

AQUATIC SERVICES REVIEW DISCUSSION PAPER

April 2016

Submissions on this Discussion Paper are invited from all residents and community groups.

Submission close on Friday 24 June 2016

For further information on the Discussion Paper and the Aquatic Services Review, please contact the Council on 5481 2200

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an extensive process of community engagement and consultation, this discussion paper has been prepared to consider the future provision of aquatic facilities and services in the Shire of Campaspe.

Through the conduct of exceptionally well attended focus group sessions in each town with an outdoor pools and in the formation of reference groups for each pool it has been clearly communicated that access to swimming facilities in rural communities is a very high priority. The community also acknowledged the challenges of the cost of maintenance of very old outdoor pool infrastructure, falling attendances, declining small town populations and the relevance and effective access to facilities.

Adding to the challenge of sustaining community assets such as local pools has been the recent introduction of rate capping for all Victorian Council's. This restriction and notable decline in state and federal funding for community assets requires Council to review the level of services across all areas of operation to ensure that the limited funds available are allocated to best overall community benefit.

The Aquatic Services Review has placed a high level of scrutiny on affordability and benefit and the consultation process to date, has enabled Council to learn and understand what these benefits are.

This discussion paper draws on the feedback of the community and the further input of pool reference groups for each town with an outdoor pool, and outlines three options of future service delivery for consideration.

From the consultation process, the community has told the council 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.

To continue the conversation with the community on what Campaspe aquatic facilities look like in the future, the Council has developed three different facility development options that may meet the needs of the community and take into account cost, age of assets and expected decline in use of seasonal outdoor pools in small populations.

The Council is seeking community feedback on the following three options:

OPTION A

REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND LOCAL AQUATIC FACILITIES

The Council provides a three tier service of Regional, District and Local aquatic facilities. All facilities would be retained in their current formats and locations and capital funds would be allocated towards ensuring that all facilities are compliant with relevant legislation and guidelines. Capital funds would also be allocated towards providing full access to existing facilities for people with a disability. There would be no change to service diversity under this model.

OPTION B

REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND INTERACTIVE WATERPLAY FACILITIES

The Council provides a three tier service of Regional, District and Community aquatic facilities, with capital works allocated to remodel and upgrade facilities at Kyabram, Rochester and Rushworth. Capital funds are also allocated to decommission existing aquatic facilities at Lockington, Colbinabbin, Tongala and Stanhope and replace them with interactive water play. A new interactive water play would also be provided in Echuca.

OPTION C

REGIONAL AND DISTRICT AQUATIC FACILITIES

The Council provides a two tier service of Regional and District aquatic facilities with capital works allocated to remodel and upgrade facilities at Kyabram, Rochester and Rushworth and construct interactive water play facilities at each location. A new interactive water play would also be provided in Echuca.

BACKGROUND

COUNCIL SERVICES REVIEW PROGRAM

Over a number of years, the Council has been progressively undertaking reviews of all services provided to the community. The purpose of the reviews has been to consider the long term financial sustainability of current service levels and determine what changes to services are required overtime to ensure that future needs and demands can be met. Services reviewed to date include childcare, places of assembly and the road network. In 2013, the Council commenced a review of aquatic services.

DRIVERS BEHIND THE AQUATIC SERVICES REVIEW

The drivers for the Aquatic Service Review were based around three challenges to the long term sustainability of aquatic services and facilities in Campaspe.

AGE, CONDITION AND NUMBER OF FACILITIES

Without doubt the biggest challenge is the age of Campaspe Shires outdoor pool facilities. With an average age of over 50 years old, and ranging from 18 to 85 years old, most the Shire's pools are in very poor condition, as they reach 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 over the next 24-38 months. This activity to date has clearly indicated that significant and expensive work is required to main all existing facilities in serviceable condition.

INCREASING OPERATIONAL COSTS AND FALLING ATTENDANCES

The main costs associated with running pools Include staff, power, water, chemicals, asset maintenance, cleaning, administration and administration and supervision

In past years these costs have risen significantly above CPI. There have been increases to entry fees over recent years and for coming seasons, but these provide only a very small 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.

CHANGING POPULATION AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

The general population in Australia and Campaspe 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, there 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 decline further as the overall population changes.

COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO THE AQUATIC SERVICES REVIEW

From the outset of the Aquatic Services Review, it has been a priority of the Council to fully engage the community in discussion about future service levels. Whilst the use of outdoor pools has declined dramatically over the past decade, it is clear that most communities still consider them as important community assets.

To facilitate this engagement and to help the community become involved in the discussion about the future of aquatic services, a four phase approach to the review was established.

REVIEW PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

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 three phases have included the following activities:

PHASE I – SITUATIONAL 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.
- User survey.
- 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.

PHASE II – EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Sharing the available data and information on the condition and performance of outdoor pools with the community.
- Conduct seven community focus groups sessions at each outdoor pool
- Online feedback on “facts and figures” publication.
- Formation of reference groups for each pool.

PHASE III – DISCUSSION AND REVIEW

- Initial meeting with reference groups
- Distribution of data and feedback packages to reference groups
- Reference Group Workshop
- Release of Discussion Paper for public comment

The public exhibition of this Discussion Paper marks the commencement of Phase IV, which will involve a review of all feedback on the proposed options.

OBSERVATIONS AND LEARNINGS OF PHASES I, II, & III

PHASE I

As part of Phase I, the Council began its commitment to thoroughly consult and engage with the community, receiving over 800 responses to a shire wide household survey seeking feedback from residents on their use and perception about aquatic facilities:

The survey showed the following.

- The main household user of public swimming pools were “self” and/or “adult in households with children.”
- Overall, recreational swimming was the highest activity. For outdoor pools, it was most common to use the pool to cool down in the hot weather.
- Pools not being heated, having access to a private pool and being too busy were reasons for people not using the facilities.
- Echuca respondents suggested improving the amenities, offering longer opening hours and reducing the cost of entry would encourage more use.
- Outside of Echuca, respondents suggested improving the amenities, offering longer opening hours and improving the landscape and pool surrounds would encourage more use.

The key findings of the survey included the following.

- A high number (19%) of residents have access to a private pool. Research from other Councils suggests that the increasing number of “backyard” pools has contributed to a decrease in attendances at public swimming pools.
- Longer opening hours, improved amenities and improved landscape and pool surrounds were common themes for improvements at all of the pools.
- 21% of residents had used a Greater Shepparton City Council pool in the past 12 months.
- A quarter of residents had not used any Shire of Campaspe pool in the past 12 months.

Phase I activity also included an internal review of the operational performance of all aquatic facilities and progression of detailed assessment of the condition and probable future renewal and maintenance costs.

This information was collated into a “fact and figures” information booklet, containing key financial and operational information and identification of three major challenges to the sustainability of aquatic facilities into the future.

The outcomes of this phase provided information and detail for progression to the Education and Engagement activities of Phase II.

PHASE II

ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The Council has been committed an open and honest discussion with the community about the future of aquatic services in the Shire of Campaspe and during Phase II of the review, has created a number of activities and processes to facilitate this.

An Aquatic Services “facts and figures” document was prepared and distributed. This document provided an outline of the main challenges to the sustainability of aquatic services in their current formats and historical trends in attendance and operational costs. The document also outlined future expected asset renewal (maintenance) and provide projections of future operating costs and attendance based on historical trends.

With the “facts and figure” document published and available, the Council hosted focus groups sessions at each town with an outdoor pool, run in conjunction with pool parties at each venue. More than 250 residents participated in the seven sessions, with many other friends and facility enjoying a free BBQ and activities run by Council programs staff.

A large amount of feedback and comments were offered at these meetings and scribed for the record on butcher’s paper. As a further indication of the passion the community have for their pools, 113 people nominated to join a Pool Reference Group for their community.

In addition, more than 150 individual submissions were received on-line, with high support for the retention of all outdoor pools and a range of suggestions on the future direction of aquatic services.

FEEDBACK FROM ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

A wide range of feedback was received including a number of suggestions on improvements and changes to current operational practices and improvement to existing facilities. Considerable feedback was also received about longer term development of aquatic facilities.

Benefits

Feedback was very consistent in terms of what the community consider to be the most important benefits of aquatic facilities. The main benefits are summarised as follows:

- Supervised environment for children and youth
- Provide opportunities for health, fitness, and water education.
- Safer alternative to other water bodies such as dams, creeks, and channels.
- Enhancement of social engagement and lifestyle opportunities

Communications

There were was a lot of feedback about the Council’s communication of details about operating hours, seasons and availability of programs such as learn to swim. Suggested improvements included making sure all venue signage had up to date information on season opening and closing dates, operating hours and a clear notice about the process used by Council to determine when operating hours are reduced or increased due to weather conditions. The use of school newsletters was also suggested as a way to advertise the availability of programs.

Amenities

The quality of amenities was generally considered poor to average, with the condition of change rooms and toilet facilities the most common cause for complaint. Cleaning practices and services were not considered to be an issue which indicates that dissatisfaction with amenities is most likely linked to the age and physical characteristics of the buildings. Improvement to the quality of finishes and fixtures of amenities was often raised in feedback.

Operating Hours

There was a high level of dissatisfaction with the current operating hours, both in terms of total hours open and the times of opening and closing. Concern was also expressed that some pools had less operating hours than others and that specific needs of each community are not taken into account. The weekday afternoon hours for opening was frequently questioned and review sought. It was suggested that improvements could be made by Council staff meeting with the community before each season to discuss operating arrangements.

Pool Condition and Cleanliness

The general view was that water quality and the general condition of the pools was at a satisfactory level. Many comments were made about cold water being a deterrent to participation by many groups and individuals and have suggested that the heating of pools would increase use. A number of suggestions were made about the installation of solar heating and the use of solar blankets to improve water comfort.

Surrounds and Landscaping

It was acknowledged by many residents that the maintenance of the surrounds has improved significantly with favourable comments about the quality of the lawns. More shade was sought and there were many calls for BBQ's that are understood to have been removed to be replaced. The potential for the community to take responsibility for surrounds maintenance was discussed as a way of reducing costs.

Water Features

One of the most frequent comments from residents was disappointment that diving boards are no longer available and that this was one of the few "attractions" for teenagers. Inflatables were considered a positive feature, however concern was expressed that due to the limited number of inflatables, and communities rarely had access to them. It was suggested that community groups could possibly buy and manage inflatables on a voluntary basis.

Strong interest was shown in the addition of interactive water play facilities, however it was clearly indicated that access to both traditional pool formats and interactive water play facilities was preferential. Support was shown for interactive water play facilities replacing shallow water toddler's pools.

Kiosk

The main concern expressed about the kiosk was the risk of lifeguards being distracted from their duties and observations that lifeguards spent too much time in the kiosk instead of patrolling and supervising patrons. It was suggested that the community could run the kiosk and assist with the collection of entry fees and recording of attendances.

Recording Attendance

The accuracy of recording attendances was questioned and concern expressed that if attendance numbers are to be used in the future to measure the performance of pools, data collection had to be improved. The use of technology to assist this was raised as a means of improving the integrity of data collected.

Access

The community expressed significant understanding of the limitations of existing pool designs in providing access for people of all abilities and findings ways to address this was considered a very high priority. There was no support for consideration of a transport system as an alternative option to provision of a local pool and it was clearly expressed that local availability was an important part of accessing the benefits of aquatic facilities.

Value for Money

In general it was regarded that the price of entry and membership offered good value for money. Some concerns were expressed that increasing fees by too much, might reduce access for people from low income families. There was also some support for fees to be increased as they are considered to be too low.

Suggestions were made for the Council to provide reciprocal rights to all pools on the payment of seasonal membership. It was expressed by some that small towns are not after “gold plated” facilities and wish to maintain current infrastructure, with service improvement.

Cost of Service Provision

More community involvement in the operation of pools is needed to reduce costs and increase use. Some suggestions that return to full community management would improve service and reduce costs.

General acceptance that the cost challenges presented will impact on capacity to continue service provision into future. Need to place a “value” on the cost benefit of outdoor pools. Need to have more accurate and dependable data on attendances.

Community Participation

There was strong support for the community to become more involved in the management and operation of outdoor pools in order to improve attendances and reduce operating costs.

Uncertainty was expressed as to the community’s capacity to return to full management and operational control of outdoor pools. Technical skills/qualifications, risk management and a lack of volunteers were cited as factors to this uncertainty. More confidence however was expressed in the capacity and interest of the community to undertake grounds maintenance, kiosk operation, and the planning and facilitation of community events and activities.

PHASE III

Pool Reference Group Engagement

At each of the Phase II Focus Group Sessions, participants were invited to make expressions of interest in joining a Pool Reference Group (PRG) for each outdoor pool. A total of 113 expressions of interest were received and following a nomination process, a total of 51 people were appointed across the seven PRG’s.

Over June and July, a meeting was held with each PRG to discuss the review and the ongoing process of consultation and enjoyment with each group. It had initially been intended to hold individual works shops with each PRG however resource limitations resulted in a single work shop of all PRG’s held on July 1 2015 in Rochester.

As background to the workshop, a Pool Reference Group Information Package was distributed to all group members. The information package contained details on the following:

- Aquatic Services Review process and phases
- Outcomes from Phase II Education and Engagement activities
- Current classifications, catchments and availability to aquatic facilities
- The operational performance of outdoor pools

The PRG workshop was attended by 27 members, representing each of the seven groups. Over two hours, participants were guided through a Pool Reference Group Workshop Package, a document outlining a number of proposals and questions related to various aspects of facility and service provision. Discussion points and proposals included performance measures and targets, getting greater community participation in the use and operation of pools, the level of services and facilities into the future and the consideration for thresholds on the cost of maintenance and renewal of pool infrastructure.

At the conclusion of the workshop each PRG was invited to provide a formal response to the questions proposed in the workshop package and on any other matter they desired. A five week period was agreed upon to enable each group to meet and formulate a response.

The responses provided by the reference groups have been used to assist in the formation of the proposed service models outlined in this Discussion Paper.

THE CURRENT SERVICE

The following pages describe a summary of the current level of service and facility provision, as well as projected future estimates of future pool operating costs and attendances.

FACILITIES

ECHUCA WAR MEMORIAL AQUATIC CENTRE (EWMAC) – INDOOR, HEATED WATER

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 50.0 m x 22.0 m, Depth: 1.0 - 1.8 m
Learners Pool Size: 15.2 m x 8.0 m, Depth: 0.6 - 1.0 m
Toddlers Pool Size: 12.5 m x 8.0 m, Depth: 0.0 - 0.6m
Kiosk, Change Rooms, Steam Room & Spa, Gymnasium, Program Rooms

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 52 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km, however some users will travel up to 50km to access the services offered.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access for people with a disability is severely limited for the Main Pool.

KYABRAM SWIMMING POOL – OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 50.0 m x 15.0 m, Depth: 1.0 – 1.5 m
Toddlers Pool Size: 9.0 m (Octagonal), Depth: 0.3 m
Kiosk, Change Rooms, Swimming Club Room.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km, however some users will travel up to 25 km to access the service.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access for people with a disability is severely limited for the Main and Toddlers Pools

COLBINABBIN SWIMMING POOL – OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 20.0 m x 14.0 m, Depth: 1.0 – 2.4. m
Toddlers Pool Size: 4.0 m x 4.0 m, Depth: 0.3 m
Kiosk, Change Rooms (shared)

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access is not available to the Main Pool and Toddlers Pool.

LOCKINGTON SWIMMING POOL – OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 25.0 m x 13.0 m, Depth: 1.0 – 2.4 m
Toddlers Pool Size: 9.0 m (Octagonal), Depth: 0.3 m
Kiosk, Change Rooms.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access is not available to the Main Pool and Toddlers Pool.

STANHOPE SWIMMING POOL– OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool (Size: 25.0 m x 12.0 m, Depth: 0.9 – 2.4 m)
Learners Pool (Size: 10.0 m x 4.0 m, Depth: 1 m)
Toddlers Pool (Size: 9.0 m (Octagonal), Depth: 0.3 m)
Kiosk, Change Rooms.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access for people with a disability is severely limited for the Main, Learners and Toddlers Pools

ROCHESTER SWIMMING POOL – OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 50.0 m x 13.0 m, Depth: 1.0 – 3.0 m
Toddlers Pool Size: 12.0 m x 9.0 m, Depth: 0.3 m
Kiosk, Change Rooms, Swimming Club Rooms.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km, however some users will travel up to 25 km to access the service.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access is not available to the Main Pool and Toddlers Pool.

RUSHWORTH SWIMMING POOL – OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 30.0 m x 9.0 m, Depth: 0.6 m – 2.4 m

Toddlers Pool Size: 9.0 m (Octagonal), Depth: 0.3 m

Kiosk, Change Rooms.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access for people with a disability is severely limited for the Main and Toddlers Pools

TONGALA SWIMMING POOL– OUTDOOR, NOT HEATED

FEATURES

Main Pool Size: 25.0 m x 15.0 m, Depth: 1.0 m – 2.4 m

Learners Pool Size: 12.0 m x 8.0 m, Depth: 0.6 m – 1.2 m

Toddlers Pool Size: 9.0 m (Octagonal), Depth: 0.3 m

Kiosk, Change Rooms.

AVAILABILITY

This venue is available 16 weeks per year.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

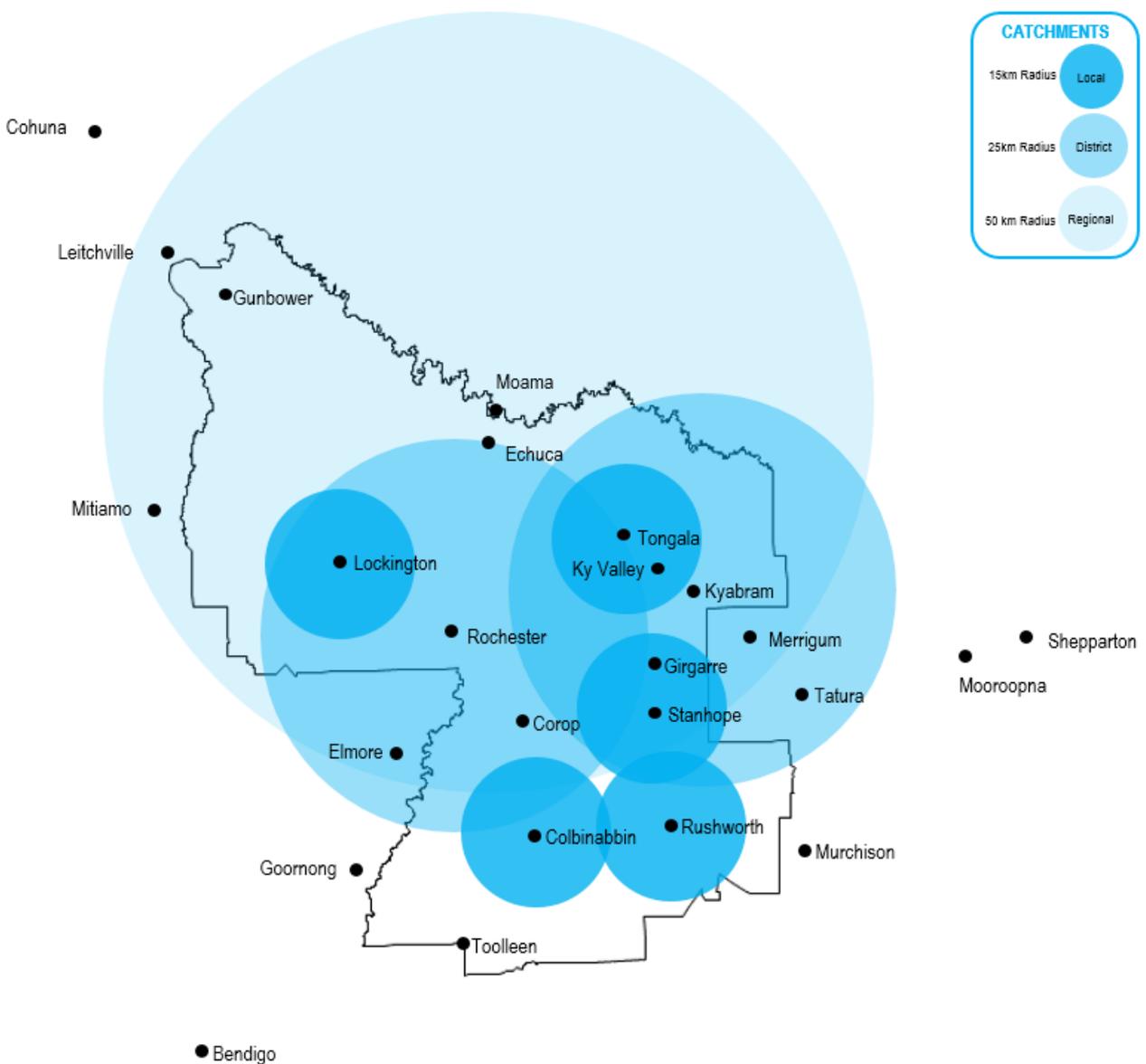
The majority of users of this facility will come from within a catchment radius of 15km.

ALL ABILITIES ACCESS

Access is not available to the Main, Learners, or Toddlers Pools.

CURRENT DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

The distribution of existing Campaspe Shire pools is shown schematically below with reference made to facilities with a 50km catchment radius as “Regional”, a 25km catchment radius as “District” and 15km catchment radius labelled “Local”. It should be noted that services are also provided by the City of Greater Bendigo and Greater Shepparton City Council’s and Shire of Gunnawarra which may be accessed by Campaspe community. Those services are not mapped in this discussion paper.



CURRENT SERVICING OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

The following table indicates what opportunities are available currently at all existing aquatic facilities how the current service meets the needs of the community that can be met by aquatic facilities:

OPPORTUNITIES	ECHUCA	KYABRAM AND ROCHESTER	ALL OTHER POOLS
Interactive Water Play	x	x	x
Community to Socialise & Engage	✓	✓	✓
Getting Cool When It's Hot	✓	✓	✓
Lap Swimming & Water Based Exercise	✓	✓	✓
Short Course (25m) Swimming	✓	✓	x
Pool Based Water Play	✓	✓	✓
Water Education & Safety Programs	✓	✓	✓
Long Course (50m) Swimming	✓	✓	x
Indoor Fitness Equipment & Programs	✓	x	x

At present there is no provision of opportunities for interactive water play, facilities feature that is becoming increasingly available in many other local government areas either as replacements for traditional pool provision or as additional features. Small to medium sized interactive water play facilities are generally available free to the public and usually collocated with other parks amenities such as public toilets and change rooms, wayside stops, BBQs and Shelters. Interactive water play facilities are fully automated and do not require supervision and have relatively lower maintenance and operational costs than traditional pool facilities.

Access to facilities by people with a disability is severely limited at all outdoor facilities and requires significant funding and remodelling of all pools and amenities to achieve compliance.

CURRENT REPLACEMENT COST AND RENEWAL LIABILITIES

The current replacement cost for all Aquatic Service facilities is estimated around \$25,877,993. This includes all pools, assets and infrastructure at each of the eight locations with aquatic facilities.

COST OF CURRENT SERVICE

In 2014/15, the Council spent \$1,258,000 on the operation of all aquatic facilities and recorded a total of 145,535 attendances. Collectively the seven outdoor facilities cost \$492,226 and attendances totalled 34,712.

In the Council's 2015/16 budget, it is forecast that the operation of all aquatic facilities will cost \$1,260,052 and around 182,562 attendances will be recorded. For outdoor aquatic facilities, the estimated cost is \$468,867 with a forecast attendance similar to the previous season's total.

The table below provides specific information for each aquatic facility:

FACILITY	NET OPERATING COST		ANNUAL ATTENDANCE		ANNUAL OPERATING COST PER ATTENDANCE	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
EWMAC	\$765,807	\$791,185	145,535	147,718	\$5.26	\$5.36
Colbinabbin	\$52,995	\$48,503	1,923	1,904	\$27.56	\$25.48
Kyabram	\$86,812	\$80,306	11,475	11,590	\$7.57	\$6.93
Lockington	\$58,449	\$58,931	2,436	2,412	\$23.99	\$24.44
Rochester	\$98,133	\$96,055	9,205	9,297	\$10.66	\$10.33
Rushworth	\$60,012	\$59,014	3,264	3,297	\$18.39	\$17.90
Stanhope	\$62,212	\$56,889	2,345	2,322	\$26.53	\$24.50
Tongala	\$73,614	\$69,169	4,064	4,023	\$18.11	\$17.19
TOTAL	\$1,258,034	\$1,260,052	180,247	182,562	\$6.98	\$6.90

Over the next 15 years without change to current service levels, it may be expected that around \$24.5 million will be expended and around 3 million attendances will be recorded. Of this, outdoor facilities will account for just 18% of total attendances at a cost of \$16.79 per attendance. EWMAC will experience around 2.45 million attendance at a cost of \$6.24 per attendance. The forecasts for each facility are shown below.

FACILITY	AGGREGATED NET OPERATING COST	AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE	NET OPERATING COST PER AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE
	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION
EWMAC	\$15,379,638	2,464,252	\$6.24
Colbinabbin	\$942,837	31,024	\$30.39
Kyabram	\$1,561,046	186,559	\$8.37
Lockington	\$1,145,544	33,749	\$33.94
Rochester	\$1,867,187	149,654	\$12.48
Rushworth	\$1,147,157	53,066	\$21.62
Stanhope	\$1,105,850	32,488	\$21.62
Tongala	\$1,344,557	56,304	\$23.88
TOTAL	\$24,493,815	3,007,094.96	\$8.15
OUTDOOR POOLS ONLY	\$9,114,177	542,842.51	\$16.79

VISION FOR FUTURE AQUATIC FACILITIES

Based on the extensive community feedback and information received in the three phases to date of the Aquatic Services Review, the following vision, opportunities and objectives are proposed for Campaspe Aquatic Services:

All residents will have reasonable opportunities to use and enjoy a diverse range of high quality, financially viable and fully accessible aquatic facilities, programs and activities.

Campaspe Aquatic Facilities shall provide opportunities 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*

In order to ensure this vision and create these opportunities, the Shire of Campaspe will:

- *Provide residents with reasonable access to a range of indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities and programs that are equitably distributed across the municipality in light of township location, viable travel times (by vehicle) and population catchments.*
- *Improve the diversity and quality of aquatic service opportunities through a long term of modernisation and rationalisation of facilities and features.*
- *Ensure all future facilities maximise access for people with a disability.*
- *Ensure that all aquatic facilities are well managed and maintained and optimally used.*

DEVELOPING A COST EFFECTIVE MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

A key part of the Aquatic Services Review is to identify any gaps in meeting needs (for example access to interactive water play feature) and consider alternative models of service delivery and facility provision that can improve on quality, relevance, access (for people with a disability) and sustainability.

This Discussion Paper outlines three different service delivery models for consideration in establishing a long term strategic plan for future aquatic services.

Each model outlines proposed service standards and consideration is given to:

- The benefits that will be delivered by the service standards
- The types and distribution of aquatic facilities to deliver the service standards
- The capital costs to provide the aquatic facilities to deliver the services standards.
- The operating cost to provide the service standards
- The ongoing renewal and maintenance costs
- The impact on existing travel distances for residents to access services and benefits.
- Relative improvement to access for people of all abilities
- Relative improvements to quality and condition and contributions to modernisation of facilities

The three models are compared against the current level of service and facility provision, with cost differences for operational expenditure, maintenance and renewal and capital improvements projected over a 15 year period to 2031.

An implementation plan has been prepared for Option C.

COMMUNITY OWNED/OPERATED AQUATIC SERVICES

Models incorporating community owned/operated aquatic services were considered in the preparation of this discussion paper. However, a community owned/operated aquatic service model is not proposed as an option. Community based service models were considered to pose a significant burden on local communities with respect to ongoing costs and liability including potential personal liability in the event of an accident or drowning.

For example, if Council handed over all existing outdoor aquatic facilities and their operation to local community groups the operating cost to each community would be in the order of \$50,000 year on year. It is acknowledged that local communities may through volunteer labour /materials deliver significant operational cost savings. However, community groups would still be subject to the same regulatory and compliance requirements as Council. Any savings in operational costs are likely to be offset by increased insurance and compliance costs.

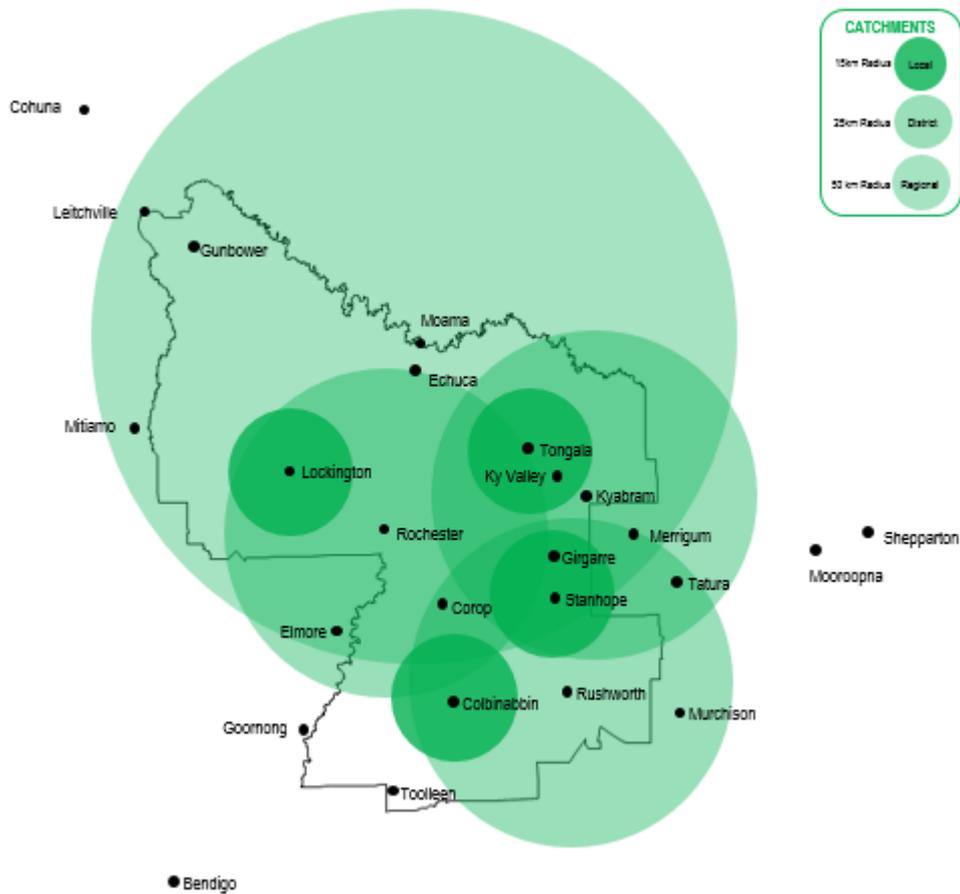
In addition to operational costs communities would be subject to ongoing maintenance and capital costs year on year, these costs would vary across the outdoor facilities based on asset condition, age and number and types of facilities/amenities. As an indication across all facilities managed by Council the average maintenance and capital depreciation per pool is approximately \$125,000. Note given the age of the assets depreciation is low and does not reflect actual replacement cost. Communities would need to continue to allocate funding in a similar order to support the ongoing operation of facilities.

Community groups would need to form a registered business entity, without which, Council would remain responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation and industry standards. In a number of instances the existing facilities are co-located on Crown land and consequently are able to be transferred to community groups without remaining connected to Council. These circumstances are equivalent to Option A presented in this paper.

OPTION A - REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND LOCAL FACILITIES

Under this option, all facilities would be retained in their current formats and locations and capital funds would be allocated towards ensuring that all facilities are compliant with relevant legislation and guidelines. Capital funds would also be allocated towards providing full access to existing facilities for people with a disability.

The distribution of facilities would be as per the diagram below:



OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT EACH FACILITY

The following table indicates what opportunities are provided at each types of facility under this model of service delivery

OPPORTUNITIES	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL
Interactive Water Play	x	x	x
Community to Socialise & Engage	✓	✓	✓
Getting Cool When It's Hot	✓	✓	✓
Lap Swimming & Water Based Exercise	✓	✓	✓
Short Course (25m) Swimming	✓	✓	x
Pool Based Water Play	✓	✓	✓
Water Education & Safety Programs	✓	✓	✓
Long Course (50m) Swimming	✓	x	x
Indoor Fitness Equipment & Programs	✓	x	x

The diversity of the service will not change under this model. The quality of the service will be slightly improved through the allocation of funds to provide full disability access to all facilities.

ESTIMATED COST OF SERVICE

Projected estimates of costs to Council over a 15 year period for this service option are listed in the table below.

FACILITY	AGGREGATED NET OPERATING COST	AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE	NET OPERATING COST PER AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE
	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION
EWMAC	\$15,379,638	2,464,252	\$6.24
Colbinabbin	\$942,837	31,024	\$30.39
Kyabram	\$1,561,046	186,559	\$8.37
Lockington	\$1,145,544	33,749	\$33.94
Rochester	\$1,867,187	149,654	\$12.48
Rushworth	\$1,147,157	53,066	\$21.62
Stanhope	\$1,105,850	32,488	\$21.62
Tongala	\$1,344,557	56,304	\$23.88
TOTAL	\$24,493,815	3,007,094.96	\$8.15

The operational cost for this model over 15 years is estimated at \$24,493,815 with an average cost per attendance estimated at \$8.15 for this period.

CAPITAL COST TO ACHIEVE SERVICE MODEL

The capital cost to achieve this service model is estimated at \$2,487,773.

IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY

This option maximises access for people with a disability to all existing facilities.

IMPACT ON QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

There is no impact on quality and diversity under this model.

IMPACT ON GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

There is no impact to the current geographical access residents have to aquatic services under this option.

IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

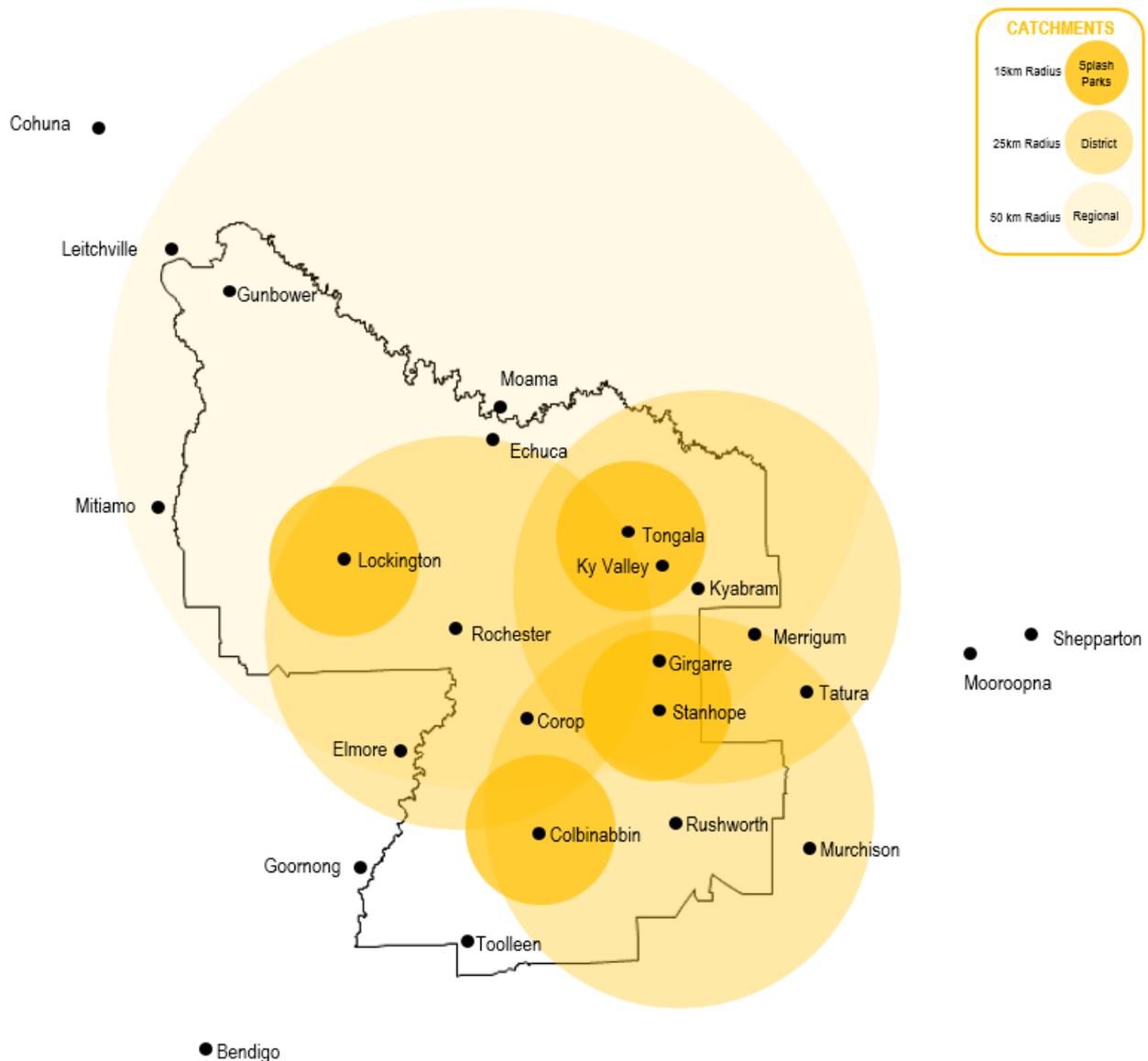
This model will retain the same current replacement value of a replacement value of \$25,877,993. All environmental impacts will remain unchanged. Financial sustainability also remains unchanged.

OPTION B - REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND INTERACTIVE WATER PLAY 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 facilities in each of these towns, and facilities at Kyabram, Rochester and Rushworth would be remodelled and upgraded to include 25 m main pools and interactive water play facilities. All facilities will maximise access for people with a disability.

An interactive water play facility would also be constructed in Echuca

The distribution of facilities would be as per the diagram below:



OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT EACH FACILITY

The following table indicates what opportunities are provided at each types of facility under this model of service delivery

OPPORTUNITIES	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	INTERACTIVE WATER PLAY
Interactive Water Play	✓	✓	✓
Community to Socialise & Engage	✓	✓	✓
Getting Cool When It's Hot	✓	✓	✓
Lap Swimming & Water Based Exercise	✓	✓	✗
Short Course (25m) Swimming	✓	✓	✗
Pool Based Water Play	✓	✓	✗
Water Education & Safety Programs	✓	✓	✗
Long Course (50m) Swimming	✓	✗	✗
Indoor Fitness Equipment & Programs	✓	✗	✗

The diversity of the service is enhanced under this model through the introduction of opportunities for interactive water play in eight locations. The quality of the service markedly improves and major impacts are made in terms of access to facilities for people with a disability. Short Course swimming would also become available at the Rushworth, through modifications to the main pool length (from 30m to 25m) and adjustments to depth at the shallower end.

ESTIMATED COST OF SERVICE

Projected estimates of costs to Council over a 15 year period for this service option are listed in the table below.

FACILITY	AGGREGATED NET OPERATING COST	AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE	NET OPERATING COST PER AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE
	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION
EWMAC	\$15,768,412	2,464,252	\$6.40
COLBINABBIN	\$388,775	31,634	\$12.29
KYABRAM	\$1,360,711	219,825	\$6.19
LOCKINGTON	\$388,775	36,540	\$10.64
ROCHESTER	\$1,360,711	176,339	\$7.72
RUSHWORTH	\$1,166,324	62,528	\$18.65
STANHOPE	\$388,775	35,175	\$11.05
TONGALA	\$388,775	60,960	\$6.38
TOTAL	\$21,211,256	3,087,254	\$6.87

By comparison to the current service level, this model offers significant operational savings over a 15 year period of around \$3,960,000 and it is forecast that the cost per attendance for all facilities would be reduced from around \$8.15 to \$6.62 per attendance. Rushworth Swimming Pool would become the most highly subsidised facility, however will provide access for Colbinabbin and district residents to

CAPITAL COST TO ACHIEVE SERVICE MODEL

The capital cost to achieve this service model is estimated at \$6,170,173.

IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY

This option maximises access for people with a disability, with all interactive water play facilities accessible to wheelchairs and new access ramps to pools at Kyabram and Rochester.

IMPACT ON QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All aquatic facilities under this model will be new and therefore be of high quality and standard. The introduction of interactive water play features at eight locations increases the diversity of opportunities available to Campaspe residents'

IMPACT ON GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

Geographical access is impacted under this model of service delivery with increased travel time for residents from the towns and districts of Lockington, Stanhope, Tongala and Colbinabbin to access opportunities for lap swimming, water education and safety programs. The following table indicates both travel distance and times to commute to facilities to access these opportunities with minimums for each town in red:

	ECHUCA		KYABRAM		ROCHESTER		RUSHWORTH	
	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME
TONGALA	26.9 km	22 min	15.9 km	13 min	34.3 km	26 min	41.1 km	31 min
STANHOPE	48.5 km	38 min	19.9 km	16 min	34.0 km	26 min	16.6 km	14 min
COLBINABBIN	63.4 km	49 min	52.7 km	40 min	33.1 km	26 min	20.6 km	16 min
LOCKINGTON	35.3 km	28 min	59.5 km	47 min	23.9 km	19 min	72.9 km	58 min

Information sourced from Whereis website

For Option B, the longest trip to access opportunities at district or regional facilities is between Lockington and Rochester at around 19 minutes (23.9 kilometres). The shortest trip is between Tongala and Kyabram which would take approximately 13 minutes to travel 15.9 km.

IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

This model will reduce Council asset renewal liabilities with the new facilities having a significantly lower overall replacement value than current assets. The new replacement value is estimated at \$24,260,981. This would provide a reduction in Council's long term expected renewal commitments by around 6%. Operational costs are expected to be reduced under this option and are also expected to be lower than current estimates and lower than costs estimated for Option A.

Collectively, this option will require less water, power, chemicals for an overall improvement in financial and environmental sustainability.

OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT EACH FACILITY

The following table indicates what opportunities are provided at each types of facility under this model of service delivery

OPPORTUNITIES	REGIONAL	DISTRICT
Interactive Water Play	✓	✓
Community to Socialise & Engage	✓	✓
Getting Cool When It's Hot	✓	✓
Lap Swimming & Water Based Exercise	✓	✓
Short Course (25m) Swimming	✓	✓
Pool Based Water Play	✓	✓
Water Education & Safety Programs	✓	✓
Long Course (50m) Swimming	✓	✗
Indoor Fitness Equipment & Programs	✓	✗

The diversity of the service is enhanced under this model through the introduction of opportunities for interactive water play in four locations. The quality of the service markedly improves and major impacts are made in terms of access to facilities for people with a disability. Short Course swimming would also become available at the Rushworth, through modifications to the main pool length (from 30m to 25m) and adjustments to depth at the shallower end.

ESTIMATED COST OF SERVICE

Projected estimates of costs to Council over a 15 year period for this service option are listed in the table below.

FACILITY	AGGREGATED NET OPERATING COST	AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE	NET OPERATING COST PER AGGREGATED ATTENDANCE
	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION	15 YEAR PROJECTION
EWMAC	\$15,768,412	2,464,252	\$6.40
Kyabram	\$1,360,711	219,825	\$6.19
Rochester	\$1,360,711	176,339	\$7.72
Rushworth	\$1,166,324	62,528	\$18.65
TOTAL	\$19,656,158	2,922,945	\$6.72

By comparison to the current service level, this model offers significant operational savings over a 15 year period of around \$4,837,657 by comparison to the current service arrangement and it is forecast that the cost per attendance for all facilities would be reduced from around \$8.15 to \$6.72 per attendance. Rushworth Swimming Pool would become the most highly subsidised facility, however will provide access for Colbinabbin and district residents.

CAPITAL COST TO ACHIEVE SERVICE MODEL

The capital cost to achieve this service model is estimated at \$4,598,861.

IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY

This option maximises access for people with a disability, with all interactive water play facilities accessible to wheelchairs and new access ramps to pools at Kyabram and Rochester.

IMPACT ON QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All aquatic facilities under this model will be new and therefore be of high quality and standard. The introduction of interactive water play features at four locations increases the diversity of opportunities available to Campaspe residents'

IMPACT ON GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS

Geographical access is impacted under this model of service delivery with increased travel time for residents from the towns and districts of Lockington, Stanhope, Tongala and Colbinabbin to access all aquatic services. The following table indicates both travel distance and times to commute to facilities to access these opportunities with minimums for each town in red:

	ECHUCA		KYABRAM		ROCHESTER		RUSHWORTH	
	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME	DISTANCE	TIME
TONGALA	26.9 km	22 min	15.9 km	13 min	34.3 km	26 min	41.1 km	31 min
STANHOPE	48.5 km	38 min	19.9 km	16 min	34.0 km	26 min	16.6 km	14 min
COLBINABBIN	63.4 km	49 min	52.7 km	40 min	33.1 km	26 min	20.6 km	16 min
LOCKINGTON	35.3 km	28 min	59.5 km	47 min	23.9 km	19 min	72.9 km	58 min

Information sourced from Whereis website

For this service model, the longest trip to access opportunities at district or regional facilities is between Lockington and Rochester at around 19 minutes (23.9 kilometres). The shortest trip is between Tongala and Kyabram which would take approximately 13 minutes to travel 15.9 km.

IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

This model will reduce Council asset renewal liabilities by comparison to the current level of provision, with the new facilities having a significantly lower replacement value than current assets. This will reduce the Council's long term expected renewal commitments by around 12%. Operational costs are expected to be reduced under this option are also expected to be lower than current estimates and lower than costs estimated for Option's A and B.

Collectively, this option will require less water, power, chemicals for an overall improvement in financial and environmental sustainability greater than Options A and B.

SUMMARY OF ALL THREE OPTIONS AGAINST CURRENT SERVICE

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS AT WHICH OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE	CURRENT	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
Interactive Water Play	0	8	8	4
Community to Socialise & Engage	8	8	8	4
Getting Cool When It's Hot	8	8	8	4
Lap Swimming & Water Based Exercise	8	8	4	4
Short Course (25m) Swimming	3	3	4	3
Pool Based Water Play	8	8	4	4
Water Education & Safety Programs	8	8	4	4
Long Course (50m) Swimming	3	3	1	1
Indoor Fitness Equipment & Programs	1	1	1	1
OPERATIONAL COSTS	CURRENT	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
15 Year Operational Costs	\$24,493,815	\$24,493,815	\$21,211,256	\$19,656,158
15 Year Operational Cost Per Attendance	\$ 8.15	\$8.15	\$6.87	\$6.72
Estimated Difference in Operational Costs,	N/A	NIL	\$3,282,559	\$4,837,657
ESTIMATIONS FOR EACH OPTION	CURRENT	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
Estimated Cost to Apply Option	Nil	\$2,487,773	\$6,170,173	\$4,598,861
Estimated Replacement Value	\$25,877,993	\$25,877,993	\$24,260,981	\$22,689,670
Estimated % Reduction in Replacement Value	Nil	Nil	-6.2%	-12.3%

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR OPTION C

The 15 year projected forward operating costs and attendances calculated for Options A, B and C assumes an immediate transition to the service model. Whilst this is useful in making comparison of the financial differences of each model, in reality, the transition process would occur over a multi-year period as funding and delivering all changes at once is not affordable in a single year of the Council's budget and logistically improbable to construct.

As an indicative guide, the following table outlines a possible implementation process for Option C.

Year	Works	Capital Cost	Projected Annual Operational Cost Reduction
Year One	Demolition of Pools and Buildings at Lockington, Colbinabbin, Stanhope and Tongala	\$305,800	\$ 247,269 =Estimated saving based on closing four facilities. <u>Sub Total - \$247,629</u>
Year Two	Design and Construct Kyabram Facility Complete Kyabram Facility Building Compliance	\$1,420,479	\$ 256,170.93 Estimated saving based on closing four facilities plus 3.6% allowance for annual increases. \$80,306 – One year saving on Kyabram estimated operating costs during construction. <u>Sub Total \$336,476.</u>
Year Three	Design and Construct Rochester Facility Complete Rochester Facility Building Compliance	\$1,453,943	\$ 265,393 – Estimated saving based on closing four facilities plus 3.6% allowance for annual increases. \$99,513 – One year saving on Rochester estimated operating costs during construction. \$10,000 – Relative savings based on lower operating cost of new Kyabram Facility. <u>Sub Total - \$ 374,906</u>
Year Four	Design and Construct Modifications to Rushworth Facility Complete Rushworth Facility Building Compliance	\$1,025,812	\$ 274,947 - Estimated saving based on closing four facilities plus 3.6% allowance for annual increases. \$64,398 – One year saving on Rushworth estimated operating costs during construction. \$20,000 – Relative savings based on lower operating cost of new Kyabram and Rochester Facilities. <u>Sub Total - \$ 359,345</u>

Year Five	Design and Construct Echuca interactive water play facility	\$392,828	<p>\$ 284,845 - Estimated saving based on closing four facilities plus 3.6% allowance for annual increases.</p> <p>\$20,000 – Relative savings based on lower operating cost of new Kyabram and Rochester Facilities.</p> <p>(20,000) – Increased cost due to new Echuca interactive water play facility.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sub Total - \$ 284,845</u></p>
		<p>Total Capital Cost</p> <p><u>\$4,598,861</u></p>	<p>Estimated Savings Over 5 Years of Implementation</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>\$ 1,602,843</u></p>