A photograph of two children swimming in a pool, seen from behind. The water is splashing around them, and the background is a blurred outdoor pool setting with green lane markers. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

LAKE MACQUARIE AQUATIC FACILITIES STRATEGY

Adopted by Council 24 April 2023

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal People, the traditional custodians of the land over which the Aquatics Facility Strategy relates.

We remember and respect the Ancestors who cared for and nurtured this Country.

Dhumaan ngayin ngarrakalu kirraanan barayidin.

It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters.

Ngarrakalumba yuludaka bibayilin barayida baaduka.

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal people and Elders past, present and future.

Lake Macquarie City Council dhumaan Awabakala ngarrakal yalawaa, yalawan, yalawanan.

Wording by the Aboriginal Reference Group and translated by Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Our enviable location near picturesque mountains, coast and lake naturally promotes an active lifestyle, and as a Council we pride ourselves on providing sport and recreation facilities that support this.

To ensure our swim centres meet our community needs in the future, we've developed this Aquatic Facilities Strategy. This document provides a 20-year framework to guide the development of our six swim centres at Speers Point, Charlestown, Morisset, Swansea, West Wallsend and Toronto.

Most of our community lives within a 15-minute drive of one of our swim centres, and this strategy focuses on improving and upgrading our swim centres to meet everyone's needs.

The strategy is recommending the addition of new indoor learn to swim pools at three of our swim centres to ensure the essential lifesaving skill of swimming can be offered to even more people. Improvements and updates have been identified to offer enhanced accessibility for people of all abilities.

The strategy also outlines steps to increase programming opportunities for competitive swim squads, water polo, aqua aerobic classes, lap swimmers and gentle exercise.

We recognise the important role our swim centres play in informal recreation, where family and friends can come together to swim, relax and have fun. This strategy supports this, outlining measures such as expanding existing water play zones, and offering other new facilities to test the limits of our youth and young at heart.

I am excited to see this strategy implemented over the coming years, and to watch our swim centres grow and thrive.

Cr Kay Fraser

Mayor, Lake Macquarie City Council



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1. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

1.1. WHY AN AQUATIC FACILITIES STRATEGY?

Lake Macquarie City Council currently owns six swim centres. The swim centres provide important recreational swimming, lap swimming, aquatic fitness and water safety/learn to swim opportunities for Lake Macquarie residents.

Council has commissioned a new Aquatic Facilities Strategy to replace its existing Pool Service Delivery Model, which is now outdated and no longer reflects Council and community aspirations and needs.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

Deliver an Aquatic Facilities Strategy that provides the strategic direction for the provision, development and management of Council's swim centres for the next 20 years.

1.2. WHAT DOES THIS STRATEGY COVER?

An aquatic facility is a man-made body of water used for recreation, leisure and adventure, fitness and training, education and therapy, and are available for public use, not domestic swimming pools.

Council currently owns six (6) aquatic facilities at:

- Charlestown Swim Centre
- Swansea Swim Centre
- Speers Point Swim Centre
- Toronto Swim Centre
- Morisset Swim Centre
- West Wallsend Swim Centre.

The strategy does not cover:

- Ocean pools
- Education owned pools
- Commercial pools
- Park related water play parks/ lagoons
- Surf parks.

1.3. WHERE DOES THE AQUATIC FACILITIES STRATEGY FIT?

The Aquatic Facilities Strategy is underpinned by a number of volumes and supporting documents, including:



Background Report



Community Engagement Report



Analysis Report

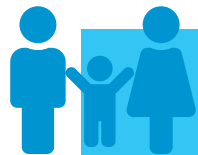
The Lake Macquarie Local Strategic Planning Statement is underpinned by a number of strategic documents including the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. The graphic below illustrates the Aquatic Facilities Strategy placement within the broader Council context:





2. OUR CITY

As of 2021 there are an estimated 208,615 residents living within the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area. Lake Macquarie age profile compared to NSW shows that:



50-59 years

The largest age group in Lake Macquarie is the 50-59 years cohorts



Lake Macquarie has significantly less 20 to 39 year olds than NSW

The Lake Macquarie population is ageing, with significantly more people aged 60 to 79 than NSW



12.2%
children aged 0 to 9

11.92%
teenagers and adolescents (aged 10 to 19)

238,180

estimated population in 2041

population increase

30,015



98.6% growth

The largest growth is expected in age cohorts above 80 years, with the 90-94 years cohort expected to experience an increase of 1,697 people between 2021 and 2036

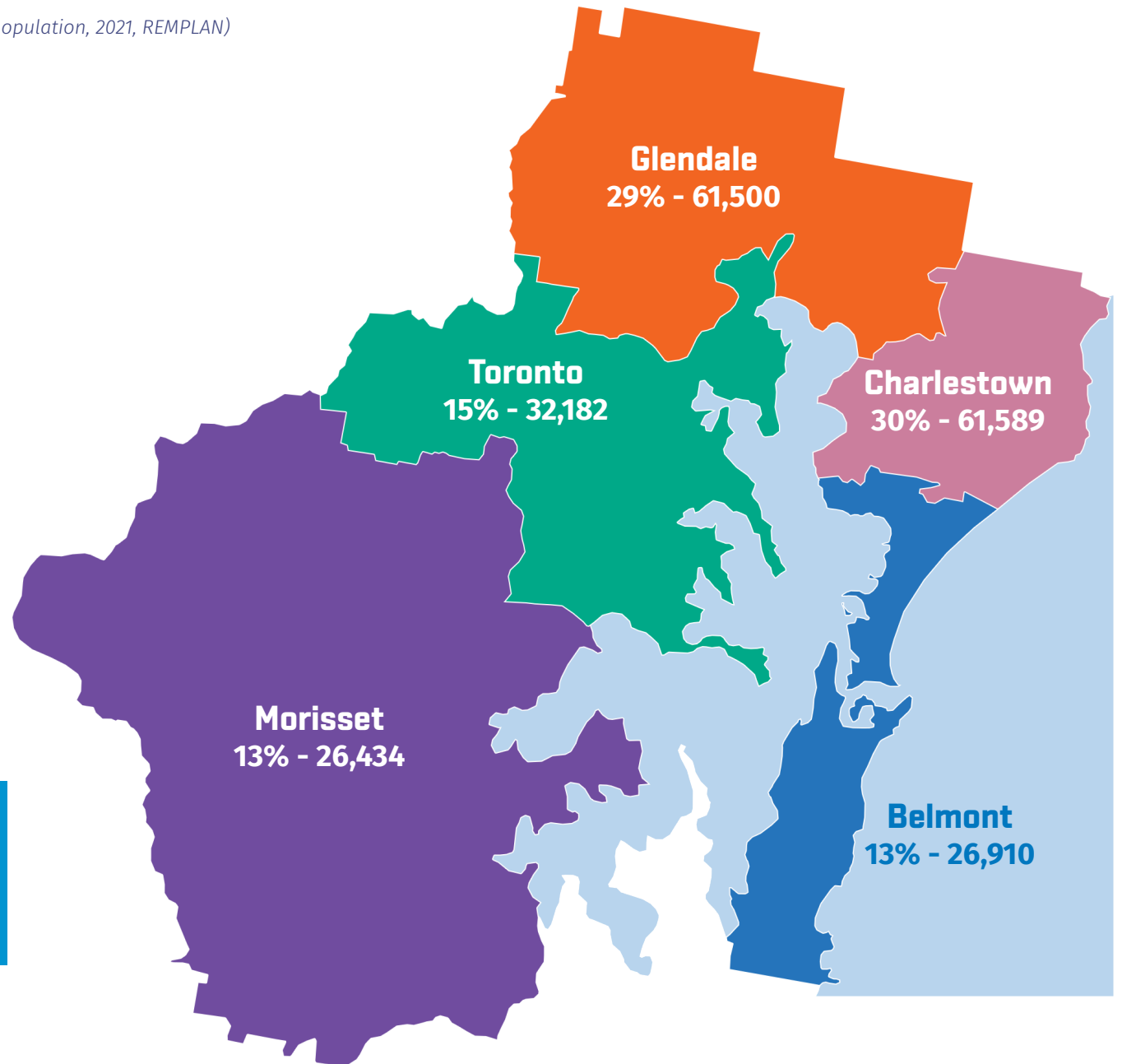
84.2% growth

This is followed by 3,031 people for the 85-89 year cohort



The largest population growth is estimated to be in the **Glendale and Morisset** planning catchments. This suggests there will increasing demand at Speers Point, West Wallsend and Morisset Swim Centres.

2021 population distribution by catchment (estimated population, 2021, REMPLAN)



The population of Lake Macquarie is predicted to grow by 30,015 from 208,165 in 2021 to 238,180 in 2041.

3. EVIDENCE FOR ACTION

3.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF AQUATIC FACILITIES

Our aquatic, parks, sport and recreation facilities are critical for community health and wellbeing, helping to benefit our community:



Physically and **mentally** by promoting physical activity and active lifestyles, reducing illness and disease, improving mental health and creating a sense of wellbeing



Socially by generating stronger and more connected communities with improved social interaction and inclusion.



Environmentally by developing attractive well-planned settings that encourage active transport and the use of our aquatic facilities and leisure services. This helps to reduce temperature, mitigate urban heat island effects, improve air quality ecosystems and biodiversity.



Economically by assisting to reduce health care cost through reduction in disease and illness associated with lack of physical activity and social interaction, and providing local employment and investment opportunities.



The aquatic industry provides a social return on investment of \$4.87 for every dollar spent operating an aquatic facility in a capital city or \$2.18 in regional Australia¹.

¹ Health, Social and Economic Value Of Aquatic Industry, Royal Life Saving Australia (Pricewaterhouse Coopers), 2021



3.2. TRENDS IN AQUATIC FACILITIES

3.2.1. Aquatic and leisure facility usage trends

Over the past decade, there has been a greater emphasis on the development of a variety of water spaces within aquatic centres, including the components that contribute to successful contemporary aquatic & leisure facilities summarised below:



Facility trends indicate several common success factors for aquatic centres:



One-stop-shop



Reduce operating losses



Programmable spaces



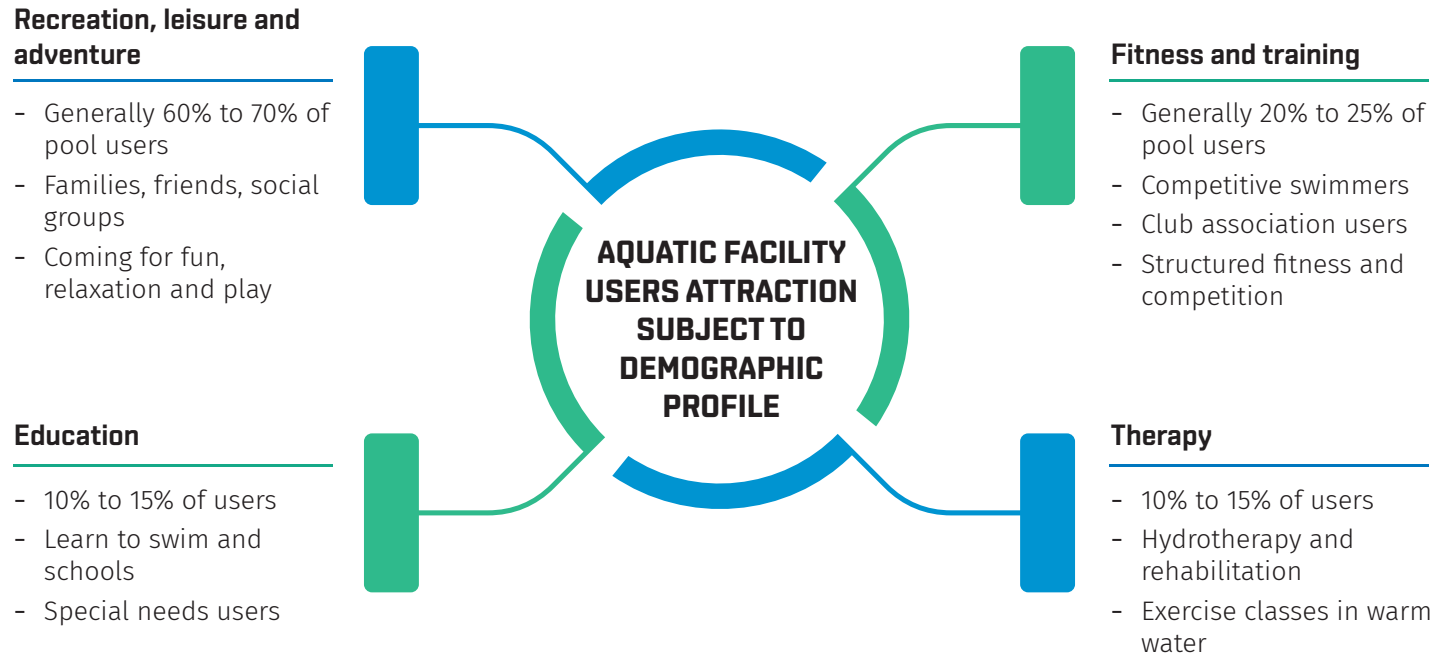
Community/social hub

Successful and sustainable contemporary aquatics and leisure facilities are also community destinations and meeting points for various physical and social activities.

The trends in aquatic facilities are based on the extensive experience of Otium team members who have been responsible for planning, managing or overseeing many of the major recreational facility redevelopments in Australia over the last 20 years.

3.3. MARKET ATTRACTIVENESS

There are four distinct key user markets that need to be attracted to a facility if it is to achieve high use and sustainable operations. These are outlined in the graphic below:



The trends in aquatic facilities are based on the extensive experience of Otium team members who have been responsible for planning, managing or overseeing many of the major recreational facility redevelopments in Australia over the last 20 years.



4. AQUATIC FACILITIES IN LAKE MAC

Council owns six swim centres in Lake Macquarie. A review of these identified these three key findings:



Our swim centres have a good geographical spread across Lake Macquarie



Most swim centres offer a similar facility mix and predominantly cater for lap swimmers



Four swim centres have aging infrastructure and will require intervention over the next 20 years

4.1. OUR SWIM CENTRES








Below is a summary of the major facilities available at each of the six swim centres.

LEGEND

-  Outdoor 50m pool
-  Outdoor 25m pool
-  Outdoor program pool
-  Outdoor toddler pool
-  Outdoor splash play
-  Indoor 25m pool
-  Indoor learn to swim pool
-  Indoor warm water program
-  Year-round operation
-  Seasonal operation
-  Accessible chairlift
-  Accessible hoist
-  Accessible platform lift
-  Year constructed
-  Kiosk
-  Amenities
-  Meeting room's

SPEERS POINT SWIM CENTRE

1961

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

CHARLESTOWN SWIM CENTRE

1975

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

MORISSET SWIM CENTRE

1985

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

SWANSEA SWIM CENTRE

1960

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 




TORONTO SWIM CENTRE

1997*

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

WEST WALLSEND SWIM CENTRE

1978**

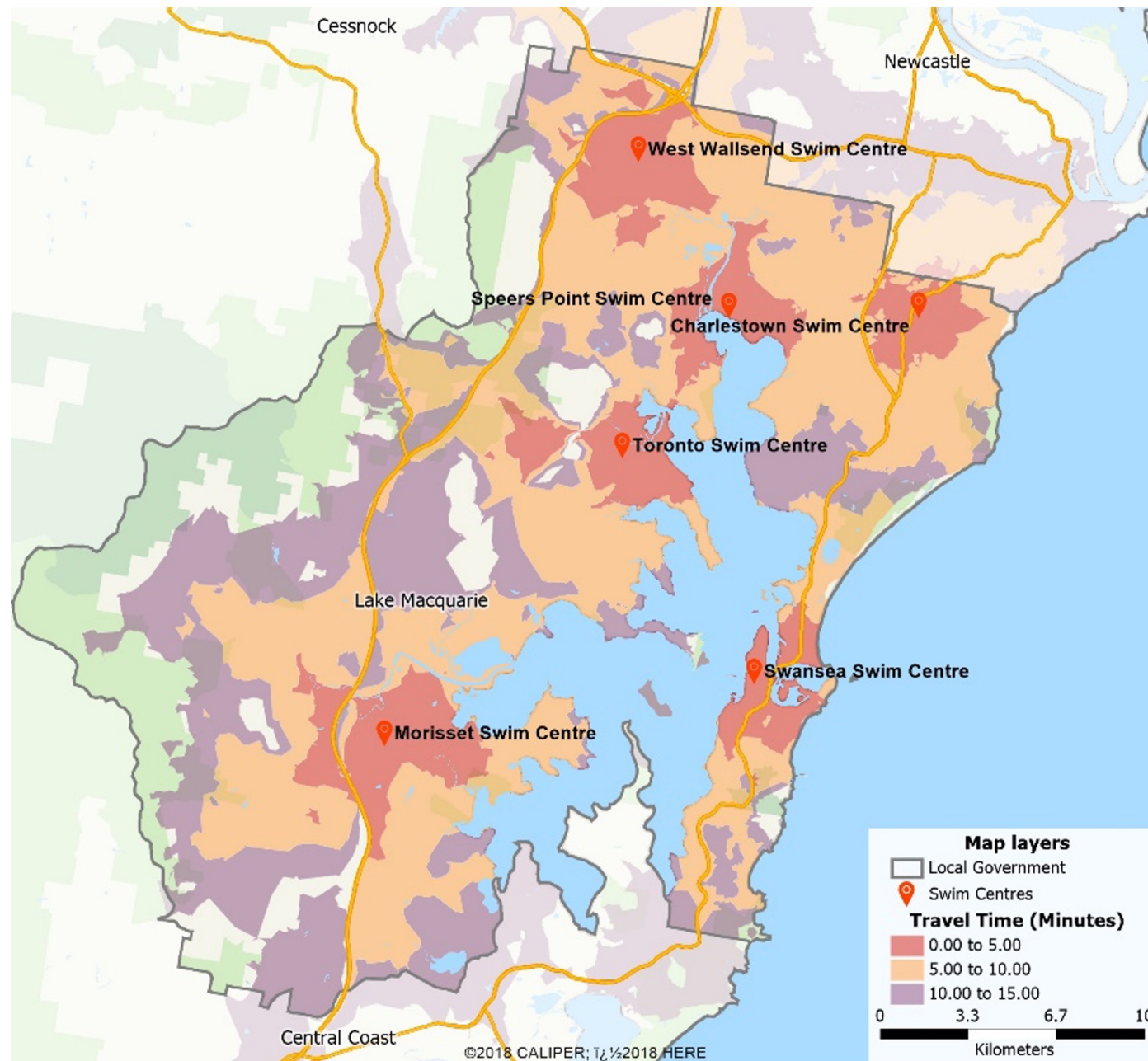
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* Toronto Swim Centre was redeveloped in 2018-2019

**West Wallsend Swim Centre had major renovations in 2014-2015 (changerooms excluded)

Speers Point, Charlestown, Swansea and Morisset all have aging infrastructure that will require significant intervention over the life of this strategy.

The following map identifies the location of each of the six swimming centres and the 5, 10 and 15 minute car travel catchments. It illustrates the good geographical spread of swim centres, with only the western fringe areas of the LGA not within 15 minutes travel time.



4.2. OUR SWIM CENTRES PROVISION



Provision

The Council swim centre provision rate per resident in Lake Macquarie is 1:35,629. This is consistent with other Council areas of Newcastle, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shoalhaven and is considered adequate. The next 20 years provision will increase to 1:39,697, however will still remain consistent with these other Council areas. Given this provision standard and the good geographical spread of Council owned swimming centres, there is no requirement for an additional swim centre to be provided by Council over the next 20 years.



Sport and Recreation Centre

The NSW State Government is planning a new Sport and Recreation Centre on the Morisset peninsula. At this time, it is unknown if this new centre will include public swimming pools. It will be critical for Council to collaborate with the state government in the development of this new facility to understand the impact and opportunities for Morisset Swim Centre.



Major events venue

The redevelopment of the Morisset Golf Course into a major events venue, may include a water play zone. It will be important for Council to confirm what the final proposal will include to understand the impact and opportunities for Morisset Swim Centre.



Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct

The Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation is currently undertaking a business case for the Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct at Broadmeadow. The precinct concept plan has identified the provision of an Aquatic and Leisure Centre. There is an opportunity for Council to facilitate discussions with the NSW Government to encourage this centre to focus on facilities that support aquatic based event and high-performance programs and services, including increased lap swimming space, fitness and deep water related facilities.

Council does not need to acquire or provide an additional swim centre over the next 20 years

4.3. OUR SWIM CENTRES PERFORMANCE

The most recent full operating year performance of each swim centre, prior to the impact of COVID-19 (2018-2019) are summarised below:



Annual visitation varies across the swim centres, with our outdoor swim centres similar to the median and our indoor swim centres at the low end for contemporary aquatics facilities.



Whilst it is common for swim centres to result in an operating deficit, **the average operating deficit** per swim centre of \$334,526 per annum is considered to be at the **low end** of performance compared to contemporary aquatic facilities.

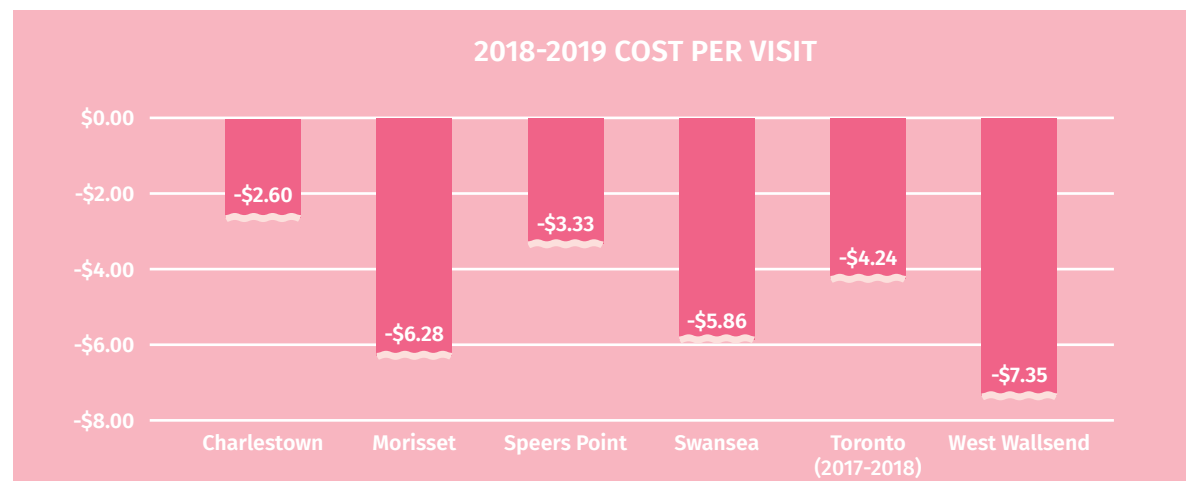
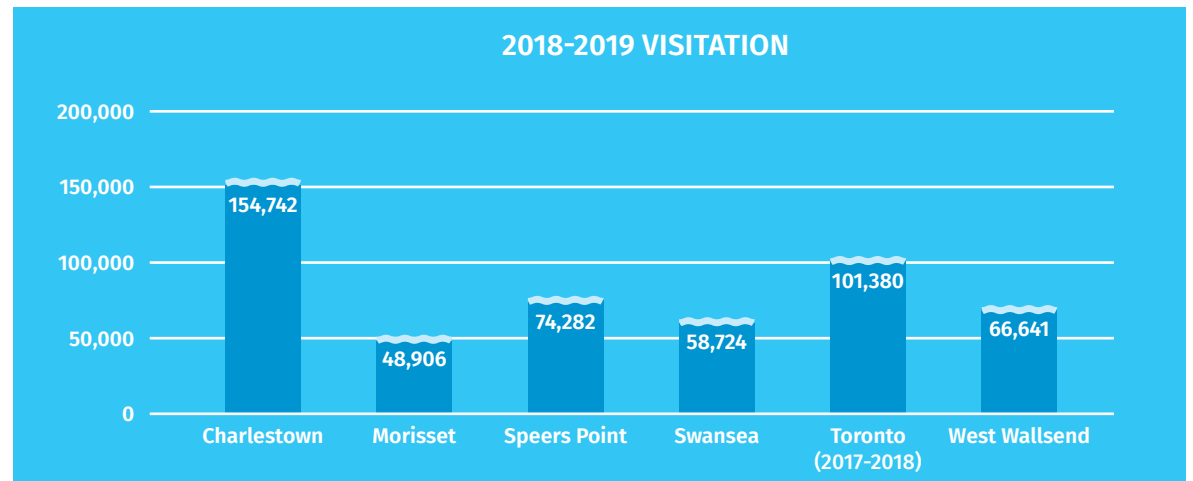


The average **cost per visit** of \$4.52 for outdoor centres is similar to the median, while \$5.80 for indoor centres is considered to be at **low end** of performance compared to contemporary aquatic facilities (CERM Operational Benchmarks For Australian Public Aquatic Centres comparison; \$4.60 outdoor and \$0.46 indoor).



Micromex Lake Macquarie City Council Community Research 2021 report found **95% of customers are satisfied** with Council swimming pools, programs and activities

These performances suggest that the current Council-owned swim centres are not fully servicing the potential aquatic facility market and there is likely to be large levels of unmet demand.

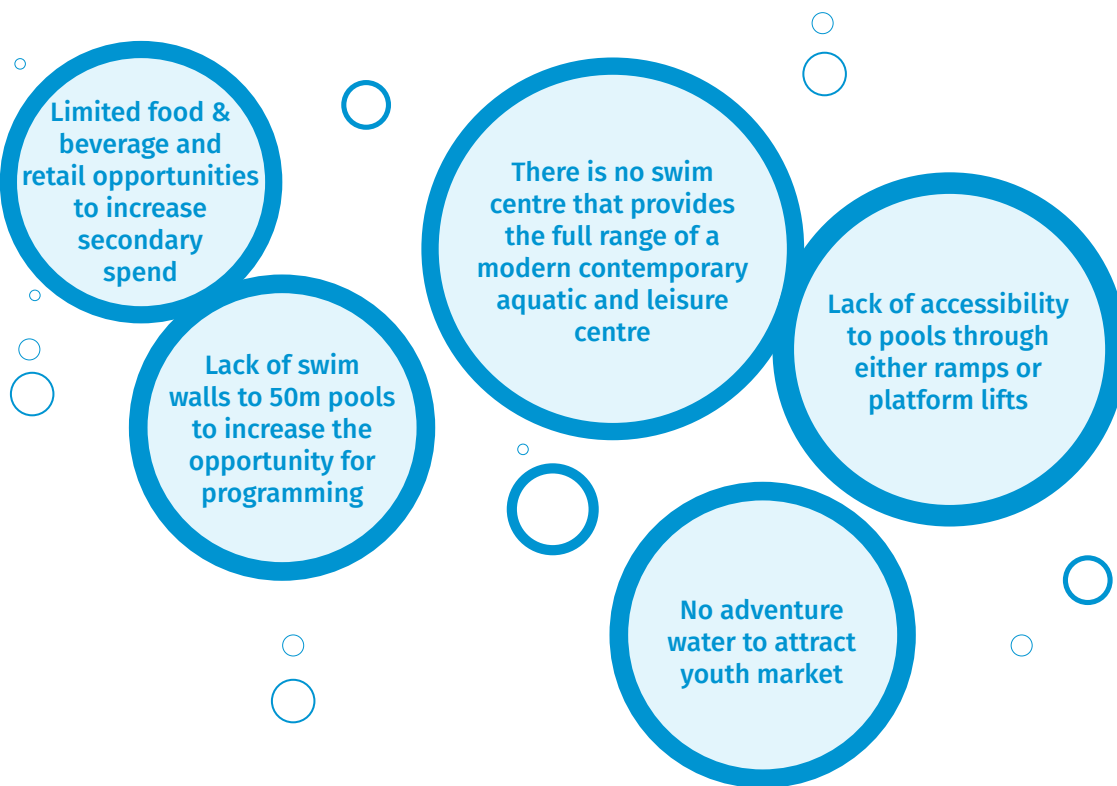


CERM is the University of South Australia's 'Centre for Environmental and Recreation Management' and is recognised nationally for the development of performance indicators for indoor sporting centres, and aquatic & leisure centres. CERM PI[®] data measures operational management efficiency (cost recovery, operational ratios, catchment usage rates, secondary spending etc). Data for 2016-2018 categorised aquatic centres by the type of facility (ie indoor and outdoor) and further segmented it by the size (m2) of the facility.



4.4. OUR SWIM CENTRES' MARKET ATTRACTIVENESS

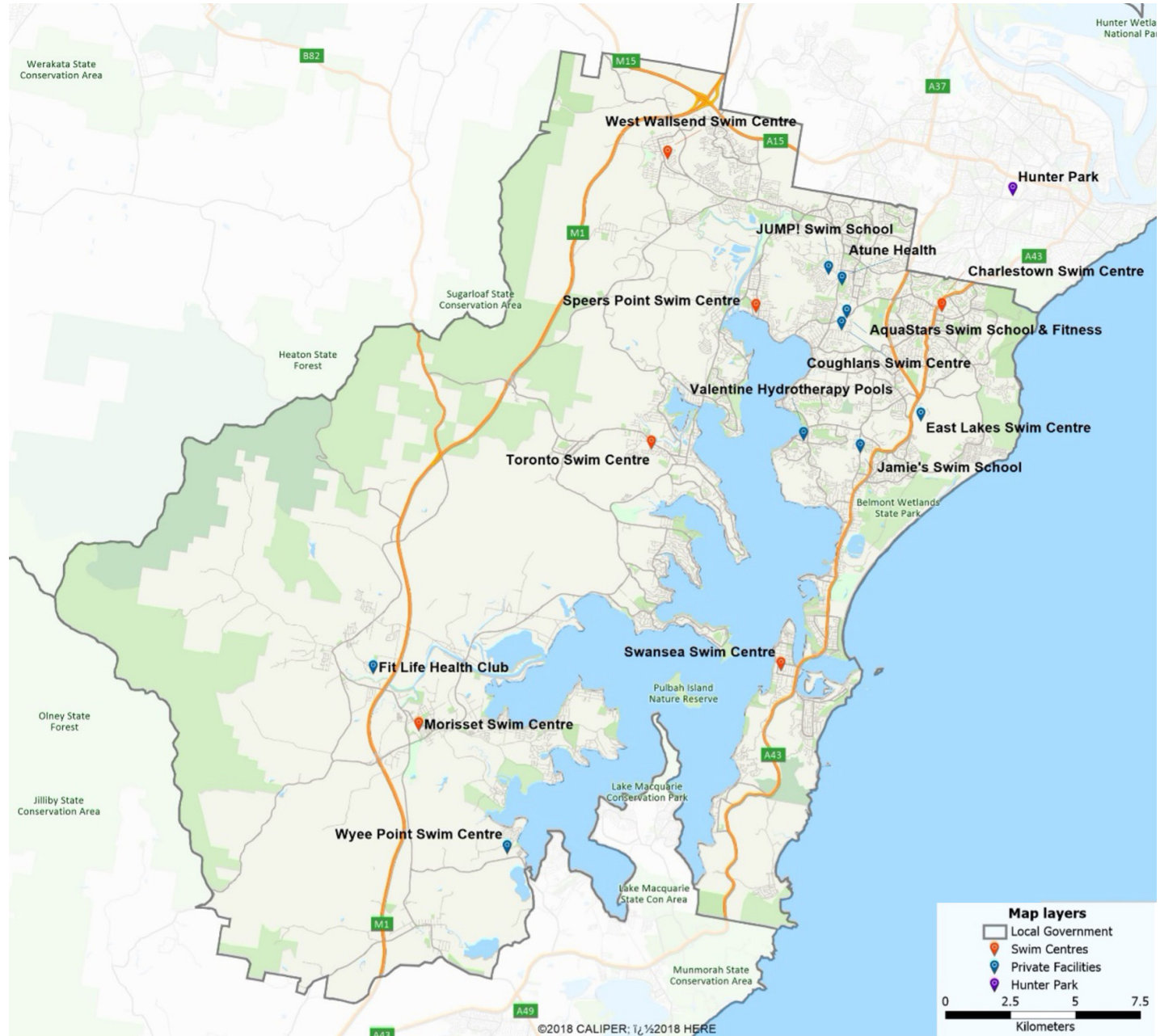
Whilst across the network there is, to some extent, the provision of aquatic facilities that align to each of the key user markets identified in Section 4.1 of this report, there is no single Council-owned swim centre that provides the full range and standard of aquatic facilities at the one venue, that would be considered fully contemporary.



4.5. NON-COUNCIL AQUATIC FACILITIES

There are currently nine privately operated swim centres in Lake Macquarie, with three including hydrotherapy/warm water pools. All focus on programs such as learn to swim, competitive squads, aqua aerobics and/or therapy. Of the nine privately operated centres four are located in the Glendale catchment, three in the Charlestown catchment and two in the Morisset Catchment. There are no other privately operated swim centres in either of the Toronto or Belmont Catchments.

ORGANISATION	FACILITIES	CATCHMENT
Wye Point Swim Centre	Indoor 15m Pool	Morisset
Fit Life Health Club	Indoor 25m pool	Morisset
JUMP! Swim School	Indoor 15m pool	Glendale
Coughlans Swim Centre	Indoor 25m pool, 15m pool, Hydrotherapy pool	Glendale
AquaStars Swim School & Fitness	Indoor 15m Pool	Glendale
East Lakes Swim Centre	Indoor 25m pool	Charlestown
Jamie's Swim School	Indoor 20m pool	Charlestown
Valentine Hydrotherapy Pools	Indoor 25m pool, 15m pool, Hydrotherapy pool	Charlestown
Atune Health	Hydrotherapy pool	Cardiff



5. ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

5.1. PHASE 1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



We engaged with:

- The Project Control Group
- Various section of Lake Macquarie City Council
- Private pool operators within the LGA
- NSW State Government representatives for the Hunter Park Sports Precinct
- Swim clubs that currently utilise Council's swim centres
- Current operators of contracted Council swim centres
- Swimming NSW
- Royal Life Saving
- Neighbouring councils of Newcastle, Maitland, Central Coast and Cessnock.

We learnt:



Strong provision of aquatic centres and lap swimming pools



High customer satisfaction levels



Opportunities for increased year-round warm water pools and upgraded dry facilities



Opportunity to establish broader community services at swim centres



High importance for accessible facilities

5.2. PHASE 2 BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



We engaged with the community through:

- Awareness raising
- Online community survey (745 responses)
- Community information sessions

We learnt:



Over 44% use the pools for lap and club swimming



75% strongly supportive or supportive of Swansea, West Wallsend, Toronto, Charlestown, Morisset becoming identified district facilities



Common improvements requested included enhancing amenities, providing additional pools, extending operations year-round and improving car parking



87%-96% support or neutral on the recommended preliminary facility improvements

6. OUR VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES & FRAMEWORK

6.1. VISION

Lake Macquarie residents will have access to an integrated, diverse, inclusive, sustainable and modern network of swim centres that support active lifestyles, value swimming as a life skill and provide opportunities for social and community connection.

6.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

In consideration of the analysis of future needs for Councils swim centres, the following guiding principles will inform the future direction for swim centre improvements and investment.



Diversity

Lake Mac Swim Centre network will provide a range of facilities, opportunities and experiences to the community.

One city-wide swim centre providing a unique, diverse and comprehensive range of facilities

District swim centres will be distinct from one another and offer a diversity of opportunities.



Equity and accessibility

All swim centres to provide year-round access and learn to swim opportunities.

Universal access will be provided within all swim centres



Sustainable management

Maximise commercial 'dry' components to off set the cost of providing the 'wet' components.

Major capital works are aligned with Council's Asset Management Plan, maximising asset life whilst providing construction efficiencies.

Opportunities for secondary spend are incorporated within future improvements.



Quality and health

Swim centres will meet or exceed NSW Health Guidelines for public pools
Swim centres will provide contemporary facilities and quality experiences that meet community expectations.



Lifestyle and wellbeing

Swim centres will provide a diverse range of facilities and experiences that support opportunities for social connections, recreation and exercise.

Swim centres improvements will support opportunities for flexible programming and use of space to meet the aquatic needs of a diverse and growing community.

7. AN AQUATICS FACILITIES FRAMEWORK FOR LAKE MAC

7.1. AQUATIC FACILITY HIERARCHY

The future network of Council-owned aquatic centres will be based upon:

- Council's provision rate being relatively consistent with other, similar, NSW local government rates
- strong geographic spread of current Council-owned swim centres
- Council's obligation to support local aquatic facility, program and service needs of the community
- extensive research and consultation undertaken to inform this Strategy.

The Aquatic Facility Network Hierarchy below recommends three classifications and identifies our swim centres within this classification:



REGIONAL

- Focus on facilities that support aquatic-based events and high-performance programs and services, including increased lap swimming space, fitness and deep water related facilities such as water polo and diving.
- This facility should be located at the Hunter Sports Park, Aquatic and Leisure Centre within the Newcastle LGA and provided by the NSW State Government.

CITYWIDE

- Services the entire city catchment and incorporates high quality and high capacity facilities, that support recreation, leisure and adventure, fitness and training, education and therapy activities.
- This facility will be developed at the Speers Point Swim Centre, given its central location, colocation with broader recreation and sports facilities, strong population catchment and available land to support the full range of facilities required.

DISTRICT

- Services a cluster of communities/suburbs from its immediate surrounding catchment, with a mix of local training or social use and inter-club competition.
- District facilities will consist of the Charlestown, Morisset, Swansea, Toronto and West Wallsend Swim Centres.



8. OUR PLAN

The strategy identifies a number of actions that are assigned a priority rating. Actions can be progressed simultaneously across the six swim centres and are not interdependent in their delivery.

Action plan

This plan identifies the key actions that will guide further work to be undertaken to implement the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. The detailed implementation of the strategy will require additional work to address specific issues, including the preparation of business cases and feasibility assessment and more detailed planning and assessment at the local level to determine the best response to identified issues.

The implementation of this strategy will be considered within the context of Council's overall priorities and the competing demands of other areas and strategies within Council.

Lead Council department and partners

The strategy provides Lake Macquarie City Council with recommended actions and priorities. While it identifies a lead department, there will often be a number of sections involved in implementation. Some actions require external partnerships with community groups or government agencies.

Priority Rating

Actions have been assigned a priority rating based on:

- **High:** critical to strategy implementation. Should be commenced within the first five years.
- **Medium:** important in responding to a future need, may include prerequisite work for a low priority action. Should be commenced within five to 10 years.
- **Low:** an identified future need that will improve aquatic facilities but is a lower priority overall. Should be commenced within 10 to 20 years.
- **Ongoing:** recurring actions that support implementation and continue throughout the life of the strategy.

ACTION		MONITORING/EVALUATION OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY	PRIORITY
1. Commit to planning for a network of fit for purpose swimming centres				
1.1	The Aquatic Facilities Strategy is incorporated in Council's annual four-year Delivery Program and Long term Financial Plan	Integrate the recommendations of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy into Council's strategic planning documents and incorporate actions into the four-year Delivery Program, prioritising based on this action table and the swim centre plans	Asset Management Leisure Services	High Ongoing
1.2	Plan for the expansion of Speers Point Swim Centre	Complete a business case and masterplan for Speers Point Swim Centre to be developed into the city-wide aquatic facility	Asset Management Leisure Services City Projects	High
1.3	Plan for the expansion of West Wallsend Swim Centre	Complete a concept plan and detailed design for the provision of a new indoor learn to swim pool and water play at West Wallsend	Asset Management Leisure Services City Projects	High
1.4	Plan for the expansion of Swansea Swim Centre	Complete consultation with relevant stakeholders to expand the Swansea Swim Centre into adjacent sportsground to allow for a year-round indoor learn to swim pool and car parking facilities Complete a business case and masterplan for Swansea Swim Centre to be expanded with a new year-round indoor learn to swim pool and car parking	Asset Management Leisure Services City Projects	High
1.5	Plan for the expansion of Morisset Swim Centre	Complete a business case and masterplan for Morisset Swim Centre to be expanded with a year-round indoor learn to swim pool and water play	Asset Management Leisure Services	High
1.6	Review capital work priorities within the Aquatic Facilities Strategy	Priorities to be reviewed based upon grant opportunities, asset condition, external proposal outcomes, and broader network provision	Asset Management Leisure Services	Medium
2. Enhance and upgrade swimming centres				
2.1	Implement swim centre new upgrades/expansions according to the recommendations in the swim centre plans	Allow for flexibility to prioritisation of all swim centre upgrades/expansions should unplanned funding sources be made available	Asset Management Leisure Services	Ongoing
2.2	Seek external funding sources to achieve expansions and upgrades of swim centres	External funding sources are applied for to achieve strategy swim centre upgrades where appropriate	Asset Management Leisure Services	Ongoing
3. Manage and maintain a fit for purpose network of swimming centre				
3.1	Review asset management plans for swim centres	Swim centre asset management plans are updated in accordance with the hierarchy and recommendations of the strategy	Asset Management Leisure Services	High Ongoing
3.2	Improve accessibility to swim centres for people of all abilities	Planning and design of new/upgraded/replaced assets within the swim centres incorporates accessibility principles for people of all abilities	Asset Management City Projects Leisure Services	Ongoing

ACTION	MONITORING/EVALUATION OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY	PRIORITY
3.3 Incorporate environmental sustainability initiatives to decrease water and energy consumption at swim centres	<p>Align with Council's Sustainability Policy and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan to increase water and energy efficiencies through upgrades and initiatives</p> <p>Ensure swim centres are included within the proposed water and energy resilience strategies</p> <p>Water and energy efficiency improvements are incorporated in new, upgraded, and replacement infrastructure at swim centres where appropriate</p>	<p>Asset Management Environmental Systems Leisure Services</p>	High, Ongoing
4. Collaborate to ensure successful implementation of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy			
4.1 Improve cross departmental collaboration to facilitate strategy implementation	Areas of responsibility for the implementation of the strategy and supporting teams to achieve the best outcomes from the strategy are determined	<p>Asset Management Leisure Services City Projects</p>	High
4.2 Raise awareness of swim centres and their benefits	Communication and promotional strategies are developed to raise awareness of Council's swim centres and their opportunities, facilities and benefits to the community	<p>Leisure Services Communications</p>	Ongoing
4.3 Market swim centres once significant upgrades and improvements have been completed	Marketing of upgraded swim centres is completed. Comparison on attendance number is undertaken prior to upgrades and once completed to measure impact of upgrade	<p>Leisure Services Communications</p>	Ongoing
4.4 Liaise with Hunter Venues and City of Newcastle on plans for new facilities or swim centre improvements	<p>Confirm Hunter Venues intentions for the development of the Hunter Sports Precinct Aquatic and Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Review the City of Newcastle Pool Strategy once adopted, to assess impact, if any, on the recommendations within this strategy</p>	<p>Asset Management Leisure Services</p>	High
4.5 Liaise with the NSW Government on the development of the new Lake Macquarie Sport and Recreation Centre at Morisset	Confirm if a swimming pool will be provided at this location and the intended operation of this facility to determine impact, if any, on the recommendations for the Morisset Swim Centre. Review recommendations if required	<p>Asset Management Leisure Services</p>	High
4.6 Review the Cedar Mill Event site development proposal	Confirm if water play will be a component in the finalised construction plans and determine impact, if any, on the recommendations for the Morisset Swim Centre, Review recommendations if required.	<p>Asset Management Leisure Services</p>	High
4.7 Liaise with Transport NSW on Speers Point Swim Centre	<p>Negotiate the potential upgrade of the intersection of Park Rd and The Esplanade. Incorporate outcome of negotiations into the feasibility investigations</p> <p>Negotiate with Transport NSW to increase public transport options to Speers Point Park through increased stops at Cockle Creek train station and increased bus services</p>	<p>Asset Management</p>	High
4.8 Undertake an operating model assessment for Speers Point Swim Centre	Based on the proposed mix of commercial and social based facilities for this swim centre, an assessment of the most appropriate operating model will be undertaken to determine the most effective arrangement for Council	<p>Leisure Services</p>	High

9. OUR SWIM CENTRE PLAN

The Swim Centre Plans recognise the need for more contemporary offerings at each of the swim centres, with improvements and developments reflecting the Aquatic Facilities Framework. These plans focus on achieving the best community outcomes for our swim centres, staging of works over a 20-year period, and modernising existing facilities as they reach end of asset life.

The swim centre plans recognise that Speers Point Swim Centre will be developed as the city-wide facility and the remaining five swim centres developed as district standard facilities.

The development of the Speers Point Swim Centre as a city-wide Aquatic and Leisure Centre, will allow for a comprehensive suite of wet and dry facilities to be provided within a contemporary facility, providing a broad range of experiences, and whilst maximising revenue opportunities. The key facility improvements have been identified in each of the swim centre plans and in accordance with Section 8 - Our Plan, are prioritised as either high, medium or low priorities. Funding availability has also been identified for each of the key facility improvement as either:



Funding identified – source identified, funding established to meet priority timeframe



Funding required – source yet to be identified and funding not confirmed

‘Funding identified’ sources include Asset Management Plans and Section 7.11 developer contributions. Asset Management Plans include the approved 10-year Asset Management Plan and improvements listed for the subsequent 10-year Asset Management Plan.

‘Funding required’ will be actively sought to meet timeframes, however, cannot be guaranteed. Sources could include grants, loans and other operational funds.





9.1. SPEERS POINT SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

Given the location, co-location with broader recreation and sports facilities and strong population catchment, the Speers Point Swim Centre will be redeveloped as the city-wide aquatic facility.

Redevelopment and upgrades over time will be undertaken to provide a fully contemporary swim centre that offers the full spectrum of wet and dry facilities to maximise market attractiveness.

This diversity in facilities will cater to all members of the community and transition to a year-round operating centre, estimated to increase annual visitation from the current 55,000 visits to 550,000 visits per year.



Key facility improvements

The table below identifies the key facility improvements for the Speers Point Swim Centre and the funding availability to undertake these.

FUNDING IDENTIFIED

FUNDING REQUIRED

High priority

Install fibreglass liner 50m (with wet deck), 25m pool

New swim wall to 50m pool*

Plant room replacement

New platform lift to 50m and 25m pool*

Redevelop grandstand

Medium priority

Redevelop entry foyer, café, administration and retail area

New indoor warm water program pool*

Redevelop changeroom and amenities

Improved car park, access and drop off areas

Transition to year round operation**

Replace existing splash pad with larger water play

New adventure water zone

New health and fitness / wellness centre

New indoor heated learn to swim pool

Decommission 25m outdoor pool

Retain and activate

50m pool

*Partial funding currently available through Development Contributions.

**Year round access will apply to all indoor pools, with outdoor pools to be determined by a future operational business case



9.2. CHARLESTOWN SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

With a strong population catchment, the Charlestown Swim Centre will progressively be upgraded at a district facility standard, with improvements timed to align with asset useful life projections and staging of capital investment over a 20-year period.

With the recent addition of a heated indoor learn to swim pool, this centre will focus on modernising existing facilities at end of asset life. It is expected that the improvements will enhance the user experience and increase visitation by 19 per cent.



Key facility improvements

The table below identifies the key facility improvements for the Charlestown Swim Centre and the funding availability to undertake these.

FUNDING IDENTIFIED

FUNDING REQUIRED

High priority

Install fibreglass pool liner 50m pool

New swim wall to 50m pool

New platform lift to 50m pool

Medium priority

Replace existing splash pad with water play zone

Low priority

Redevelop entry foyer, café, administration and retail area

Car park and access improvements

Redevelop changeroom and amenities

Redevelop grandstand

Retain and activate

Outdoor 50m pool, 25m pool

Indoor learn to swim pool



9.3. MORISSET SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

While the current population catchment is small, the Morisset catchment is expected to have significant population increase in the next 20 years. On this basis, the Morisset Swim Centre will be progressively upgraded at a district facility standard.

This swim centre may be impacted by the development of the new Sport and Recreation Centre in Morisset and the proposed redevelopment of the old Morisset Golf Course site. While it is an aspiration for this swim centre to be available year round and incorporate an indoor learn to swim pool, this will be dependent upon the potential impacts from these projects.

The modernisation of existing support infrastructure and provision of a water play zone will enhance the user experience and is estimated to increase visitation by 16 per cent.



Key facility improvements

The table below identifies the key facility improvements for the Morisset Swim Centre and the funding availability to undertake these.

FUNDING IDENTIFIED

FUNDING REQUIRED

High priority

New platform lift to 25m pool

Medium priority

Install fibreglass pool liner to 25m pool

Plant room replacement

Replace toddler pool with water play zone

Refurbish kiosk and store room

Low priority

Redevelop entry foyer, café, administration and retail area

Car park and access improvements

Redevelop changeroom and amenities

Transition to year round operation**

Replace outdoor program pool with indoor learn to swim pool*

Retain and activate

Outdoor 25m pool

*May not be required dependent upon impact from the final outcomes for the new Sport and Recreation Centre and redevelopment of the old Morisset Golf Course

**Year round access will apply to all indoor pools, with outdoor pools to be determined by a future operational business case.



9.4. SWANSEA SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

While the current population catchment is small, the Swansea Swim Centre is the only public swimming pool located within the Belmont Catchment. Based on this, the centre will be progressively upgraded at a district facility standard. The major key facility improvements for the Swansea Swim Centre have been timed to be modernised at the end of asset life.

The modernisation of the centre and the provision of a new year-round indoor heated learn to swim pool with off-street car parking will significantly enhance user experience and offerings, with an estimated increase in visitation of 47 per cent.



Key facility improvements

The table below identifies the key facility improvements for the Swansea Swim Centre and the funding availability.

FUNDING IDENTIFIED

FUNDING REQUIRED

High priority

Install fibreglass pool liner

New swim wall to 50m pool

Plant room replacement

New platform lift to 50m pool

Grandstand replacement

Replace existing splash pad with water play

New heated indoor learn to swim pool*

New off-street car park

Transition to year-round operations**

Medium priority

Redevelop entry foyer, café, administration and retail area

Low priority

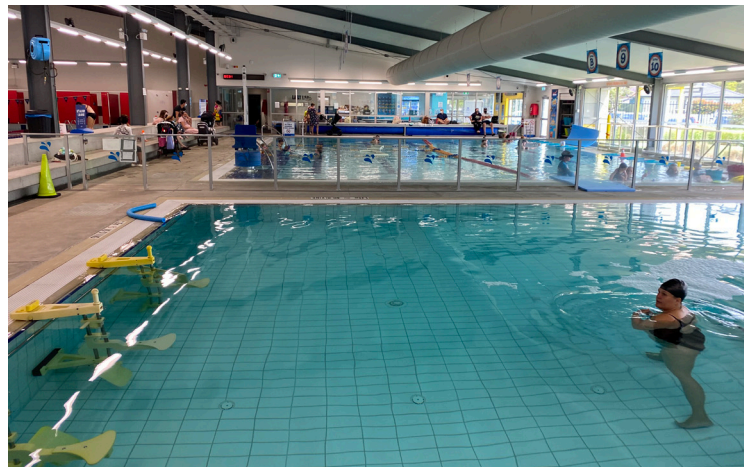
Redevelop changeroom and amenities

Retain and activate

50m pool

*Partial funding currently available through Development Contributions.

** Year round access will apply to all indoor pools, with outdoor pools to be determined by a future operational business case.



9.5. TORONTO SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

The Toronto Swim Centre was redeveloped in 2018-2019 and offers three indoor heated swimming pools, a new foyer with café and retail spaces, new changerooms, office and storage space, meeting rooms and off-street car parking. This centre will be maintained over the next 20 years to continue to meet community needs.



Key facility improvements

There are no facility improvements at Toronto Swim Centre. Assets will be maintained and all three pools will be retained and activated.



9.6. WEST WALLSEND SWIM CENTRE



Future direction

The West Wallsend Swim Centre was significantly upgraded in 2014/15 with the exception of the changerooms and will progressively be upgraded at a district facility standard, over a 20-year period.

With no learn to swim pools currently being offered in this growing north western area and the centre currently only having one pool offering, it is recommended for this centre to provide a new indoor heated learn to swim pool to supplement the existing indoor 25m pool.

The provision of a new indoor heated learn to swim pool will improve user experience and offerings, with an estimated increase in visitation of 76%.



Key facility improvements

The table below identifies the key facility improvements for the West Wallsend Swim Centre and the funding availability to undertake these.

FUNDING IDENTIFIED

FUNDING REQUIRED

High priority

New indoor heated learn to swim pool

New platform lift to 25m pool

New water play zone

Retain and activate

25m pool



10. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The implementation of the Lake Macquarie Aquatic Facilities Strategy will be undertaken on a priority basis over a 20-year timeframe within available resource allocations. A review of implementation will be undertaken annually with progress measured by the percentage of actions commenced or completed.

Financial resourcing will be a critical factor in resourcing the strategy implementation, including, but not limited to, general revenue, developer contributions and grants.

Ongoing partnerships and collaboration with a range of internal and external stakeholders will be essential to ensuring implementation of the strategy.

The recommended timing of improvements has been formulated based on the following hierarchy of priorities:

Prioritisation considerations for timing

1. Alignment with Council's financial plans
2. Replacement of current assets at end-of-life
3. Demand and viability
4. Speers Point redevelopment to citywide pool

Whilst some projects may be classified as medium/long term, smaller value projects may be realised in the shorter term if unexpected funding becomes available.



11. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS

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

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence' and as such these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware

that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

There will be differences between projected and actual results, because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm,

underwrite or guarantee the achievability of the projections as it is not possible to substantiate assumptions which are based on future events.

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

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