

GANNAWARRA AQUATIC STRATEGY



OTIUM PLANNING GROUP

Head Office

304, 91 Murphy Street Richmond, Vic 3121

Phone: (03) 9698 7300

Email: info@otiumplanning.com.au

Web: www.otiumplanning.com.au

ABN: 30 605 962 169 ACN: 605 962 169

Melbourne Office

Contact: Kate Maddock

Phone: 0419 316 540

Email: kate@otiumplanning.com.au

Otium Planning Group has offices in:

• Auckland • Brisbane • Cairns • Christchurch • Melbourne • Perth • Sydney

Otium Planning Group acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and to Elders, past, present and emerging. Otium is committed to national reconciliation and respect for indigenous peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, and their rich contribution to society.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Why Do We Need an Aquatic Strategy	2
3. Project Area	4
4. Who is our Community?	5
5. Gannawarra Aquatic Facilities	6
5.1 What we know about our facilities	6
5.2 Operating Performance	7
5.3 Catchment Analysis	10
6. What have our Stakeholders told us?	11
7. What Industry trends do we need to consider?	12
8. Strategy Directions and Recommendations	14
8.1 Key Issues	14
8.2 Strategic Recommendations	14
8.2.1 Facility Hierarchy and Provision	15
8.2.2 Recommended Strategic Direction	15
8.2.3 Management and Operations	20
8.2.4 Aquatic Facility Programming	20
8.2.5 Asset Management	20
9. Warranties and Disclaimers	21



INTRODUCTION

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to investing in its aquatic and leisure facilities to encourage healthy and active lifestyles and to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Council recognises the importance of these facilities in supporting the physical and mental health within the community, by offering safe and healthy environments for people to come together to exercise and build social connections.

In order to meet the community's changing expectations and contemporary aquatic and recreational needs, the Gannawarra Aquatic Strategy has been developed to provide a road map for the future aquatic and leisure facility development in the Gannawarra Shire for the next 10 years.

The Strategy is a summary of market research, facility operating information and stakeholder consultation. It considers the upgrade and renewal requirements of the existing facilities,

the current and future needs of residents, population growth and demographic shifts, emerging usage trends and the financial impacts for Council.

The Strategy is consistent with the Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 Goal 1: Liveability. Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.



2. WHY DO WE NEED AN AQUATICS STRATEGY?

Recognising that aquatic and leisure activities continue to evolve, this Strategy has been developed to guide the future direction and decision making to ensure the future provision of facilities and services offered address the current and future needs of the Gannawarra community.

There are six public aquatic facilities located in the Shire of Gannawarra. Three are owned and operated by Council and three are located on crown land operated by Committees of Management:

- Kerang Outdoor Pool
- Cohuna Outdoor Pool
- Kerang Exercise Pool
- Leitchville Outdoor Pool
- Quambatook Outdoor Pool
- Koondrook Outdoor Pool.

The five outdoor pools are reported to be past their end of life, and the Kerang Exercise Pool no longer adequately services a growing demand for learn to swim and use by an ageing demographic. It is because of these reasons that a long-term strategic plan for aquatic provision

into the future was recommended in Gannawarra Shire Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019.

The Gannawarra Shire Pools Strategic Plan 2009 reviewed the condition of each pool, identified strategies to increase community use of pool facilities and design a maintenance and improvement plan.

The plan found:

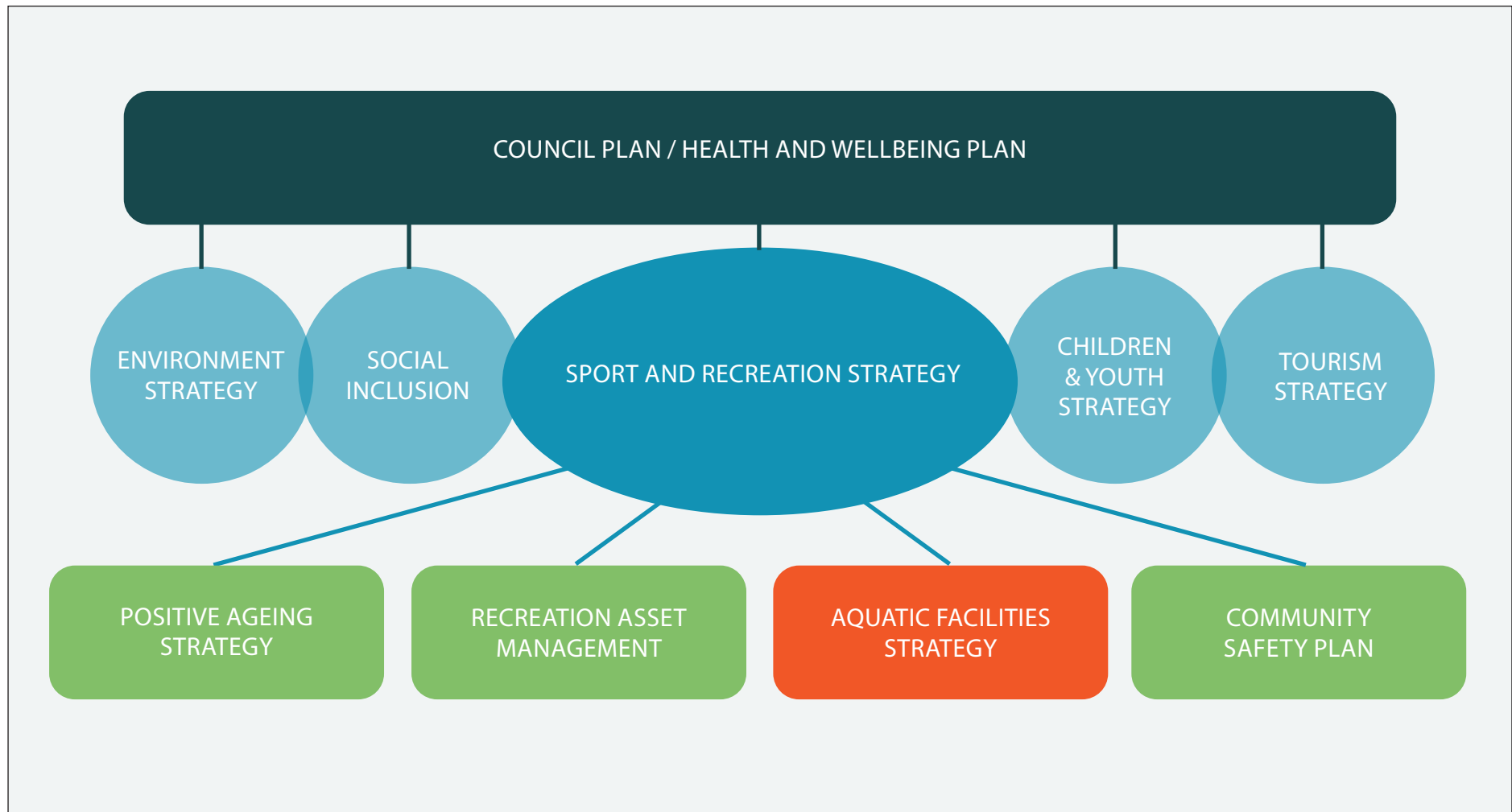
- All pools require significant maintenance and/or redevelopment works if they are to be retained in the longer term. The cost of these works alone is about \$1.9M and will require ongoing investment.
 - The technical and maintenance works will only keep the facilities operational. They will not provide optimum service for they are outdated and lack quality support facilities and programs. They are failing to attract the youth market and cannot meet the health and wellbeing needs of an ageing community.
 - Improvements to disability access, improved shade and windbreaks, more seating and provision of indoor program spaces were recommended to support a wider range of uses and new programming.
 - The lack of promotion and programming, together with the slow decline in the Shire population have meant the facilities are increasingly marginal from a recreational, financial and operational perspective.
- New leisure, recreation, social, health and wellbeing opportunities should be provided at the facilities for them to be more effective. Recommended initiatives include multi-purpose program rooms, health and fitness gym, consulting suites, indoor/outdoor water play, café and an indoor pool at one venue.
 - Maintaining the existing pools is the priority in the immediate to medium term. However, if the cost of these works cannot be afforded over the long term, Council may be forced to close one or more of the existing pools. If this is the case, Council should consider enhancing the quality, attractiveness and programming of the remaining venues.



Council Strategic Links

The diagram below shows the strategic links between Gannawarra Shire Council's key strategic documents. The Aquatic Facilities Strategy is a recommendation of the Sport and Recreation Strategy.

Figure 1: Strategic Links



3. PROJECT AREA

Gannawarra is a rural municipality located on the northern boundary of Victoria, 1.25 hours from Bendigo and 40 minutes from Swan Hill. It contains two central townships – Kerang and Cohuna - and a number of smaller settlements including Koondrook, Quambatook, Leitchville, Lalbert, Lake Charm, Murrabit and Mystic Park (Kangaroo Lake). The region features red gum forests, many freshwater lakes, the Murray River and Gunbower Creek.



4. WHO IS OUR COMMUNITY?

It is important to understand the current and future populations to ensure the facilities and services are developed to address residents' needs. The following details the key population characteristics of the Gannawarra Shire.

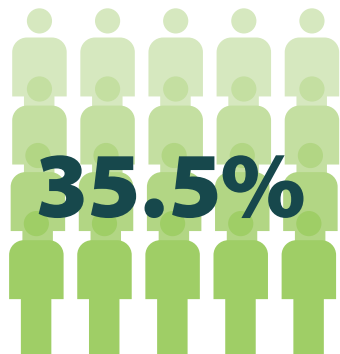
Gannawarra population

10,612

10,612 (ERP 2021), grown by 0.5% in previous year and expected to grow modestly.

49

The median age is 49 years, which is significantly higher than the median age across Regional Victoria of 43 years.



60 years and over

The increasing number of retirees and seniors in the community will mean a growing need for therapy-based programming.



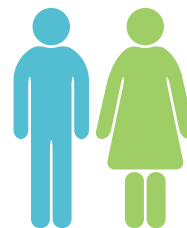
6.5%

688 people (or 6.5% of the population) in 2016 reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This is more than the 6% recorded for Regional Victoria.



Property prices are comparatively low, below the national average. However, the median weekly income is also below the national median. Therefore, providing accessible and affordable aquatic and leisure facilities and programs are important to encourage participation.

relatively even number of males and females



which is consistent with Regional Victoria

Only 5% of the population were born overseas, compared to 11% in Regional Victoria, and English being the predominant language in more households.



Low level of cultural diversity



The unemployment rate (3.4% June 2020) is well below the State and national average.



Pre and school aged children make up one fifth of the community. A feature of Gannawarra Shire is the access residents have to inland water ways, meaning access to learn to swim programs and leisure water are important and will continue.

5. GANNAWARRA AQUATIC FACILITIES

5.1 What we know about our facilities

KERANG OUTDOOR POOL

Ownership and Management

- Seasonal Pool
- Owned and managed by Council

Facilities

- Main pool (50.32m x 18.6m)
- Intermediate pool
- Splash park
- Waterslide
- Amenities and change rooms
- Swimming Club Room
- Kiosk/Office/Reception area
- Shade structures and picnic areas

COHUNA OUTDOOR POOL

Ownership and Management

- Seasonal Pool
- Situated on Crown land, Council Committee of Management

Facilities

- Main pool (33.5m x 12.8m)
- Learners' pool
- Wading pool
- Waterslide
- Amenities and change rooms
- Swimming Club Room
- Kiosk/Office/Reception area
- Shade structures and picnic areas

KERANG EXERCISE POOL

Ownership and Management

- Indoor pool open year-round
- Owned and managed by Council

Facilities

- 5m x 6m pool
- Heated to 32-34 degrees
- 10 patron maximum at any one time
- Amenities and change rooms

LEITCHVILLE OUTDOOR POOL

Ownership and Management

- Seasonal Pool
- Owned by Council and managed by Council appointed Committee
- Council provided annual funding allocation

Facilities

- Main pool (T-shaped 25m x 12.6/20.1m)
- Toddlers' pool
- Amenities and change rooms
- Kiosk/Office/Reception area
- Shade structures and picnic areas

QUAMBATOOK OUTDOOR POOL

Ownership and Management

- Seasonal Pool
- Situated on Crown Land, managed and maintained by local community Committee of Management
- Council provided annual funding allocation

Facilities

- Main pool (25m x 10.6m)
- Toddlers' pool
- Amenities and change rooms
- Kiosk/Office/Reception area
- Shade structures and picnic areas

KOONDROOK OUTDOOR POOL

Ownership and Management

- Seasonal Pool
- Situated on Crown Land, managed and maintained by local community Committee of Management
- Council provided annual funding allocation

Facilities

- Main pool (33m x 17m)
- Learners' pool
- Toddlers' pool
- Amenities and change rooms
- Kiosk/Office/Reception area
- Shade structures and picnic areas

5.2 Operating Performance

The following table provides a summary of the operational performance of Gannawarra aquatic centres during the period 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. Please note COVID 19 had a significant impact on the operational performance across all facilities during the period 2019 - 2021. As a result the last full three years of operation has been assessed (represented as an average).

Table 1: Summary of Overall Operational Performance

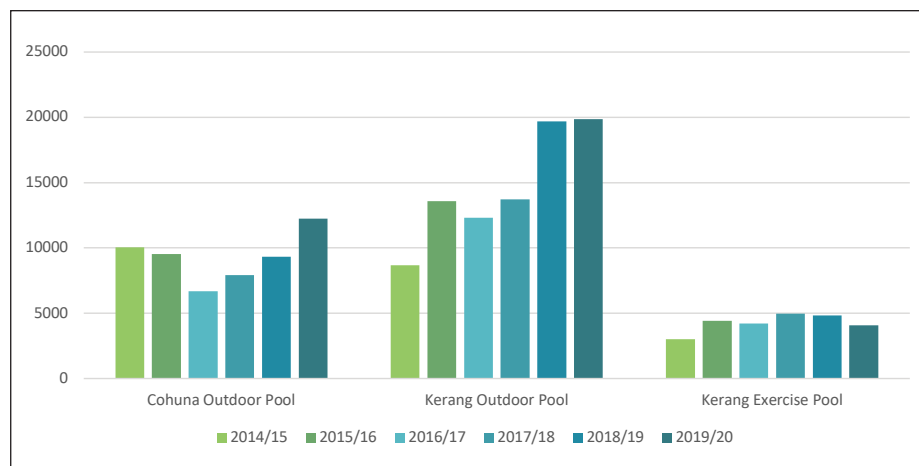
	Cohuna Outdoor Pool	Kerang Outdoor Pool	Kerang Exercise Pool	Leitchville Outdoor Pool	Quambatook Outdoor Pool	Koondrook Outdoor Pool	Total/ Average
Visits	9,833	17,757	4,615	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	28,051 (Council only)
Income	\$30,826	\$53,054	\$25,077	\$8,868	\$19,762	\$71,026	\$208,613 (Council only = \$108,957)
Expenditure	\$110,157	\$182,308	\$86,252	\$10,632	\$15,813	\$61,194	\$466,356 (Council only = \$378,990)
Operational Surplus / Deficit	-\$79,331	-\$129,254	-\$61,175	-\$1,764	\$3,959	\$9,832	-\$257,743 (Council only = -\$269,760)
Income Per Visit	\$3.13	\$2.99	\$5.43	No visit data	No visit data	No visit data	\$3.88 (Council only)
Expense Per Visit	\$11.20	\$10.27	\$18.69	No visit data	No visit data	No visit data	\$13.50 (Council only)
Operating Cost Per Visit	-\$8.07	-\$7.28	-\$13.26	No visit data	No visit data	No visit data	-\$9.62 (Council only)
Asset Renewal 5-Year Average Spend	\$26,150	\$23,050	\$0	\$3,450	\$6,200	\$10,450	\$69,300

The operating indicators show:

- The three-year average for total visitations across the three Council managed pools was 28,051 visits per season.
- The three-year average total income across six sites was \$208,613 per season.
- The three-year total operating deficit across six sites was \$257,743 per season.
- Kerang Exercise Pool recorded the highest income per visit at \$5.43 in comparison to Cohuna Outdoor Pool at \$3.13 and Kerang Outdoor Pool at \$2.99. This can be explained by a higher entry fee structure for the Kerang Exercise Pool. The average income per visit across the three Council managed pools was \$3.88.
- Kerang Outdoor Pool recorded the lowest expenditure per visit at \$10.27 in comparison to Cohuna Outdoor Pool at \$11.20 and Kerang Exercise Pool at \$18.69. The average expenditure per visit across the three Council managed pools was \$13.50.
- The average cost per visit for the three Council managed sites was -\$9.62. Kerang Outdoor Pool recorded the lowest cost per visit at -\$7.28, followed by Cohuna Outdoor Pool at -\$8.07 cost per visit and Kerang Exercise Pool at -\$13.26 cost per visit.
- The average total asset renewal spending across the last five years was \$69,300. Most of the upgrades/replacement works occurred at Cohuna, Kerang and Leitchville Outdoor Pools.

The following figure shows the annual attendance data for the last five years for the three Council managed facilities.

Figure 3: Gannawarra Council owned Aquatic Facilities Annual Attendance Summary



The attendance summary indicates the following trends:

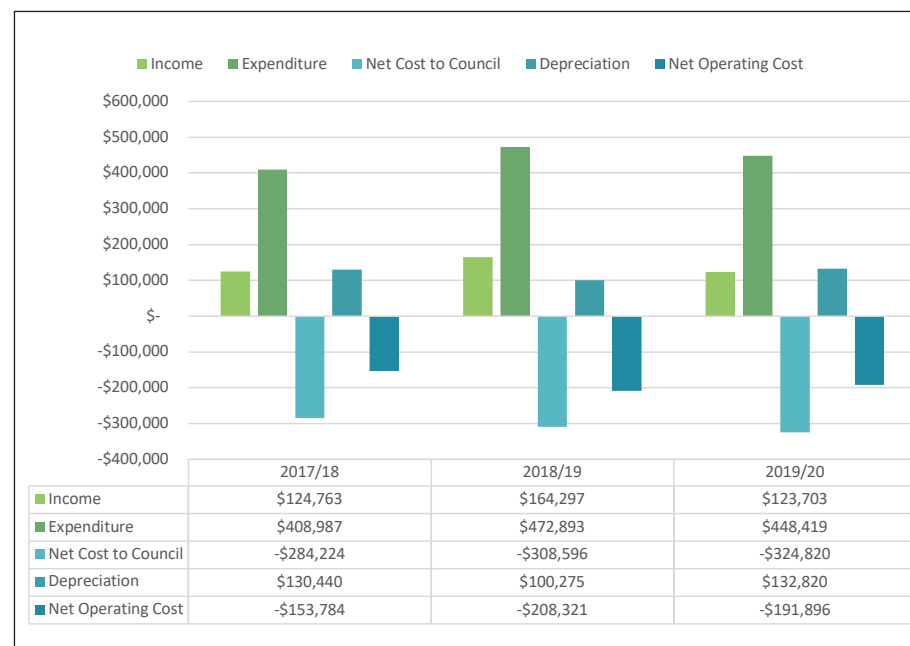
- There was an overall increase in visitations for the Gannawarra council managed aquatic facilities.
- Kerang Outdoor Pool and Cohuna Outdoor Pool both show a steady increase over the last three years with the highest recorded attendances achieved in 2019/20.
- Kerang Exercise Pool has been attracting similar visitation levels with the highest visitations recorded in 2017/18. The COVID impacts and closures resulted in a decline in visits for 2019/20.
- The steep increase in visitations over the last two years at Cohuna and Kerang Outdoor Pools can be explained by new door counter and point of sale technology installed at both sites in 2018.

The following figure shows the combined financial performance for Gannawarra aquatic facilities over the last three years. This includes Cohuna Outdoor Pool, Kerang Outdoor Pool, Kerang Exercise Pool, Leitchville Outdoor Pool and Quambatook Outdoor Pool. Koondrook is not included in the analysis given no financial operating data has been provided.

The combined financial performance summary indicates the following trends:

- Income has been relatively stable over the three years, with 2018/19 recorded the highest combined revenue across the five pools being \$164,297. The average combined total income was \$137,588.

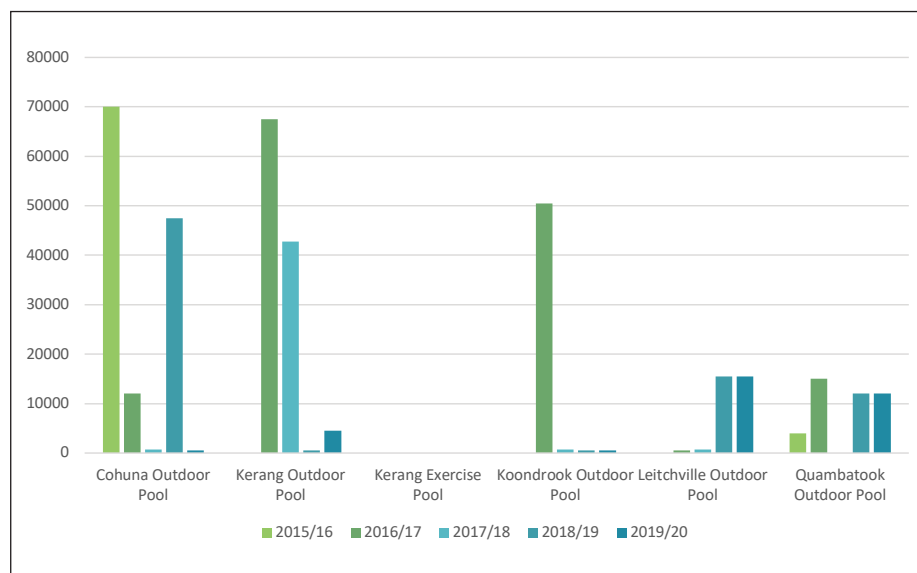
Figure 4: Gannawarra Aquatic Facilities Annual Financial Performance Summary



- The average annual combined expenditure across the five facilities was \$443,433 per year. The highest expenditure was recorded in 2018/19 at \$472,893.
- The total combined net cost (including depreciation) to Council was increased over the three years by 14%, from -\$284,224 in 2017/18 to -\$324,820 in 2019/20.
- The total combined net operating cost (excluding depreciation) decreased in 2019/20 from the previous year, however, has increased by 24.8% over the three years from -\$153,784 in 2017/18 deficit to -\$191,896 deficit in 2019/20.

The following figure shows the asset renewal expenditure invested across Gannawarra aquatic facilities over the last five years.

Figure 5: Gannawarra Aquatic Facilities Annual Asset Renewal and Major Maintenance Expenditure Summary



The asset renewal expenditure indicates the following trends:

- The majority of investment has been allocated to Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook Outdoor Pools. This included significant works to plant room improvements, pool shell painting and expansion joint repairs, shade structure installation and landscaping works.
- The spending has fluctuated annually depending on the urgency of works required across the six facilities.
- The average asset renewal spend each year over the last five years has been \$69,300.



5.3 Catchment Analysis

Leisure and sporting facility trends and benchmarking generally indicates that local or municipal facilities have a primary catchment radius of approximately 5km and a secondary catchment radius of 10km.

In general, approximately 75% to 85% of users will reside within a 0km to 5km radius of a facility with the remaining 15% to 25% coming from areas within the 5km to 10km radius of the facility. Regional facilities, providing unique and varied facility components and a larger number of services will draw users from a much wider catchment than a local/municipal facility. In rural Victoria a 20km catchment area is observed for regional facilities.

The size and shape of the catchment area will be influenced by a number of factors including the range and quality of facilities and services offered, natural and built barriers i.e., freeways, travel times and the availability of competing facilities. In metropolitan Melbourne, it is not uncommon for facilities to share catchment areas, particularly the secondary catchment areas.

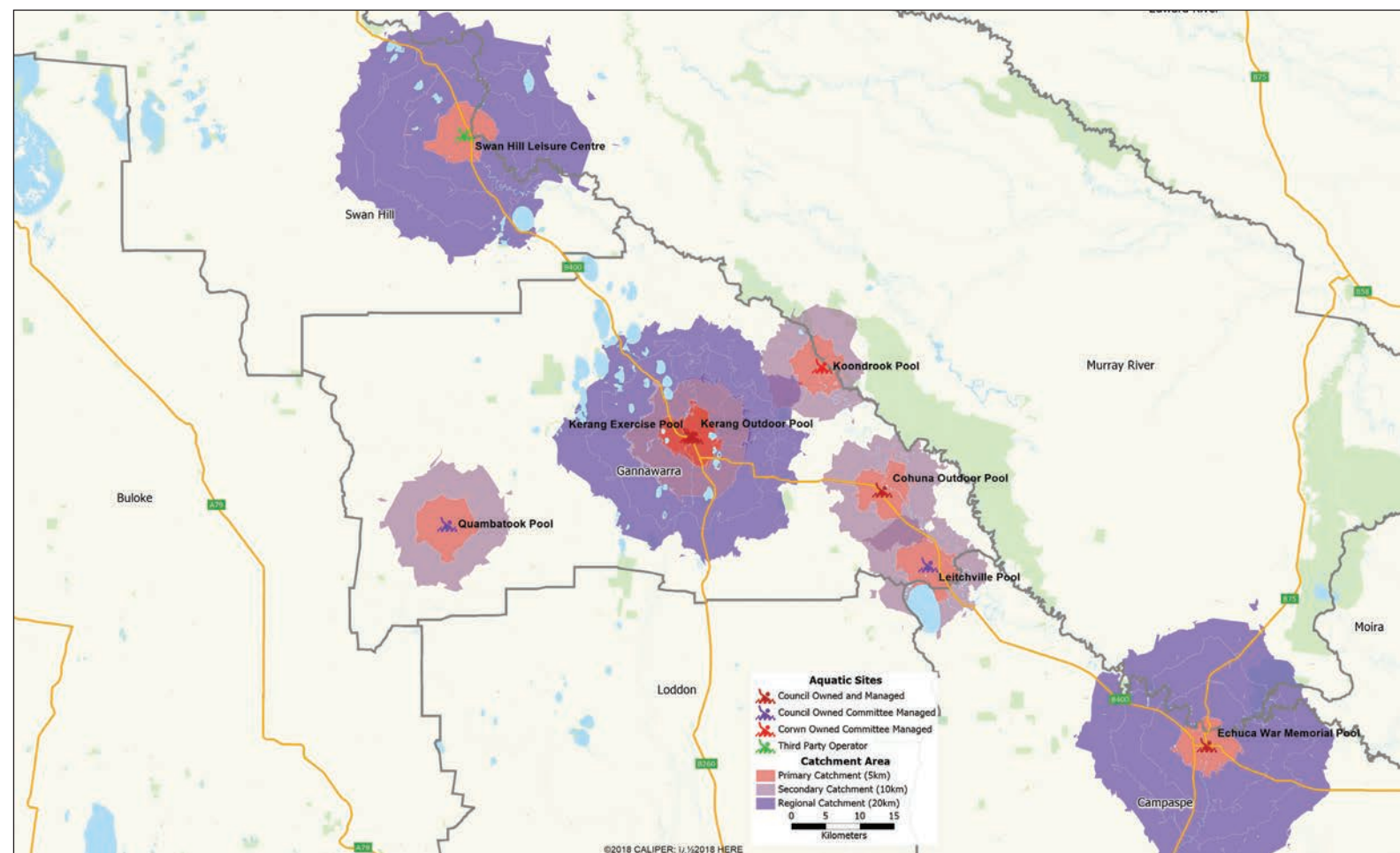
The Catchment Map on the following page shows:

- The facility catchment areas of regional indoor pools in Campaspe Shire Council (Echuca War Memorial Pool) and Swan Hill Rural City Council (Swan Hill Leisure Centre) are not within proximity of servicing the Gannawarra Shire community.
- The Kerang Outdoor Pool is the main school carnival pool and provides for a sub-regional catchment area. Kerang is also the service centre to Gannawarra, has the potential to link is well located.

- Outdoor pools in Koondrook, Cohuna, Leitchville and Quambatook provide for local catchments.
- There is an overlap of catchment areas between Cohuna and Leitchville outdoor pools.
- The catchment area for Koondrook pool also provides for the Barham township in Murray River Council.
- The Kerang, Cohuna and Kerang pools have complementary catchment areas with popu-

lation sizes and programming i.e., school classes and learn to swim, that can sustain a local pool.

Figure 6: Gannawarra Aquatic Centres Catchment Areas



6. WHAT HAVE OUR STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US?

The Strategy involved a two-stage consultation process where key stakeholders, interest groups and the community were invited to contribute.

The stage one consultation process provided a snapshot of the current pool usage and community priorities for future pool provision. Over 550 responses to a community survey were received.

Key stakeholders identified the high value of aquatic facilities and services to community. The long-standing commitment volunteers have had to make to keep the pools going was also acknowledged.

The increasing Life Saving Victoria compliance and safety requirements together with increasing reactive maintenance for the old pools are making it difficult for volunteer groups to continue to manage these community assets without assistance of Council.

Key stakeholders identify the high demand for learn to swim classes by local schools in Gannawarra Shire and Murray River Council (Barham), the two swim clubs, local learn to swim providers. The two swim clubs have healthy memberships.

Key stakeholders identify a key missing link in the aquatic facility provision is a contemporary warm water program pool that meets standards and can be programmed for therapy-based programs including aquatic aerobics and rehabilitation. This is supported by the growing interest and membership in water aerobics classes by local providers.

An indoor aquatic centre available all year round for programming was supported across key stakeholders.

The future improvements that would encourage greater use of pool facilities focused on expanding on what is currently available at the pools, in particular children's programming (such as learn to swim), extending opening hours (including the potential for heated or indoor pools for year-round access) and further activation of the pool sites.

The community survey was dominated by respondents who use either Cohuna Outdoor Pool (48%) or Kerang Outdoor Pool (35%). Cohuna Outdoor Pool was the only pool which respondents considered the facilities to be of a poor quality citing the condition of the pool, the condition of the amenities, and the need for constant maintenance due to the condition.



The stage two consultation process invited key stakeholders, interest groups and the community to provide feedback on a Draft Gannawarra Aquatic Strategy. The engagement findings were presented to Council with changes made to the Strategy.

The engagement process involved:

- **Key stakeholder interviews and work-shops**

Councillors, Council staff and consultants met with the Swimming Pool Management Committees and Progress Associations / Development Committees across all Gannawarra townships during April and May.

Interviews also occurred with Northern District Community Health and other health agencies, schools, interest groups and advisory groups.

- **Online community surveys**

A 12-question survey was designed to seek the broader community feedback on what they liked or disliked about the Draft Strategy.

Overall, 520 community surveys were received from a wide range of community members and across Gannawarra townships.

- **Community drop-in sessions**

There were five community drop-in sessions held between 20-24 June 2022 at Quambatook, Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook and Leitchville.

“We have heard the passion throughout the community for their local outdoor swimming pools and the importance our residents place on these facilities, whilst we have also heard of the growing need for all year-round warm water to support learn to swim programs for the Gannawarra’s young people and to support low impact exercise.”

– Mayor, Cr Charlie Gillingham



The stage 2 consultation process found:

- The community supports access to pools for water safety, our health, fitness and wellbeing and they are good for business, tourism and an ingredient to attracting professionals and people to Gannawarra Shire communities.
- A part of the community attached the development of an indoor aquatic facility in Kerang to the closure of small township outdoor pools.
- When reading deeper into the responses to surveys, community workshops, drop-in sessions and stakeholder interviews with

7. WHAT INDUSTRY TRENDS DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER?

Aquatic and leisure facilities provide a range of values and benefits for communities including:

- Health and fitness services allowing people to enjoy the benefits of physical activity.
- The provision of safe and welcoming spaces, supporting social inclusion and a sense of connection for all members of the community.
- Opportunities to participate for recreation, competition, or sport.
- Community development that contributes to the development of social capital, helping to create links in a community.
- Positive impacts on physical and mental wellbeing.
- Water safety/education and water confidence programs that can reduce the incidence of drownings in the community.
- Fostering community pride.

The primary focus in contemporary aquatic and leisure facility design is on expanding the facility mix to include a combination of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ options. These include spaces that accommodate a range of activities such as lap swimming, aquatic programs/learn-to-swim, adventure water, ‘leisure water’ with interactive water play elements, health and fitness, wellness services, multi-purpose program spaces, community meeting rooms/spaces, quality food and

beverage options and improved merchandising/retail areas.

Contemporary aquatic leisure facilities are community destinations and meeting points for a range of physical and social activities. Facilities including these elements will attract the four key user markets outlined in figure 5 and are most likely to provide more reasons for people to visit and stay longer, improving health and wellbeing of the community and financial sustainability for the Centre. These types of facilities provide more reasons for people to visit and stay longer, thus facility viability is improved.

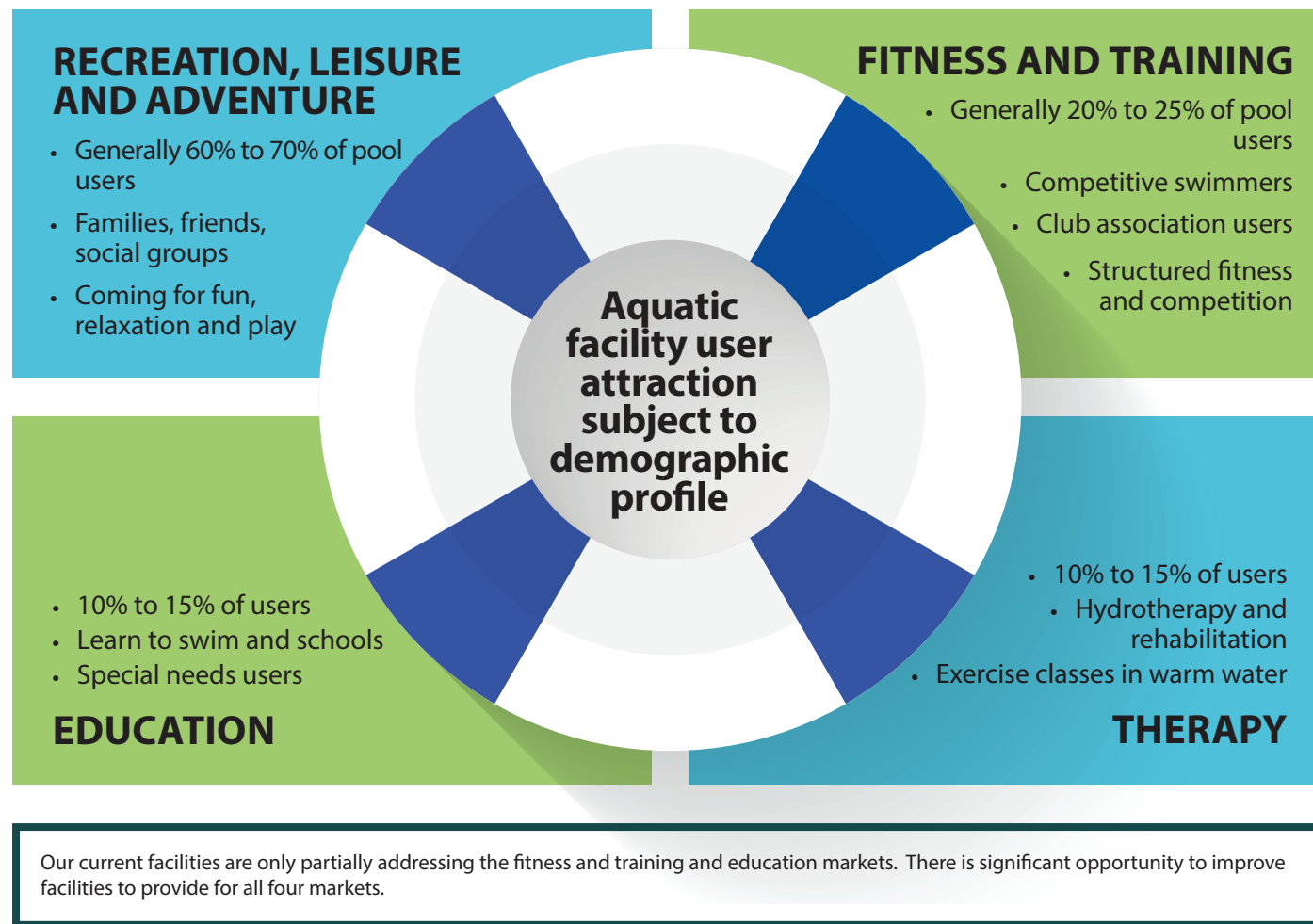


Major increases in energy and water costs in recent years (and predictions of higher energy costs into the future) require aquatic and leisure facilities to incorporate modern, environmentally sustainable features.

Table 2: Trends and Challenges

Sport and Recreation Trends	Challenges for Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A gradual ageing of the population.• Flexibility in the times when people recreate.• Increased variety in leisure options.• Constraints to leisure participation.• Changing employment structures, trading, and work hours.• Aquatic areas usually require financial subsidy whilst health and fitness usually profitable.• Different people want different activities.• Provision of high standards and quality of facilities and services.• Desire for activities to be affordable.• Recognition of strong links between physical activity and health.• Expectations of equity and access.• Technology developments and impacts.• More sustainable and eco-friendly infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer Expectations – low cost / long operating hours.• Changing population demographics.• Competition for participants.• High cost of aquatic areas due to labour and services costs.• Need to operate commercial activities to help subsidise aquatic area costs.• Maintaining and upgrading ageing and outdated facilities.• Need for new facilities to accommodate population growth.• Well-trained personnel – volunteers and paid staff.• Keeping ‘pace’ with technology development.• Environmental sustainability to reduce energy and water usage and costs.• Rate capping impact and competing priorities on Council budgets.

Figure 7: Main aquatic and leisure facility user markets



8. STRATEGY DIRECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section summarises the key issues identified via the market research, centre review and stakeholder engagement stages of the project. Strategic directions are proposed to address these issues together with a proposed aquatic facility network.

8.1 Key Issues

Aquatic service supports strategic commitment to strong healthy communities.

Current aquatic facilities do not accommodate all key user markets.

Facility catchments and hierarchy indicates a need for a network of aquatic facilities that provide a range of complementary facilities, services and programs.

Significant asset renewal and maintenance challenges in short to medium term.

Compliance and safety challenges at community run pools.

8.2 Strategic Recommendations

Proposed Vision

Based on the above challenges, the proposed Vision and Objectives for the Gannawarra Aquatic Strategy are to:

Provide sustainable and accessible aquatic and leisure facilities that brings Gannawarra residents together to enjoy health and wellbeing, education and leisure experiences.

Proposed Objectives

The proposed objectives to achieve the Vision for the provision on aquatic facilities are::

OBJECTIVE ONE

Provision of accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities that support participation opportunities and key program needs.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Well managed and maintained facilities that meet current design and operational industry standards.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Development of a network of complementary facilities that are located within key catchment areas (population and visitation).

OBJECTIVE FOUR

Environmentally sustainable and universally designed facilities.

8.2.1 Facility Hierarchy and Provision

Facilities will be provided through a combination of:

- Council owned aquatic and leisure facilities.
- Community managed aquatic and leisure facilities.
- Facilities/services available from the private sector (e.g., swim school, fitness centres and personal training studios).
- Sub regional aquatic facilities offered by adjoining municipalities in Swan Hill Rural City Council (Swan Hill Leisure Centre) and Campaspe Shire Council (Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre).

Table 3: Facility Hierarchy

Service Hierarchy	Service Level Objective
Local Local rural township catchment population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a local aquatic experience i.e., pool or water play / leisure water • Usually linked to other community facilities to share management and operation cost
District Major townships centre and district catchment population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide program pool combined with water play / leisure water • Consider provision of limited dry/gym facilities
Sub Regional Major township centre with highest population area servicing a municipal catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to separate program and leisure water • Larger dry/gym facilities • Additional limited facilities
Regional Regional city catchment population servicing across municipal boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More extensive program and leisure water • Consideration of indoor 50m pool and complementary warm water pool • Increased gym and program space • Additional complementary amenities, food and beverage

8.2.2 Recommended Strategic Direction

The recommended future development options are based on the following localised trends:

- Need for funding investment to address the operational and technical issue identified via the detailed facility audits of the ageing facilities.
- Opportunity to integrate key facilities and service areas at one location to support year-round access to aquatic facilities to support learn to swim and therapy-based activities.
- New leisure and water play opportunities to continue to support the informal leisure/social/family markets.
- Consider opportunities to support indoor health and fitness programs and services.
- Improvements to disability access, improved shade and windbreaks, more seating and landscaping.
- Maintaining the existing pools is the priority in the immediate to medium term. However, if the cost of these works cannot be afforded over the long term, some of these pools may be forced to close.
- Support the community Committee of Management operated facilities to ensure the long-term sustainability of operations.
- Based on the above the recommended strategic direction for the Gannawarra Aquatic facilities is as follows.



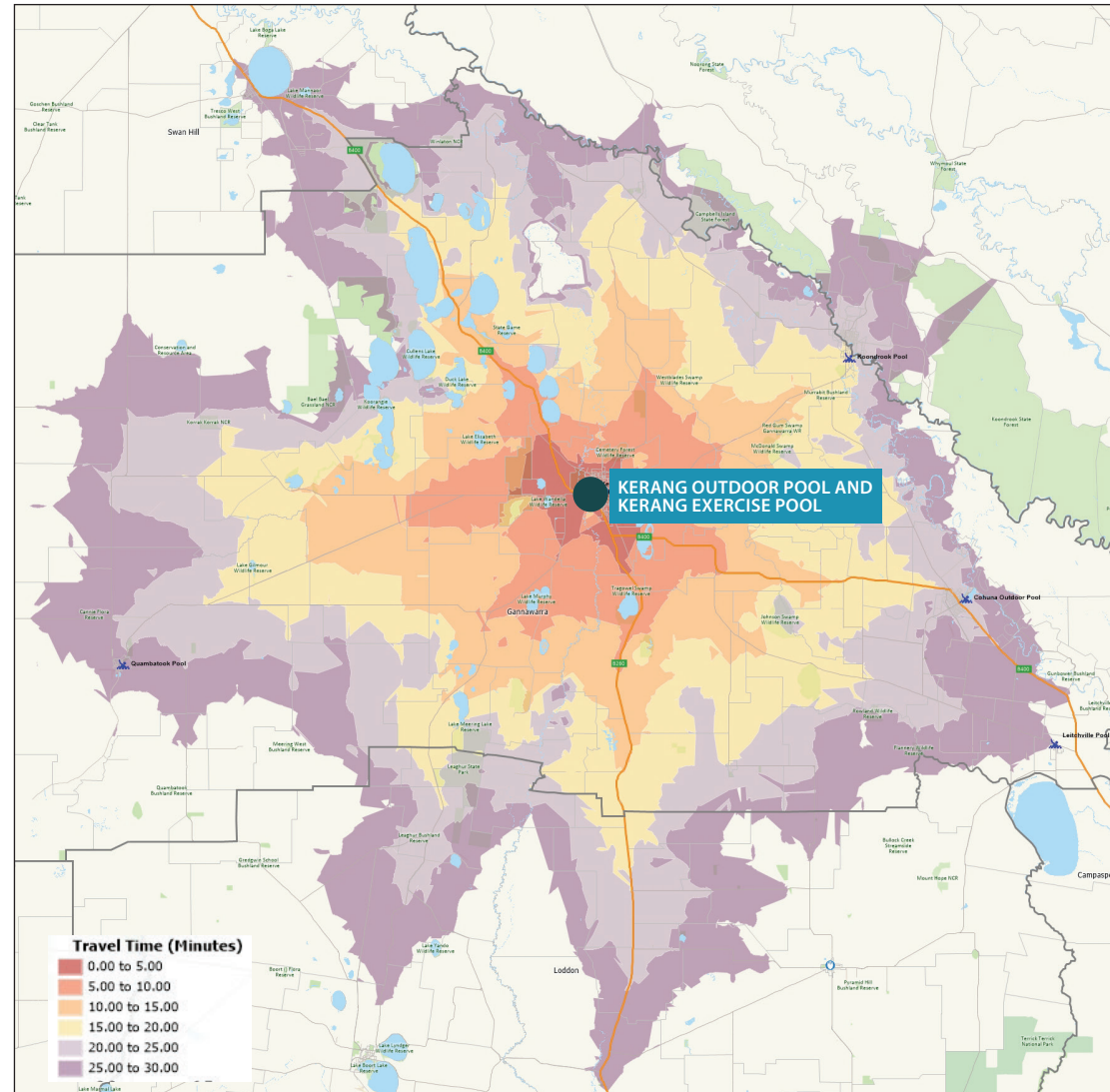
Kerang Outdoor Pool and Kerang Exercise Pool

Recommended Strategy

Development of a sub-regional (municipal level) integrated indoor aquatic facility in Kerang that services the key aquatic programming needs of the Shire at the site of the existing outdoor pool. This will include a new entry that integrates the library, outdoor pool and proposed indoor facility including an indoor pool, warm water pool, dry health and fitness facilities, allied health services, changerooms, café, reception and administration area. This recommendation will result in the closure to the existing Kerang exercise pool.

Sub regional facility

Catchment assumptions are important in determining potential patronage of a sub-regional facility. Anecdotal evidence supports the notion that people in regional areas do travel to attend recreational pursuits. Football, cricket and netball participants of all ages travel to away games that are often outside of the municipality. There is now evidence that suggests residents living in regional areas are prepared to travel up to 30 minutes to access quality sporting facilities, this is supported by the current use of the Kerang Outdoor Pool user profile. The following map indicates the population catchment within the travel distances of five to 30 minutes of the proposed location of the integrated facility.



Kerang Outdoor Pool and Kerang Exercise Pool

Recommendation	Timing
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical audit at the outdoor pool.	Year 2
That funding be provided in the 2023/2024 Council budget for the development of concept plans and capital cost estimate for an integrated aquatic facility in Kerang.	Year 1-2
That Council commence the design phase for an integrated indoor aquatic facility on the site of the outdoor pools. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor laned program /warm water pool • Toddlers pool/leisure water • Dry health and wellness area • Support amenities. 	Year 1-2
That Council prepare a business case for the development of the integrated aquatic facility to understand the operational costs, usage and Council subsidy.	Year 1-2
That Council develop a funding strategy that considers the potential internal and external (state and federal governments) to support the development of an integrated aquatic centre.	Year 1-2
That Council close the Kerang Exercise Pool once a new contemporary indoor warm water program pool is provided. The pool will be accessible and of a sufficient size to provide for the programming and rehabilitation needs.	Timing to coincide with opening of the proposed new facility



Cohuna Outdoor Pool

Development of a new outdoor pool for lap swimming, learn to swim and other aquatic programs and consider the options for heating the water to extend the length of the season to support these programs.

Development of leisure water including a waterslide to support the social / fun / family markets.

The Cohuna Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2022 considers a number of sites for the development of a new swimming pool. Detailed geotechnical site investigation is required on two sites along Gunbower Creek to determine a preferred site for development of the pool. This review should exclude Apex Park as it was not supported as a suitable location by residents.

Recommendation	Timing
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical audit at the outdoor pool.	Year 2
That Council undertake detailed geotechnical site investigation on potential sites identified in the Cohuna Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2022 to determine a preferred site for development of the pool.	Year 1-2
That Council prepare a concept plan and capital cost estimate for the development of a new outdoor pool in Cohuna.	Year 1-2
That Council prepare a business case for the new outdoor pool to understand the operational costs, usage and Council subsidy.	Year 1-2
That Council develop a funding strategy that considers the potential internal and external (government and private) funding opportunities to support the development of a new facility.	Year 3



Leitchville Outdoor Pool

Retain Council's annual funding contribution to pool operations.

Council sets key performance indicators to ensure they meet industry standards. Key performance indicators include:

- Lifeguarding in line with Life Saving Victoria guidelines for safe pool operations
- Maintain a safe water quality level in line with Department of Health and Human Services water quality regulations
- Adhere to current dangerous goods storage and handling legislation and Australian standards
- Maintain a register of Work Safe notifiable incidents and near misses
- Maintain a register of staff inductions and industry qualifications and training.

Recommendation	Timing
That Council support the Committee of Management with the recommended essential maintenance works identified within the technical audit at the outdoor pool..	2022/2023
That Council work in collaboration with the Committee of Management on the outcomes of the assessment against Life Saving Victoria Guidelines for the safe operations of pools.	2022/2023



Quambatook Outdoor Pool

Retain Council's annual funding contribution to pool operations.

Council sets key performance indicators to ensure they meet industry standards. Key performance indicators include:

- Lifeguarding in line with Life Saving Victoria guidelines for safe pool operations
- Maintain a safe water quality level in line with Department of Health water quality regulations
- Adhere to current dangerous goods storage and handling legislation and Australian standards
- Maintain a register of Work Safe notifiable incidents and near misses
- Maintain a register of staff inductions and industry qualifications and training.

Recommendation	Timing
That Council provide DECCA and the Committee of Management the recommended essential maintenance works identified within the technical audit at the outdoor pool.	Year 1
That Council work in collaboration with the Committee of Management the outcomes of the assessment against Life Saving Victoria Guidelines for the safe operations of pools.	Year 1
That Council work in collaboration with DECCA, the Committee of Management and the local community to design an open space precinct that supports the Quambatook community.	Ongoing annual review
That Council consider opportunities to support Quambatook residents' access to aquatic facilities via transport services during the summer months and / or subsidies to the proposed new integrated facility.	Year 5

Koondrook Outdoor Pool

The facility provides access to an aquatic facility for local residents of both the Koondrook and Barham areas. There is a need to undertake the identified maintenance works to ensure the facility is operating efficiently.

There is an opportunity to work with DECCA, the Committee of Management and Murray River Council on upgrading the current toddlers pool and learn to swim pool area to provide more contemporary leisure water opportunities to encourage and support the family and social markets.

Design of new leisure water and play area to include varied depths for primary school and early years children.

Retain Council's annual funding contribution to pool operations.

Council sets key performance indicators to ensure they meet industry standards.

Key performance indicators include:

- Lifeguarding in line with Life Saving Victoria guidelines for safe pool operations
- Maintain a safe water quality level in line with Department of Health and Human Services water quality regulations
- Adhere to current dangerous goods storage and handling legislation and Australian standards
- Maintain a register of Work Safe notifiable incidents and near misses
- Maintain a register of staff inductions and industry qualifications and training.

Recommendation	Timing
That Council support the Committee of Management in sourcing funds to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical audit at the outdoor pool.	Year 3
That Council in collaboration with DECCA, the Committee of Management and the Murray River Council support the preparation of concept plans for the redevelopment of the toddler's pool and program pool to create a contemporary leisure water area to support the family/social markets.	Year 3
That Council in collaboration with DECCA, the Committee of Management and the Murray River support the preparation of a business case for the recommended redevelopment.	Year 4
That Council, DECCA, the Committee of Management and the Murray River Council develop a funding strategy that considers the potential internal and external (government and private) funding opportunities to support the recommended redevelopment.	Year 4

8.2.3 Management and Operations

To ensure the management and operations of the facilities are aligned to industry trends and compliance requirements it recommended that the following management strategies be implemented.

Table 4: Management and Operations Recommendations

Recommendation	Timing
That Council undertake an annual review of the performance of all facilities in meeting key performance measures and progress made on the strategy.	Ongoing
That Council work in collaboration with community pool Committees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fees and charges for access to aquatic facilities and programs / services are set at an affordable level to support participation. • Improve usage and financial data collection. • Complete LSV Safety Audits for community run pools. • To ensure compliance with LSV Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations. 	Year 3
That Council consider providing lifeguarding services to 'advertised' popular water holes such as the Cohuna Beach.	Year 1

8.2.4 Aquatic Facility Programming

The review highlighted the opportunity for increased access to aquatic program opportunities. It is recommended that Council plan for the delivery of a range of aquatic and dry based programs at the facilities that support the health and wellness needs of the community.

Table 5: Aquatic Facility Programming Recommendations

Recommendation	Timing
That Council develop a range of aquatic programs to be implemented across the network of facilities to support the health and wellbeing of residents.	Year 1
That Council support the community pool Committees through providing research and programming opportunities.	Year 1
Council provides a discount/incentive to lessen the cost of travel to access aquatic facilities and programs for communities without access to a local pool.	2023/2024

8.2.5 Asset Management

To ensure the aquatic facilities are maintained in line with industry standards it is recommended that Council update and implement the Aquatic Facilities Asset Management Plan (AMP) and maintenance plans for all aquatics facilities in line with Technical Assessments.

Table 6: Asset Management Recommendations

Recommendation	Timing
That Council update and implement the Aquatic Facilities Asset Management Plan (AMP) and maintenance plans for Kerang outdoor pool and Cohuna outdoor pool in line with Technical Assessments prepared; and align Council's operational and renewal budgets.	Ongoing
That funding be provided to undertake the necessary maintenance works as identified within the technical audit at Kerang outdoor pool and Cohuna outdoor pool.	Year 2
That Council work in collaboration with community pool Committees of Management and DEWLP to develop an Asset Management Plan for each community pool site in line with Technical Assessments and Strategic Directions.	Ongoing

9. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS

The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their 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.



Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd ABN 30 605 962 169
304/91 Murphy Street Richmond Victoria 3121
Phone: +61 3 9698 7300 Email: info@otiumplanning.com.au
www.otiumplanning.com.au

