

6.9. AQUATIC SERVICES REVIEW DISCUSSION PAPER

COUNCILLORS PANKHURST/ZOBEC

That Council suspend standing orders at 5:20pm

CARRIED

Ms Heather Woodman addressed Council in relation to item 6.9.

Ms Kylie Floyd addressed Council in relation to item 6.9.

Ms Clare Ireland addressed Council in relation to item 6.9.

Mr Ryan Wilkinson addressed Council in relation to item 6.9.

Miss Josephine Brown addressed Council in relation to item 6.9.

COUNCILLORS JARMAN/ZOBEC

That Council resume standing orders at 6:01pm

CARRIED

Author:

Andrew Cowin, Strategic Planning Manager

Attachments:

6.9.1. Aquatics Service Review Discussion Paper

6.9.2. Aquatics Service Review Communication Plan – Phase IV

1. Purpose

To seek endorsement of the Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper for community comment.

2. Recommendation

That Council:

- i. Endorse the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper (Discussion Paper).
- ii. Affirm Option C as the preferred option for the delivery of aquatic services across the Shire of Campaspe.
- iii. Note the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper Implementation Plan.
- iv. Release the draft Discussion Paper and Implementation Plan for community comment in accordance with the Communication Plan.

COUNCILLORS MADDISON/WESTON

That Council:

- i. Endorse the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper (Discussion Paper).
- ii. Note the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper Implementation Plan.
- iii. Release the draft Discussion Paper and Implementation Plan for community comment in accordance with the Communication Plan.

Cr Pankhurst foreshadowed the original recommendation should the motion be lost

The MOTION was put to a vote and was CARRIED

A division was called for

Those in favour of the motion

Crs Howell, Jarman, Maddison, Pentreath, Zobec, Weston

Those against the motion

Crs Pankhurst, Wilson

3. Conflict of Interest

In accordance with Section 80B of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the officer preparing this report declares no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

4. Charter of Human Rights

This report has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

5. Instrument of Delegation

This report has considered and complies with the Instrument of Sub-Delegation by the Chief Executive Officer in so far as this report is not contrary to the existing policy or strategy previously adopted by Council.

6. Background

Council has an established program of service review. The program was established to support and consider the long term financial sustainability of service levels provided and to ensure that services provided are meeting the changing community demands overtime. Services reviewed to date include childcare, places of assembly and the road network. In 2013, the Council commenced a review of aquatic services.

The outcomes of the Aquatic Services Review are to support the long term sustainability of aquatic services and facilities in Campaspe.

The Aquatic Services Review comprises four distinct phases. Phase I, II and III are complete and have incorporated situational analysis and investigation, education and engagement, discussion and review of feedback. More specifically the phases include the following activities:

Phase I – Situation Analysis and Investigation

- General condition assessments of all aquatic facilities and detailed inspections of pool shells, circulation and filtration systems of the Rochester, Kyabram and Tongala Pools.
- Shire wide household survey seeking feedback about usage and perception of Campaspe aquatic facilities.
- Preparation of maintenance plans for each pool.
- Analysis of operational and financial performance of each pool and modelling of projected performance to 2018/19.
- Listing of major challenges that will impact on the capacity to sustain current services in the future.
- The outcomes of this phase provided information and detail for progression to the Education and Engagement activities of Phase II.

Phase II – Education and Engagement

- Sharing the available data and information on the condition and performance of outdoor pools with the community via the publication and distribution of an Aquatic Services “facts and figures” flyer.
- Conduct seven community focus groups sessions at each outdoor pool with more than 250 participants, 113 people nominated to join a Pool Reference Group for their community.
- Online feedback on “facts and figures” publication.
- Formation of reference groups for each pool.

Phase III – Discussion and Review

- 51 people were appointed across the seven Pool Reference Group a single workshop of all PRG's held in July 2015 in Rochester, attended by 27 members.
- Distribution of data and feedback packages to reference groups
- Responses from the reference groups have assisted in the formation of the proposed service models outlined in this Discussion Paper.

Phase IV – Options and Implementation

- Public exhibition of the draft Discussion Paper which takes into consideration all findings and community feedback from all earlier phases.
- Concludes in the adoption of an Aquatic Services Strategic Direction to guide aquatic services into the future.

7. Content

The draft Discussion Paper proposes three options of service delivery for aquatic services across Campaspe. The development of these models has been informed by feedback from the community and the pool reference groups.

Through the community consultation process it was identified that aquatic facilities provide places for:

- Water Safety Education
- Getting Cool When It's Hot
- Pool Based Recreational Play

- Interactive Water Play
- Long Course (50m) and Short Course (25m) Swimming Sports
- Indoor Fitness Equipment and Programs
- Lap Swimming and Water Based Exercise
- Community Socialisation and Engagement

Whilst most of these opportunities are currently available to residents over a range of different facilities across Campaspe, the quality, condition and accessibility of these facilities are on the whole, not up to par with community expectations and preferences.

The options proposed in the draft Discussion Paper seek to meet the needs of the community whilst considering cost, age of assets and expected decline in use of seasonal outdoor pools in small populations.

The draft Discussion Paper proposes the following options:

Option A – Regional, District and Local Aquatic Facilities

A three tier service providing Regional, District and Local aquatic facilities. Under this option, all facilities would be retained in their current formats and locations, capital funds would be allocated to ensuring that all facilities are compliant with relevant legislation and guidelines.

Option B – Regional, District and Splash Park Facilities

A three tier service of Regional, District and Community aquatic facilities. Under this option, a significant change to the form of aquatic facilities at Lockington, Stanhope, Colbinabbin and Tongala is proposed. Existing traditional seasonal use pools will be replaced by interactive water play in each of these towns, and facilities at Kyabram, Rochester and Rushworth will be remodelled and upgraded to include 25m main pools and interactive water play. All facilities will maximise access for people with a disability. Interactive water play is also proposed for Echuca.

Option C – Regional and District Aquatic Facilities

A two tier service of Regional and District aquatic facilities. Under this option, all aquatic services will be delivered through facilities at Echuca, Rochester, Rushworth, and Kyabram. Main pools at Kyabram, Rushworth and Rochester would be remodelled as 25metre pools and interactive water play at each location. All facilities will maximise access for people with a disability. Interactive water play is also proposed for Echuca.

Option C is the recommended service model and an implementation plan has been development to support implementation.

8. Issues

The Aquatic Services Review has been driven by a number of challenges to the long term sustainability of the service and the facilities.

Issue 1 - Age, Condition and Number of Facilities

The most significant challenge for the Shire of Campaspe is the age of outdoor pool facilities. The current facilities average age is over 50 years, and ranges from 18 to 85 years. As a consequence a majority of the facilities are in very poor condition, and reaching the end of their serviceable lives. General condition assessments have been carried out for each pool and at Rochester, Kyabram and Tongala a more concise and detailed inspections have been undertaken. All other pools are to have similar inspections scheduled over the next 24-38 months. This activity to date has clearly indicated that significant and expensive work is required to maintain all existing facilities in serviceable condition.

Issue 2 - Increasing Operational Costs and Falling Attendances

The main costs associated with running pools include staff, power, water, chemicals, asset maintenance, cleaning, administration and supervision. In past years these costs have risen significantly above CPI. There have been increases to entry fees over recent years and planned for coming seasons, but these provide only minor offset against rising costs. Adding to the net cost of operating pools, there is a nationwide decline in the use of small, cold-water seasonal swimming pools. Campaspe is no exception and has experienced significant declines in attendance at most outdoor pools over the past decade.

Issue 3 - Changing Population and Community Expectations

The Australian and Campaspe population is ageing. The use of cold-water outdoor pools significantly decreases with age, as water temperatures and access become relevant. Corresponding with an ageing population, is also a decrease in younger age groups in many Campaspe towns. These younger groups have been typically the highest users of outdoor swimming pools, however they represent a much lower proportion of the population and will continue to decline further as the overall population changes.

9. Options

Option 1: Not endorse the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper for community consultation

This option is not recommended by officers.

The draft Discussion Paper has been developed with significant community consultation and user input. Not endorsing the draft Discussion Paper for consultation will not enable the community to comment on the service delivery options proposed in the paper. Further not endorsing the paper for public release will not provide a clear direction as to the service options available and Council's preferred option.

Option 2: Endorse the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper for community consultation and affirm option C as the preferred service delivery model

This option is recommended by officers.

The draft Discussion Paper has been developed with significant community consultation and user input. Endorsing the draft Discussion Paper for consultation will enable the community to comment on the service delivery options proposed in the paper. Further endorsing the paper for public release will provide a clear direction as to the service options available and Council's preferred option.

Option 3: Endorse the draft Aquatic Services Review Discussion Paper for community consultation but not affirm option C as the preferred service delivery model

This option is not recommended by officers.

The draft Discussion Paper has been developed with significant community consultation and user input. Endorsing the draft Discussion Paper for consultation will enable the community to comment on the service delivery options proposed in the paper. Not affirming a preferred option will not provide the community with a clear indication of Council's preferred approach and may result in unrealistic expectation and confusion amongst the community.

10. Strategic Planning Environments

Prosperity: The service review supports Strategic Objective #4: "*Campaspe attracts and retains new residents*" in that it seeks to maximise use of existing public infrastructure to accommodate growth.

Place: The service review supports Strategic Objective #3: "*Community infrastructure contributes to our long-term social and economic fabric*" in that it provides direction to enable effective decisions regarding long term use of and investment in aquatic facilities. It will also contribute in the longer term to enhancement of an important community asset that is appropriate, accessible and safe.

People: The service review supports Strategic Objective #1: *“Services support our communities’ health and wellbeing”* in that the service review seeks to plan and provide services that cater for all life stages and meet community need.

Organisation: The service review supports Strategic Objective #1: *“Through respectful conversations with our stakeholders, partners and community, we hold shared goals, and understand each others’ obligations, activities and achievements”* and Strategic Objective #2 *“Service delivery reflects community need and is efficient and effective”* in that the service review has involved significant community conversation around the current service issues and the need to consider alternatives.

The service review also supports Strategic Objective #3 *“Council continues to have the resources to provide services needs by our communities”* in that the review seeks to assess the affordability of the desired service and plan for the longer term context.

11. Consultation

Phases II and III have involved extensive community consultation and engagement. Phase IV involves the culmination of information gathered from previous phases into a discussion paper for community comment.

A communication plan has been developed to support the release of the paper. The communication plan involves the following key activities:

- media releases
- information to Community Reference Groups engaged in the phases II and III
- Information in the Campaspe Times newsletter