4.2 Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning	\$120,000 - \$160,000 *
7.4.3 Management and Operation	\$20,000 - \$30,000 *
7.4.4 Facility Programming and Activation	\$10,000 - \$20,000 *
7.4.5 Asset Management Plan	\$30,000 - \$40,000 *
7.4.6 Outdoor Pool Upgrades	\$3,320,000 - \$4,730,000 *
7.4.7 Waterplay Upgrades	\$2,000,000 - \$2,520,000 *
Total Indicative Cost Range	\$5,915,000 - \$7,980,000 *

*Note: Indicative costs only - estimates are likely change over time subject to timing of delivery, cost escalation, CPI and final scope of works for each project. The figures exclude contingencies and project management fees.

Funding the implementation of the Strategic Directions Recommendations and Actions would be subject to achieving funding as part of future Council budgeting processes and seeking external partner funding opportunities where applicable.

The further work undertaken as part of Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning mentioned in Table 17 will identify the capital and operating costs associated with an Indoor Aquatics Facility. This will need to be further considered by Council at the appropriate time.

The high order indicative costs associated with implementing the actions arising from the Strategic Directions and Actions outlined in the strategy are estimated to be \$5.9M - \$7.98M. This includes Facility upgrades compliance and OH&S works, Management and Operation, Facility Programming and Activation, Asset Management Plan, Outdoor pool and Waterplay Upgrades and further Indoor Aquatics Facility Planning.

The Strategic Direction Recommendations and Actions arising from the Aquatics Strategy are not currently included in Council's long term financial plan and would require significant external funding.

8. Warranties and Disclaimers



The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their own experience to the task, they have relied upon information supplied to them by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence' and as such these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

There will be differences between projected and actual results because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm, underwrite or guarantee the achievability of the projections as it is not possible to substantiate assumptions which are based on future events.

Accordingly, neither Otium Planning Group, nor any member or employee of Otium Planning Group, undertakes responsibility arising in any way whatsoever to any persons other than client in respect of this report, for any errors or omissions herein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

PO Box 21 Daylesford 3460
P: 03 5348 2306

shire@hepburn.vic.gov.au
www.hepburn.vic.gov.au
 www.facebook.com/hepburncouncil

DAYLESFORD

Cnr. Duke & Albert Streets,
Daylesford
8:30am – 5:00pm

CRESWICK

Creswick Hub
68 Albert Street, Creswick
8:30am – 5:00pm

TRENTHAM

13 Albert Street, Trentham
Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-5pm
Sat 10am-1pm

CLUNES

The Warehouse – Clunes
36 Fraser Street, Clunes
Mon & Thurs 10am – 6pm
Wed & Fri 10am – 4pm

Prepared by Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd
304/91 Murphy Street Richmond VIC 3121
ABN: 30 605 962 169 Phone: (03) 9698 7300
Email: info@otiumplanning.com.au
Web: www.otiumplanning.com.au

Local Office:
Contact: Kate Maddock,
Managing Director
Phone: 0419 316 540
kate@otiumplanning.com.au


OTIUM
Planning group
SPORT + LEISURE

Appendix 1: Community Survey Results

