# Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015 to 2024

*Amended*



Prepared by SGL Consulting Group Australia Pty Ltd

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 Project Scope, Objectives and Purpose

In line with the project purpose and objectives Council is seeking an Aquatics Strategy Report that links all of the various studies and consultation on future aquatic leisure facilities report in a planned and sequential strategy. The strategy will make integrated facility, program and service recommendations on the priority area/s for aquatic and leisure centre development in Bass Coast Shire over the next ten years.

The development of an Aquatic Strategy Report is required including:

- A review of Council's aquatic and leisure centre feasibility studies
- A conclusion about the priority components for redevelopment/development of a leisure and aquatic centre/s in Bass Coast
- Defined timelines for the development of a facility/facilities
- A conclusion including information about the current sites, comments about condition of the current facilities, finances, funding opportunities and timelines
- Recommendations about how to proceed and likely staging of tasks.

The key project objectives are:

i. Consolidate current trends and conclusions from reports on aquatics and leisure in Bass Coast

**ii.** Draw conclusions about the redevelopment/development of aquatic and leisure services of Bass Coast in the next ten years

iii. Provide a report which draws conclusions about the priority location for aquatics and leisure centre in the next five years

iv. Provide broad sequencing/timelines for projects

v. The report will include considerations such as location, condition of current facilities, funding availability (major state and federal grants), project timing, service provision and broader relevant population issues.

vi. Comment about the scale/differentiation between each project

The key project purpose is to provide a clear direction to enable the Council to meet the current and future requirements for aquatic leisure facilities within the Shire of Bass Coast and:

- Recommending the priority components and location/s
- Timing for the future development and or redevelopment of aquatic facilities.

The report will assist Councillors in making facility and development priority and staging decisions and form part of a submission to Sports and Recreation Victoria for a range of funding over the term of the Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy.

## 1.2 Project Methodology

The project methodology has been developed to meet the projects goals and objectives and specific requirements as listed in the project brief. The proposed project methodology is listed in the table below.

*Table 1.1 Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy Methodology*

| Phase | Task | Details |
|---|---|---|
| One: Background | 1. Project Clarification and Local Facility/Site Review Meeting | SGL coordinated a project clarification and Facility/sites familiarization and review meeting to discuss the project methodology, collect all plans and relevant reports and inspect the BCALC facility as well as potential PIALC sites. |
| | 2. Review of Relevant Reports | SGL reviewed all relevant reports including:<br>• Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Design Consultation Jan 2015.<br>• Feasibility Study for the Viability of Two Aquatic Centres in Bass Coast May 2014.<br>• Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study Feb 2011.<br>• Municipal Recreation Plan 2009 to 2014 Aug 2009.<br>• Bass Coast Shire Council Plan 2013 to 2017.<br>• Council reports and resolutions.<br>• Other relevant documents |
| Two: Research | 3. First Draft Aquatic Trends and Conclusions | SGL completed a first draft aquatic facilities trends and conclusions report that was used to compare against relevant documents and associated analysis to:<br>• Draw conclusions about facility options for redevelopment/new facilities over the next 10 years.<br>• Confirm priority components<br>• Confirm priority locations (later changed to priority site selection criteria<br>• Logical staging<br>• Funding targets |
| | 4. Mid Project Review | SGL coordinated a meeting with the Project Working Group to present, discuss and review the Aquatic Trends and Conclusions First Draft Report |
| Three: Aquatic Strategy | 5. Update Report to Final Draft Status | SGL updated the first draft report to include any agreed edits and extra information and this was then completed to final draft status. |
| | 6. Presentation of Draft Report | The draft report was presented to the Project Working Group. |
| | 7 Completion of Final Report | SGL completed a final report based on edits and additional information identified from the draft report forums. |
| | 8. Presentation of Final Report | SGL presented the final report to the Project Working Group and Council. |

## 1.3 Overview of the Project Area

Bass Coast Shire is a vibrant community within easy commuting distance from Melbourne. Bass Coast has demonstrated consistent growth over the past decade. As the Gippsland region grows, so do the opportunities to invest, live and work in the Bass Coast Shire.

Bass Coast is changing from a rural community based on agriculture, fishing and tourism. It is now a dynamic, modern community with options for commuting, greater opportunities and evolving services and technologies - while still maintaining a rural community feeling.

Bass Coast Shire Council supports the Shire becoming a major regional centre based upon:

1. Attracting global knowledge workers to the region.
2. Investing in the arts and education.
3. Supporting traditional and emerging industry sectors.

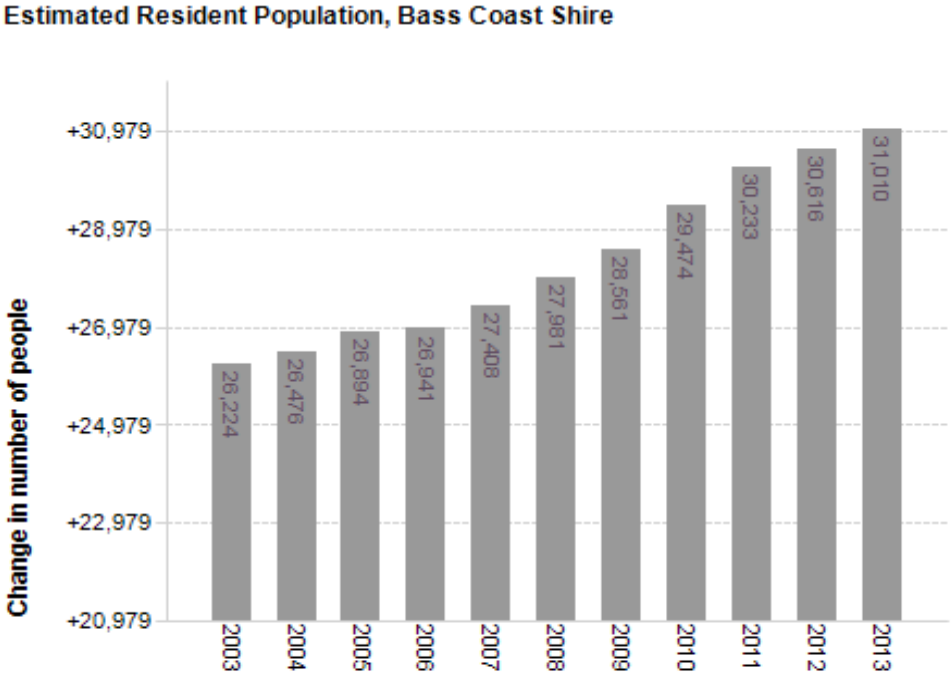
Less than ninety minutes drive from the Melbourne CBD, Bass Coast Shire encompasses a unique combination of coastline and rural hinterland. The area has been a popular holiday destination for a long time with over three million visitors annually travelling to the area and experiencing the coastal and rural lifestyle that is attracting more permanent residents annually.

With a population of over 31,010 people (ABS ERP 2013), Bass Coast Shire covers over 860sq km spanning rich farmland, stunning coastline, a large range of smaller townships and tranquil hinterland. In the main holiday seasons the population is estimated to increase substantially.

The main town centres of Cowes, Inverloch, Grantville, San Remo and Wonthaggi provide quality housing, shopping and services.

### 1.3.1 Population Growth Trends

The Bass Coast Shire population information has been developed using Council's Community Profile website data as prepared by Profile id. The following table highlights population growth of the Shire area between 2003 and 2013.




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0). Compiled and presented by .id the population experts

The population review trends that have occurred between 2003 and 2013 indicate an annually increasing population from 26,224 in 2003 to 31,010 in 2013. This is an increase of 4,786 people or +18.2% (+1.82% annual average increase).

### 1.3.2 Population Distribution 2011

The following table lists the Shires main population distribution statistics from the 2011 ABS Census data as listed on the Profile id Community Profile website are summarized by main area.

| Area | Number | Hectare | Persons per hectare |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cowes - Ventnor and District | 5,432 | 6,496 | 0.84 |
| Inverloch - Pound Creek | 4,907 | 10,110 | 0.49 |
| Newhaven - Cape Woolamai | 1,925 | 1,325 | 1.45 |
| North Wonthaggi | 2,540 | 1,014 | 2.51 |
| Phillip Island Balance | 1,853 | 2,187 | 0.85 |
| Rural Balance | 2,320 | 38,196 | 0.06 |
| San Remo | 1,236 | 1,533 | 0.81 |
| Waterline (Westernport Townships). | 3,493 | 18,442 | 0.19 |
| Wonthaggi - Cape Paterson | 5,854 | 7,206 | 0.81 |
| **Bass Coast Shire** | **29,558** | **86,414** | **0.34** |

**Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011. Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

#### 1.3.2.1 Aquatic Strategy Population Distribution

Council currently has adopted recommendations on future Shire aquatic facilities should be based on a two facility and location strategy. This covers:

- **Location 1: Wonthaggi** – Redevelopment of the Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre
- **Location 2: Phillip Island** – New Aquatic Leisure Centre to be developed in Cowes.

Based on the two-facility/location strategy direction SGL have considered the current population distribution, road networks, likely distance and travel time between locations to estimate the likely population catchments that should be attracted to each of the facilities/locations in the following table.

*Table 1.2 Aquatic Strategy Likely Population Catchments (ABS 2011)*

| Facility/Location | Area | Population | % of Shire Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| Location One: Wonthaggi | Inverloch- Pound Creek | 4,907 | 16.6% |
| | North Wonthaggi | 2,540 | 8.6% |
| | Wonthaggi – Cape Patterson | 5,854 | 19.8% |
| | Wonthaggi District (excluding San Remo) | 5,847 | 19.7% |
| | **Total Likely Catchment Wonthaggi** | **19,112** | **64.7%** |
| Location Two: Phillip Island | Cowes – Ventnor and District | 5,432 | 18.3% |
| | Newhaven – Cape Woolamai | 1,925 | 6.5% |
| | Phillip Island Towns/Rural Balance | 1,853 | 6.3% |
| | San Remo | 1,236 | 4.2% |
| | **Total Likely Catchment Phillip Island** | **10,446** | **35.4%** |
| | **Total Bass Coast Shire Population** | **29,558** | **100.0%** |

The population review data indicates based on a two facility/location strategy that:

- **Location One: Wonthaggi** is expected to have the largest population catchment of approximately 19,112 people or 64.7% of the shires population.
- **Location Two:** Phillip Island is expected to have the lowest population catchment of 10,446 people or 35.4% of the shires population.

The project area population distribution (2011) data indicates the largest aquatic leisure facility should be developed in location one – Wonthaggi whilst a smaller multi-purpose facility should be located in location two Phillip Island. Future Phillip Island facilities should take into account the significant population increases that occur in the main tourist and holiday seasons.

### 1.3.2.2 Age Profile of the Population

Industry trends indicate that the current and future age profile of the population is critical to guiding the types of facility components that should be developed. The age profile of the Bass Coast Shire Council (ABS 2011) is listed in the following table.

*Table 1.3 Bass Coast Shire Age Profile (ABS 2011)*

| Bass Coast Shire - (Usual residence) | 2011 | | | 2006 | | | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Five year age groups (years)** | **Number** | **%** | **Regional VIC %** | **Number** | **%** | **Regional VIC %** | **2006 to 2011** |
| 0 to 4 | 1,769 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 1,391 | 5.2 | 6.0 | +378 |
| 5 to 9 | 1,638 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 1,523 | 5.7 | 6.8 | +115 |
| 10 to 14 | 1,632 | 5.5 | 6.7 | 1,689 | 6.4 | 7.5 | -57 |
| 15 to 19 | 1,525 | 5.1 | 6.8 | 1,495 | 5.6 | 7.0 | +30 |
| 20 to 24 | 1,188 | 4.0 | 5.5 | 981 | 3.7 | 5.5 | +207 |
| 25 to 29 | 1,353 | 4.6 | 5.2 | 1,005 | 3.8 | 4.9 | +348 |
| 30 to 34 | 1,435 | 4.8 | 5.2 | 1,307 | 4.9 | 5.8 | +128 |
| 35 to 39 | 1,767 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 1,581 | 6.0 | 6.6 | +186 |
| 40 to 44 | 1,890 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 1,725 | 6.5 | 7.1 | +165 |
| 45 to 49 | 1,851 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 1,825 | 6.9 | 7.4 | +26 |
| 50 to 54 | 2,023 | 6.8 | 7.1 | 1,879 | 7.1 | 7.1 | +144 |
| 55 to 59 | 2,144 | 7.2 | 6.9 | 2,032 | 7.7 | 6.7 | +112 |
| 60 to 64 | 2,401 | 8.1 | 6.6 | 2,006 | 7.6 | 5.4 | +395 |
| 65 to 69 | 2,232 | 7.5 | 5.2 | 1,746 | 6.6 | 4.6 | +486 |
| 70 to 74 | 1,624 | 5.5 | 4.1 | 1,493 | 5.6 | 3.8 | +131 |
| 75 to 79 | 1,274 | 4.3 | 3.2 | 1,330 | 5.0 | 3.4 | -56 |
| 80 to 84 | 1,016 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 917 | 3.5 | 2.5 | +99 |
| 85 and over | 854 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 620 | 2.3 | 2.0 | +234 |
| **Total** | **29,616** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **26,545** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **+3,071** |

**Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts. (Usual residence data)

The BCSC age profile data indicates key user aquatic facility industry trend age groups account for:

- Children (0 to 14 years): 5,039 people (17.0% of the area population)
- Youth (15 to 24 years): 2,713 people (9.2% of the area population)
- Younger Adults (25 to 39 years): 4,555 people (15.3% of the area population)
- Middle Age Adults (40 to 59 years): 7,908 people (26.7% of the area population)
- Older Adults (60 years plus): 9,401 people (31.8% of the area population)

The age profile data indicates future aquatic facilities need to equally meet middle and older adult range (58.5% of the area population) facility components compared to younger families/children/youth range (41.5% of the population).

### 1.3.2.3 Other Population Trends that will Impact on Future Aquatic Facilities

There are a number of key population trends in the Bass Coast Shire Council area that will impact on future aquatic facilities and these include:

**1. Median Age:** The Shire's population median age is 46 years, which is very significant as it is 5 years above Regional Victoria (41 years) and 9 years above Victoria's average (37 years). This indicates facility components that met older adult requirements such as hotter water, gentle exercise areas, spas and saunas should be a high priority at each facility.

**2. Couples With Children:** Only 21% of couples have children in the Shire compared to 27% in Regional Victoria and 32% in Victoria. This indicates water areas for families and children need to be balanced against areas for middle age and older adults etc.

**3. Median Weekly Household Income:** 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.

**4. SEIFA Index of Disadvantage:** In 2011 the BCSC SEIFA Index of disadvantage was 978, which was the same as Regional Victoria (978) but lower than Victoria (1010). This indicates similar levels of disadvantage in the BCSC area than other regional areas.

### 1.3.2.4 Future Population Trends

The Shires population has increased by 18% in the past 10 years and these trends are expected to continue with a projected annual population increase of above state averages. The following graph shows the predicted population growth by main area between 2011 and 2031.

*Table 1.4 BCSC Future Population Trends*

| Area | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | Total change | Avg. annual % change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bass Coast Shire** | **30,024** | **33,186** | **37,547** | **41,545** | **45,257** | **+15,233** | **+2.07** |
| Cowes - Ventnor & District | 5,652 | 6,227 | 6,897 | 7,545 | 8,134 | +2,482 | +1.84 |
| Inverloch - Pound Creek | 4,894 | 5,318 | 5,752 | 6,115 | 6,361 | +1,467 | +1.32 |
| North Wonthaggi | 2,613 | 3,005 | 3,964 | 4,946 | 6,043 | +3,430 | +4.28 |
| Phillip Island Balance | 3,934 | 4,082 | 4,205 | 4,421 | 4,653 | +719 | +0.84 |
| Rural Balance | 2,399 | 2,712 | 3,189 | 3,420 | 3,604 | +1,205 | +2.06 |
| San Remo | 1,145 | 1,421 | 1,993 | 2,476 | 2,919 | +1,774 | +4.79 |
| Waterline (Westernport Townships) | 3,571 | 3,929 | 4,228 | 4,459 | 4,636 | +1,065 | +1.31 |
| Wonthaggi/South Dudley/Cape Paterson | 5,816 | 6,492 | 7,319 | 8,163 | 8,907 | +3,091 | +2.15 |

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2031, prepared by .id the population experts, January 2012.

The future Shire population trends indicate that the population is expected to increase by more than 15,000 people over the next 20 years. This is likely to see a total population in excess of 45,000 people living in the shire by 2031.

Approximately 8,000 people are likely to move into areas that would be serviced by the Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre Wonthaggi whilst 7,000 people are likely to move into the Phillip Island/San Remo area and therefore be served by the proposed Phillip Island Aquatic Centre.

Based on this the future facility redevelopment and development concepts should note the likely catchment population zones for each facility/location (excluding tourist and day visitor impacts) are estimated in the following table

*Table 1.5 BCSC Aquatic Facility/Location Population Catchments 2011 and 2031*

| Aquatic Facility/Location | 2011 Population | 2031 Population |
|---|---|---|
| Location 1: Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre, Wonthaggi | 19,112 | 27,500 |
| Location 2: Phillip Island Aquatic Centre | 10,446 | 17,500 |

## 1.4 Current Aquatic Facility Provision

Bass Coast Shire Council area has currently only one existing aquatic leisure facility, which is located in Wonthaggi. The facility is the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre (BCALC) which was opened in 1975 (40 years old) and it incorporates the following approximate sized main areas:

- Indoor 25m x 14m (6 lane pool) = 350m2
- Indoor toddlers pool (5m x 4m) = 20m2

- Plant room 13m x 9m = 117m2
- Indoor sports court (34m x 22m) = 748m2
- Gym (was originally youth club/hall) 18m x 11m = 198m2
- Indoor Amenities 220m2
- Child care 17m x 7m = 119m2
- Tennis pavilion 15m x 5m = 75m2
- Entry/Reception/Circulation/Storage

There are currently also three outdoor swimming pools within the shire but these are located at Primary Schools at Wonthaggi (no public use), Corinella (no public use) and Cowes (limited public use during holiday periods). There are 2 commercial learn to swim pools being one at Inverloch (Ivy Swimmers 5 Lindsay Close Inverloch) and Infinity Swim School (7 Batman Avenue Surf Beach).

The Shire also has a Leisure Centre at Cowes that has dry facilities only including a health club, group fitness room, crèche, single court stadium and sauna.

A review of Council reports indicates that in August 2009 Council adopted the Municipal Recreation Plan that guided future aquatic development including recommendations to:

- "Upgrade the current indoor aquatic facilities at Wonthaggi as the Shires main regional facility and township.
- Investigate the provision of an aquatic facility to service Phillip Island and the northern parts of the shire.

## 1.5 Relevant Studies Review

The following studies have been reviewed as background to this project:

**1. Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study – Feb 2011**

The study was commissioned to explore future development options for the Centre, as its pools, health club and stadium areas were operating at capacity and additional use cannot be accommodated without undertaking facility redevelopment.

Further technical and service audits commissioned during the feasibility study identified a range of building condition, service efficiency and safety issues that needed attention.

The study confirmed that the BCALC in its present form and condition was approaching the end of its functional life. The study also found that the following new or redeveloped facilities and services are required for the Centre to continue to meet the aquatic, health and recreational needs of the Shire community:

- Increased water space for lap swimming, warm water programs, aquatic education and children's water play.
- Improved centre amenities, particularly new change rooms and toilets.
- Expanded crèche and cafe services.
- Expanded health club and group fitness areas.

In July 2011, Bass Coast Shire Council adopted the study recommendations.

**2. Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre Design Development – June 2013**

In June 2013, Council resolved to commence design development for the upgrade and expansion of the BCALC, with consideration on how any redevelopment proposal could be staged and funded over a number of years.

In the period between June and August 2014, ML Design Architects prepared various concept plans for the redevelopment and expansion of the BCALC.

In September 2014, a set of concept plans were sufficiently developed to be placed on public exhibition for the purpose of receiving stakeholder and community feedback (see study 4 below).

**3. Feasibility Study for the Viability of Two Aquatic Centres in Bass Coast (May 2014)**

In September 2013 Council commissioned an investigative study to assess the financial viability of developing and operating two aquatic facilities in Bass Coast Shire. These were at the

- Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Wonthaggi;
- A new, second aquatic facility to be built in Cowes, Phillip Island.

The study outlines different options of delivery of aquatic facilities in the Shire and associated funding scenarios for each option. In May 2014, Council noted the completion of the study and resolved to continue the process to redevelop the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre (amongst other resolutions).

**4. Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Design Consultation (Jan 2015)**

This studies key purpose was to seek key stakeholder feedback on the redevelopment plans prepared by ML Design. The Project Objectives were:

- To provide the community and other stakeholders with an opportunity to view the redevelopment plans.
- To seek feedback from key stakeholders to inform the redevelopment design.
- To consult broadly with the community and key stakeholders.
- To present the consultation feedback in a well ordered and concise format that can be used to inform Council, and that can be added to funding applications seeking State and Federal government support for the implementation of the redevelopment.
- To work with the Project Steering Group, including the architects, to plan the redevelopment of the facility.

The key findings of the project as noted in the report are covered in greater detail in section 3.3 of this report.

**5. Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study Nov 2010**

This study was completed by Sport and Leisure Solutions and was commissioned by the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc. (PIACF). It was used as background information by PIACF in their submission to a Policy Workshop of Council in March 2014.

The key findings of the feasibility study included:

- High level of community demand and need for an aquatic facility on Phillip Island.
- Distance travelled to Wonthaggi and the local population increases and aging demographics were key reasons for the development.
- Suggested location was the Phillip Island Adventure Resort but other sites if available should also be compared/reviewed.
- The facility should incorporate a 25m lap pool, a multi-purpose aquatic space for learn to swim, hydrotherapy and leisure/play as well as future health and fitness facilities.

- The estimated capital cost range would be in the order of $8M to $10M and a funding strategy would need to be developed.
- The estimated annual operating cost for the facility was projected in the order of $220,000/year and the operating cost will need to be underwritten by the Bass Coast Council.

Section four of this report provides greater detail on the proposed Phillip Island Aquatic Centre including updated plans and site considerations that PIACF has completed since 2010.

## 1.6 Current Council Aquatic Strategy Resolutions

The Council Plan includes two strategies that relate to the development of aquatic facilities:

1. Provide infrastructure and facilities that are well managed, environmentally sustainable and are suitable for the community's needs.
2. Improve the opportunity to enjoy our recreational facilities and open space.

Council's Municipal Recreation Plan 2009 to 2014 includes the policy statement:

- Develop Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre as the regional facility for the whole Shire.

The plan also has the key actions to:

- Upgrade the current indoor aquatic facilities at Wonthaggi as the Shire's regional township
    - Tasks identified included:
        - Revise the design and costing for the redevelopment of the Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre
        - Secure capital works funding for the project in the capital Works budget
        - Apply for funding through the Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) Better Pools Grant Program
        - Construction of new aquatic centre
- Investigate the provision of an aquatic facility to service Phillip Island and the northern parts of the Shire
    - Tasks identified included:
        - Conduct an independent business feasibility study
        - Provide a matrix to assist in aquatic site selection



# 2 Aquatic Trends and Key Industry Issues

## 2.1 Introduction

There are no standards of provision that Council's must meet in relation to the number, size, location and type of aquatic leisure facility provided for any identified community. This has therefore seen a significant diversity of aquatic leisure facility provision across the country since the first swimming pools were developed in the 1900s.

The high cost of capital to fund such development is also a limiting factor but building the wrong components or poor design that increases staffing and energy costs is also a significant constraint as aquatic facilities traditionally cost a lot to annually operate.

The aquatic facilities are also very harsh and corrosive on building structures, plant and equipment and surrounding environments and require ongoing maintenance and capital improvement funding.

All of these factors indicate the need for a detailed aquatic facility strategy that is guided not only by resident demand but also industry trends and key success and constraint knowledge.

This section of the report covers key aquatic leisure facility and industry trends to guide future aquatic strategy development.

## 2.2 SGL Aquatic and Leisure Facility Trends

This information draws from a review of a large sample of industry market research projects that have been carried out over the past five years to assist in defining aquatic and indoor facility and related leisure trends.

SGL's extensive experience in the development of aquatic and leisure facilities indicates that these types of facilities usually become a highly emotive and public interest debate. Organised formal groups (specialist users of pools) may dominate consultation processes whilst the general resident/casual and recreation user (highest user of pools) can remain unheard.

In many cases when a council is faced with developing or redeveloping an aquatic facility the debate about the right components for the community it is to serve may at times be dominated by wanting a bit more of what they have already got rather than who is missing out and what is needed. Other key learning's include:

- The organized club and group priority for long course competition, lap swimming and training facilities (50m or 25m lap pools) usually comes at the expense of not including or building multi-use high use viable water areas as well.

- The need for deep water to meet specialist sport needs increases operating costs and also restricts who can use the water. Selection of these areas must be made with financial and user impacts clearly highlighted.

- Lack of a co-coordinated strategy for other existing pools in the project area and user catchment zones so there is not duplication of the same thing in the same catchment zone.

- Lack of knowledge on local competitor facilities and user markets of why and how people use pools and what they pay for the different user categories. Participation trends usually show only a small market for lap swimming, whilst a large proportion of people use the facilities for recreation, fun, enjoyment, socialisation, education and therapy.

- The development of limited water areas that have a range of differing water depths and temperatures.

- Ensuring all user markets is the priority so that a mix of water areas becomes an essential part of a successful aquatic leisure centre design brief.

### 2.2.1 Impacting Leisure and Aquatic Trends

The following summary of general leisure trends impacting on people and their demand for recreation, sport and leisure activities and in particular aquatic facilities has been developed using a range of aquatic facility feasibility documents. General Leisure trends impacting on aquatic leisure facilities design, facility components and user attraction include:

- ***A gradual ageing of the population.*** As life expectancy increases, birth rates stay low and the "baby boomers" of the 1950's and 1960's grow older. This is placing a new demand on providing programmed hotter water areas as well as pools suitable for therapy and older adult exercises. It also means it is essential to have a range of pools with different water depths and temperatures.

- ***Flexibility in the times when people recreate.*** As demands on people's time increases and work practices change people are seeking to take their recreation at different times, over a broad spread of hours and at facilities that offer a lot of activities under the one roof. Indoor pools and health and fitness facilities are particularly attractive and getting easier to use as many are open 12 to 16 hours, 7 days a week

- ***Increased variety in recreation and leisure options.*** People's leisure 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 water areas to meet different needs at the one centre.

- ***Constraints to recreation and leisure 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 recreation and leisure participation. The development of targeted markets of users, programs and services at aquatic and 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 sports 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 pools attractive as their long opening hour's means usage can be made in a wide range of social, training, competition, educational settings.

- ***Different people want different activities.*** Differing population characteristics i.e. age, gender, cultural issues sees the need for facilities to offer potential users a much more varied range of programs and services than previously offered. All year round indoor aquatic facilities also provide the greatest diversity of activities throughout the different seasons impacted by an areas local weather

- ***Provision of high standards and quality of facilities and services.*** People are looking for high standard, high quality facilities and services to meet their recreation and leisure 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

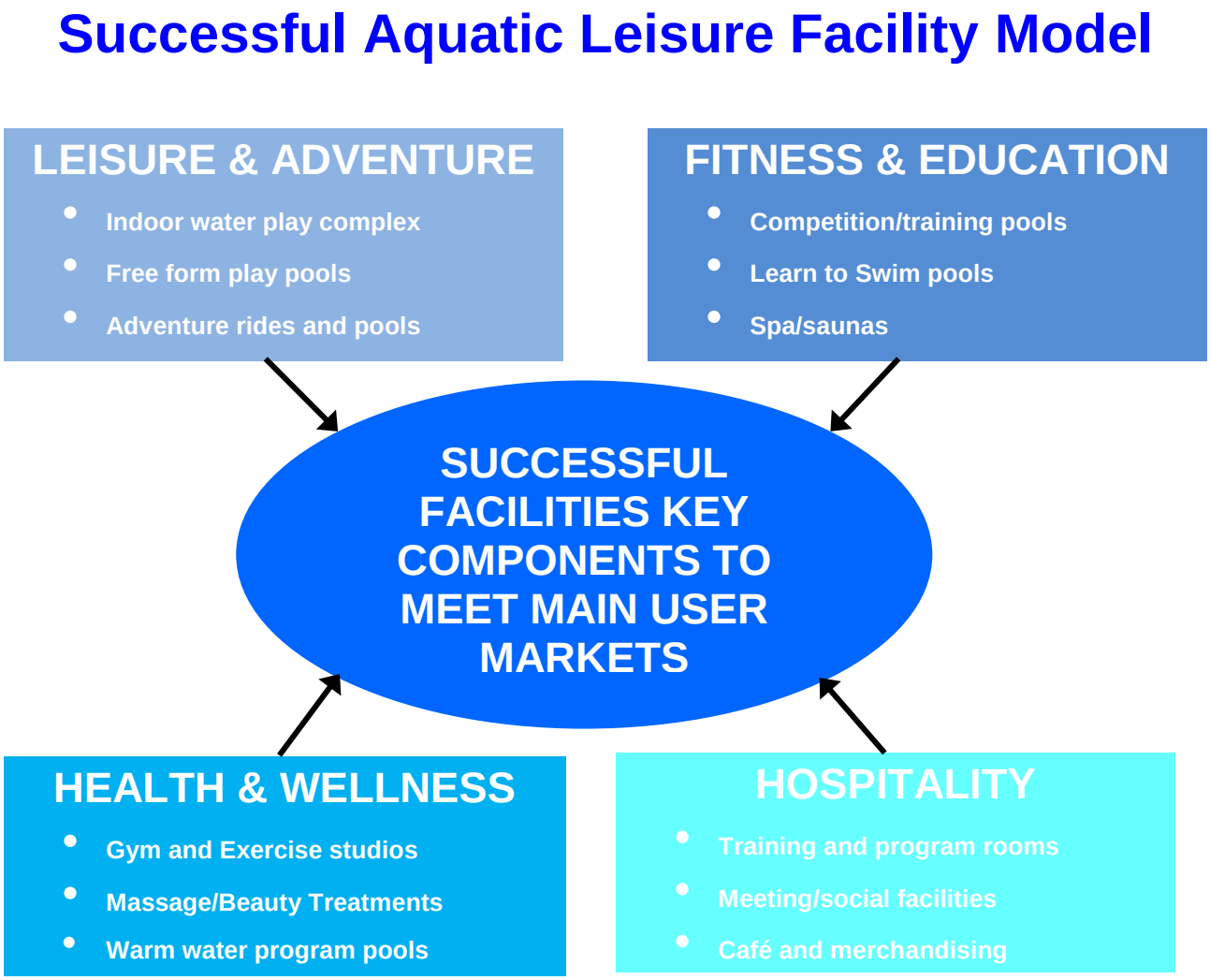
- ***Desire for activities to be affordable.*** The development of multi-purpose aquatic leisure centres has enabled the high operating cost activity of aquatics (in many cases) to be cross subsidised by more profitable activity areas such as health and fitness, food and beverage and entertainment areas. 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.

- ***Recognition of strong links between physical activity and health.*** Preventative health care and active lifestyles are very important to many people's aquatic and health and fitness activities are becoming a large part of people's activity choices.

- ***Expectations of equity and access.*** Today's society expects people with special needs to be catered for in public aquatic and leisure 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 different abilities, physical condition and skill levels.

### 2.2.2 Successful Aquatic Facility Model

The most successful aquatic facilities provide a broad range of activity areas to cater for maximum user markets. This is listed in the following graphic.



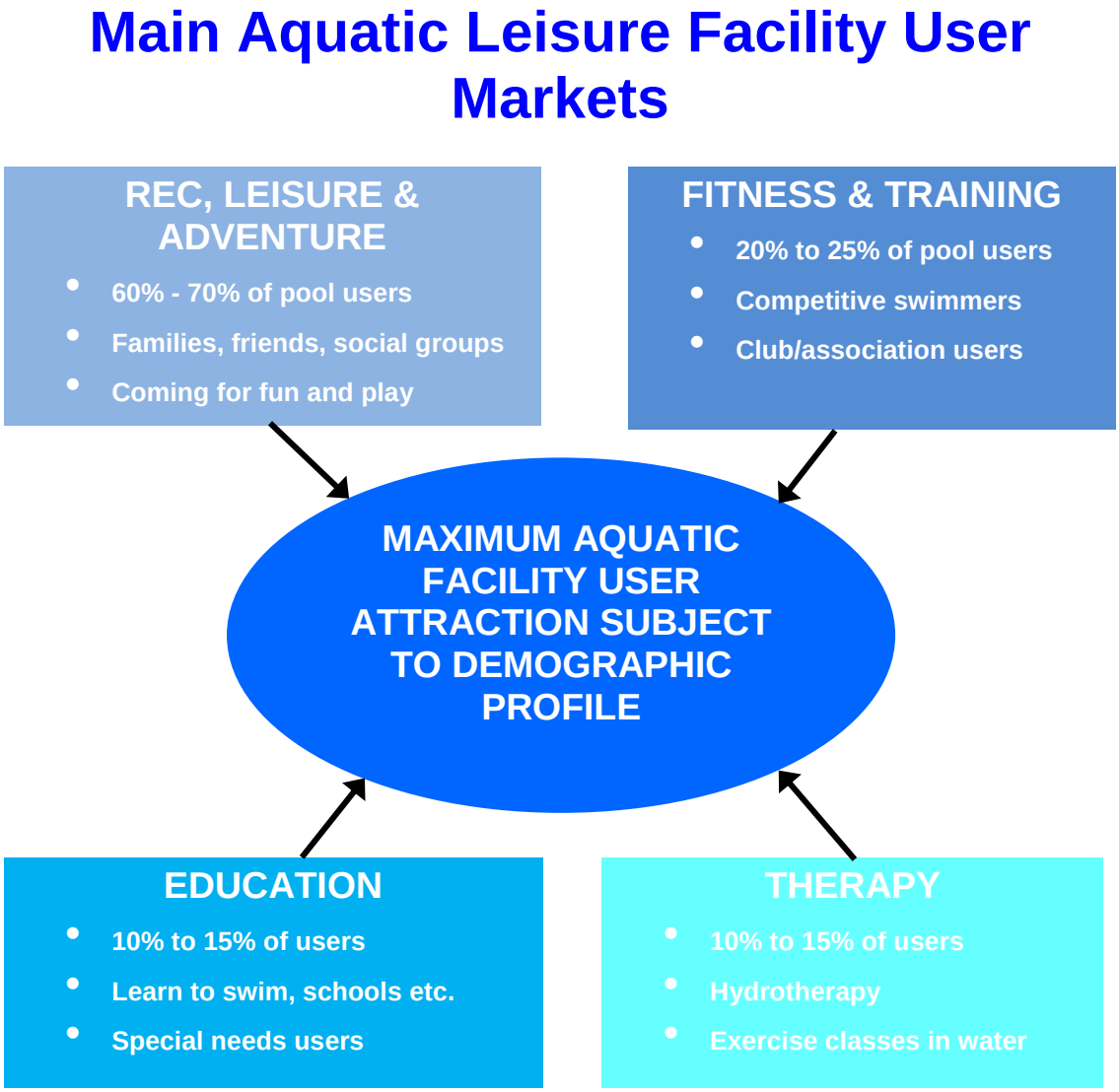
### 2.2.3 Specific Aquatic Facility Trends

Specific Aquatic Facility Trends that are impacting on users of such facilities include:

**(a) Aquatic Facility Trends and Main User Markets**

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.

Such studies usually identify the demographic profile of residents in the project area, their current aquatic and leisure participation patterns and use of surrounding aquatic facilities that provide a sound base for more user-friendly facilities. The majority of aquatic facility market research indicates future complexes must equally cater for four distinct aquatic user markets as listed in the graphic below:




The four main user markets at successful aquatic leisure facilities are:

- **Recreation and Leisure Market** - usually made up of families, people coming with friends and groups for fun, relaxation, social activity and low level competition/participation.

- **Competitive/Training/Fitness Market** - usually made up of people predominantly attending facilities alone for structured fitness or competition activities.

- **Education Market** - usually made up of children and adults wishing to increase water safety and survival skills. Includes Learn to swim classes, school and club use and individuals improving their skills and techniques. They require hot water pools and water depths with some straight edges and easy water access etc.

- **Health and Therapy Market** - usually made up of children, adults and older adults wanting to relax or exercise in hot water. This market also includes specialist health condition groups such as arthritis, asthma suffers, etc. They require hot water pools and associated health relaxation areas, i.e. Spa/saunas, etc.

Industry benchmarking indicates that the recreation and leisure market will be the largest as it contains people of all ages, ability, types, interest and gender. The competitive/ training/fitness market is a more specialist market as it usually contains younger, fitter and more active people who have made time to train and compete.

Previous benchmarking conducted by the SGL Leisure Planning Team indicates that in many cases 60% to 70% of facility users come from the recreation/leisure sector whilst only 20% to 30% come from the competitive/training/fitness markets.

The health and therapy and education markets can range from 10% to 20% of the market subject to the age and health profile of the community in which the facility is located.

**"The most successful centres attract all user markets and should be set up to allow people to participate in a range of activities at the one site". In smaller population community's master planning and staging development can achieve this.**

The further addition of health and fitness facilities, spas and saunas and social areas have been very successful at many aquatic facilities, as they add to the user experience and contribute to people being attracted to attend these facilities more often.

**(i) Aquatic Facilities Activity Areas**

Industry trends indicate that in the majority of current indoor stand-alone aquatic facilities revenue does not meet annual operating costs. Average losses can range from $500,000 to $1,000,000 plus per annum. The small numbers of centres that have the capacity to return an operational surplus show so ability to contribute to maintenance and facility renewal but we are not aware of any that provide a return on capital investment.

A review of the various successful centres' business 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

To ensure financial viability and high user markets across all age, gender and cultural grouping markets future facility development must be designed with the above business aims in mind. This support usually recommends activity area components that can:

- 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 schools or main transport access.

Traditionally, commercial investment in aquatic facilities has been in specialist pools such as learn-to-swim or as additions to health and fitness clubs. This has left major aquatic facility development to local government as the major provider.

The high capital cost and limited financial returns have contributed to this situation so it is also essential that commercial high revenue generating activities are linked to high cost aquatic facilities.

**(ii) Health and Fitness Activity Areas**

Industry trends indicate that users of aquatic facilities are also significant users of health and fitness facilities. Location of each of these activity components at the one site improves financial viability.

Health and fitness has the capacity to record high expense recovery returns, with many centres returning 125% to 180% of expenditure. Traditionally these returns can also attract commercial investors and operators to health and fitness facilities.

Locating these facilities at aquatic centres increases the potential of cross selling and spin-off use. It also improves the membership/program user and casual user ratio.

**(iii) Ancillary Services and Activity Areas**

In recent years, there has been a trend to develop a range of complementary businesses in conjunction with aquatic leisure facilities. These include:

- **Wellness Centres/Day Spas**: There is an emerging trend of adding in an area for specialist wellness activities, services and merchandising. The key services found at successful wellness centres include massage, beauty therapy treatments, gentle exercise classes and relaxation and time out activities.

  Inclusion of such facilities offers a broader range of activities to a larger age profile of people. The massage and beauty therapy are high yield sales activities and can have high linked merchandising product sales.

  It is essential in developing such areas that they are located with good views, away from general public noise and viewing areas and have very good finishes and fittings. There needs to be a close by lounge for relaxation after treatment or classes.

- **Sports Medicine**: Development of consulting rooms, with patient access to health and fitness and pools, have been excellent revenue generators.

- **Health and Therapeutic** Services: Health consultancies, weight loss and therapeutic services linking in worker and accident rehabilitation patients to use the range of facilities with centre memberships paid by relevant authorities.

- **Health and Beauty Services**: Leased areas to services such as beauticians, hair salons and body toning.

### 2.2.4 Potential Future Aquatic Facility Trends

Aquatic Facility reviews completed in Australia, North America, Canada, the Middle East and Asia SGL provide a guide to likely new aquatic facility innovations and trends. Key features that should be considered when redeveloping or retrofitting high use aquatic facilities include:

### (i) Leisure Play Equipment and Splash Pads

Changing static shallow water areas into water play and fun zones is one of the most popular renovations. This can be achieved by adding simple play equipment, water sprays and interactive equipment to existing pools.

Added to this is the option to introduce inflatable play equipment to allow the area to be changeable. Many such outdoor pools that have been retrofitted have been linked to high use indoor pools.

### (ii) Major Attraction Leisure Features

Water slides and similar challenge and adventure type activities have remained popular as long as the venue has a range of slides/rides to keep peoples interest. Single ride facilities struggle to keep interest due to the lack of variety. Multi ride areas allow users to try different length and configuration rides. There are also a range of new water rides that have a slide component leading to another ride experience such as dropping into a bowl and then water, or onto a ramp and then into a splash pool.

A key design trend is to link all slides to a common entry platform to ensure one staff person can supervise the area. A common splash down zone also allows one lifeguard to control a range of ride water entry points.

### (iii) Special Effects

A range of North American Indoor leisure parks have added computerised light shows and sound systems to allow night time areas to be changed. The use of lights and sound provided users with new indoor facility experiences at night-time.

Some centres have gone further by adding projection walls to incorporate movies and short video clips with their new light and sound effects.

### (iv) Leisure Furniture

Many centres aimed to keep parents and children at centres longer (to encourage greater secondary spending on food/beverage/merchandising) by providing quality furniture. The use of pool side lounges, tables, chairs, umbrellas, has allowed families to stay close to the water areas in relative comfort.

### (v) Food/Beverage/Merchandising

This area has seen some major changes through development of pool side and dry area multi serving zones. Linked to these are high quality wet and dry lounge zones where people are encouraged to sit down and relax.

A number of innovative centres provide extensive lounge areas as well as pool side furniture. These centres use mobile food and beverage carts to sell items directly to centre users (i.e. they take the product to the customer).

A number of other centres visited have used merchandising innovations, such as all existing customers having to go through the sales area. Other innovations included:

- Multi-media video screens through the centre reminding customers about programs, special promotions, and food/beverage and merchandising specials.
- Providing customers with discount vouchers (at entry to centre) to spend in food/ beverage and merchandising outlets or on their next visit.
- Offering combination sales specials to attract a higher spend per person



# 3 Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre

## 3.1 Introduction

This section of the report reviews the Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre facilities and operations trends and then reviews the proposed redevelopment concept, components and community consultation feedback on the proposed redevelopment.

Following this background review SGL has been commissioned to advise on:

**i.** Redevelopment and new development component priorities based on research findings, likely business impacts and successful aquatic facility development that will best meet the centres likely catchment user and Shire population needs.

ii. Develop a staged redevelopment plan that documents the broad sequencing/timelines for staged development and likely usage and business impacts

## 3.2 Review of the Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre

The Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre (BCALC) are located within the Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve Precinct and can be accessed off Wentworth Road Wonthaggi.

It is currently the Shire's only indoor multi use aquatic and leisure centre. It was opened in 1979 and the facilities are now almost 40 years old and comprise the following facility components:

- Indoor 25m x 14m (6 lane pool) = 350m2
- Indoor toddlers pool (5m x 4m) = 20m2
- Plant room 13m x 9m = 117m2
- Indoor sports court (34m x 22m) = 748m2
- Gym (was originally youth club/hall) 18m x 11m = 198m2
- Indoor Amenities 220m2
- Child care 17m x 7m = 119m2
- Tennis pavilion 15m x 5m = 75m2
- Entry/Reception/Circulation/Storage

The Centre also provides a clubroom space for the adjacent tennis courts and incorporates a portable building north of the pool hall that is used as a Spin Room.

The BCALC is part of a large sporting and recreation precinct at the Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve and facilities at the reserve include:

- Two sports ovals,
- 7 netball courts,

- 8 tennis courts,
- 2 croquet lawns,
- A dog obedience area,
- A playground,
- A number of pavilions and clubrooms and other showground infrastructure.

A plan of the existing centre and reserve surrounds is listed as follows.




### 3.2.1 Facility Management

The YMCA currently manages BCALC on behalf of the Council under a contract management agreement that has been in place since 1998. The Centre is just over 40 years old and currently is open all year round, seven days a week.

### 3.2.2 Facility Usage Trends

Reviews of facility management annual reports indicate the following main usage and program visits occurred over the past two years:

1. Aquatics
    a. Recreational Swim – Adult/Child/Concession/family (Decreasing)

b. Swim Club Rec. Swim (Decreasing)
c. School Aquatic visits (Increasing)
d. Aquatic Education Visits (Learn to Swim) (increasing)
e. Aqua Aerobics and Aqua Movers
f. Water Hockey (decreasing)

2. Health and Fitness
    a. Membership Visits
    b. Living Longer Living Stronger
    c. Body Pump
    d. Body Balance/Boxfit/Spin/Step it Up/ShBam/Chi-Ball
    e. Challenge Fitness Camp
    f. Personal Training
3. Indoor Sport
    a. Basketball
    b. Gymnastics/Ed Gym
    c. Badminton
4. Children's Programs
    a. Childcare
    b. Holiday Program

The operational visit review indicated a total of over 80,000 visits were made to the facilities in 2012/13 and this was higher in 2013/14 at more than 85,000 visits. The main activity user categories were Aquatics, Health and Fitness, Indoor Sport and then other activities e.g. Childcare/Holiday Program.

The main activity usage review for the past two years indicates aquatic visits are the highest user at 48 to 49% of total visits). This is followed by health and fitness visits with 45 to 47% of total visits and Indoor sport visits at 2.7 to 3.4% of total visits).

Visitation results are important to note when looking at future priority facility component's as it is critical that management understands what facilities the main users are attracted to and ensure in any redevelopment they are not impacted and restricted in their use.

The results show nearly equal numbers of people visiting for aquatic facilities and programs as they do for health and fitness facilities and programs. Future redevelopment therefore needs to be balanced between these main activity areas.

### 3.2.3 Facility Operational Financial Trends

The operating financial review indicates that annual revenue increased slightly from 2012/13 to 2013/14. Based on these results the facility operating loss was reduced by 11.2% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

Operating income as a % of operating expenditure increased slightly by 3.3% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

### 3.2.4 Facility Operational Business Indicators

A review has also been completed on the facilities past two financial reports and the details are listed in the following table:

*Table 3.1 BCALC Operational Business Indicators 2012 to 2014*

| Category | Variance 2012/13 to 2013/14 |
|---|---|
| Annual Visits | +3.5% |
| Operational Income | +4.4% |
| Operational Expenditure | -0.2% |
| Net Operating Profit/(loss) | -11% |
| Annual Income/Visit | +0.8% |
| Annual Expenditure/Visit | -3.5% |
| Annual Operating (Loss)/Visit | -14% |
| Operating Income as a % of Operating Expenditure | +3.3% |

Annual expenditure per visit is also similar for each year however there was a 3.5% reduction from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

The annual net operating loss per visit has improved and was reduced by 14% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

These indicators further highlight the need in future facility redevelopment to consider not only aquatic facility improvements but also health and fitness improvements if Council wishes to try and maintain or reduce annual operating losses.

### 3.2.5 Facility Operational Income by Main Activity 2013/14

To assist in determining the annual revenue generated by the aquatics area compared to the health and fitness area we have reviewed the 2013/14 operational financials, usage and net operating result. This is summarized in the following table:

*Table 3.2 BCALC Main Activity Operational Income 2013/14*

| Income Category | % 0f Total Income |
|---|---|
| Aquatics | 45.1% |
| Health and Fitness/Dry Programs | 39.9% |
| Indoor Sport | 1.1% |
| Vacation Care | 7.3% |
| Facility Rental | 1.6% |
| Creche/Other | 0.5% |
| Café/Vending/Retail | 4.5% |
| Total Income | 100.0% |

The operational income trends for 2013/14 financial year indicate that aquatics is the largest income source at 45.1% of total income raised, followed by health and fitness at 39.9%. Vacation care at 7.3% is the next largest income source followed by café/vending and retail (secondary spend) at 4.5%. Facility rental (1.6%), Indoor sport (1.1%) and crèche/other income (0.5%) are all very low at.

Again these results indicate the need to consider health and fitness and aquatic improvements if Council wishes to continue reducing the annual operating cost with increased operating income.

### 3.2.6 Facility Operational Spend Per Visit by Main Activity 2013/14

The income generated per activity visit shows aquatics achieves the highest income per visit followed by health and fitness. Both indoor sport and secondary spend activities such as café, vending and merchandise showed much lower levels per visit. It should also be noted from the income review that the largest sources of revenue for the main activity areas are:

1. **Aquatics:** Swimming Lessons, recreational swimming and Schools.

2. **Health and Fitness:** Memberships and programs

These income trends by activity need to be considered and ensure that in any redevelopment they continue and increase as part of any redevelopment.

## 3.3 BCALC Redevelopment Study

In July 2011, Bass Coast Shire Council adopted the Wonthaggi Aquatic and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study Report (February 2011). The study was commissioned to explore future development options for the Centre, as its pools, health club and stadium areas were operating at capacity and additional use could not be accommodated without undertaking facility redevelopment.

Further technical and service audits commissioned during the feasibility study identified a range of building condition, service efficiency and safety issues that also need attention. The study found that the following new or redeveloped facilities and services are required for the Centre to continue to meet the aquatic, health and recreational needs of the Shire community:

- Increased water space for lap swimming, warm water programs, aquatic education and children's water play.
- Improved centre amenities, particularly new change rooms and toilets.
- Expanded crèche and cafe services.
- Expanded health club and group fitness areas.

In June 2013, Council resolved to commence design development for the upgrade/expansion of the BCALC, with consideration on how any redevelopment could be staged/funded.

### 3.3.1 Proposed Facility Redevelopment Concept

The latest redevelopment concept as developed by ML Design is listed on the next pages. The redevelopment component list includes a suggested staged redevelopment development being:

**Stage One New Aquatic Area**

- New 25m x 10 Lane (2.5m lanes) Indoor Pool
- New entry and foyer
- New wet change and family change areas
- New group change rooms
- New first aid and storage
- New plant room for new facilities
- New crèche
- Expanded car park (178 spaces) and new driveway

**Stage Two New Aquatic Area**

- New LTS/program pool and water play

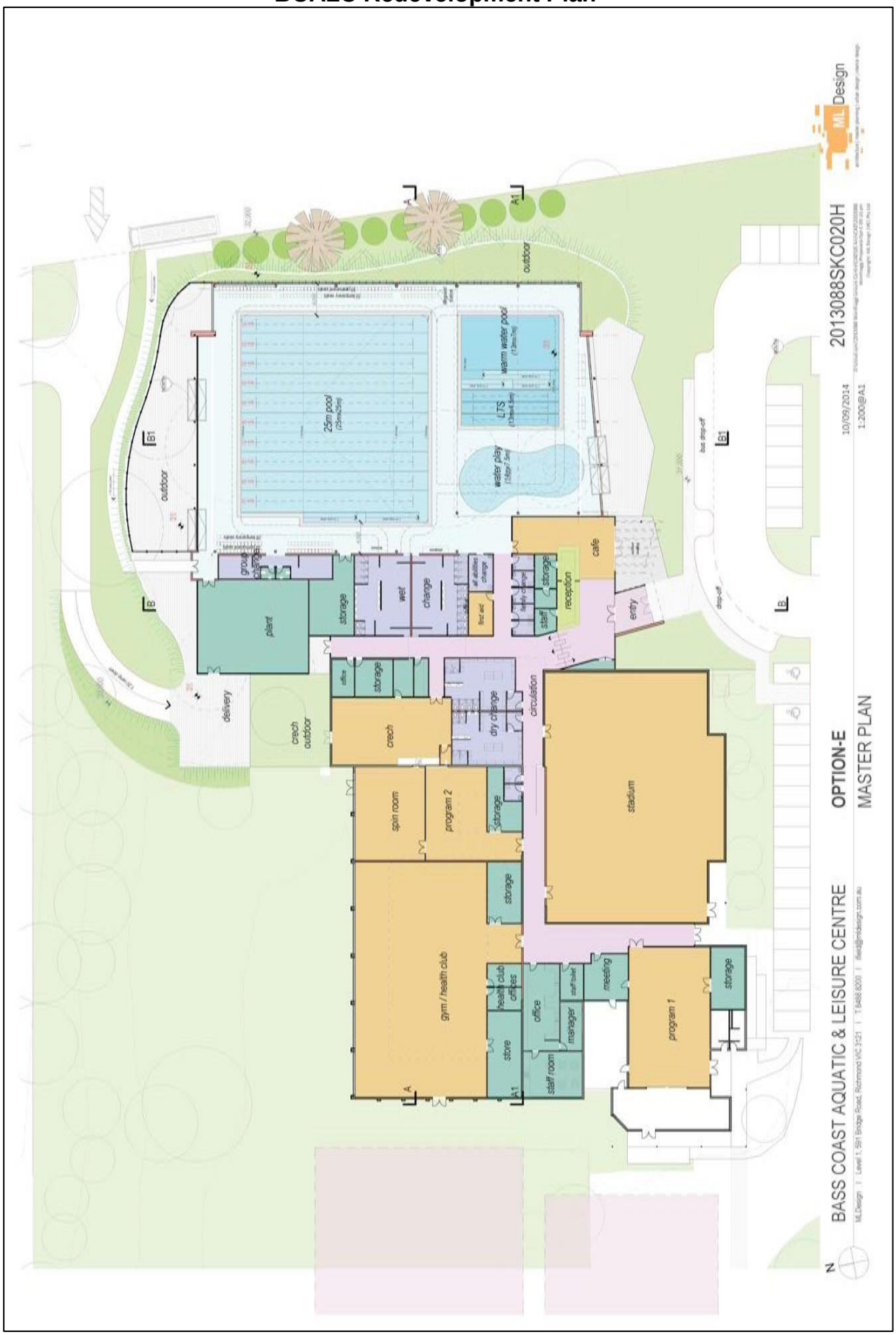
**Stage Three New Health and Fitness Facilities**

- Expanded health club and program rooms
- New office and storage
- New dry change and areas
- 124 car spaces
- Existing pool converted to water storage

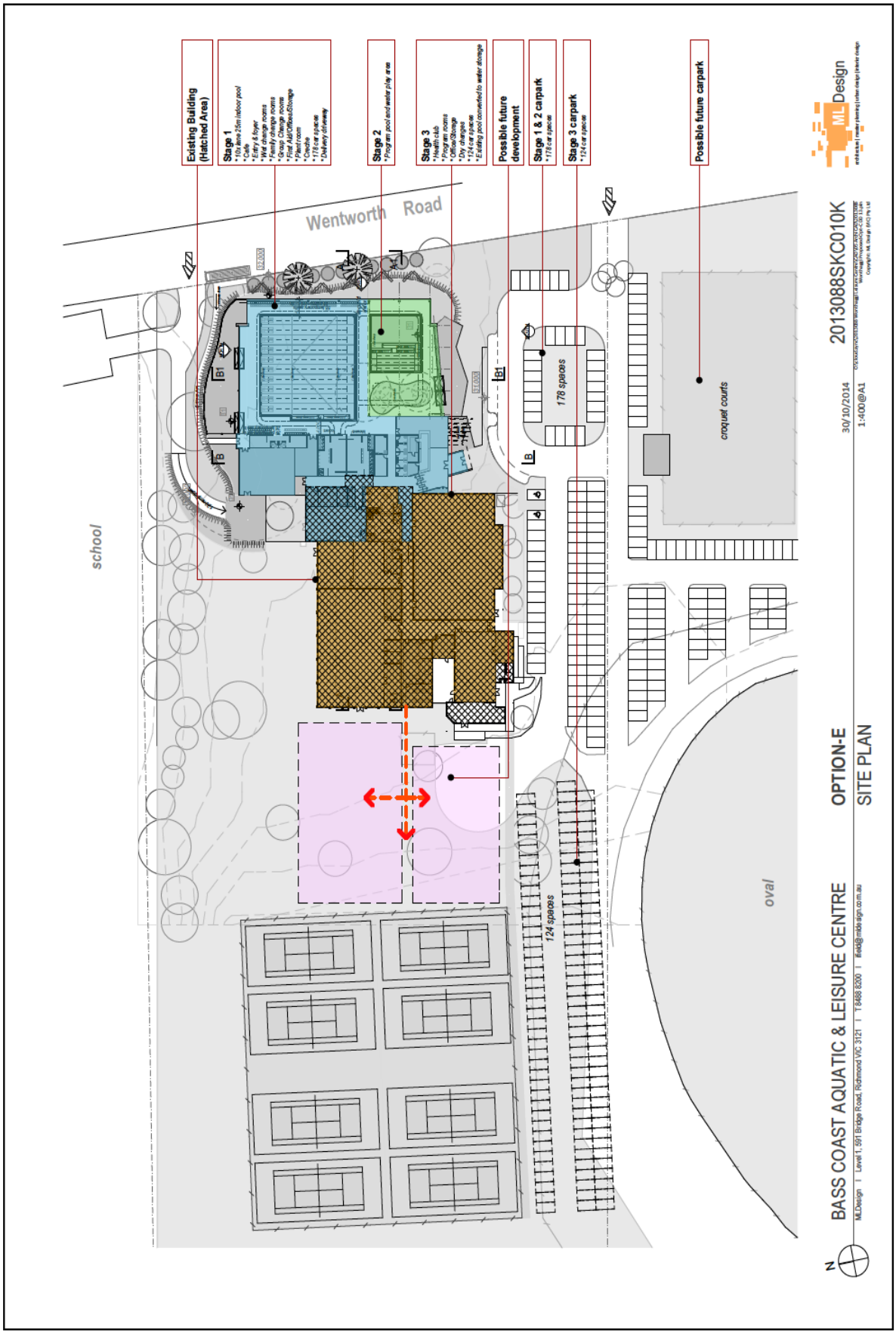
**Other Development Stages**

- Possible indoor sport courts (number to be determined)

## BCALC Redevelopment Plan



## BCALC Staged Redevelopment Development Plan



## 3.4 Redevelopment Consultation Findings

Simon Consulting was commissioned by Council in September 2014 to complete a community engagement strategy. This studies key purpose was to seek key stakeholder feedback on the redevelopment plans prepared by ML Design. The Project Objectives were:

1. To provide the community and other stakeholders with an opportunity to view the redevelopment plans.
2. To seek feedback from key stakeholders to inform the redevelopment design.
3. To consult broadly with the community and key stakeholders.
4. To present the consultation feedback in a well ordered and concise format that can be used to inform Council, and that can be added to funding applications seeking State and Federal government support for the implementation of the redevelopment.
5. To work with the Project Steering Group, including the architects, to plan the redevelopment of the facility.

The project received excellent response rates and the project report indicated that the consultation highlighted:

- *There was strong general support for the Centre redevelopment project and for the current plans from all stakeholder groups consulted. This level of support was confirmed in the formal survey of opinion of stakeholders and the community, in which 89% support was recorded.*
- *The current staging plan for the Centre redevelopment project shows that the warm water program pool is a Stage 2 project. This will result in no warm water program pool being available in the redeveloped BCALC from the time that Stage 1 works commence until the time that Stage 2 works are completed, unless the existing pool is retained in its current form and permanently heated to 31-33°C for some or all days each week.*
- *Most stakeholders noted that if the Centre does not have a warm water program pool it will impact upon the availability of quality warm water programming for older adults, pre-school children, and people with health conditions who require water to be heated to a level higher than is required for a lap pool.*
- *It was also noted that the community and Centre revenue would both be significantly negatively impacted if a warm water program pool was not available at any time during the total project period for the Centre's redevelopment. Most stakeholders advocated for the Stage 1 works currently shown to also include the provision of proposed new warm water program pool.*

- *An insufficient number of showers are shown on the plans in the women's 'wet' change room.*
- *Insufficient storage is allowed for in the plans for the Learn to Swim program, the swim clubs and the underwater hockey club.*
- *There was some support for a 50m pool in preference to the 25m pool currently allowed for in the plans. Most of the support for a 50m pool came from people directly associated with the three swim clubs and the underwater hockey club based at the Centre.*
- *There were mixed views from all stakeholder groups as to the need for the 25m pool to have 10 lanes, as currently shown in the plans. There was little support for 10 lanes from Centre staff, from Council staff, and from some community members, based on need and the likely additional capital and recurrent operational costs that would be required to incorporate 10 lanes in the redevelopment - 8 lanes was considered more appropriate by these stakeholders.*

- *Conversely, there was support for the retention of 10 lanes from people directly associated with the three swim clubs and the underwater hockey club, and from Swimming Australia, in the context of the desirability of 10 lanes for competition swimming and to also allow maximum concurrent use of the main pool by the user groups and for the aquatic programs currently being provided for in the existing pool.*
- *There was some support for the inclusion of a water slide, sauna and steam room in the Centre redevelopment.*
- *There was some concern expressed that the warm water program pool currently shown in the plans will not be large enough to accommodate the number of people currently attending water aerobic classes.*
- *There was strong advocacy from indoor sporting groups and other stakeholders to incorporate the proposed future indoor sports courts into the final redevelopment plans, and for the development of some or all of these new courts to be included in an early stage of the overall Centre redevelopment. Over 75 written submissions were received during the consultation project in support of additional indoor sports courts to be provided in Wonthaggi.*
- *Whilst many stakeholders agreed that the site of the Wonthaggi Croquet Club facility was an ideal location for expanding the off-street car parking to service the redeveloped Centre, it was also strongly advocated that a suitable relocation option for the Club was important if the existing croquet club facility was converted to car parking.*
- *The Wonthaggi North Primary School understands the need to utilise the site of the current bus parking area for the Centre redevelopment. The school has identified a potential new bus parking area off White Road, and believes that the full cost of any relocation needs to be budgeted for as part of the Centre redevelopment.*
- *The Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc. recognised the need for the Centre redevelopment, however, notes that Council needs to be planning for the development of both the BCALC and a new swimming facility for Phillip Island concurrently, but would prefer that the development for Phillip Island occur first.*
- *There was no opposition to the Centre redevelopment expressed by any residents living in houses opposite the BCALC in Wentworth Road.*

### 3.4.1 Redevelopment Plan Consultation Modifications

The 2015 Simon Consulting Report noted that the consultation raised a possible list of recommended modifications to the current Centre redevelopment design that should be considered by the Project Steering Group and the Project Architect when preparing the final design. The list of recommended changes were divided into two categories:

- One list is of changes that were considered mandatory,
- The second list is of changes that would provide some community benefit if included and need to be further considered.

The decision-making for which category a recommended change should fall into has been based on the level of support forthcoming during the stakeholder engagement and the opinion of the project consultant (based on his experience in the planning for new and upgraded aquatic facilities, and current industry trends).

#### 3.4.1.1 Changes Considered Mandatory for Inclusion in the Final Design

The 2015 Simon Consulting Report highlighted the following changes to be considered by Council in the final design:

1. *Increase the depth of the shallow end of the 25m pool to 1.1m from 1.0m, and provide a flat deep end surface 15m wide between the two sides of the pool. (Retain the deep end depth at 1.8m).*

2. *Increase the number of showers in the women's 'wet' change room – suggested ratio of amenities is 3-4 toilet pans and 8 showers.*

3. *Increase the provision of storage for the Learn to Swim program, the swim clubs and the underwater hockey club. Suggest a new combined storeroom space for all groups be provided in the northeast corner of the pool deck that could be excavated into the existing slope (with the internal area of the storeroom separately partitioned for each group using chain mesh, or similar).*

4. *Provide an Aquatics office/ lifeguard station with views over the pool deck.*

5. *Centralise the administration offices within the fully redevelopment Centre, with an option to consider being to swap the locations of the administration area and the 'dry' change rooms as currently shown in the plans.*

6. *Include the warm water program pool in Stage 1 by effectively combining Stages 1 & 2 as currently shown on the plans.*

7. *Make the proposed accessible change room fully compliant with the standards for a Changing Places facility, and ensure sufficient space exists inside the change room to accommodate motorised wheelchairs.*

8. *Incorporate the proposed additional indoor courts into the final design for the Centre redevelopment. (A condition of inclusion of this modification is that Council will investigate options for a preferred site for a new tennis clubroom to service the adjacent tennis courts).*

9. *Incorporate the concept design for a new bus parking area for the Wonthaggi North Primary School into the final site layout plan for the Centre redevelopment.*

10. *Incorporate car parking on the site of the Wonthaggi Croquet Club and reduce the car parking currently shown between the oval and the tennis courts. (A condition of inclusion of this modification is that Council will investigate options and determine a preferred site for a new croquet club facility in Wonthaggi, in conjunction with the Wonthaggi Croquet Club committee).*

11. *Include a path network around the redeveloped BCALC that ensures safe pedestrian access to the proposed new Centre entrance.*

12. *Include adequate provision for disabled car parking, and investigate options to include parking for a 12 seater and/or 20 seater bus adjacent to the proposed new Centre entrance*.

#### 3.4.1.2 Changes Requiring Further Consideration for Inclusion

The facility design changes that were raised in the Simon Consulting Report 2015 for further Council consideration were:

- Reduce the number of lanes for the 25m pool from 10 lanes to 8 lanes.
- Increase the size of the community meeting room, and include a kitchenette.
- Include a water slide in the Centre redevelopment.
- Include a sauna and/or steam room in the Centre redevelopment.
- Increase the size of the program/ exercise component of the Learn to Swim/ program pool.
- Allow for the deep end of the 25m pool to be 12m wide and flat, and lined with a tile appropriate for underwater hockey competition.
- Increase the spectator capacity of the pool hall, by possibly incorporating tiered

spectator seating above the group change rooms and amenities, or other option.

- Install fixed hoists to the proposed two pools.
- Incorporate an accessible change room in each of the four large communal change rooms planned for the Centre.
- Plan for the future use of the outdoor area north of the proposed new gym/ health club as a possible outdoor programmable space.

## 3.5 SGL Review of BCALC Redevelopment Component Options and Staging

In line with our project commission SGL have reviewed the proposed BCALC Redevelopment Component Options and Staging Plan taking into account:

- Recent consultation findings from the Simon Consulting 2015 Report.
- Review of current usage and revenue trends
- Review of successful aquatic industry trends and similar facility redevelopment in smaller population areas.
- Capacity of the existing facility and site to take the proposed redevelopment.
- Key functional and operational issues that need to be considered
- Other relevant issues

The review findings are summarized in the table on the next page.

*Table 3.3 BCALC Redevelopment SGL Components and Staging Review*

| Area | Component | Current Facility Provision | Redevelopment Plan Provision | 2015 Community Consultation Impacts | SGL Review | Proposed Staging | SGL Recommended Staging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aquatics | Competition Pool | 25m x 14m (6 lanes) 350m2 | • New 25m x 10 lanes (2.5m) so 25m x 25m (625m2).<br>• New plant to service new pool | • Mixed opinions on need for 10 lanes or 8 lanes.<br>• Need to change depths of 25m pool | • 10 lane 25m pool not justified as provides only lap swimming deep water area for limited user market.<br>• High capital cost and limited budget requires change to 8 lanes x 2.5m wide 25m x 20m (500m2).<br>• Recommended depth 1.1m to 1.8m.<br>• Ramp access down sideline closest to change facility access. | Stage One | • Stage One is recommended as main aquatic area required to be built. |
| | Warm Water/LTS Program Pool | Small toddlers pool 5m x 4m (20m2) so no current facility | • New LTS (13m x 4.5m = 58m2) and warm water program pool linked by access ramp (13m x 7m = 91m2).<br>• Ramp takes up 3m x 15m = 45m2 of non usable water.<br>• Total usable water 149m2 | • Need separate pool as all activities currently done in 25m pool<br>• Most requested facility<br>• Concern not big enough<br>• Needs to be done as 1st stage | • Largest current aquatics income comes from learn to swim and schools so area proposed is considered too small.<br>• High use of centre by older adults that will increase with aging of the population indicates warm water program area is also too small.<br>• SGL proposed pool area would be 20m x 15m (300m2) plus 1.5m ramp central to the two water areas to reduce ramp non programmable area<br>• Consider accessible spa at the end of the ramp and in warm water program pool | Stage Two | • Should be in stage one as this area has greatest capacity to increase aquatic revenue the most for LTS and warm water program use.<br>• Major negative business impact if done as second stage |
| | Water Play and Toddlers Pool | Small toddlers pool | • New water play and toddlers pool (7.5m x 18m = 135m2 approx.). | • Supported as a high priority activity | • Need to redesign based on area that may be available in pool hall with larger LTS/Warm Water Program Pool<br>• Need to consider zero depth to 300mm deep | Stage Two | • Should be in stage one as no shallow water for infants and small children |
| | Spa and Sauna | Not provided? | • Not provided | • Recommended to be considered/included | • High income activity area that links well to warm water program pool.<br>• One option is to link spa to warm water program pool and accessible by ramp.<br>• Locate sauna adjacent to warm water program pool | No Included | • Considered as stage one if included in warm water pool.<br>• Possible stage 2 extension if standalone design |
| | Waterslide/s | Not provided | • Not provided | • Recommended to be considered/included | • High requested adventure area by youth.<br>• High income area opportunity<br>• Aquatic trends indicate need to consider multiple slides to add variety and interest.<br>• Tower needs to be enclosed and linked to pool hall with covered slides outside pool hall<br>• Main cost is tower so slides can be staged | Not included | • Stage Two |

| Area | Component | Current Facility Provision | Redevelopment Plan Provision | 2015 Community Consultation Impacts | SGL Review | Proposed Staging | SGL Recommended Staging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aquatics (Continued) | 25m Pool Spectator Area | Not provided | 2 Rows of seats down side of 25m pool | • Requested consideration of more spectator seating | • Spectator areas are a high capital cost that are not used al the time.<br>• Centre size and population does not support major events pool so keep as planned | Stage One | Stage One |
| | Aquatic Storage | Small storage space | New larger storage space off pool hall | • Increase provision of aquatic storage.<br>• Ensure adequate storage near LTS and WW Program Pool | • Support need for increased size of storage | Stage One | Stage One |
| Health and Fitness | Gym/Weights Area | Small gym (18m x 11m = 198m2) located off main foyer. | New larger area gym at 630m2 provided in stage 2 development | • Supported new development | • Health and fitness membership is largest income source for current operations so need to consider how can expand gym and program room's a.s.a.p.<br>• Suggest consideration of redeveloping the current stadium as the new gym and program area due to lower cost and better opportunity to then locate new 2 indoor courts onsite (and also access them better). | Stage Three | Needs business impact review as key business area that needs to be done a.s.a.p. |
| | Program Rooms | Temporary portable building used as spin room ad stadium used as group fitness class area | 3 x program rooms (1 x 198m2, 1 x 116m2 and 1 x 113m2) | • Supported new development | • Group fitness is a major income source and profitable if spaces are large enough.<br>• Suggest consideration of redeveloping the current stadium (748m2) as the new gym and program area due to lower cost and better opportunity to then locate new 2 indoor courts onsite (and also access them better). | Stage Three | Needs review as key business area that needs to be done a.s.a.p. |
| Front Of House | Foyer/Reception and Administration | Shared space located to service both wet and dry areas | New modern entry and reception linking also to café and retail and administration areas | • Not raised in consultation | • Well designed and functionally laid out.<br>• Need to consider if new indoor sport courts are built how these are accessed and controlled from main entry | Stage One | Stage One |
| Indoor Sport | Indoor Sport Courts | Single court stadium | No future redevelopment proposed for indoor sport courts | • High priority to develop 2 new full size indoor sport courts | • Support the need for 2 indoor sport courts at the facility.<br>• Consider reusing the stadium as new gym and group fitness area (refit out) and develop new courts where new H&F areas proposed | Not Included in the proposed development | Needs review as if new H&F area uses exiting court new courts would be needed in line with this timing. |
| Amenities | Wet Change | Shared wet and dry change | Separate wet and dry change proposed | • Wet change proposed in stage 1 | • Adequate sized areas allowed for in the plans | Stage One | Need to be linked to wet activity area construction. |
| | Dry Change | Shared wet and dry change | Separate wet and dry change proposed | • Dry change proposed in stage 3 | • Adequate sized areas allowed for in the plans | Stage Three | Need to be linked to dry activity area construction. |
| | Family Change | One family change | 6 family/accessible change | • Proposed in stage one | • Excellent provision | Stage One | Support this provision |
| | Group Change | No facilities | 2 x group change | • Proposed in stage one | • Excellent provision | Stage One | Support this provision |
| Other Areas | Meeting Room | Small Room | Small meeting room | • Proposed in stage three | • Small area needs expanded space | Stage Three | Need to enlarge area |

## 3.6 Staged Development Business Impact

Once final facility components are confirmed and new layout plans completed then staged development needs to be guided by capital cost, available funding and direct business impacts.

Currently the staging plans proposed 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 being learn to swim, older adult programs and recreational swimming.

It is therefore essential that Council completes detailed business plans for the redevelopment and these be used to help identify usage, operational and financial impacts to help guide final staged development.



# 4 Phillip Island Aquatic Centre

## 4.1 Introduction

This section of the Aquatic Strategy looks at Phillip Island and the proposed Phillip Island Aquatic Centre that has been supported by the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc.

The section reviews previous feasibility studies and suggested plans and costs as well as proposes a future site selection process to help select the best and most successful site for a future aquatic leisure facility at the Island.

## 4.2 Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc.

A Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study (October 2010) was commissioned by the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc. (PIACF). Sport and Leisure Solutions Pty Ltd. completed the study and it's key findings and recommendations were used as background information by PIACF in their submission to a Policy Workshop of Council in March 2014.

The key findings of the feasibility study as listed in section 11 of the report included:

**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.

**Reasons for Development**

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.

- To promote and facilitate community health and fitness.
- The requirement to have facilities and programs that promote kids water safety, swimming development and competition.

**Site Location**

- The most obvious site is the one that is available at the Phillip Adventure Resort. However if alternative sites were made available in Cowes the consulting team does not believe there would a major impact on facility usage

**Facility Design**

- The facility should incorporate a 25m lap lane pool and a multipurpose aquatic space for learn to swim, hydrotherapy and leisure play.
- The facility should be designed to incorporate future health and fitness program areas.

**Capital Cost**

- A construction cost range of between $8M and $10M should be expected.
- Funding for construction of the centre should be a mix of local, state and federal government funding.
- A 2% aquatic facilities levy has been suggested as one option for funding development and operations.

**Operating Cost**

- The annual operating cost estimated from financial modeling will be a deficit in the vicinity of $220.000. It is highly unlikely that the facility will be able to operate at break even level in the foreseeable future.
- It is likely the operating cost will need to be underwritten by the Bass Coast Council

**Partnership Development**

- Development of a new facility that supports local community access can be justified from a social equity, health and community building perspective. However the issue of financial viability will continue to impact on Bass Coast Shire Council's willingness to develop an aquatic centre on Phillip Island.
- A funding model that minimises the impact on council's current and future service obligation and capital plans is critical to the development of the centre.
- The PIACFC should continue discussions with Bass Coast Council to ensure that the PIAC development is part of council's long term capital development plan

### 4.2.1 Future Facility Concepts

The Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc. in October 2014 developed new concept plans for a local aquatic centre as an extension to the Cowes Recreation Centre.

The concept was developed as part of a master plan review of the recreation reserve and saw a new indoor facility extension to the existing recreation centre incorporating:

- New indoor 25m lap pool
- Multi-purpose warm water program and learn to swim pool with water play area
- New indoor sport court
- New linking foyer and amenities

The site plan showing the Cowes Recreation Centre redevelopment is listed on the next page.




## 4.3 Current Status of PIAC Project Development.

The Phillip Island Aquatic Working Group met on the 31st October 2104. The meeting was the first meeting since the Council resolution in May to commit to developing an aquatic centre on Phillip Island (under certain conditions). At the meeting discussion about the sites and the level of development was raised.

So far the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Incorporated has independently prepared plans for an aquatic centre as an extension to the Phillip Island Leisure Centre at Cowes Recreation Reserve (see section 4.2).

A detailed project plan needs to be prepared and a revised project terms of reference has been drafted by Council officers for the group to consider.

Though the work done to date has assisted in getting the project into consideration of Councils aquatic strategy there is still detailed work to be undertaken by both Council and the working group in terms of final components, the selection of a site and the development of concept plans and estimated capital costs for the development of an aquatic centre on Phillip Island.

For example the SGL review has highlighted the lack of shallow water for infants and toddlers as well as lack of water play area that should be considered in the final component review.

Section 4.4 of this report has been developed to assist with site selection using accepted industry successful aquatic centre site selection criteria.

Based on the current project status Council Officers have recommended that at this point in time it is not appropriate to make any grant application for the development of an aquatic centre for Phillip Island.

Section five of this report will recommend the actions proposed for the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre as part of the Council's Future Aquatic Strategy 2015 to 2024.

## 4.4 Successful Aquatic Centre Site Selection

The project brief required SGL to highlight its successful aquatic facilities site selection criteria system to enable the Phillip Island Aquatic Working Group to use it for future aquatic facility site assessment.

The SGL Aquatic Leisure Site Selection System was originally developed by the company in 2001 to assist a council with determining the best site for a future aquatic facility from 18 nominated sites.

Over the past 14 years the SGL site selection criteria system has been updated/modified and has assisted the company and more than 150 projects select sites for community facility development.

To use the site selection criteria you need to first collect a basic set of similar information for each site for the preliminary review of all sites. This includes:

- Site area available for development
- Land ownership,
- Any conditions of use
- Available site services and their capacities
- Town planning and neighborhood impacts information
- Capacity for partnership funding/development
- Other relevant site review data available

### 4.4.1 Site Review Process

To help in reviewing sites the recommended process is to work through a three-staged process to first shortlist all sites into potential and non-potential sites and then stage 2 complete more detailed assessment of the sites to determine final priority sites for more detailed investigation. (Stage 3). Stage three then involves detailed investigation of the shortlisted sites to choose a final best site.

The recommended three-stage site review process is:

- **Stage One: General Site Review:** General site review against the three main site priority criteria to assist in determining shortlisted and non-compliant sites. This can be done using a scoring system (rating 1 to 10/criteria) or a yes/no to start with.

.

- **Stage Two Review of Potential Sites:** Complete a more detailed review of all sites that were highlighted in stage one as potential sites by overlaying a range of specific criteria to determine a shortlist of priority sites for detailed investigation This can be done using a scoring system (rating 1 to 10/criteria).

- **Stage Three: Detailed Review of Priority Sites:** Complete detailed reviews of the priority sites including available service reviews, ground condition review, contamination soil review, indicative cost of development etc. to help determine the best site. This can also be done also using a scoring system that was used for stage two.

The recommended site selection scoring system to be used is based on assessment such as:

- 10 points = Meets every criteria and it is the best site
- 8 to 9 points = Meets most criteria 80% to 90%
- 6 to 7 points = Meets 60% to 70% of criteria.
- 4 to 5 points = Meets only 40% to 50% of criteria
- 2 to 3 points = Meets only 20% to 30% of criteria.
- 1 point = meets 10% or less criteria
- 0 point = does not meet any criteria.

### 4.4.2 Aquatic Leisure Centre Site Review Criteria

The consultant team and council have developed a range of site assessment criteria that have been structured into stage one Site Criteria (must be able to be met to be in the potential site selection list) and then Stage two Site Criteria (should be able to be met in the stage two review to a high standard/capability).

The top 2 to 3 sites after stage one and two should proceed to the stage three detailed site reviews.

### 4.4.3 Stage One Primary Site Review Criteria

The stage one site review criteria SGL recommend to be used for the Bass Coast Shire Council area are as listed below:

**Criteria 1: Size of Site to Meet Development Requirements:** It has been assumed at this early stage of planning that a Philip Island Aquatic Leisure Centre would be of similar size to centres built for populations of 5,000 to 12,000 people.

We have used as industry checkpoints aquatic facilities built at Yarra Junction (5,000 people), Leongatha (8,000 people) and Ocean Grove (10,000 to 12,000 people). This would see the size requirements for the centre of approximately 3,500 m2 to 4,000m2 as well as land for adequate parking and buffer landscape and future expansion.

Based on assumed building areas and car parking the total development area required would be in the order of:

| Component | Estimated Area |
|---|---|
| Building Area | 3,500 to 4,000m² |
| Outdoor Area and Future Expansion | 1,000 m² to 2,000m2 |
| Car Park Area/Buffer Zone | 4,000 to 6,000 m² |
| **Total Development Area** | **0.85 hectares to 1.2 hectares** |

**Note:** These allowances may be modified for sites that allow the development to be built as an extension to an existing building or already have suitable car parking provision.

**Criteria 2: Public Transport Access:** Site being accessible by the public bus service that goes to and from Cowes and across the Island.

**Criteria 3: High Visibility of Site:** Having a highly visible location to ensure the centre is well recognised, promoted and easily available to all. Industry trends clearly indicate Aquatic Leisure facilities that are built on highly visible sites receive higher usage due to their easy access and constant reminder of the facility.

This is very important for facilities in tourist zones with high numbers of daily visitors that do not live in the area. This is important not just for the financial viability of the centre, but also for the positive health and social outcomes that regular participation in physical activity will bring.
**Criteria 4: Unsuitable land:** Sites not suitable due to previous uses such as land fill or has contamination or are undulated and require significant earth works or no services close by etc.

The review can be simply done and scored by:

- Yes meets criteria or
- No does not meet criteria:

These four stage one site review criteria are identified as essential to any site in the stage one review and not being able to meet all of the four main criteria would fail the site in the stage one review and only sites that meet all 4 criteria should be regarded as potential sites.

Sites that do not meet the criteria should not be considered in any detailed site reviews.

### 4.4.4 Stage Two Secondary Site Criteria

For sites that meet all stage one site criteria are called potential sites and are then assessed against more detailed range of aquatic leisure centre industry successful site selection criteria involving a stage two site review of 12 site selection criteria.

This process requires more detailed information to be collected on each potential site

It is recommended that a 10-point scoring system for each criterion to be used to score each site as listed at the end of section 4.2. This will allow clear delineation between high scoring sites and low scoring sites.

The 12 stage two site selection criteria are:

**Criteria 5:** Planning/Zoning: Capability of site to meet all current and proposed planning requirements for a facility, which can expect (100,000 to 200,000 visits per year).

**Criteria 6:** Site Services: Aiming for services to be on site or closely located to minimise cost and to ensure facility can be serviced to the following approximate level.

| | |
|---|---|
| a) Electrical: | 500KVA |
| b) Water: | Sufficient for fire fighting purposes |
| c) Gas: | 1500-2000KW (for pool and general air handling) |
| d) Sewer: | For filter, backwash, concourse wash down etc. |
| e) Storm water: | To meet building, car park and land water run off. |

**Criteria 7:** Site Access and Traffic Impacts: Most site visitors (80% to 90%) will come by car so there needs to be adequate site access and provision of appropriate car parking, bus parking and group drop off and pick up.

**Criteria 8:** Value of Site: Cost to either purchase or create the development on the site can be compared to determine the likely development impost at each site.

**Criteria 9:** Passing Traffic: Position of site to major traffic zones levels.

**Criteria 10:** Location to Catchment Population: Location and how close it caters for current and projected project area population (Primary/Secondary catchment zones).

**Criteria 11:** Neighborhood Effects: Rating of any negative neighborhood impacts likely to occur from the development in relation to surrounding neighborhood.

**Criteria 12:** Compatible Use of Site: Close development link to existing or other site users/uses or adjoining or close by facilities including the clustering of community facilities.

**Criteria 13:** Image of Site: Does site image complement the proposed development? (I.e. visual aesthetics).

**Criteria 14:** Shared Development Opportunities: Are there any shared development or management opportunities? I.e. commercial/community partnerships.

**Criteria 15:** Potential of Part Land Sale or Lease: Does the site have extra area suitable for sale/lease to assist with development/funding opportunities?

**Criteria 16:** Commercial Potential of the Site: Is the site commercially attractive to other funding parties or commercial investors?

These criteria and the scores can be documented in a simple matrix as follows to enable sites to be scored from highest to lowest and across criteria as well.

### 4.4.5 Stage Two Site Selection Matrix

The stage two site selection matrix listed below has been developed to show how sites can be scored and compared against each other for each of the twelve stage two criteria.

| Name of Site | 5 Planning | 6 Services | 7 Access and Traffic | 8 Site Value | 9 Passing Traffic | 10 Population Access | 11 Area Impacts | 12 Link to Other Site Users | 13 Image of Site | 14 Shared Develop Opt. | 15 Land Sales? | 16 Commercial Site | Total Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Site 1; | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site 2: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site 3: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site 4: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site 5: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site 6: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The sites are then listed in priority order by total score and the top three to four sites with the highest scores (priority sites) can then be referred to a stage three detailed site review for investigations (that may require professional services assistance).

Subject to the scores there may only be one or two priority sites (high score sites) and a lot of low scoring sites so only forward high score sites to the stage three review as this can be a high cost review stage and the assessment process competed in stage one should clearly show priority sites over other sites.

### 4.4.6 Stage Three Priority Site Reviews

The final site review stage looks at the more detailed information in relation to:

- Site ground levels to test if some sites will cost more to develop in due to level changes and need for ground leveling or terracing.
- Available level/costs of services for the development and site,
- Ground condition review including soil tests for foundations.
- Contamination soil review to test for development sites that may have contaminated soil.
- Design opportunities - Needs design input and tests best ESD orientation options, design and component functional options and any restrictions to design such as site levels etc.
- Indicative cost of development – Needs cost control advice to see if sites have any cost issues related to development/design.

The stage three review is a detailed review for each site and each site is compared by the key review criteria to identify the best site or alternative site (if there are two sites very similar) only so future design and concept development can be completed to decide on the best layout option.



# 5 Future Bass Coast Shire Aquatic Strategy

## 5.1 Introduction

This section brings together all of the study findings into a future Council Aquatic Strategy that can assist in prioritizing actions and development based on a strategy for the next ten years being from 2015 to 2024.

Please note that this is a starting point to the future aquatic strategy and as final sites and plans for both aquatic facilities are updated then capital costs and business plans can be completed. This will then provide data on funding required and then funding strategies can be developed and implemented.

Ultimately the availability of sites, finalizing of plans and funding and planning approvals will see the need to constantly modify and update the proposed aquatic strategy. The aquatic strategy in section 5.3 will require updating once capital costs and funding is known for the suggested actions listed in the plan at each of the facilities.

## 5.2 How Aquatic Facility Trends Impact the BCSC Future Aquatic Strategy

The aquatic facility trends listed in section 2.2 of this report indicate that successful aquatic facilities require:

- **Multiple water areas with different depths and varied water temperature to meet the range of key user markets are a key facility requirement**. For example children require shallower and hotter water than adults swimming laps who require deeper and colder water for such activities. Older adults on the other hand require deeper and hotter water for gentle exercise, walking in water etc.
- **All aquatic facilities need to be designed to meet the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation** which will determine placement of water areas, divisions and barriers between deep and shallow water and amenities and pool hall entry etc.
- **Development of aquatic facilities at high profile sites and built in association with other facilities (one stop shop- cluster and connect facilities)** allows for reduced operational costs due to the opportunities for shared management and services, user attraction to the same site and cross selling of facilities and shared service areas such as reception, retail, food and beverage, car parking and plant rooms.
- **A mix of community and commercial activities at the one site** can assist in helping reduce the operating losses of aquatic facilities. Commercial activities such as health and fitness gyms, group fitness rooms, wellness and health centres and cafes/retail outlets all need to be co-located at Aquatic Leisure Centres.

These key items need to help guide the future Bass Coast Shire Aquatic Strategy

## 5.3 Future BCSC Aquatic Strategy Ten Year Program

The future recommended BCSC Aquatic Strategy Ten Year Program and associated tasks and actions are listed in the following table.

*Table 5.1 BCSC Aquatic Strategy Ten Year Program*

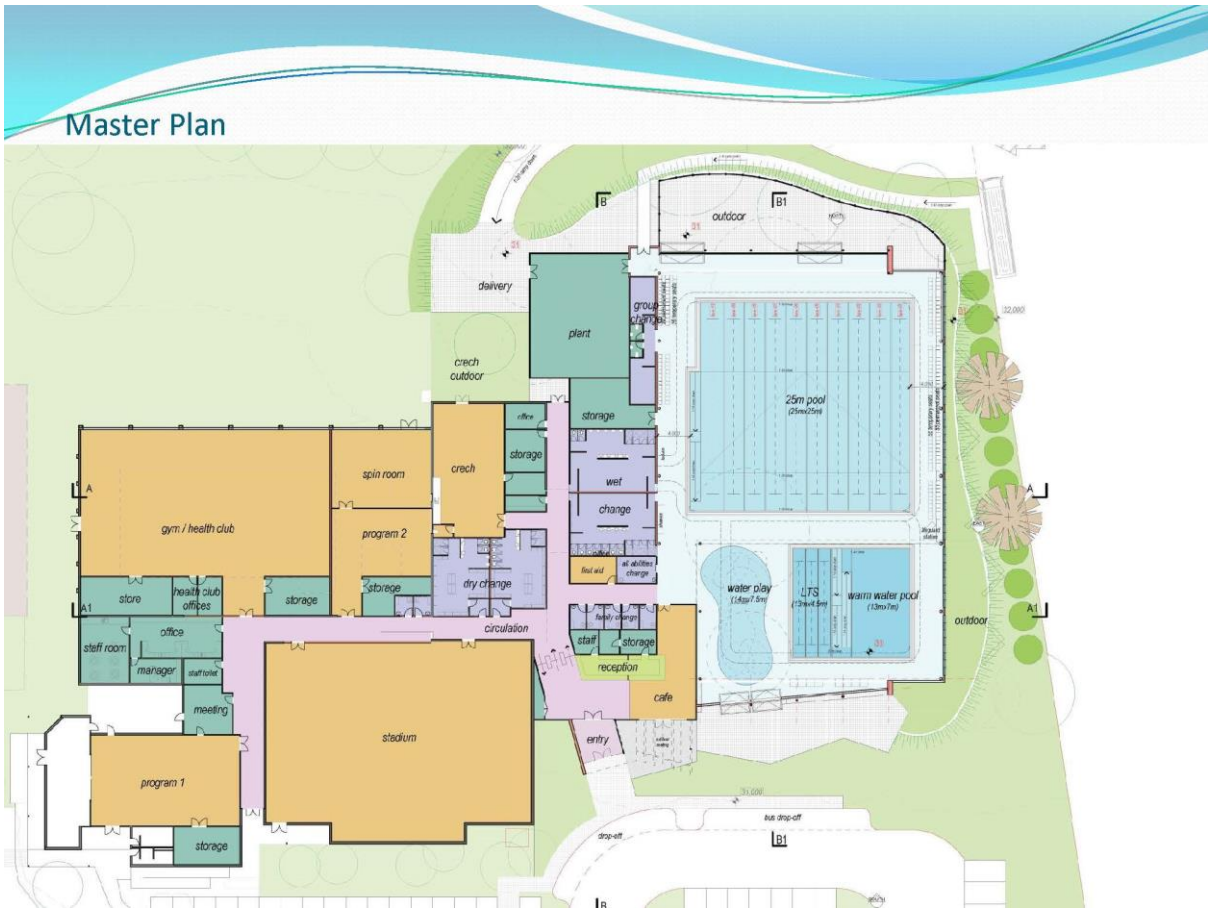
| Facility | Action | Approx. Cost | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bass Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre (BCALC) | 1. Complete facility component review in association with development of a business plan to guide detailed operational impacts/options | $10,000 | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2. Complete final design, staging and capital cost plans | Covered in design fee | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3. Complete draft internal and external funding strategy | Internal cost | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4. Complete applications for external funding and confirm internal funding capability. | Internal cost | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5. Subject to external and internal funding available set up project staging and capital works funding plan to guide future development plans | Internal cost | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6. Complete final design and documentation for stage one | Covered in design fee | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 7. Tender stage one | TBD | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 8. Commence construction of stage one works | TBD | | | ▯ | | | | | | | |
| | 9. Complete stage one works and open new facility areas | TBD | | | | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 10. Update business and operational plans for remaining stages | $10,000 | | | ▯ | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 11. Undertake detailed design of remaining stages | TBD | | | ▯ | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 12. Seek external funding for remaining stages | Internal cost | | | | ▯ | ▯ | | | | | |
| | 13. Subject to external/internal funding available set up project staging/capital works funding plan to guide future staging development. | Internal cost | | | | | | ▯ | | | | |
| | 14. Tender remaining staged works | TBD | | | | | | ▯ | | | | |
| | 15. Commence construction | TBD | | | | | | | ▯ | | | |
| | 16. Complete works/open new areas | TBD | | | | | | | | ▯ | | |

| Facility | Action | Approx. Cost | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Phillip Island Aquatic Centre (PIAC)** | 1. Complete independent feasibility update, facility component review and business plan | $15,000 | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2. Complete PIAC site assessment review | $5,000 | ▯ | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3. Council to review PIAC feasibility and site assessment and confirm final development | Internal cost | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 4. Develop PIAC concepts and indicative capital cost plan | To be Tendered | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 5. Complete community consultation on proposed design and capital costs. | Internal cost | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 6. Develop internal and external funding strategy for PIAC. | Internal cost | | ▯ | | | | | | | | |
| | 6. Complete applications for external funding and confirm internal funding capability. | Internal cost | | | ▯ | | | | | | | |
| | 7. Subject to external and internal funding available set up project staging and capital works funding plan to guide future development plans | Internal cost | | | ▯ | | | | | | | |
| | 8. Complete final design and documentation for stage one | Covered in design fee | | | | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 9. Tender stage one | TBD | | | | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 10. Commence construction of stage one works | TBD | | | | ▯ | | | | | | |
| | 11. Complete stage one works and open new facility areas | TBD | | | | ▯ | ▯ | | | | | |
| | 12. Update business and operational plans for remaining stages | $10,000 | | | | | ▯ | | | | | |
| | 13. Undertake detailed design of remaining stages | TBD | | | | | ▯ | ▯ | | | | |
| | 14. Seek external funding for remaining stages | Internal cost | | | | | | ▯ | | | | |
| | 15. Subject to external/internal funding available set up project staging/capital works funding plan to guide future staging development. | Internal cost | | | | | | ▯ | | | | |
| | 16 Tender remaining staged works | TBD | | | | | | | ▯ | | | |
| | 17. Commence construction | TBD | | | | | | | | ▯ | | |
| | 18 Complete works/open new areas | TBD | | | | | | | | ▯ | ▯ | |

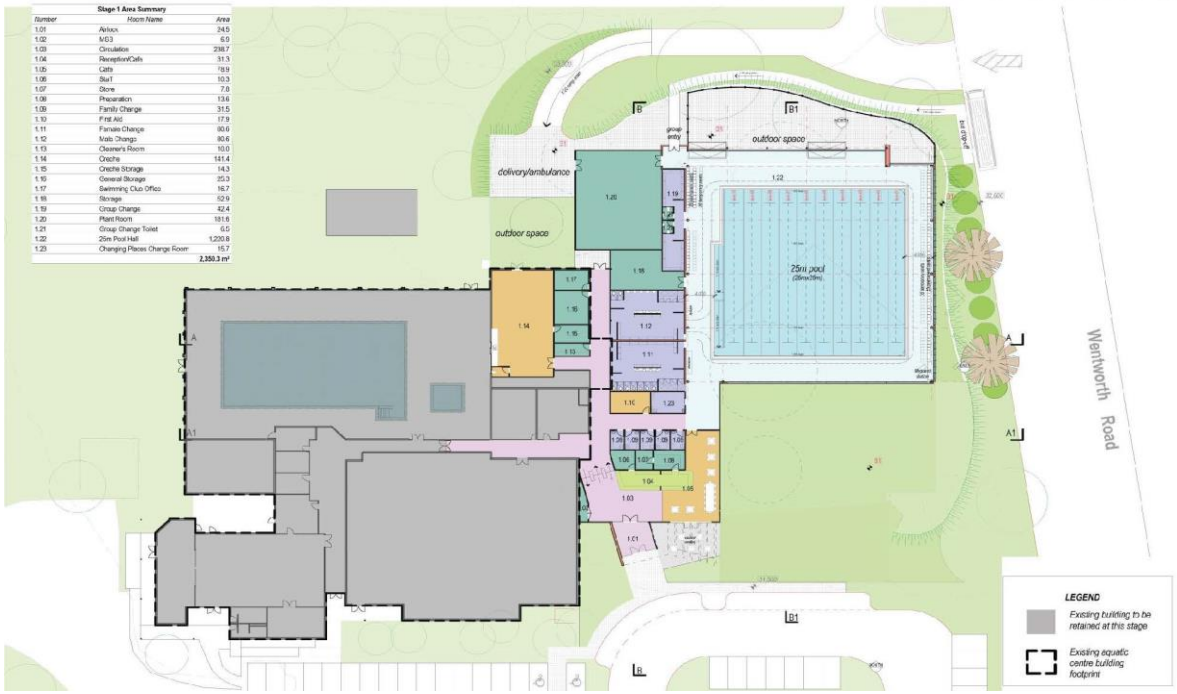
Note: The actions may require different time allocations and all development phases are reliant on funding availability, permit and planning applications and acceptance of tenders.

# Appendix One:  BCALC Development Plans 2015

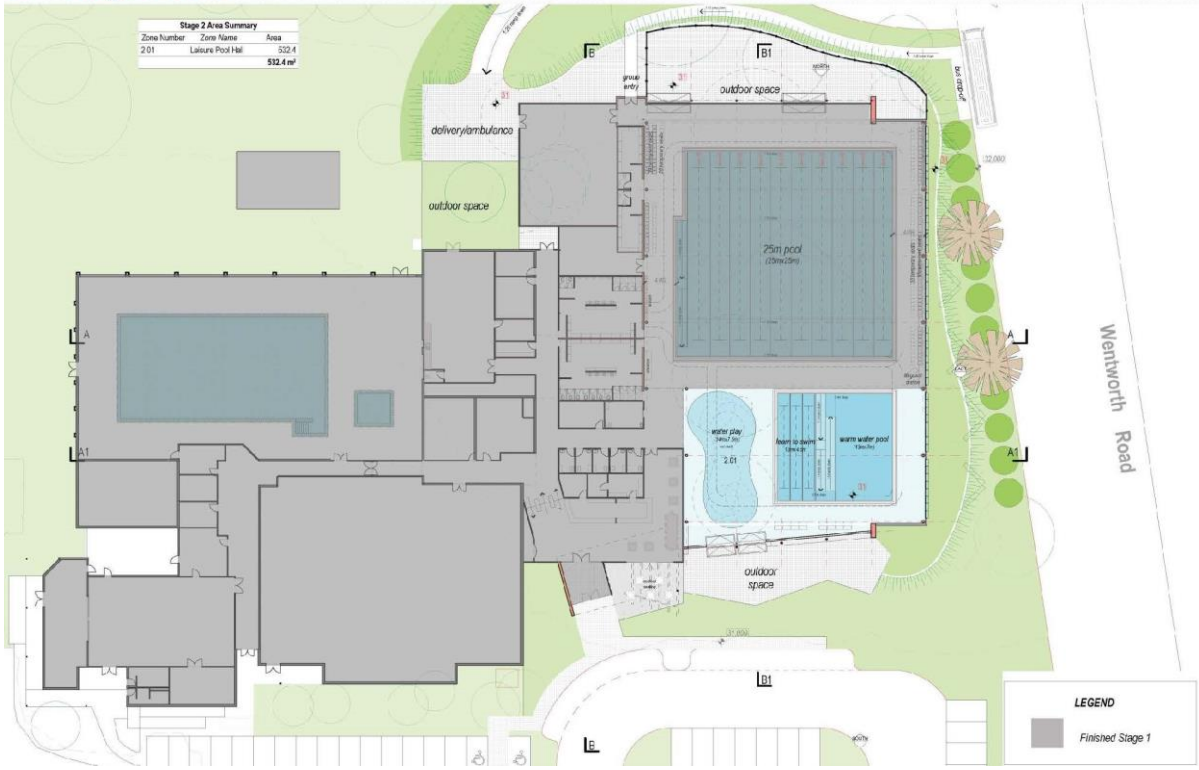


## Stage 1 Plan




## Stage 2 Plan



## Stage 3 Plan


Stage 3 Area Summary
Zone Number | Zone Name | Area
3.01 | Stadium | 751.3
3.02 | Circulation | 147.6
3.03 | Female Change | 65.3
3.04 | Male Change | 64.8
3.05 | Dis. Change | 5.8
3.06 | Dis. Change | 5.6
3.07 | Storage | 28.5
3.08 | Program 2 | 116.1
3.09 | Spin Room | 113.6
3.10 | Storage | 38.3
3.11 | Gym | 567.7
3.12 | Health Club Office | 14.4
3.13 | Health Club Office | 14.4
3.14 | Storage | 54.3
3.15 | Staff Room | 48.6
3.16 | Office | 54.1
3.17 | Manager | 18.9
3.18 | Staff Toilets | 16.3
3.19 | Meeting | 34.9
3.20 | Program 1 | 168.2
3.21 | Storage | 40.4
2,389.1 m²
delivery/ambulance
outdoor space
outdoor space
25m pool
courtyard
tennis club
female
A
A1
B
B1
B1

# Addendum

*(September 2025)*

Since the adoption of the Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy in 2015, progress has been made to deliver recommendations outlined in the Strategy with feasibility work completed.

Feasibility Studies and Reports since adoption include:

- Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study (adopted 2021)
- Phillip Island Aquatic and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study (adopted 2021)
- Bass Coast Economic Impact Study
- Bass Coast Aquatics Economic and Funding Strategy
- Bass Coast Aquatics Funding Strategy
- Bass Coast Leisure Centre Facility Asset Management Plan (FAMP)

The Facility Asset Management Plan (FAMP) for the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre outlines the condition, life span, and renewal costs of components, along with annual maintenance and renewal requirements to sustain existing service delivery.

The FAMP findings identified many components throughout the building are approaching end of life and significant renewals are required over the next 10 years, which will require financial investment of approximately $10 million to ensure existing level of service provision. The investment does not look to upgrade or increase the level of service or service quality to the community.

Additionally, since 2015, the Wonthaggi North East Precinct Structure Plan has been gazetted, altering the population profile of Wonthaggi for the future. The Structure Plan will allow for 5,000 new dwellings and approximately 12,000 new residents within the Shire. Population growth will place further demand on the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre's capacity to meet community demand.

Since adoption of the feasibility studies in 2021, Council has continued to advocate for a 2-pool concurrent delivery Strategy through advocacy and campaigning work. Advocacy efforts included:

- Ministerial Visits to discuss the project
- Inclusion into the Advocacy Strategy
- Budget bid discussions with electoral nominees
- One Gippsland Pipeline Projects
- Advocacy to Sport and Recreation Victoria

To date advocacy efforts have failed to secure the funding required to deliver 2-pools concurrently. During advocacy discussions, Council was provided feedback to prioritise a single pool for initial delivery.

# Addendum

*(September 2025)*

**Key Considerations**

1. Since 2015, there is a further forecast growth to population due to the gazetting of the Wonthaggi North East Precinct Structure Plan. This directly impacts the total population of Wonthaggi, increasing it by an additional 12,000 residents. This will place ongoing pressure on the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre to meet community needs.

2. The existing single aquatic centre in Bass Coast is approaching end of life and significant component maintenance renewal and repair works to deliver the current level of service (no increase in provision), that is currently inadequate for the Bass Coast Shire population.

3. Advocacy efforts for a 2-pool concurrent delivery Strategy have failed to achieve funding, with feedback from funding bodies requesting Council develop a prioritisation plan and advocate for a single pool to be delivered first.

4. Risks of retaining a concurrent 2-pool delivery model strategy include:
    a. *Funding Risk* – Continued pursuit of two centres simultaneously does not align with state or federal funding feedback. Continuing advocacy in this manner presents a high risk of securing no funding, delaying both projects indefinitely.
    b. *Asset Risk* – The Wonthaggi facility is approaching end-of-life. Deferring its redevelopment to pursue both centres concurrently presents risks to service failure and sudden closure, leaving the Shire without a functioning aquatic facility.
    c. *Community Service Risk* – Demand on aquatic provision will continue to increase as population grows, especially in Wonthaggi. An inability to provide adequate service provision creates a risk of higher community dissatisfaction, reduced participation, and poorer health outcomes.
    d. *Financial Risk* – Attempting to fund two major facilities concurrently, in addition to the financial commitment required through FAMP findings, places unsustainable pressure on Council's capital program and increases long-term debt exposure.
    e. *Strategic Alignment Risk* – Persisting with a 2-pool concurrent delivery strategy against the advice of funding bodies undermines Council's advocacy credibility and weakens Council's ability to secure external investment.

# Addendum

*(September 2025)*

## Delivery Prioritisation Sequencing

To ensure continuity of aquatic and leisure services to the community, council needs to move to a staged delivery model.

*Stage One – Wonthaggi (Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre)*

> Redevelopment prioritised to address urgent asset renewal needs, secure ongoing service delivery, and support Wonthaggi's projected population growth.

*Stage Two – Phillip Island Aquatic and Leisure Centre*

> Planning and advocacy for Phillip Island will recommence following completion of the Wonthaggi redevelopment. This sequencing will provide long-term equity of access while ensuring the Shire retains a functional aquatic facility during the transition.

Sequencing in this order will also ensure that vital aquatic, recreation and leisure services continue to be delivered to residents and visitors in the Bass Coast Shire.

## Conclusion

The 2015 Strategy outlined a vision for two aquatic centres to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population. While that vision remains valid, funding realities, asset condition, and population growth now requires a sequenced approach to delivery.

By prioritising the delivery of the Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre first, Council will safeguard service delivery, respond to community growth, and position itself strongly for subsequent delivery of the Phillip Island Aquatic facility. In response to concerns with the current building, funding has been allocated in the 2025/2026 financial year for detailed designs.

# Bass Coast Aquatic Strategy 2015 to 2024
***Amended***

**Document Information**

| | |
|---|---|
| Type | Council Strategy |
| Mayor | <br>Cr Rochelle Halstead |
| Date Adopted | Council Meeting 18 February 2026 |
| Responsible Officer | Manager Major Projects & Property |
| Version Number | 2 |

**Revision History**

| Date | Version | Revision Description | Administered |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24 June 2015 | 1 | Adopted | Council |
| 18 February 2026 | 2 | Adopted as amended | Council |