

E.5 Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy

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| File No: | CM15/29 |
| Department: | Sustainable Development and Growth |
| Council Plan Strategic Objective: | Sustainable Development & Growth |
| | Our built environment complements our landscape, lifestyle and climate. |

Previous Items: J.15 Provision of Aquatic Facilities - Council - 27 July 2011
 SR8/13 - Development of Aquatic Facilities in Bass Coast Shire - Council - 19 June 2013
 2/13 - 132/13 Provision of Aquatic Facilities in Bass Coast Shire - Council - 18 September 2013
 SR7/14 - Aquatic Facilities Viability Feasibility Study - Council - 21 May 2014

Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The provision of adequate built leisure facilities that include aquatic play, swimming and fitness components is an essential element in the community's social fabric and contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of residents who use these facilities. Aquatic facilities require significant capital investment and financial operational subsidy support as facility development needs to be a 40 year plus decision. Detailed planning enables facilities to meet the needs of all the user groups now and into the future.

The draft Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy (Aquatic Strategy) will assist in making aquatic facility development priority and staging decisions. It will also form part of a future business case for aquatic facility development submissions to Sport and Recreation Victoria for a range of funding support over the term of the Strategy. It sets out Council's planned approach which includes a sequence of development for aquatic facilities within the municipality.

Background

The draft Aquatic Strategy is intended to provide Council with direction for the provision of aquatic facilities for a period of 10 years. It reviews current use, considers population growth and the likely demand so that Council can respond to and meets the needs of its current and future community.

Over the past four years a number of reports have been presented to Council in regard to aquatic facility development. A summary is provided of these below:

- I. 27 July 2011. The report focused on:
 - The size of the pool needed for the Wonthaggi Aquatic Centre
 - A staged approach for redevelopment
 - Community consultation regarding the design

- Accurate costing of stages, the financial impact and external funding options
2. 19 June 2013. This report included:
 - Renaming the Wonthaggi Aquatic Centre as Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre
 - Detailed design and staging for redevelopment of Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre
 - The main pool to be 25 metres by 10 lanes
 - Investigate short term options for Phillip Island
 - Establish working group for the development of Phillip Island Aquatic Centre
 3. 18 September 2013. The report included:
 - Financial viability of operating two aquatic centres
 - Sample survey of willingness to fund through increased general rates, special rates or special charges
 4. 21 May 2014. A summary of the issues included:
 - Council committing to development of an aquatic centre on Phillip Island
 - Further planning for a Phillip Island Aquatic Centre be undertaken
 - Commit to the redevelopment of Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre and that the design include a staged development
 - The first stage development for the BCALC be a 25 metre by 10 lane pool
 - Funding for aquatic facilities be included for consideration in the long term financial plan

Draft Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy

The draft Aquatic Strategy acknowledges the commitment Council has to the development of two aquatic centres in Bass Coast and presents the background for the development of each centre. It gives a sequence of tasks required for the development of each facility.

A summary of the situation for each facility is set out below:

Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre

Currently Bass Coast has one aquatic facility to cater for all residents within the municipality. The Centre was built in 1979 and is in need of redevelopment.

A report titled "Structural Review Wonthaggi Indoor 25 Metre Pool" by Brown Smart Consulting in March 2013 noted

"That the pool is of unsuitable design by modern standards and has only a limited remaining life expectancy In our opinion... the pool (is likely to be) unserviceable within the next 10 years, perhaps less".

In addition a recent Health Assessment audit of the facility was completed and has identified a range of items which will need to be addressed. The audit carried out by Environmental Health Officers listed a number of items needing attention from a health viewpoint. These included tiling, painting and floor replacement in the change rooms and are listed in the maintenance items below.

Maintenance required and identified for the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre this year and over the next twelve months includes:

- Repairs to fix a major water leak resulting in additional water charges (completed)
- Rusted ventilation (to be addressed)
- Tiling throughout male shower areas (to be addressed)
- Painting – substantial change rooms and pool deck works. (to be addressed)
- Cracking in brick work (to be addressed)
- Plant room repairs (to be addressed)
- Change room roof replacement (to be addressed)
- Change room floor replacement (to be addressed necessitating close down)
- Change room seating replacement (to be addressed)
- Weather proofing seals to external doors (to be addressed)
- Repair to rusted wall sections in change areas (to be addressed)

The total cost of these works is estimated around \$100,000. This is in addition to an annual maintenance expenditure of over \$80,000 which is anticipated to continue or increase over the next five years. Some disruption to the service from time to time may also be necessary resulting in a loss of income.

Feasibility studies into the redevelopment of the centre have been carried out in 1999 and in 2011. The feasibility study in 2011 identified a range of additional facility components and programs were needed including:

- Increased space for lap swimming, warm water, Aquatic Education and children's water play
- Improved centre Amenities particularly new change rooms and toilets
- The addition of a crèche and café services
- An expanded health club and dedicated group fitness area
- The addition of health and well-being programs and spin classes.

In June 2013 Council received a report on aquatic facility provision in Bass Coast and resolved to:

“Proceed with the detailed design for the aquatic facilities at the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre paying particular attention to how the facility would be staged and funded over a number of years”.

Over the past twelve months concept design options have been developed and the plans refined. Community consultation was undertaken from September to November 2014.

The features of the concept plan for the redevelopment of the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre include:

- Main pool hall 25 metre 10 lane pool with ramp entry 1.1 metre to 1.8 metre
- Warm water pool with ramp entry
- Splash pad water play area
- Change rooms
- Family and Group change areas
- 'Changing Places' Change rooms
- Café
- Crèche
- First aid

The draft Aquatic Strategy recommends some amendments aimed at improving the financial viability through the redevelopment of the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre. These amendments are outlined in the section "Amendments to Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre".

Phillip Island Aquatic Centre

Over the last twenty years the proposal for the development of an aquatic facility on Phillip Island has been strongly advocated by the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund.

Separately the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Incorporated has raised funds and campaigned for the development of an Aquatic Centre on Phillip Island. The group had arranged for concept plans to be prepared showing an aquatic centre as an extension to the Phillip Island Leisure Centre at Cowes Recreation Reserve.

On 21 May 2014 Council committed to the development of an aquatic centre on Phillip Island, resolving to:

- I. Commit to providing an aquatic centre on Phillip Island subject to the following:
 - Undertaking further work to determine the suitable location for the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre.
 - Undertaking further work to determine the most appropriate first stage of construction of the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre by June 2015.
 - Continues to meet with the Phillip Island Working Group on a quarterly basis.
 - Council funding required to determine the most appropriate first stage, and design for construction of this first stage, is considered as part of the 2015/2016 budget.

- Funding is obtained to the value of at least 50% of the cost of the first stage of construction through community fundraising and/or government grants. Community fundraising must take the form of cash funds.
- Further stages of development of the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre will require the community to achieve a fund raising target equivalent to 50% of the cost of the project. Community fundraising must take the form of cash funds.

The Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund engaged consultants 'Sport and Leisure Solutions' in 2010 to complete a feasibility study for the development of a centre for Phillip Island.

The draft Aquatic Strategy noted the key findings from the "Sport and Leisure Solutions Feasibility study 2010". These findings were:

"Community demand

- *There is a high level of community demand and need for an aquatic facility on Phillip Island.*
- *There are high levels of dissatisfaction with the current aquatic provision within Bass Coast Shire.*
- *The development of an aquatic facility on Phillip Island would result in a significant increase in aquatic related health and fitness activities.*

The key reasons for developing an aquatic centre on Phillip Island include:-

- *The continued growth of the local population.*
- *The aging population and the need for passive, low impact exercise opportunities such as hydrotherapy.*
- *Health related issues and the need for non-weight bearing activity options and programs.*
- *The significant health and fitness benefits that will be derived by the community.*
- *Current inadequacies of Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre in terms of lane availability and program range.*
- *The requirement to travel to Wonthaggi is a significant barrier in terms of travel time and fuel cost.*
- *The contribution the facility will make to the sense of community and the capacity to develop a community hub for Phillip Island."*

The draft Aquatic Strategy also notes the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund in October 2014 developed a concept plans for an aquatic centre as an extension to the Phillip Island Leisure located at the Cowes Recreation Reserve. This concept incorporated the following:

- New indoor 25 Metre pool
- Multi-purpose warm water program pool with learn to swim and water play area
- New Indoor Sports Court
- New linking foyer and amenities

Key Findings from the Aquatic Strategy

The draft Aquatic Strategy outlines the potential future development of aquatic facilities for Bass Coast. It is based on the need for a planned sequential development of aquatic facilities to meet the community need and to consider the most viable operation of the facilities.

The draft Aquatic Strategy reviews and considers the previous reports and notes the decisions Council has made in regard to the intended future provision for aquatics within Bass Coast and then considers key factors which will influence aquatic facility development.

The draft Aquatic Strategy outlines the following three aspects need to be considered in the development of aquatic facilities.

1. Population profile

The draft Aquatic Strategy also reviewed the population and trends. Some of the findings in the Strategy are:

- the Shire's population median age is 46 years , which is significant as it is 5 years above the Regional Victorian Average (41 years) and 9 years above Victoria's average (37 years). This indicates facility components to meet older adult requirements such as hotter water, gentle exercise areas and spas and saunas should be a priority at each facility.
- In 2011 the median household income in BCSC was \$855 which was much lower than Regional Victoria at \$945 and Victoria \$1,216. This indicates many users of future aquatic facilities will be impacted by the cost of the service.
- Future population trends indicate that the population is expected to increase by more than 15,000 people over the next 20 years.
- The strategy notes *“that based on the future facility redevelopment and development concepts note the likely catchment population zones for each facility/location (excluding tourist and day visitor impacts) are estimated as likely to be:*

| Aquatic Centre Location | Catchment size 2011 | Catchment size 2031 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre | 19,211 | 27,500 |
| Phillip Island Aquatic Centre | 10,446 | 17,500 |

(Catchment based on approximately 30 minutes driving time from each centre)

2. Key leisure trends need to be considered including:

- A gradual ageing of the population – This places a new demand on providing programmed hotter water areas as well as pools suitable for therapy and older adult exercises. It is essential to have a range of pools with different water depths and temperatures
- Flexibility in the times people recreate – People are seeking recreation at different times over a broad spread of hours at facilities that offer a lot of activities under the one roof.

- High standard quality facilities – People are looking for high standard, high quality and services to meet their recreation and leisure needs.
- Activities need to be affordable – The development of multi-purpose aquatic leisure centres has enabled the high operating cost activity (in many cases) to be catered for in public aquatic and leisure facilities.
- Strong links between active and healthy lifestyles – preventative health care and active lifestyles are very important to many people’s health. Aquatic and fitness activities are becoming a large part of people’s activity choices

3. Features of Successful Aquatic facilities

The strategy also highlights the aspects of “Successful Aquatic Facility Model” and notes that:

“Traditionally many local authority aquatic leisure facilities were built for specialist or limited market users (i.e. competitive swimmers or high level sport participants). Detailed planning and comprehensive feasibility studies now are able to show more targeted user profiles”.

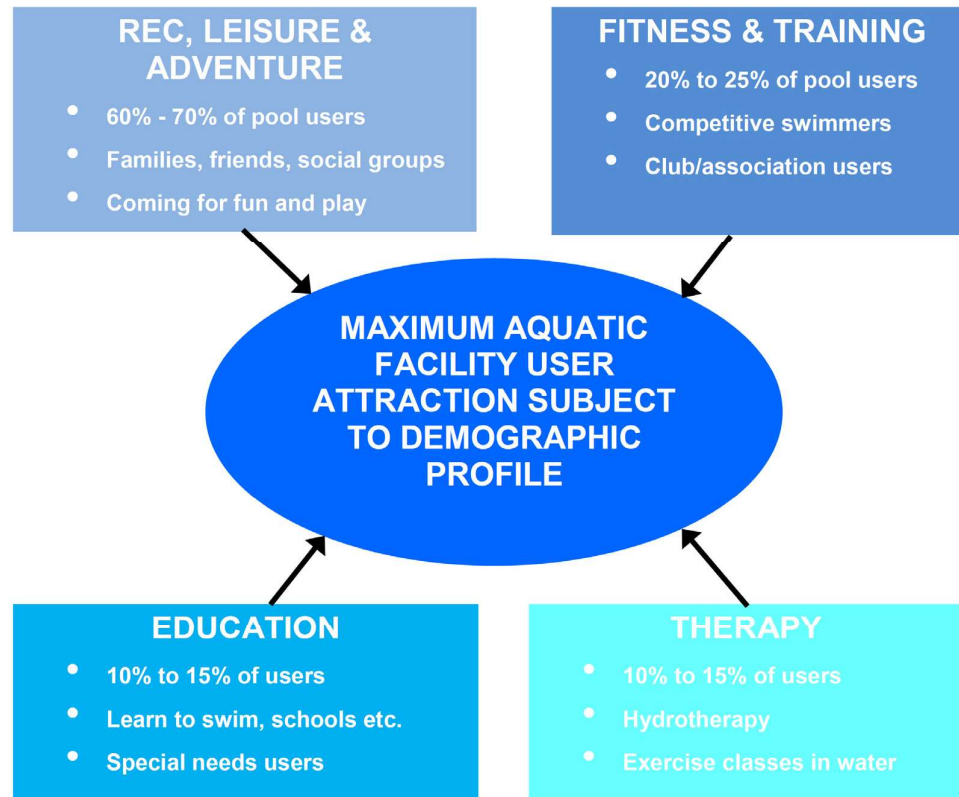
The most successful aquatic facilities provide a broad range of different activity areas to cater for maximum user markets. A review of the successful centres indicates that these centres record:

- High visits per square metre
- High expense recovery ability including capital repayment
- High operating profits per visit
- Excellent program range returns and attendances
- High secondary spend returns
- Excellent range of attendance types (adult/child ratio)
- Draws users from a large catchment area
- High revenue returns from health and fitness

The most successful aquatic facilities provide a broad range of different activity areas to cater for maximum user markets and the whole community.

The majority of aquatic facility market research indicates future complexes must equally cater for distinct aquatic user markets as listed in the graphic below:

Main Aquatic Leisure Facility User Markets



Amendments to the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre Redevelopment plans.

The draft Aquatic Strategy provides a review of the Bass Coast Aquatic Centre redevelopment plans.

A review of the features and staging of the redevelopment of Bass coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Table 3.7 in the draft Aquatic Strategy recommends the proposed stages one and two of the Bass Coast Aquatic Centre redevelopment need to be done together. The following amendments and staging are recommended in the draft Aquatic Strategy:

- The main pool be 25 metres by 8 lanes
- The warm water/learn to swim program pool be increased to 20 x 15 metres
- The water play and toddlers pool is a high priority activity
- All aquatic components should be built in stage one otherwise there will be a major negative business impact if done as a second stage.
- Increase the storage areas

In the case of the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre redevelopment the warm water/learn to swim Program pool has the greatest capacity to increase aquatic revenue. There would be major negative business impact if it was done as part of stage two. Similarly the water play and toddlers pool should be in stage one otherwise there will be no shallow water for infants and small children. A Spa and Sauna should be considered as it is a high income activity that links well to the warm water pool.

These amendments are being included in the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre concept plan which is under development and is anticipated to be considered by Council at the July 2015 meeting.

Strategic Basis

- The Council Plan 2013 – 2017 included two strategies which relate to the development of aquatic facilities:
 - Provide infrastructure and facilities that are well managed, environmentally sustainable and are suitable for the community's needs.
 - Improve the opportunity to enjoy our recreational facilities and open space.
- Council's Bass Coast Municipal Recreation Plan 2009-2014:
 - Key Objective 5: Enhance water based recreation opportunity and safety
 - Policy Statement: Develop Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre as the regional facility for the whole of the Shire
 - Key Action 4.5.1: Upgrade the current indoor aquatic facilities at Wonthaggi as the Shire's regional township
 - Task: Revise the design and costing for the redevelopment of the Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

Finances

The commitment by Council to the development of two aquatic centres has significant financial implications. The estimated cost for the redevelopment of Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre is \$16 million for the aquatic components, a further \$3.2 million for the development of the Health and Fitness components and further funds will need to be allocated for the development of indoor courts.

In the report into the 'Feasibility Study for the Viability of Two Aquatic Centres in Bass Coast' the estimated cost for the development of an aquatic centre on Phillip Island was \$10.8 million.

Securing Bass Coast's Future - Long Term Financial Plan 2015-2025 does not include any major aquatic facility development before 2020. However the ongoing maintenance at the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre is expected to continue rising due to the age of the infrastructure.

The draft Aquatic Strategy notes that it is important to ensure the financial viability of any aquatic facility that is developed. Future aquatic facilities need to be designed to include components that appeal to a broad range of users across all ages, genders and cultural groupings.

Aquatic facilities need to include components that:

- Provide a mix of shallow leisure/recreation water with programmable water areas
- Provide high revenue generating complementary service areas such as spas, saunas and food and beverage services
- Are located in a high traffic/visitation area
- Are located as part of other leisure facility component development
- Located at high use locations close to shopping centres or school or main transport access

The draft Aquatic Strategy notes

“Currently the proposed staging plans for the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre Redevelopment would have significant financial impact on the centre operations as development of only a deep water lap pool in stage one would impact on the highest revenue sources – learn to swim, older adult programs and recreational swimming”.

The changes recommended by the draft Aquatic Strategy will be incorporated in the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre redevelopment design should Council adopt it.

Statutory Requirements/Codes/Standards/Policies

The development or re-development of any aquatic facilities will be required to meet current building standards, codes and guidelines as applicable to the aquatic industry.

Other Options

Council has two options;

1. To adopt the Aquatic Strategy.

This is the preferred option and will provide Council with a robust framework to undertake future development of aquatic centers in Bass Coast Shire. This will enable Council to leverage funding when it becomes available.

2. Not to adopt the Aquatic Strategy.

This would result in the need to make decisions on individual centres without recognition of the impact for the community if more than one centre is to be developed. It would also compromise any application to Sport and Recreation Victoria for funding due to a lack of a clear priority location for the development of aquatic facilities. Since there are two areas within Bass Coast where the community has strongly expressed a desire for the development of aquatic facilities Council needs to have a strategy to complement funding applications.

Officer’s Conclusion and Recommendation

The draft Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy has significant social implications. The provision of adequate built leisure facilities that include aquatic play, swimming and fitness components is an essential element in the community’s social fabric and contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of residents who use these facilities.

Council's commitment to the development of two aquatic centres for Bass Coast has seen the development of the design for the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre proceed to final concept stage. The next stage of financial modelling/business based on the final design needs to be completed.

The progression of the Phillip Island Aquatic Working Group to the assessment of potential sites for Phillip Island will enable the next stage of the development of a concept plan and financial modelling for the centre to be undertaken.

The draft Aquatic Strategy is an important supporting document to complement grant applications to external funding bodies e.g. Sport and Recreation Victoria for major funding for aquatic centre development. For Councils where there is more than one aquatic facility or there is a desire or an intention to establish more than one aquatic facility an adopted aquatic strategy provides a clear indication of Council's future aquatic development schedule. The strategy will need to be reviewed annually and updated when appropriate to reflect the current situation.

In terms of the proposed development of the two aquatic projects in Bass Coast, the planning for both is progressing.

Plans for the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre are further advanced through the various studies and reports presented and the engagement of M L Design to prepare the design for the redevelopment. It is anticipated the final concept plan will be presented for Council's consideration at the July 2015 meeting. Once a concept plan is adopted some further work will be needed to develop the financial modelling /business case for the centre.

The development of concept plans for an aquatic centre on Phillip Island can be undertaken once the site selection process has been completed. This has been budgeted for in the 2015/16 Council Budget. The draft Aquatic Strategy provides a matrix to be used for site selection. Following this the development of concept plans and financial modelling/ business case can be prepared.

These steps when completed will then give Council two planned aquatic facilities ready for submission of applications when funding opportunities are identified or presented.

Through the concept plan and financial modelling process the key features of each centre need to be clearly identified. Each centre needs to have a point of difference and this point of difference will also be a key factor for inclusion in funding submissions.

The Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre has the larger catchment and is the aquatic centre which will provide the broadest range of aquatic, health and fitness programs. It also functions as the regional facility within Bass Coast and is the project with the greatest benefit to a larger number of residents. The centre is also in need of significant maintenance and in the Brown Consulting Report 2013 "Structural Review of Wonthaggi Indoor Pool" advises "*the pool will become unserviceable within 10 years*".

The draft Aquatic Strategy identifies the stage I redevelopment of the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre to be the first priority for aquatic centre development. However funding opportunities may be more favourable for one particular proposal than the other due to the conditions or the specific goal of the funding stream. With both projects prepared and ready for detailed design Council would be in a position to prepare funding applications for either project.

In summary the draft Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015 – 2024 sets out Council's commitment to the development of two aquatic centres. Concept plans and financial modelling for each centre has commenced and is progressing for both centres. Each centre will be developed with a point of difference. The Aquatic Strategy provides the sequence for aquatic facility development in Bass Coast and will be the supporting document for funding applications.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015-2024.

Attachments

AT-1 Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015 - 2024 Final Draft Report 48 Pages

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Phil Wright / Seconded: Cr. Andrew Phillips

That Council adopts the Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015-2024, noting that:

- a. the Strategy does not include a budget for construction until approximately 2020;**
- b. Bass Coast (Wonthaggi) concept plans have been prepared; and**
- c. that in relation to the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre the 2015/16 budget allows for concept plans to be prepared for the site to be selected by the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Working Group.**

CARRIED