

CAMPASPE SHIRE COUNCIL
MEDIA RELEASE



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**CAMPASPE SHIRE COUNCIL TIPS IN \$5 MILLION FOR ROCHESTER AND ADVOCATES FOR
FEDERAL FUNDING FOR ALL AQUATIC FACILITIES**

Campaspe Shire Council has announced it will contribute \$5 million towards new aquatic facilities to replace the flood-demolished Rochester District War Memorial Pool.

As part of its 'Advocating for a Brighter Tomorrow' federal election advocacy campaign, Campaspe Shire Council is also calling on the next Australian Government to provide urgent funding for aquatic infrastructure, both locally and nationally.

Campaspe Shire Council Mayor Cr Daniel Mackrell said aquatic facilities were a vital part of Australian life, and Council's contribution to the Rochester facility was a reflection of that fact.

"Australia is a water-loving nation, and aquatic facilities play a critical role in our communities," Cr Mackrell said. "Not only for the health, safety and fitness benefits they provide but also because they are a central hub for community gathering and connection.

"That's why we're making this significant contribution towards a new aquatic facility to replace the Rochester pool, demolished in the October 2022 flood event, as well as asking for federal and state funds.

"In the wake of hundreds of public swimming pools across Australia nearing the end of their functional lifespan, we're also seeking the establishment of a national program for aquatic infrastructure to ensure that all citizens continue to have access to these vital facilities."

Advocacy priority – Aquatic facilities to replace the flood-demolished Rochester pool

"The Rochester pool was an important focal point for residents of the town, but not anymore," Cr Mackrell said.

"So, we're calling on the incoming federal government to contribute funds towards the design and construction of a proposed \$12.5 million new aquatic facility in Rochester. Council will make a five-million-dollar contribution towards the project, and we'll also seek funding from the Victorian Government.

"We've recently removed the old pool infrastructure and prepared the site in readiness for a new aquatic facility. We just need the funding support to make it happen.

"A new aquatic facility will provide a crucial social, health and recreation hub for Rochester and surrounding communities. It will also assist in the flood recovery process by boosting community morale and fostering a sense of pride and resilience in the face of adversity."

Advocacy priority – Establishment of a national program for aquatic infrastructure

A 2022 report by Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) titled *The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia* underlined the urgent need for substantial investment in public swimming pool infrastructure across Australia. The RLSA report found that:

- the average Australian public pool was built in 1968
- 500 (40%) public pools will reach the end of their functional lifespan by 2030
- \$8 billion is needed to replace those 500 ageing public pools
- a further \$3 billion will be needed to replace facilities ending their lifespan by 2035.

The RLSA report further highlights that ageing public pools are predominantly servicing regional areas; however, many regional councils struggle to afford to maintain or replace them so are increasingly considering closing their pools. The report also points to the community angst around such decisions.

“Like most rural and regional councils, we have several outdoor aquatic facilities in the Shire of Campaspe nearing the end of their functional lifespans,” Cr Mackrell said.

“The cost of replacing these with modern facilities is prohibitive for most councils and maintaining them is a huge year-on-year expense that continues to grow the older they get.

“The establishment of a national program for aquatic infrastructure will help ensure that public swimming pools across Australia can continue to play their critical and multifaceted role for communities. Without significant investment, many pools will become unsafe or unusable, depriving communities of these essential social, recreational and educational facilities.”

For more information on Council’s ‘Advocating for a Brighter Tomorrow’ campaign, including our advocacy booklet and video, and details about how you can become involved, visit Council’s website at www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/FederalAdvocacy

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PHOTO CAPTION: (L- R) Campaspe Shire Mayor Cr Daniel Mackrell, Cr Paul Jarman, Cr Tony Marwood, and Deputy Mayor Cr Jessica Mitchell in Rochester at the site of the former Rochester District War Memorial Pool which has recently been demolished and landscaped to return to community for use until funding can be obtained for a new aquatic facility.

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To coordinate an interview or seek further information contact:

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