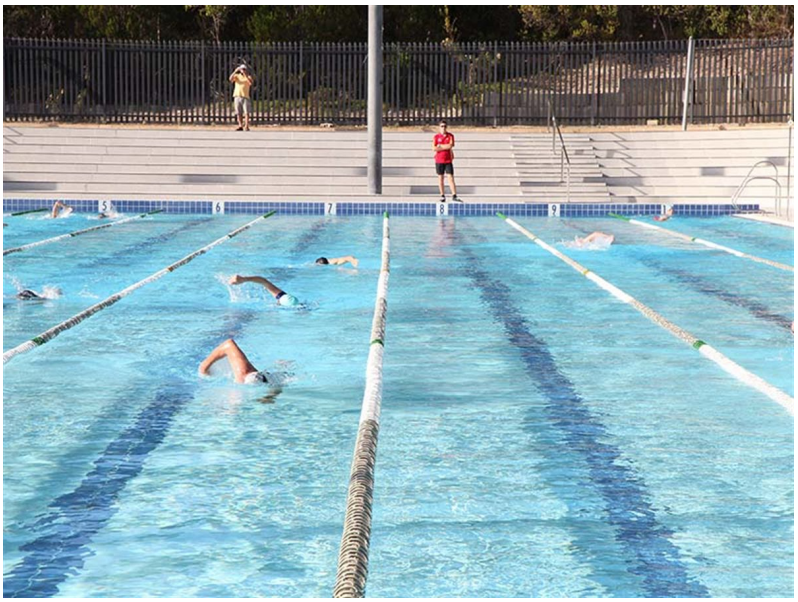
DOVETON POOL IN THE PARK DEMAND ANALYSIS



PREPARED FOR TRACT CONSULTING

ISSUED JULY 31 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Casey's *Casey Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2019 – 2041* (Aquatic Strategy) includes a review of the municipality's existing facilities and future service needs, setting the direction for investment in aquatic infrastructure for the City of Casey (Casey).

The Aquatic Strategy includes a section titled *Facility Hierachy* (Sic) and *Provision* that highlights the provision of the following aquatic facilities:

"Three regional level aquatic and leisure facilities:

- One to the north (Casey ARC Narre Warren);
- One to the south (Casey RACE Cranbourne East);
- One to the south-east to service the Clyde Urban Growth Area.

And one local indoor and outdoor aquatic and leisure facility (Doveton), that provides for seasonal use (Dec – March).

One of the short-term recommendations of the Aquatic Strategy is to develop a master plan for the Doveton Pool in the Park (DPIP). Tract Consulting has been engaged by Casey to develop the masterplan. The master planning process is intended to further explore and test the need for indoor and outdoor aquatics at the DPIP.

To inform development of the master plan, Sport and Leisure Solutions (SLS) has been engaged by Tract to provide an overview of demand for indoor and outdoor aquatics at DPIP.

The methodology implemented to assess aquatic demand factors includes the following:

- Development of a high-level aquatic market overview to assist informed decision-making. Topics covered include:
  - the benefits of aquatics
  - outdoor pool provision overview
  - market overview for aquatic leisure centres (ALCs)
  - design trends for ALCs
- A review of the Aquatic Strategy and the implications for DPIP.
- A review of community consultation information to identify any specific issues raised by residents for aquatic provision at DPIP.
- Identification of regional provision of indoor aquatics and the potential implications for the provision of indoor aquatics at DPIP.
- A review of user data to understand the capacity of Doveton and Eumemmerring residents to access indoor aquatic infrastructure.
- A review of DPIP performance against other outdoor pools.

To support the master plan response, several development options and their implications were identified for consideration by the DPIP Master Plan Project Control Group.

2. BENEFITS OF AQUATIC CENTRES

2.1 Industry Research

Three relatively recent industry reports highlight the benefits of aquatic centres and support their role in delivering outcomes in community health and wellbeing.

These findings provide a basis for viewing aquatic centres as contributors to broader health and wellbeing outcomes within the community they serve rather than as a cost or financial burden, and that this is a variable to be considered in any cost-benefit analysis.

2.1.1 *Economic Benefits of Australia's Public Aquatic Facilities* (Royal Life Saving 2017)

This study investigated the economic benefits of an individual aquatic facility visit by measuring the links between an increase in physical activity from an average pool visit and reduced risk of mortality, morbidity and healthcare expenditure, as well as reduced workplace absenteeism.

The study found that a weekly visit to a pool is enough to take most people out of the 'physically inactive' category. The resulting health benefits from this mean that every aquatic facility visit creates economic benefits worth an average of $26.39 – in addition to the leisure value gained by users. The study found that the average Australian visits a public aquatic facility 4.4 times a year, with the average aquatic facility creating $2.72 million a year in value to the community.

In addition to measurable economic benefits, there are intangible benefits, including patron enjoyment, social capital, developing a sense of community, and access to water safety education.

2.1.2 *Community Benefits of Victorian Aquatic and Recreation Centres* (Victoria Uni. 2014)

The study undertaken by Victoria University in 2014 assessed the social and economic benefits associated with council aquatic centre provision. The key findings from this study were:

- Aquatic centres are important local economic entities through programs for residents, and employment for residents and local contractors. The value of their operations needs to be better recognised by the wider community and political decision-makers.
    - Aquatic centre activities are important contributors to the local community. Users value their visit to the centre at almost $48 per visit, and the centres provide an average $38 million of benefits. (Assessed using the Travel Cost Method).
    - Centres generate a return of $7.60 value for every dollar of expenditure (excluding capital cost).
- Centre users participate in a variety of physical activity that exceeds the activity levels of most Australians, which makes an important contribution to the health of users.
- Aquatic centres contribute to local social capital. However, centre managers may need to review programs offered and the interaction with users to facilitate stronger community connections.
- Many current centre users are committed to physical health and wellbeing; however, there is value in the development and marketing of program initiatives to attract a wider range of users, especially from disadvantaged sectors of the community.

2.1.3 *Value of Swimming* (Swim England 2017)

Swim England commissioned robust research to demonstrate the value of swimming to individuals and society. The findings show how swimming positively contributes to physical and mental wellbeing, to individual and community development, and helps to reduce the burden on health and social care systems. Key findings included:

- Weekly swimming participation in England saves the National Health Service and the social care system more than £357 million a year.
- Swimmers report feeling on average 6.4% healthier than non-swimmers – this is comparable to feeling 12 years younger.
- Swimming reduces anxiety and depression.
- Swimming outdoors more than doubles the happiness of swimming indoors.
- Compared to non-swimmers, open-water swimmers say they feel 8.9% happier, while indoor swimmers feel 4.3% happier.
- Participation in swimming activities more than doubles self-confidence in women and girls.
- Swimmers are more likely to be socially connected and have more friends.

2.2 SLS Consulting Team Observations

Industry experience also suggests that aquatic centres deliver the following broad benefits.

Opportunities for competition and elite sport

The traditional role of swimming pools to provide training and competition for young swimmers is as valid today as it has ever been. Moreover, while most swimming pools will not service elite training squads to Olympic level, pools are still an important part of the pathway from learn-to-swim (LTS) programs through to the local swim club, and all the way to state and national representation.

Local swimming clubs are extremely valuable in keeping young people involved in healthy activities. They also provide opportunities for connection with a broad cross-section of the community in a relatively safe environment.

Low-cost family activities

Aquatic centres, particularly those with toddler pools and water-play attractions, provide families with low-cost entertainment. This has resulted in families using local facilities more often than in the past, providing increased opportunities for physical activity and social connection.

Aquatic education – water awareness and confidence

Indoor centres provide purpose-built facilities for the year-round development and practice of water awareness, water confidence and swimming skills. Pool depth and the relatively warm water enable the development of water confidence in a safe and comfortable environment.

General health and wellbeing

Aquatic centres provide a safe and controlled environment for people to undertake regular exercise activity to improve their health, fitness and wellbeing. Using the local aquatic centre can become part of a weekly routine that is critical to helping many people maintain and improve physical and mental wellbeing.

Safe environment

Anecdotally, a perception of safety is a determinant in the willingness of older adults and females to exercise. Community aquatic centres provide an extremely safe environment for all forms of activity and consequently encourage more members of the community to participate in health and fitness activities.

Sense of community pride

In our work with councils in planning the design and development of aquatic centres, "creating a sense of community pride" is playing an increasing role in determining the scope and quality

of facilities. Councils recognise that by investing in quality aquatic centres, they can develop facilities that generate a significant sense of pride among the local community, enhance the liveability of the community and in turn, create a positive community view of the services provided by the council to that community.

2.3 The Realities of Aquatic Centres and Swimming Pools

While aquatic centres provide significant benefits in terms of health outcomes and social connection, there are also some issues that need to be considered when developing aquatic infrastructure.

- Aquatic centres do not provide a financial return on capital investment and many incur significant losses. Key factors that determine financial performance include:
    - Catchment population size. A minimum catchment population of 50,000 is generally required to achieve an operational performance of break-even.
    - The number and size of competitors in the catchment area and the range of services they offer.
    - The scale and quality of commercial elements within a council-owned centre. The key commercial activities and drivers of net financial performance are in the health and fitness area (strength training and group fitness programs), and the LTS program. In some centres, revenue from these areas accounts on average for 70% of total revenue.
    - Facility condition. Run-down facilities perform poorly compared with centres that are well maintained.
    - The wage rates paid to staff. Contract operators such as the YMCA, Belgravia Leisure, Aligned Leisure and BlueFit can deliver services at a lower wage cost and deliver better financial returns to councils.
- Maintenance costs are extremely high. Previous analysis suggests that capital replacement and major refurbishment costs are approximately to 1% to 2% per annum. of the original capital cost. This amount is in addition to annual proactive and reactive maintenance provisions.
- Failure to adequately maintain centres results in a loss of patronage, and diminished financial performance.
- Health and fitness and LTS can generate an operational surplus and consequently, deliver a return on capital investment.
- The biggest loss-making aquatic component is lap-swimming pools. These are costly to run due to the requirement to heat and sanitise large bodies of water, and the necessity to supervise patrons. These costs, combined with the low cost of casual entry and the relatively low levels of use per square metre of water, result in operational losses for ALCs.
- Ongoing investment to maintain asset condition and operational efficiency is imperative. Over the 30 years of the effective life of an ALC, an allocation of approximately $250,000 per annum needs to be made available for repairs and reactive maintenance asset replacement. This is in addition to servicing requirements and normal preventative maintenance.
- The increase in competition in the health and fitness and LTS markets has eroded revenue for council ALCs, which has in turn, either reduced surpluses or increased operational losses.

- Staffing costs represent 60–70% of total costs. The majority of staff costs, along with utility costs, are fixed costs. These costs do not vary based on patronage.
- In-house operation provides opportunities for greater alignment with council strategies; however, staff costs are approximately 20% higher than alternative operation models.
- While outdoor swimming pools cost significantly less to build than indoor aquatic centres, they serve a much narrow sector of the community and have historically been unable to cover annual operational costs.
- There has been a significant increase in electricity and gas costs over the last 2–3 years with some facilities indicating an increase of 50%. This has negatively impacted financial performance.

Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Review March 2016

The 2016 VAGO review of ALCs identified that ALCs provide important health, wellbeing and social benefits to the community. Of the facilities managed by audited councils, only a small number generate sufficient revenue to cover operating costs.

The negative capital yields make the construction of ALCs unattractive to the private sector. Therefore, balancing the cost of developing and maintaining ALCs against the important social and health benefits is an important task for industry operators and council decision-makers.

3. OUTDOOR POOLS: OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Outdoor seasonal pools represent a nostalgic connection to the past for many Australians. In a time of less recreational choice, seasonal pools were a low-cost activity that brought communities together as well as providing a place for competitive swimmers to train. However, the relevance of outdoor pools to modern life has led to a transition, particularly in the state of Victoria, from outdoor pool provision to multipurpose indoor aquatic and leisure centres.

3.2 Outdoor Pool History and Evolution

- Between 1950 and 1980, Victorian councils built around 200 swimming pools. The major phase of swimming pool construction occurred in the 1950s and 1960s when around 120 pools were built.[1] A key driver of this development phase was the 1956 Olympics held in Melbourne.
- From the mid-1980s, the approach to aquatic provision moved towards indoor aquatic centres incorporating health and fitness areas such as strength training and group fitness in their layout. Designed to operate all year round, indoor aquatic centres service a broader cross-section of the community and generally deliver improved financial performance.
- Residents who benefited from the transition to indoor facilities included older adults, people with a disability and/or mobility issues, members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and people with low-level swimming skills. Many of these residents found that they were ill-suited to using outdoor facilities on all but the hottest days due to a lack of universal access to aquatic spaces, pools being too deep and lower water temperature.
- The advent of indoor community aquatic centres enabled centre managers to enter the LTS market, which had long been the domain of private operators. The entry into this market, combined with the growth in strength training and group fitness classes, resulted in significantly increased use and improved viability.
- The operation of seasonal pools, especially in inner Melbourne, was challenged by the Kennett Government during the implementation of local government amalgamations in 1994.
- Since the Kennett era outdoor pools have come under increased scrutiny with many councils questioning their value due to low visits and relatively high operating and maintenance costs. Some council administrators view outdoor pools as a financial burden that provide limited service to local communities.
- During those amalgamations, and not infrequently since, several councils have recommended the closure of both regional and metropolitan pools. The attempted closure of the Fitzroy Pool, which failed due to community protest, and the thwarting of other closures through community activism, are reminders of the importance of outdoor pools to local communities. In a more recent example, the Ararat Outdoor Olympic Pool was reopened in December 2016, four years after it was closed, as a result of community pressure.
- Indoor aquatic facilities have continued to evolve over the past ten years with many acting as significant community meeting places. Many ALCs receive between 500,000

[1] *Ian McShane, The past and future of local swimming pools*

and 1,000,000 visits per annum and there are several ALCs that service more than 1,000,000 visitors each year.

- The growth in visits is the result of a significant improvement in management, and marketing of aquatic and leisure services, and through the provision of facilities and activities that service the whole of the community. A contributor to the growth in participation is a better understanding of the need for exercise and movement by the whole community, particularly baby boomers and older adults.
- The growth in activity by older adults, along with people living with disability, has resulted in growth in demand for warm water exercise pools (WWEPs).
- While there has been clear movement away from outdoor pools to indoor centres, some newer centres have incorporated both indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Both Glen Eira Sport and Aquatic Centre and Aqualink Box Hill have indoor and outdoor pools. The combination of outdoor aquatics with an indoor facility enables the outdoor operating costs to be offset by indoor programs that generate net revenue such as health and fitness, and LTS programs. Further, the provision of outdoor pools in ALCs has facilitated increased lap-swimming options for communities at a lower capital cost and provides a place for the community to cool off and connect on hot days.
- Interestingly, there has only been one standalone outdoor swimming pool built in Victoria in the past 20 years. Wodonga WAVES opened in 2014 and was delivered at a cost of $10.6 million.
- The impact indoor ALCs have on community health and wellbeing will no doubt see the continued development and evolution of these centres. However, particularly as the climate warms, there will continue to be a valuable role for the outdoor pool to play in the overall provision of services to the community.

3.3 Recent Developments – Outdoor Pools

Table 1 provides a summary of infrastructure projects in Victoria over the past 10 years that have involved development or redevelopment of outdoor pools.

Table 1: Examples of Outdoor Pool Redevelopment

Project & Council	Works	Cost
Mirboo North Outdoor Pool (2020) (seasonal) **South Gippsland Shire Council**	Redevelopment of existing 25-m outdoor pool and additional facility components: – pool ramp access and wet-deck style surrounds – new outdoor learn-to-swim pool with ramp access and splash park – dry programs space – family change facilities – change facilities meeting accessibility requirements – new plant room, equipment, pipework and balance tank	$5.8 million
Horsham Outdoor Memorial Pool (2019) **Horsham Rural City Council**	50-m Outdoor Pool refurbishment: – removal of hobs from around pool to provide a flat wet deck for easier	$1.5 million

	access to the pool – ramp for all-abilities access to the pool – changes to water depth – improved filtration	
Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre (2019) **City of Moreland**	– Replacement of existing outdoor pool with 50-m outdoor pool plus additional components: – 2 giant water slides – children's splash and water-play area – 24/7 gym – cycle studio – group fitness spaces	$27 million
Warragul Leisure Centre (2016) **Baw Baw Shire Council**	The development of a new 50-m outdoor pool plus indoor aquatic redevelopment including: – combined leisure and LTS pool – replacement of WWEP – ramp to 25-m pool	$14 million
Ararat Olympic Outdoor Pool (2016) **Ararat Rural City Council**	Refurbishment of outdoor 50-m pool to facilitate reopening following closure in 2012	$1.5 million
Moe Outdoor Pool (2014) **Latrobe City Council**	Refurbishment and upgrade of existing outdoor 50-m pool plus the following additional works: – new diving pool springboard – beach-entry shallow pool with access for all ages and abilities – children's water-play features – new kiosk and entry – renovation of existing change facilities to include two fully accessible family change rooms; new fittings and fixtures throughout	$2.5 million
Aqualink Box Hill (2014) **City of Whitehorse**	25-m outdoor pool replaced with new 10-lane 25-m outdoor pool as part of a major redevelopment that included: – toddler pool with beach entry – LTS pool	$37 million

	– water-play area – warm water therapy pool – triple-springboard diving pool – gymnasium – 4 multipurpose group fitness spaces – cafe – crèche – 3-court multipurpose stadium	
Hawthorn Aquatic & Leisure Centre (2014) **City of Boroondara**	Replacement of 50-m outdoor pool as part of a broader development that included the following new elements: – indoor program pool – health and fitness area including gym and group fitness rooms – crèche – consulting suites – cafe	$20 million
Wodonga WAVES (2014) **Wodonga Council**	New 50-m outdoor pool replacing existing 50-m outdoor pool, plus the development of the following elements: – splash pad area with interactive water-play facilities – toddler pool	$10.6 million
Brunswick Baths (2013) **City of Moreland**	Refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing outdoor 50-m pool, plus additional redevelopment initiatives: – relocation and expansion of health club and crèche – new indoor 25-m pool – indoor program pool – indoor leisure play – outdoor splash pad – expanded crèche – improvements to spa – outdoor shading and seating	$14 million
Noble Park Aquatic Centre (2012) **City of Greater Dandenong**	Replacement of existing 50-m outdoor heated pool, toddler pool, large water slide, outdoor basketball half court, BBQ facilities and kiosk. Redevelopment included:	$17 million

	– new outdoor heated 51.5-m pool with moveable bulkhead/boom and shading – indoor program pool – aqua play equipment – splash pad zone – cafe – large community meeting rooms – accessibility initiatives, including ramps and hoists	
Glen Eira Sport and Aquatic Centre (2012) **City of Glen Eira**	Redevelopment of existing 50-m outdoor pool as part of a broader development that included the following new elements: – indoor 25-m pool – LTS pool – WWEP – water slides – indoor leisure pool – health and fitness area including gym and group fitness rooms – crèche – cafe – 3-court stadium	$41 million
WaterMarc (2012) **City of Banyule**	Redevelopment of existing 50-m outdoor pool as part of a broader development that included the following new elements: – indoor 50-m pool – LTS pool – WWEP – water slides – indoor leisure pool – health and fitness area including gym and group fitness rooms – crèche – cafe	$40 million
Broadford Outdoor Pool (2011)	Refurbishment of existing outdoor 50-m pool to facilitate its reopening following	$750,000

Mitchell Shire Council	closure in 2011. Upgrade to the pool shell and pool plant	

The recent redevelopment of the Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre incorporated the inclusion of indoor health and fitness spaces and a range of outdoor aquatic facilities to encourage outdoor pool use beyond lap swimming. The existing outdoor pool was replaced and a new outdoor water slide and water-play area were installed. The development has contributed to a significant increase in use of outdoor aquatics facilities, particularly on hot days when daily attendance can be as high as 2,000 and the centre is at capacity and annual aquatic attendance has increased from 67,000 to 103,000. This increase is in regional environment where there is reasonably high levels of outdoor pool provision including three (3) other outdoor 50 m pools in the City of Moreland and four (4) outdoor 50m pools in the neighbouring councils of Moonee Valley (2), Darebin (1) and Yarra (1).

At the Warragul Leisure Centre, the development a new 50-m outdoor pool appears to be the only recent example in Victoria where new outdoor aquatic infrastructure was developed rather than simply upgrading or replacing an existing pool. However, this was also attached to the existing aquatic and leisure centre that features indoor aquatic and health and fitness areas. While the outdoor pool has generated some increase in centre patronage, its impact on overall participation is not substantial.

A review of Table 1 above highlights that the majority outdoor pool development falls into two categories:

1. redevelopment of outdoor pools as part of a broader development of an aquatic and leisure centre
2. major maintenance work to address or replace ageing infrastructure

The data in table 1 suggests that there has been limited focus in redevelopment and enhancing outdoor aquatics infrastructure without the addition of indoor aquatics or indoor health and fitness infrastructure. For DPIP, provision of indoor aquatic infrastructure and the redevelopment of the outdoor pool – with the addition of some water-play features – would be consistent with this approach.

3.4 Innovation and Opportunities

To increase use of outdoor aquatic areas, councils have opted to add water-play features – including splash pads and water slides – to the traditional 50-metre outdoor pool. While these features attract community sectors such as families, children and teenagers, there appears to be no local examples where the outdoor pool experience has been re-imagined beyond these initiatives to provide a service and experience that is unique, but at the same time complementary, to existing indoor aquatic infrastructure within a municipality.

The redevelopment of DPIP could follow a traditional model of redeveloping the outdoor pool and developing new indoor aquatic facilities. This would no doubt deliver improved attendances. However, there is also an opportunity to create an innovative response to outdoor aquatic provision that will not only benefit the local community, but also offer a unique experience to the broader Casey community.

Because the industry has traditionally focused most of its creative energy on indoor aquatic facilities and services, there is significant scope to explore, through broad industry consultation, services and facilities that could contribute to a unique outdoor pool experience. Consequently, if the preferred option includes enhancing the outdoor pool experience, extensive consultation and exploration should be undertaken to develop a design response that will provide a unique experience for the community.

4. AQUATICS INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

4.1 Market Overview

The market in which council-owned ALCs operate has undergone significant change in the past 10 years. Prior to 2010, high quality and well-managed ALCs dominated local markets simply by 'opening the front door'. Centres experienced very high levels of membership, particularly in the health and fitness area. Today, the market is typified by intense competition from sophisticated, private sector operators driven by commercial imperatives.

Several market trends have evolved that need review when considering aquatic development. These include:

- Increased competition from private health and fitness operators, particularly from low-cost, 24/7 operations, which has seen the erosion of market share for all but the highest quality council owned ALCs.
- Fragmentation of the health and fitness market due to the growth in smaller boutique operators such as boot camps, F45, personal training, Pilates, and yoga.
- New providers entering the LTS market and existing operators lifting the level of professionalism to capitalise on increased demand for swimming lessons has affected the market share of ALCs. This has necessitated the introduction of a more commercial approach to customer acquisition and retention.
- A transition from term-based programs to perpetual programs that operate between 44 and 52 weeks of the year

Increased competition, combined with significant capital investment in both the public and private sector, has created a more discerning customer focused on the quality of services and facilities. Consequently, aquatic centres that lack a broad range of services and do not reflect customer expectations for quality perform poorly in terms of participation rates and performance.

4.2 Design Trends

The past 10 years has seen significant investment by councils in new and refurbished ALCs. A number of emerging design initiatives have changed the way community aquatic centres perform, raising the bar in terms of quality and provision of services, thus leading to a significant increase in overall participation by providing facilities and services for community sectors previously under-represented as users of aquatic services. These include older adults and people living with disability and/or mobility issues, as well as increased year-round use by families. These design initiatives include:

Dedicated LTS Pools

Dedicated LTS pools are standard in most new facilities and existing facility redevelopments. LTS pools provide a better learning environment than traditional lap-swimming pools for two key reasons:

- The shallower depth removes the fear factor experienced by some children learning in larger, deeper aquatic spaces.
- The warmer water ensures user comfort for the duration of the lesson and has assisted with retaining students through the colder months.

The broad benefits of LTS pools include:

- financial sustainability – net revenues offset costs of non-commercial activities

- increased physical activity of children
- enhanced water safety skills throughout the community

Warm Water Exercise Pools and Wellness Areas

Demand for warm water exercise spaces has never been higher and is expected to grow due to increased awareness of the benefits of exercise for older adults, people living with disability, and people with chronic health issues. This has resulted in an increase in the size of these spaces in centres currently being planned and developed.

The broad benefits of WWEPs include:

- accessible and equitable provision of facilities for people of all abilities
- provision of facilities that contribute to improved health and wellbeing
- provision of a platform promoting social connection

In addition to the increased demand for access to WWEPs, the demand for high-quality wellness facilities has also increased. These facilities include spa, sauna and steam facilities, and areas appropriate for social interaction.

Water Play Areas – Leisure Water

The provision of all year round 'leisure water' can transform aquatic centres into entertainment destinations and increase activity levels in children aged 2–14 years. Water-play features provide significant direct revenue streams from increased patronage and also provide indirect revenue through increases in LTS revenue and secondary spend.

Water slides have become particularly popular in new centres, replacing wave pools as the major attraction. While water slides act as a major attraction – particularly when they initially open – usage appears to reduce after the second year as they lose impact, particularly with the teenage market. The drop in patronage and the high costs of supervising slides suggest that there are some challenges associated with their long-term financial sustainability.

Family Change Facilities

The introduction of leisure water features and the drawcard these provide for families can place significant strain on change facilities. The industry has responded to an increased demand for these by providing family-specific change rooms. Family change rooms engender a sense of safety for both parents and children and therefore enhance customer experience.

Group Change Facilities

The provision of group change facilities for schools and clubs as well as the provision of dedicated group entries has enhanced the safety and supervision of school groups, while at the same time reducing overcrowding in other change areas.

Reception Foyer Areas Designed to Take into Account Self-Entry Opportunities

Changes in technology have made the implementation of self-entry options possible in ALCs. Self-entry systems have many benefits including quick entry for members, reduction of queues, enhanced capacity to manage over-the-counter enquiries, and a reduction in staff costs. This has also facilitated 24 hours entry to health and fitness areas.

Technology Factors

Up until recently, the application of technology has only been given moderate consideration in council-owned ALCs. Industry leaders have, however, identified this as being a major factor in influencing successful operation into the future. Consequently, planning for future facility developments should consider the technological capability required to meet the needs of future customers and deliver a more efficient operation. Future opportunities include:

- utilising software/apps to enhance the customer experience and focus specifically on outcomes and objectives and the associated monitoring and assessment
- introducing a range of new service and program options, including educational services, using online delivery options
- utilising data for customer tracking, revenue generation and continuous improvement
- introducing operational efficiencies through more effective software

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and Management

Energy reduction, reduction in CO_2 emissions and reduction in water use are now key considerations in the ALC design process. The proposed Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre is being designed to 6-star energy standard. It will be the first Victorian ALC to meet 6-star rating requirements.

At an operational level the increased cost of utilities and the negative impact this has had on financial performance necessitates that ESD investigations and implementation need to provide real and measurable reductions in utility usage.

Universal Design and Disability Access

Universal Design Principles encourage the development of facilities suitable for use by everyone, including people with physical and/or sensory impairment, those recovering from injury, the aged, people with impaired mobility and/or relying on mobility aids, and families with young children who need to use prams.

Indoor heated pools are now more widely used by disability groups and individuals. Added to this is the growing range of programs and activities offered to people of different abilities and physical condition. It is mandatory for modern facilities to have accessible toilets and change facilities (including changing places change rooms); hoists to pools, and ramp access into all pools.

4.2.1 Key Design Lessons – Industry Consultation

The SLS consulting team has undertaken broad industry consultation regarding key design issues for future ALCs, with a specific focus on aquatic areas. Those consulted, included managers operating recently developed or redeveloped ALCs. The findings of this consultation process can be used to inform the redevelopment of the DPIP site.

Design Principles that will assist operational performance and customer experience:

- WWEPs should be designated spaces and as large as is practicable (suggested appropriate area is 300m^2).
- Aquatic wellness areas incorporating spa/sauna/steam and the WWEP (this will maximise use by older adults, people with disabilities and chronic health issues).
- Spaces that encourage interaction and enhance social connection.
- Buildings that feature energy efficient design and be more adaptable to using alternative energy sources.
- Aquatics areas catering for male/female only swimming sessions.
- Group change facilities and provision of dedicated group entry/exit systems to cater for school and community groups.
- Bus drop off zones for school carnivals

- Technology to improve customer communications, enquiries handling, identifying and welcoming specific customers to the centre, and enabling the capture and interpretation of customer data.
- Provision for health and allied health consultation.
- Allowance for more than one water-play installation (such as including a young children's splash zone in addition to a water slide).

4.3 Operational Trends

To stay current with operational trends, the SLS consulting team undertakes ongoing site visits to ALCs throughout Australia. The following information provides a summary of key trends, issues and necessary responses identified by centre managers:

- The need to create a unique service that differentiates council-owned ALCs from those operated by the private sector.
- The restructure of LTS programs from term -based to perpetual programs.
- To meet the needs of certain demographics, centres must provide gender- and culturally-specific zones and opportunities for gender-specific swimming lessons.
- Planning for and transitioning to 24/7 access to health and fitness areas is a priority.
- Technology is being used for customer engagement and to make ALCs the "third place" in people's lives.
- Better use of data for customer tracking, revenue generation, and obtaining feedback that contributes to continuous service delivery improvement.
- Implementation of a commercial sales and marketing approach that is adequately funded, responsive and customer focused.
- Development of membership pricing options that encourage use during traditionally quiet periods.
- A focus on functional training activities and small group training.
- Providing on-demand training that allows individuals and groups to begin workouts without instructors.

4.4 Future Opportunities

Councils are now more aware of the opportunity to improve community health and wellbeing through ALC programs and services. The introduction of programs targeted at physical and mental health and wellbeing, and a revision of concession pricing models to remove price as a barrier to use, will see continued growth in use by people from all sectors of the community regardless of age, race, gender, physical ability or socio-economic background.

Patronage by such a broad cross-section of the community can transform indoor aquatic centres into community hubs and result in improved social cohesion and inclusion, and a reduction in the number of people experiencing social isolation.

A presentation in 2018 by Phil Saikaly, Director of Sport and Recreation Victoria, suggested there should be further investment and development in this area. It states that centres should transition from the traditional focus of health and wellbeing towards becoming "preventative hospitals", thus reinforcing the much broader role indoor aquatic centres can play in preventative health.

The integration of community health and wellbeing plans into the planning and operation of aquatic centres is a critical step in delivering improved local health and wellbeing outcomes. Specific opportunities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes include but are not limited to the following:

- Integrating fitness services with allied health services to promote relationships between providers and encourage the use of more than one service by customers through the convenience of co-location.
- Targeting and engaging with individuals and groups in the community who would not normally consider attending an ALC, including the use of technology to broaden and maintain that engagement.
- Increasing the size of WWEPs to better cater for all programs.
- Developing partnerships with local medical practitioners and health service providers to assist in the life-time monitoring of health and wellbeing in the community.
- Understanding health issues in the broader community and tailoring programs to meet these at a local level.
- Understanding and enhancing customers' social connection with facility, for example, there are older adults who use a WWEP activity as their social connection opportunity – particularly if living alone.
- Ability to provide a one-stop shop for exercise, nutrition, allied health, and mental health and wellbeing.
- The removal of language as a barrier to usage to increase participation and facilitate social inclusion.
- Cafe must include healthy eating options and provide good opportunities for social connection.
- Health and wellness need to be embedded in the management model, which should include the specification: A fully integrated approach to enhance community health and wellbeing.

Challenges Associated with the Health and Wellbeing Narrative

The integration of community health and wellbeing plans into centre operations is in its infancy and consequently, faces some difficulties in its implementation. These difficulties include:

- There is no consistent industry measurement to quantify improved health and wellbeing.
- The various approaches to programs to address and improve community health and wellbeing throughout the industry are largely undocumented. Consequently, many centres 're-invent the wheel' when setting up programs and activities for targeted groups and/or individuals.
- Centre management teams have greater focus on membership numbers and LTS enrolments rather whole-of-community access and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Councils have been poor at specifying the required health and wellbeing outcomes when contracting out ALC operation and do not pursue improved health and wellbeing objectives with vigour.
- While the narrative is slowly changing from bottom-line performance to contribution to community health and wellbeing, in many cases discussion at a council executive level still focuses on financial performance. It appears that increased financial pressures and a fear that a strategic shift will impact sustainability have somewhat stifled any change.

5. DRIVERS OF CASEY AQUATIC PROVISION

5.1 Aquatic Facilities Strategy

The Aquatic Strategy provides a framework for the future development of Council's aquatic and leisure facilities including DPIP. The framework provides an anchor for both the assessment of the current facility and the review of any proposed options for a future facility.

The Aquatic Strategy framework is reproduced below.

Vision

Casey's high-quality and accessible aquatic and leisure facilities will excite residents and visitors to be healthy, active and connected.

Within a growing and diverse Casey, everyone is afforded the opportunity to learn to swim.

Objective One: High quality with capacity to grow

Develop a network of complementary facilities that are of high quality and service the contemporary aquatic leisure facility markets to provide for a growing Casey Community.

Objective Two: Accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and participation opportunities

Council's aquatic and leisure facilities will be accessible, affordable and inclusive to all ages, abilities and cultures and will support more residents to become active participants. Opportunities will be provided for residents to access a range of services and facilities in the following key markets:

- Health and wellness including gymnasium/weights room, group fitness and personal training
- Rehabilitation and therapy
- Learn to swim and other aquatic based programs
- Recreational and fitness swimming
- Leisure, 'play' and adventure

Objective Three: Well planned, maintained and managed

Provide a strategic platform to inform Council's investment in the management, maintenance and renewal of Casey's aquatic and leisure facilities to maximise the benefits for the community.

Foster community participation in the planning, development, management and evaluation of aquatic facilities programs and services.

Objective Four: Environmentally sustainable and universally designed facilities

Provide best practice environmentally sustainable facilities through the planning, design, construction and maintenance of Casey's aquatic facilities.

5.1.1 Utilising the Framework: Assessing DPIP

Using the framework, a strategic assessment of DPIP identifies certain key issues. These are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: DPIP Strategic Assessment

Issue	Objective
DPIP is in poor condition and is not of high quality in comparison with contemporary aquatic and	**Objective One: High quality with**

leisure centres.	**capacity to grow**
DPIP does not comply with requirements for accessibility and is unlikely to"excite residents".	
Due to a lack of heated water the DPIP can offer limited opportunities for learning to swim. This is a concern given the apparent low levels of swimming competency of the local population.	**Objective Two: Accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and participation opportunities**
DPIP services a narrower cross-section of the community compared with indoor centres. Community sectors that are less likely to regularly use an outdoor pool include older adults, people living with disability and/or mobility issues, and people with low-level swimming skills and/or water confidence.	
The issue of affordability was also raised as a concern in the consultation process, with particular concern expressed about possible price increases after any redevelopment.	
The DPIP currently runs at an operational loss of $250,000 per annum This combined with the need to maintain ageing infrastructure and plant brings and the low level of usage brings into focus the issue of long term affordability to Council	
Environmental sustainability initiatives and opportunities are limited.	**Objective Four: Environmentally sustainable and universally designed facilities**

5.2 Community Consultation

5.2.1 Overview

Two major consultation processes have been undertaken regarding the future of DPIP. Initially, broad consultation was undertaken to inform the Aquatic Strategy as a whole. This was followed by consultation specifically related to the DPIP master plan.

Individuals, groups and organisations involved in the consultation process included:

- users and non-users
- administrators, teachers and students representing Doveton Community College
- councillors
- council officers
- centre management staff

A variety of methods were used to facilitate the consultation including:

- user and non-user surveys
- focus groups and workshops

- face-to-face meetings
- online engagement through Casey Conversations

5.2.2 Key Findings and Themes

A review of information from both consultation process identified the following:

- Facilities need upgrading to encourage increased usage.
- There is need for a venue to conduct swimming lessons in the Doveton/Eumemmerring area. This was reinforced by consultation with Doveton Community College, which highlighted that two-thirds of its students are unable to swim and that this was representative of the wider school community and its families.
- Commonly sought-after experiences include, water play, learning to swim, warm water exercise, access to spa, sauna and steam room, and the opportunity to cool down on hot summer nights.
- Preference is for aquatic components to operate on a year-round basis.
- There is also a similar preference to retain the outdoor aquatic experience to provide an opportunity to "cool off" in summer.
- The outdoor aquatic spaces should be complemented with shaded areas and seating.
- There is a desire for outdoor water play, including water slides.
- The need for both outdoor and indoor gym (strength training) opportunities were highlighted.
- It is important to retain outdoor "green" spaces
- While it is acknowledged that fees will be charged to access some spaces, there is also need for complimentary access to green spaces for social gathering.
- There was a clear theme to create a community meeting space and to implement initiatives that acknowledge the pool's history and unique aspects of the community, including its multicultural composition.
- There is an opportunity to provide community and program meeting rooms to facilitate year-round programs and opportunities for community connection.
- The need to provide traditional health and fitness activities and programs.
- Consistency in opening hours and more affordable entry fees would increase usage.
- The capacity to conduct entertainment events and activities should be considered.
- A cafe and wi-fi are also desirable inclusions.
- Affordability appears to be an issue and there is concern that a new facility will negatively impact affordability.
- There is some desire for access to allied health services.
- Security of the site is a consideration that needs to be included in future planning.

5.2.3 Potential Response to the Consultation

Both consultation processes reflect a high desire for redevelopment of the outdoor pool and the inclusion of year round indoor aquatic services. The activities that appear to be most important for a redeveloped DPIP to include are split into indoor and outdoor categories.

Indoor activities:

- swimming lessons

- warm water exercise programs
- wellness activities such as spa, sauna and steam room
- personal and group fitness
- social interaction and community connection

Outdoor activities:

- water play
- venue for cooling off on hot days
- personal and group fitness
- social interaction and community connection

5.3 Regional Approach to Provision

The Aquatic Strategy highlights that an integrated network of quality aquatic and leisure facilities is required to provide complementary facilities to meet the aquatic and leisure needs of the Casey community. It also notes that overall provision will be delivered through Casey facilities, private sector centres, and aquatic and leisure facilities offered by adjoining municipalities.

The issue of provision of indoor aquatics at the DPIP site and the need to consider provision by other council ALCs, adds a layer of complexity to decision-making in relation to the DPIP redevelopment. For instance, Dandenong Oasis, at Dandenong, is only 4.2 kilometres by road and 3 kilometres 'as the crow flies' from DPIP. The redevelopment of Oasis is being pursued by the City of Greater Dandenong (CoGD). When redeveloped, Oasis will provide an extensive range of indoor aquatic services, that will potentially be accessible by motor vehicle or public transport for many residents in the DPIP catchment.

The proposed redevelopment of the Dandenong Oasis includes the following key elements:

Aquatic Facilities

- 50m Indoor Pool
- Learn-to-Swim
- Water Play Pool
- Warm Water Program Pool
- Spa, Sauna and Steam

Health and Wellness Facilities

- Cardio and Strength Area
- Group Fitness Program Rooms x 3
- Consulting Rooms

Council needs to consider if access to a redeveloped Oasis represents acceptable levels of accessibility to indoor aquatic services for Casey residents in proximity to DPIP. This issue is explored in sections 6 and 7 of this report.

6. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PROVISION

6.1 Regional Aquatic Provision – DPIP Catchment

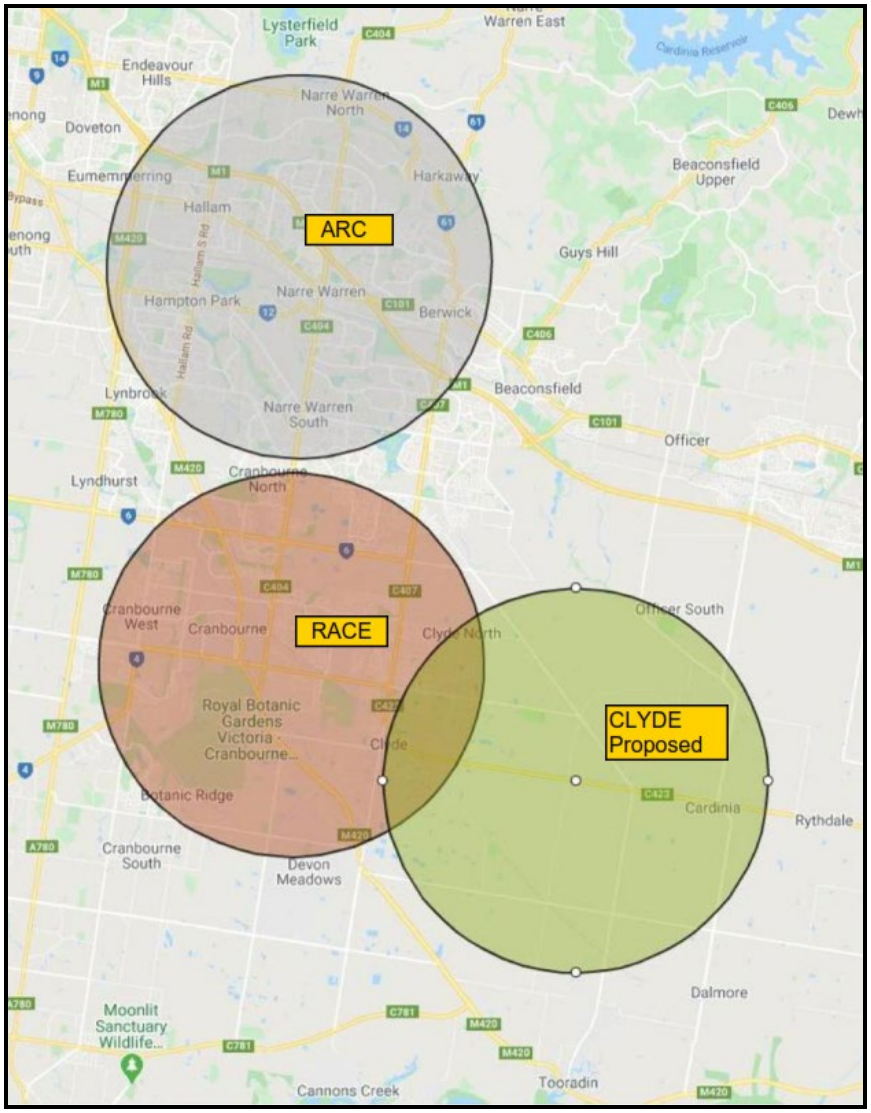
The Aquatic Strategy highlights the need to consider aquatic provision by neighbouring councils. It also noted that the majority of aquatic centre users live within a 5-kilometre radius of their centre. From an accessibility perspective, this implies that residents who live within a 5-kilometre radius of a centre will have reasonable access in terms of ease of transport and travelling times.

Given the substantial cost to develop and operate aquatic infrastructure, it is important to review the accessibility of existing aquatic infrastructure to residents who would be most likely to use an indoor or outdoor pool at DPIP. This principally relates to residents who live in Doveton, Eumemmerring and Endeavour Hills.

6.2 Accessibility to City of Casey ALCs

The map below illustrates the 5-kilometre radius of current and proposed Council indoor ALCs within Casey.

Map 1: City of Casey Aquatic and Leisure Centre Provision



Map 1, highlights that residents in a number of Casey suburbs appear to have a lower access to Casey owned indoor aquatic centres than other Casey residents. These suburbs include:

- Endeavour Hills

- Doveton/Eumemmerring
- Lynbrook
- Lyndhurst
- Cranbourne South
- Devon Meadows
- Casey Coast suburbs and Pearcedale
- Beaconsfield

6.3 Accessibility to City of Casey and Neighbouring Council ALCs

Map 2 highlights provision of aquatic facilities in neighbouring councils. It shows that the suburbs of Endeavour Hills, Doveton and Eumemmerring fall within the catchment of Oasis. Consequently, it could be argued that these residents have reasonable access to indoor aquatic facilities and services, particularly if the redevelopment of Oasis is undertaken.

Map 2: City of Casey and Neighbouring LGA Aquatic and Leisure Centre Provision

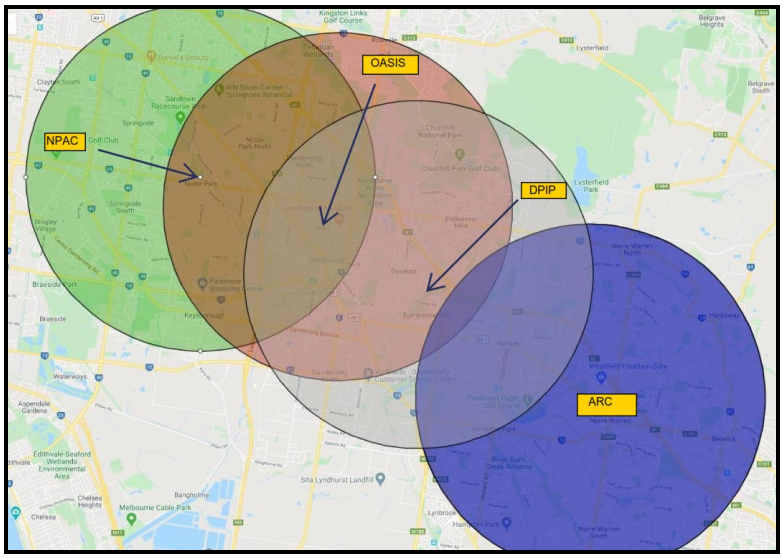
Unfortunately, neither Oasis nor Cardinia Life provides reasonable accessibility for residents in:

- Lynbrook
- Lyndhurst
- Cranbourne South
- Devon Meadows
- Casey Coast suburbs and Pearcedale
- Beaconsfield and Beaconsfield Upper

An indoor aquatic centre at the DPIP site (Map 3) would have no material impact on accessibility for residents in these suburbs.

6.4 Potential Competition to Potential LTS at DPIP

Map 3: DPIP Aquatic and Leisure Centre Competition



When considering provision of Council ALCs in Map 3, it is clear that an indoor aquatic centre at the DPIP would be in competition with Casey ARC, Oasis, and NPAC due to overlapping of the 5-kilometre radius catchments.

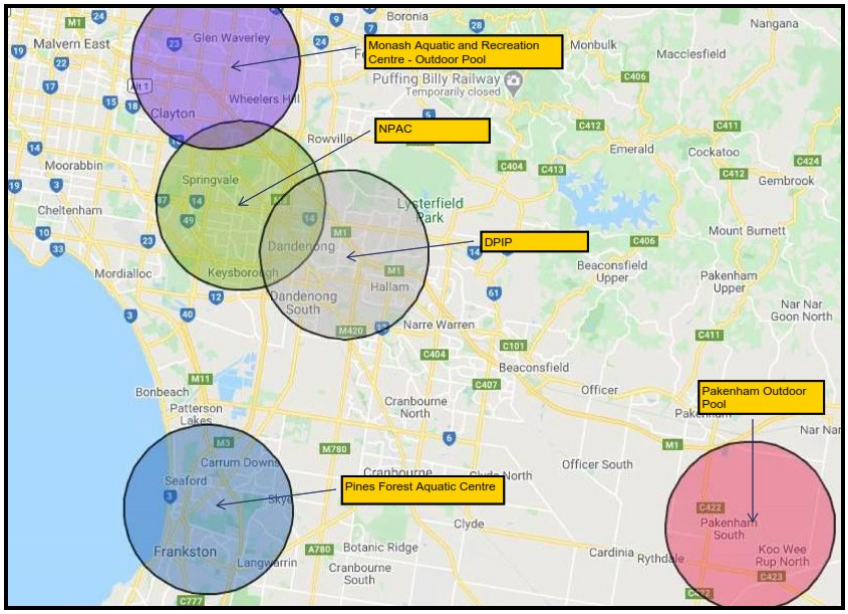
There is a proposal to undertake a $55–$60 million redevelopment of Oasis that will incorporate significant aquatic facilities which include LTS and warm water will deliver vastly improved aquatic services to residents within the Oasis catchment.

The redeveloped Oasis, combined with high-quality facilities and services at Casey ARC, represent significant competition for potential indoor aquatic services at DPIP. Competition of such high quality represents a significant challenge to maximising future viability of aquatic services, particularly LTS and warm water, at DPIP.

Also, DPIP's proximity to Casey ARC would mean that any indoor aquatic centre at DPIP would potentially attract existing customers from Casey ARC and Oasis. This would reduce Casey ARC and Oasis revenue levels and viability.

6.5 Outdoor Pool Provision

MAP 4: Outdoor Pools



Map 4 Outdoor Pools highlights that NPAC, Forest Pines Aquatic Centre and Pakenham outdoor pool offer outdoor pool options for Casey residents beyond DPIP. However, all of these facilities fall outside the 5km catchment of Casey suburbs. Pakenham Outdoor Swimming pool is in excess of 20 km from Clyde, Forest Pines Aquatic Centre is approximately 10 km from Cranbourne West and NPAC approximately 8 kms from Doveton.

6.6 Overall Competition Including the Private Sector

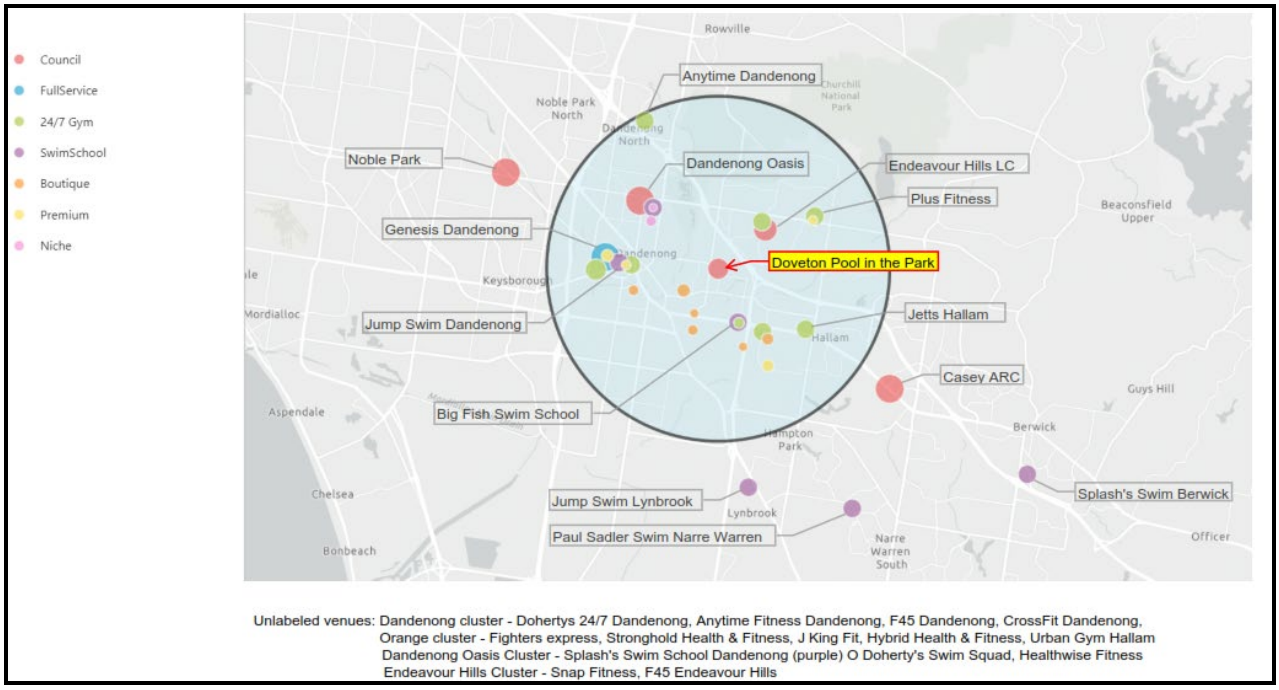
A critical plank in assessing the overall level of provision in the aquatics and health and wellness markets, and by extension the level of competition, is to consider provision by private operators.

Map 5 provides an overview of the locations of all competitors. Competitors have been classified into the following categories:

- Council aquatic and leisure centers
- Full service
- 24/7 gyms
- Swim school
- Boutique
- Premium, boutique functional or personal training studios
- Niche (women only)

Map 5 indicates that there is overall reasonable provision of aquatic and health and fitness facilities and services in the DPIP catchment. There are two private swim schools within the DPIP catchment (Jump! Dandenong, and Big Fish Little Fish Swim School), and the swim school located at Dandenong Oasis. In terms of health and fitness provision, there is a wide range of services available for residents in the DPIP catchment.

MAP 5: Private and Local Government Competition



While the private sector provides valuable and complementary services to council-owned centres, there are a few additional factors to consider.

1) Private operators in most instances do not provide concession rates for people on low incomes. Therefore, while a centre may be accessible to a resident from a

geographic perspective, from an affordability perspective, the fee structure may act as a barrier to access.

2) Some community cohorts appear to be less likely to use private sector facilities and services. These cohorts include:

   a. frail and aged

   b. people living with disability and/or mobility issues

   c. those with chronic illnesses and/or health conditions

   d. people with mental health problems

   e. people with substance abuse problems

6.7 SUMMARY

With consideration to the DPIP 5-km catchment and more specifically the Doveton and Eumemmerring suburban area, there appears to be adequate provision of aquatic services and facilities in close proximity when taking into account Dandenong Oasis and private sector provision.

Further, noting that any development would experience a high level of competition from Casey ARC, and Oasis, as well as private sector providers, there would be significant challenges to the performance of a future centre at DPIP, particularly for a LTS program which will be the main driver of financial viability. The redevelopment of Oasis looms large over the viability of DPIP. Oasis will offer a broad range of high-quality services and a concession pricing approach that may be attractive to some residents in the DPIP catchment despite the extra travel involved, thus having a negative impact on participation and revenue at DPIP.

Consequently, any decision-making in relation indoor aquatic services at DPIP should consider factors beyond local community demand, including capital costs and life-cycle costs, and potential financial outcomes for the DPIP and Casey ARC.

7. USER DATA REVIEW

7.1 Introduction

To assist with understanding current ALC usage, particularly for the suburbs of Doveton and Eumemmerring, the SLS consulting team reviewed user data for key services such as learn-to-swim programs, and health and fitness memberships at centres within Casey and the CoGD.

The centres included in the analysis were:

- Casey ARC
- Casey RACE
- Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre (no aquatics)
- Dandenong Oasis
- Noble Park Aquatic Centre (NPAC)

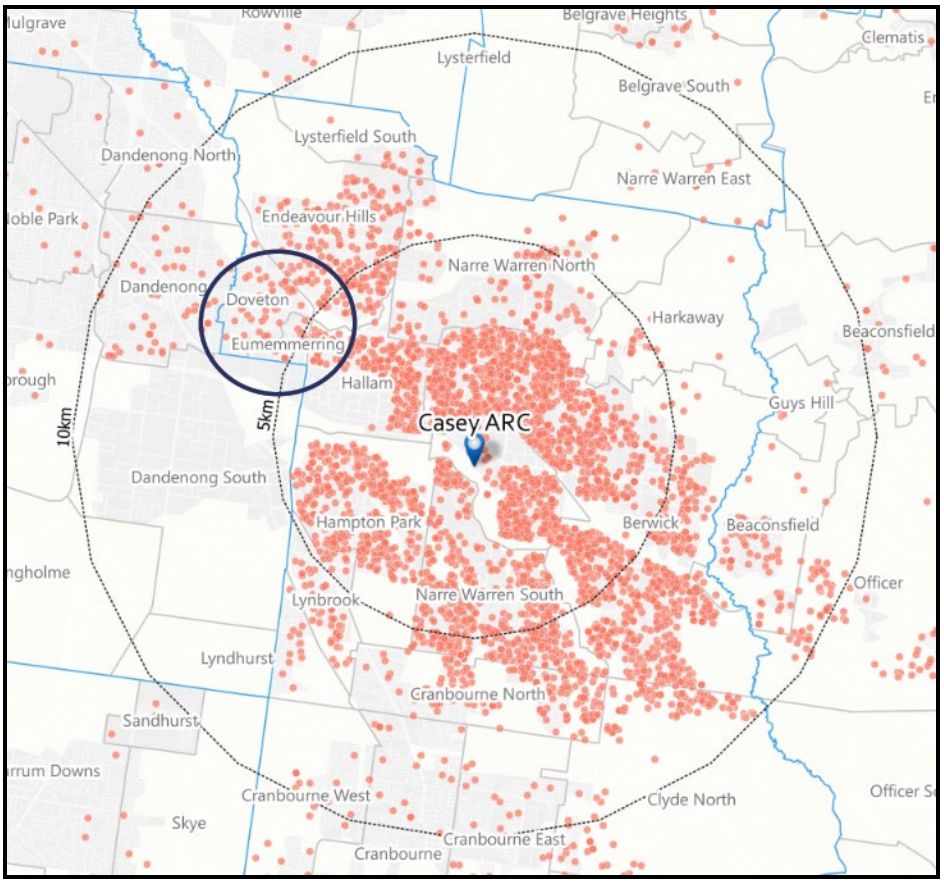
The inclusion of Oasis and NPAC recognises that users are not restricted by municipal boundaries and that Oasis in particular, is in closer proximity to suburbs within the DPIP catchment than other Casey indoor aquatic venues.

Relevant data from casual attendances were not available for analysis. Consequently, the data analysis should be treated as directional rather than absolute in relation to findings and observations of usage.

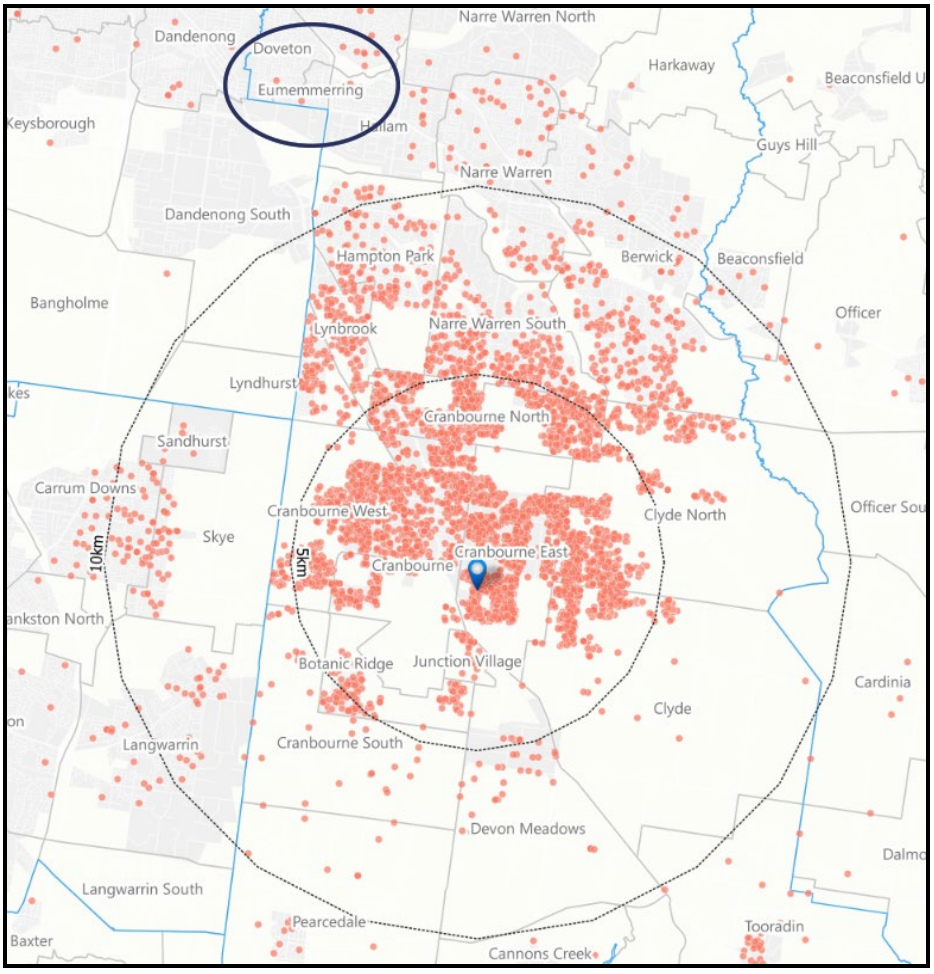
7.2 Data Plot Review

The maps below were developed to provide a visual representation of usage of ALCs and to identify the extent of use by residents in suburbs in the DPIP catchment, in particularly Doveton, Eumemmerring and Endeavour Hills.

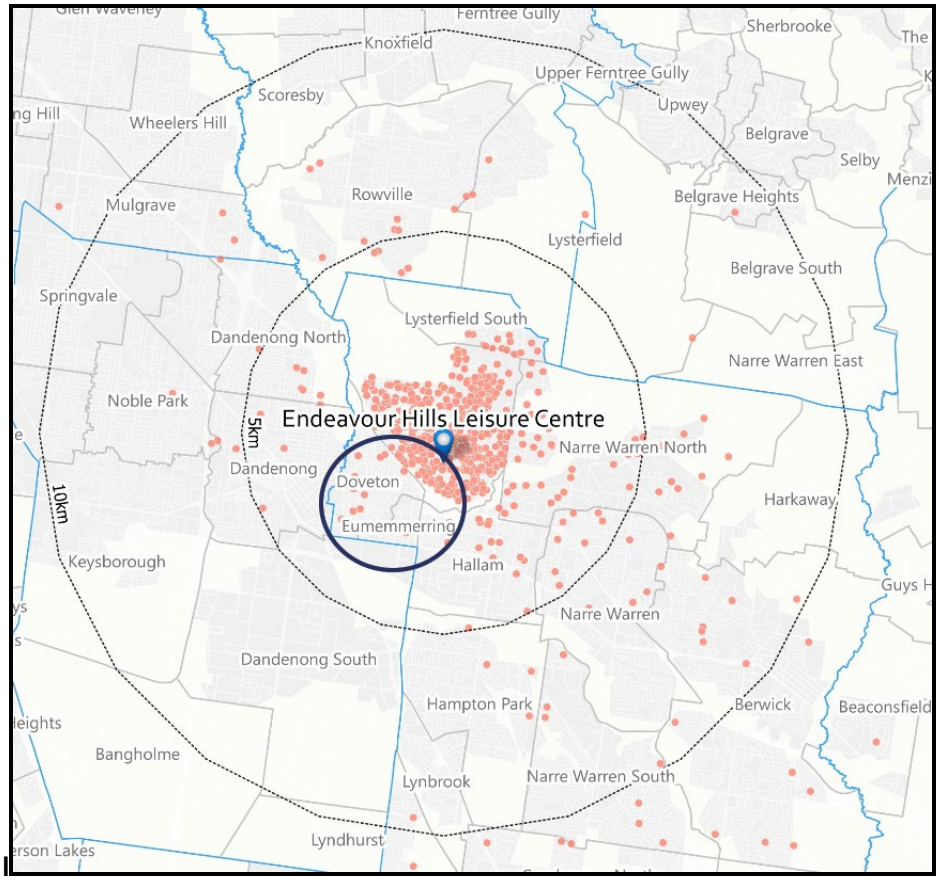
MAP 6: Casey ARC: all member locations



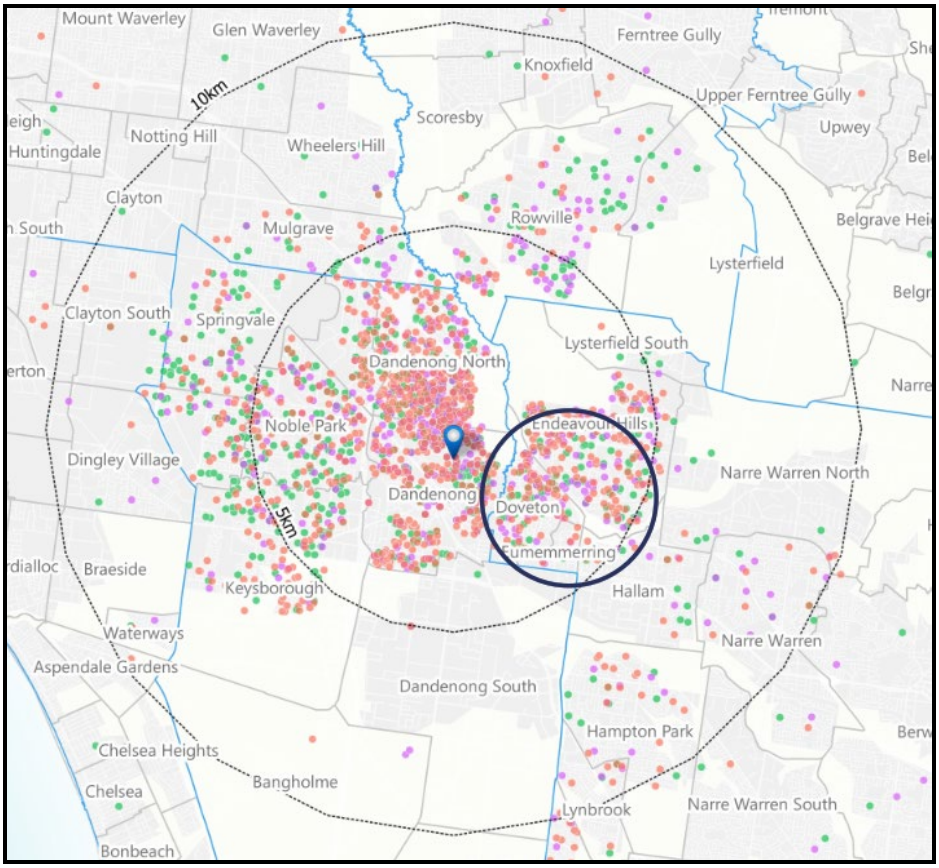
MAP 7: Casey RACE: all member locations



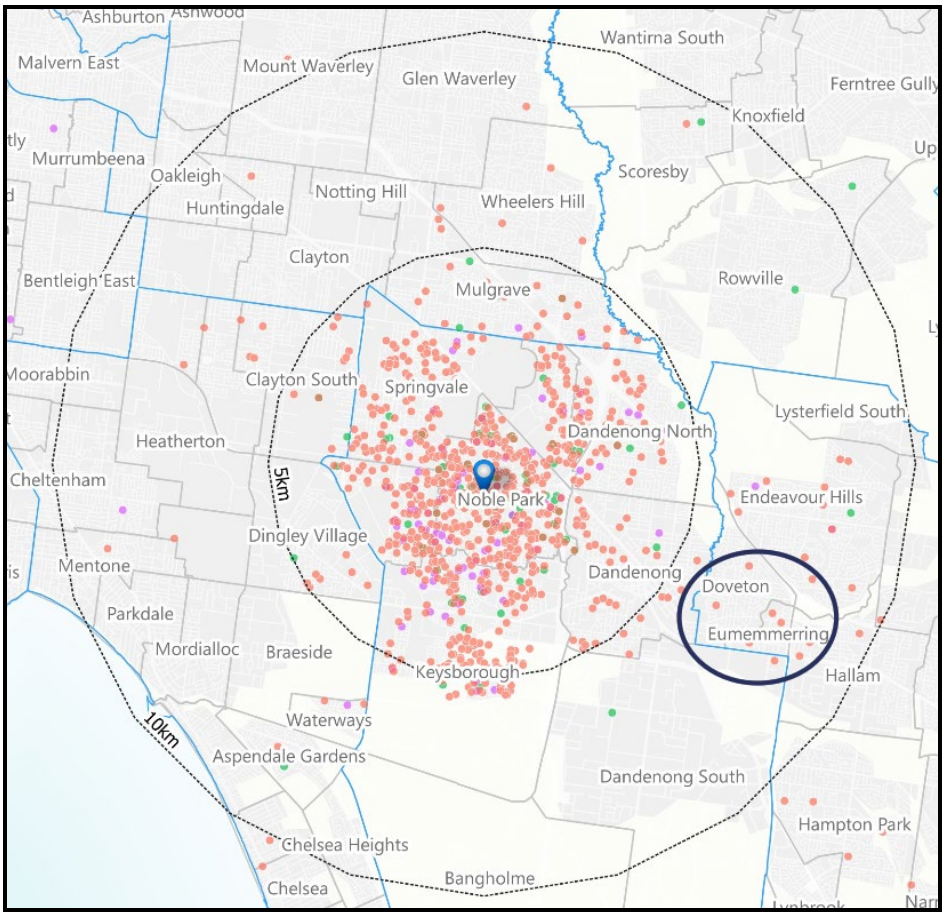
MAP 8: Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre: all member locations



MAP 9: Dandenong Oasis: all member locations



MAP 10 – Noble Park: all member locations



Key Findings

- Oasis provides services and is accessible to residents in Endeavour Hills, Doveton and Eumemmerring.
- Residents in Doveton and Eumemmerring mostly use Oasis because it is closest to where they live and offers LTS, Warm Water and is indoor.
- Doveton and Eumemmerring residents access Casey ARC in relatively low numbers, and rarely use Casey RACE and NPAC centres
- Residents in Endeavour Hills use Oasis, Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre and Casey ARC but have low use of NPAC and Casey RACE.
- Despite close proximity to Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre, there is low level of use by Doveton and Eumemmerring residents
- The analysis confirms that the majority of centre users will live within a 5-kilometre radius of the centre they use.
- Despite being part of the CoGD, Oasis actually services a relatively high number of Casey residents, whereas ALCs within Casey only service a small number of Dandenong residents. This can be attributed to the proximity of Oasis to some Casey suburbs

7.3 Additional User Data Analysis – Postcodes

To understand centre usage, member data for LTS programs and health and fitness membership were analysed against population data for each Casey suburb. The key objective of the analysis was to understand the current level of use by residents in the DPIP catchment in comparison with other Casey suburbs, and to identify any issues that might inform the need for indoor aquatic provision within the DPIP catchment.

Population data was obtained from profile.id.com.au and the de-identified user data provided to Council by the YMCA* to facilitate the data plotting. User data and population data were based on postcodes. Due to the likely differences between postcode data boundaries and population data boundaries, there may be some variability in the accuracy of information. However, for the most part, the calculation of participation levels in Casey suburbs provides an accurate comparison.

*The data from the YMCA was provided to Council only and has been used solely for this project and not distributed to any other party.

7.3.1 Learn-to-Swim Review

The tables below highlight LTS data for all centres with the exception of NPAC, due to low usage by Casey residents, and Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre, as it has no aquatic facilities.

Average travel distance was calculated from a central point in each suburb to provides an insight into the relative travel distance from Casey suburbs to an aquatic centre.

Table 3: All Data Learn to Swim Enrolment – Casey Residents

ALL DATA - Learn to Swim					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Students**	**0-14 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Distance to closest centre**
Lysterfield South	3156	5	153	3.27%	7.5
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	95	2,380	3.99%	4.5
Endeavour Hills	3802	302	4,916	6.14%	4.0
Hallam	3803	128	2,415	5.30%	4.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	64	1,643	3.90%	5.0
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	824	13,656	6.03%	3.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	670	11,503	5.82%	5.0
Beaconsfield	3807	22	1,419	1.55%	8.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	7	625	1.12%	15.0
Pearcedale	3912	10	806	1.24%	15.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	164	4,561	3.60%	11.0
Hampton Park	3976	286	6,129	4.67%	6.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	1,470	27,099	5.42%	4.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	485	8,414	5.76%	5.0
Tooradin	3980	14	831	1.68%	20.0
TOTAL		**4,546**	86,550		

Table 4 – Casey ARC Learn to Swim Enrolment – Casey Residents

Casey ARC - Learn to Swim					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Students**	**0-14 Population**	**% of local Pop**	**Approximate average distance to ARC**
Lysterfield South	3156	1	153	0.65%	9.5
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	26	2,380	1.09%	7.0
Endeavour Hills	3802	145	4,916	2.95%	8.5
Hallam	3803	115	2,415	4.76%	4.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	56	1,643	3.41%	5.0
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	717	13,656	5.25%	3.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	590	11,503	5.13%	5.0
Beaconsfield	3807	21	1,419	1.48%	8.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	7	625	1.12%	15.0
Pearcedale	3912	0	806	0.00%	29.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	49	4,561	1.07%	11.5
Hampton Park	3976	228	6,129	3.72%	6.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	115	27,099	0.42%	10.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	88	8,414	1.05%	13.5
Tooradin	3980	0	831	0.00%	25.0
		2158	86,550		

Table 5: Casey RACE Learn to Swim Enrolment – Casey Residents

Casey RACE - Learn to Swim					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Students**	**0-14 Population**	**% of local Pop**	**Approximate average distance to RACE**
Lysterfield South	3156	0	153	0.00%	20.0
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	1	2,380	0.04%	16.5
Endeavour Hills	3802	4	4,916	0.08%	19.5
Hallam	3803	1	2,415	0.04%	15.0
Narre Warren North and East	3804	4	1,643	0.24%	13.5
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	96	13,656	0.70%	10.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	75	11,503	0.65%	13.5
Beaconsfield	3807	1	1,419	0.07%	16.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	0	625	0.00%	24.0
Pearcedale	3912	10	806	1.24%	15.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	103	4,561	2.26%	11.0
Hampton Park	3976	33	6,129	0.54%	11.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	1343	27,099	4.96%	4.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	397	8,414	4.72%	5.0
Tooradin	3980	14	831	1.68%	20.0
		2082	86,550	2.41%	

Table 6: OASIS Learn to Swim Enrolment – Casey Residents

Dandenong Oasis - Learn to Swim						
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Students**	**% mship**	**0-14 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Approximate average distance to Race**
Lysterfield South	3156	4	0.28%	153	2.61%	7.5
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	63	4.44%	2,380	2.65%	4.5
Endeavour Hills	3802	142	10.01%	4,916	2.89%	4.0
Hallam	3803	9	0.63%	2,415	0.37%	7.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	3	0.21%	1,643	0.18%	11.5
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	9	0.63%	13,656	0.07%	13.5
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	3	0.21%	11,503	0.03%	15.0
Beaconsfield	3807	0	0.00%	1,419	0.00%	18.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	0	0.00%	625	0.00%	20.0
Pearcedale	3912	0	0.00%	806	0.00%	30.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	11	0.78%	4,561	0.24%	13.5
Hampton Park	3976	21	1.48%	6,129	0.34%	11.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	10	0.70%	27,099	0.04%	17.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	0	0.00%	8,414	0.00%	23.0
Tooradin	3980	0	0.00%	831	0.00%	20.0
TOTAL		**275**	**100.00%**	86,550	0.32%	

7.3.1.1 Key Findings – Learn to Swim

- Of the postcodes containing suburbs that are approximately 6 kilometres or less from an aquatic centre, postcode 3177, which includes Doveton and Eumemmerring, has the lowest overall participation in swimming lessons at 3.99% of residents aged 0–14 years.
- In the neighbouring postcode area of 3802 (Endeavour Hills), which has similar accessibility to aquatic services to the suburbs in postcode 3177, 6.15% of residents aged 0–14 years participate in swimming lessons compared with 3.99% of residents in 3177.
- In the 3177 (Doveton and Eumemmerring) postcode, 1.09% of residents aged 0–14 years access swimming lessons at Casey ARC. In the neighbouring suburb of Endeavour Hills (3802), 2.95% of this age group participate in swimming lessons at Casey ARC. This is despite many Endeavour Hills residents having to travel farther to attend Casey ARC.
- In the 0 –14 age group, 2.65% of residents in the Doveton and Eumemmerring area, and 2.89% of residents in Endeavour Hills, participated in swimming lessons at Oasis. Of interest here is that Oasis offers discount rates for concession cardholders and concession rates for swimming lessons. However Casey's aquatic facilities do offer subsidised memberships, including multi-child discounts.
- Suburbs in postcodes 3803 (Hallam), 3804 (Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East) , 3805 (Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate), 3806 (Berwick and Harkaway) and 3976 (Hampton Park), have the highest LTS participation rates and are in the closest proximity to Casey ARC.
- Suburbs in postcodes farther out from Casey ARC have lower levels of participation at Casey ARC, including postcodes 3156 (Lysterfield South), 3177 (Doveton, Eumemmerring), 3807 (Beaconsfield), 3808 (Beaconsfield Upper), 3912 (Pearcedale), 3975 (Lynbrook and Lyndhurst), 3977 (Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge), 3978 (Clyde, Clyde North) and 3980 (Tooradin).
- At Casey RACE, postcodes with the highest level of participation are 3977 (Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge) and 3878 (Clyde, Clyde North), which also include the suburbs closest to the centre. Unsurprisingly, due to travel distance to the centre, participation by residents in postcode 3177 (Doveton and Eumemmerring) is extremely low (1 person).
- The centre with the highest level of participation by Doveton and Eumemmerring residents is Dandenong Oasis (2.65% of residents aged 0–14), which is also the closest aquatic centre to these suburbs.

7.3.1.2 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) – Accessibility

With a SEIFA score of 825.8, the Doveton/Eumemmering area is the most disadvantaged postcode in Casey. As noted, of the suburbs with reasonable access to LTS services, it has the lowest participation LTS rates (3.99% of residents aged 0–14 yeas).

The neighbouring suburb of Endeavour Hills, with similar levels of accessibility to swimming lessons, has much higher participation levels – 6.14% compared with 3.99%. It is noteworthy that Endeavour Hills has a SEIFA score of 1001.4.

7.3.2 Health and Fitness Analysis

Data analysis was also undertaken in relation to health and fitness memberships. The analysis included Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre and those centres included in the analysis of LTS participation.

The age group used for population analysis was residents aged 25–69, which could be considered most likely to be members at a centre.

The tables below provide detail of the analysis for each centre and include a summary of the combined data.

Table 7: Combined Health and Fitness Memberships – Casey Residents

ALL DATA - Health and Wellness					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Members**	**25-69 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Distance to closest centre**
Lysterfield South	3156	57	679	8.39%	5.0
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	166	7,822	2.12%	4.0
Endeavour Hills	3802	1002	16,916	5.92%	1.0
Hallam	3803	194	7,711	2.52%	4.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	197	5,541	3.56%	5.0
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	1411	36,763	3.84%	3.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	815	31,229	2.61%	5.0
Beaconsfield	3807	69	4,695	1.47%	8.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	14	2,033	0.69%	15.0
Pearcedale	3912	18	2,436	0.74%	15.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	173	10,915	1.58%	11.0
Hampton Park	3976	338	17,429	1.94%	6.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	2652	64,151	4.13%	4.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	741	19,409	3.82%	5.0
Tooradin	3980	61	2,615	2.33%	20.0
TOTAL		**7908**	230,344	3.43%	

Table 8: Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre Health and Fitness Memberships – Casey Residents

Endeavour Hill Leisure Centre - Health and Wellness					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Members**	**25-69 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Approximate average distance to EHLC**
Lysterfield South	3156	29	679	4.27%	5.0
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	23	7,822	0.29%	4.0
Endeavour Hills	3802	700	16,916	4.14%	0.0
Hallam	3803	18	7,711	0.23%	5.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	58	5,541	1.05%	5.5
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	34	36,763	0.09%	10.5
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	18	31,229	0.06%	12.5
Beaconsfield	3807	1	4,695	0.02%	17.5
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	2	2,033	0.10%	19.0
Pearcedale	3912	0	2,436	0.00%	28.5
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	3	10,915	0.03%	13.5
Hampton Park	3976	4	17,429	0.02%	9.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	8	64,151	0.01%	20.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	0	19,409	0.00%	22.0
Tooradin	3980	0	2,615	0.00%	35.0
		869	230,344	**0.38%**	

Table 9: Casey ARC Health and Fitness Memberships – Casey Residents

Casey ARC - Health and Wellness					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Members**	**25-69 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Approximate average distance to ARC**
Lysterfield South	3156	8	679	1.18%	9.5
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	21	7,822	0.27%	7.0
Endeavour Hills	3802	112	16,916	0.66%	8.5
Hallam	3803	131	7,711	1.70%	4.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	118	5,541	2.13%	5.0
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	968	36,763	2.63%	3.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	611	31,229	1.96%	5.0
Beaconsfield	3807	56	4,695	1.19%	8.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	9	2,033	0.44%	15.0
Pearcedale	3912	0	2,436	0.00%	29.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	27	10,915	0.25%	11.5
Hampton Park	3976	181	17,429	1.04%	6.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	121	64,151	0.19%	10.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	64	19,409	0.33%	13.5
Tooradin	3980	2	2,615	0.08%	25.0
		2429	230,344	1.05%	

Table 10: Casey RACE Health and Fitness Memberships – Casey Residents

Casey RACE - Health and Wellness					
Suburb	**Postcode**	**Members**	**25-69 Population**	**Percentage of local population**	**Approximate average distance to RACE**
Lysterfield South	3156	0	679	0.00%	20.0
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	2	7,822	0.03%	16.5
Endeavour Hills	3802	18	16,916	0.11%	19.5
Hallam	3803	18	7,711	0.23%	15.0
Narre Warren North and East	3804	12	5,541	0.22%	13.5
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	381	36,763	1.04%	10.0
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	175	31,229	0.56%	13.5
Beaconsfield	3807	11	4,695	0.23%	16.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	3	2,033	0.15%	24.0
Pearcedale	3912	18	2,436	0.74%	15.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	137	10,915	1.26%	11.0
Hampton Park	3976	117	17,429	0.67%	11.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	2513	64,151	3.92%	4.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	677	19,409	3.49%	5.0
Tooradin	3980	59	2,615	2.26%	20.0
		4141	**230,344**	1.80%	

Table 11: OASIS Health and Fitness Memberships – Casey Residents

Dandenong Oasis - Health and Wellness						
Suburb	Postcode	Members	% mship	25-69 Population	Percentage of local population	Approximate average distance to Race
Lysterfield South	3156	20	4.62%	679	2.95%	7.5
Doveton, Eumemmerring	3177	120	27.71%	7,822	1.53%	4.5
Endeavour Hills	3802	170	39.26%	16,916	1.00%	4.0
Hallam	3803	27	6.24%	7,711	0.35%	7.5
Narre Warren North, Narre Warren East	3804	9	2.08%	5,541	0.16%	11.5
Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Fountain Gate	3805	27	6.24%	36,763	0.07%	13.5
Berwick and Harkaway	3806	11	2.54%	31,229	0.04%	15.0
Beaconsfield	3807	1	0.23%	4,695	0.02%	18.0
Beaconsfield Upper	3808	0	0.00%	2,033	0.00%	20.0
Pearcedale	3912	0	0.00%	2,436	0.00%	30.0
Lynbrook and Lyndhurst	3975	5	1.15%	10,915	0.05%	13.5
Hampton Park	3976	34	7.85%	17,429	0.20%	11.0
Cranbourne East, North, South & West, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Botanic Ridge	3977	9	2.08%	64,151	0.01%	17.0
Clyde, Clyde North	3978	0	0.00%	19,409	0.00%	23.0
Tooradin	3980	0	0.00%	2,615	0.00%	20.0
TOTAL		**433**	**100.00%**	230,344	0.19%	

7.3.2.1 Health and Fitness – Key Findings

The key findings of the analysis are:

- Members generally access the centre that is closest to their place of residence.
- Doveton and Eumemmerring have lower rates of membership than suburbs within other postcodes within a 5-kilometre radius of a centre.

  Only 2.12% of the targeted age group are members compared with neighbouring Endeavour Hills, which has 5.92%. This is despite both suburbs being in close proximity to two ALCs (Oasis and Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre).
- Despite being in close proximity to Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre, only 0.29% of Doveton and Eumemmerring residents aged 25–69 are members.
- Hallam, which as a SIEFA score of 947, has a comparatively low participation rate of 2.52% even though its residents have a relatively short travel distance of 4.5 kilometres to Casey ARC.
- Industry benchmarking suggests that suburbs with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage have lower rates of membership.
- Very low levels of usage in Pearcedale and Upper Beaconsfield are likely to be the result of these suburbs being in closer proximity to ALCs in other municipalities or proximity to privately run facilities. Cardinia Life is 12 kilometres from Upper Beaconsfield and the Peninsula Aquatic and Recreation Centre (PARC) is 14 kilometres from Pearcedale.

- Lyndhurst and Lynbrook have relatively poor access to centres within Casey or neighbouring suburbs and consequently, have relatively low levels of participation.

7.4 Summary – Provision and Usage

From a traditional planning perspective, Oasis being less than a 5-kilometre drive for the majority of residents in Doveton and Eumemmerring suggests that residents have reasonable access to aquatic services and facilities. And while residents in Doveton and Eumemmerring have lower participation rates than other Casey residents with similar access to ALCs, the level of use of Oasis for swimming lessons suggests that geographic accessibility for Doveton and Eumemmerring residents is reasonable.

8. PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

8.1 Benchmarking – Introduction

A review of key performance data has been undertaken using performance data from five outdoor pools, including Pines Forest. To honour commercial-in-confidence, the facilities will not be named; however, Pines Forest data has been included in the benchmark data.

It is important to note that DPIP is uniquely different in that it is a seasonal facility (Dec – March) and opens on a trigger temperature of 30 degrees or above, which has a direct influence on the measures and benchmark comparisons highlighted below. Some sites are heated whilst DPIP is not and some centres open for as many as 7 months, in comparison to the 4-month season at the DPIP. Consequently, the benchmarking provides an overview of performance, rather than a direct comparison.

8.2 Key Data

Table 12: DPIP Benchmark Performance Comparison

Measure	Average Benchmark Group Outdoor Pools	DPIP
Aquatic visits per season (excludes spectators)	53,550	22,317
Annual subsidy	$427,000	$261,640
Subsidy per aquatic visit (excludes maintenance)	($7.97)	($11.72)
5-km catchment based on 2016 Census)	88,309	112,000
Annual aquatic visits per 5-km catchment	0.61	0.20

8.3 Benchmarking – Findings

Based on the analysis undertaken the following key findings were identified:

- Data that can be shared from Pines Forest is that annual visits number 33,174 of which 12,769 were associated with carnivals and 20,405 community visits. This compares favourably with DPIP, which has annual visits of 21,545 of which 15,577 are associated with carnivals and 5,877 community visits.
- The annual operating loss is lower than the benchmark group average – $261,640 at DPIP compared with $427,000 in the benchmark group. The lower loss is in part due two key factors:
    - Minimal annual gas costs as the pools are not heated. For example, DPIP annual gas costs are $24,000 and Pines Forest, $40,000.
    - Lower lifeguard costs due to fewer opening hours.
    - Shorter pool season than at other sites, where seasons generally run for 5 months but as many as 7 months

  Because outdoor pools have significant fixed costs, operational losses generally increase with longer opening hours.
- DPIP has a 5-kilometre catchment population of approximately 112,000. The average catchment population of the benchmark group is 86,387. DPIP has 0.20 visits per head of catchment population against the benchmark average of 0.61 per head of catchment population. The DPIP number of visits per head is the lowest in the benchmark group.
- Pines Forrest has annual attendance of 33,174 of which 12,769 are from school carnivals.
- Pines Forest has a 5-kilometre population of approximately 96,000 and 0.35 visits per head of catchment population.

8.4 Attendance Challenges – Outdoor pools

Table 13: DPIP Benchmark Attendance Comparison Casey Centres

Centre	Annual Visits
DPIP	21,545
Casey ARC	850,000
Casey RACE	1,100,000

The comparison between the use of indoor and outdoor ALCs is stark. The challenge for outdoor pools is that they are mostly seasonal, offering a narrow range of services that meet the needs of a small community cohort on all but the hottest days when a place to cool off is highly desirable. Cohorts that find outdoor pools less attractive include:

- Older adults, people with mobility issues and people with disabilities who require warm water exercise spaces.
- People seeking swimming lessons. Outdoor pools have limitations in terms of servicing LTS customers, including pool depth and temperature, particularly for young children and those new to swimming.
- Low water temperature – the preferred temperature for lap swimming is approximately 27 degrees Celsius or lower compared with multipurpose leisure pools, LTS pools and WWEPs have temperatures that range from 30–34 degrees Celsius. Low water temperatures offer minimal encouragement for use by non lap swimmers except on days of extreme temperature.
- Deep water – outdoor pools are often comparatively deep. This discourages use by people who have a lower level of water confidence and swimming skills.

Inconsistent Opening Hours

In addition, DPIP has inconsistent operating hours that are governed by daily temperature, day of the week and month of the season. DPIP is open all Saturdays in January and February, and Thursday 6–8 pm from January to March. Outside of these hours, the centre opens only if the forecasted temperature is 30 degrees Celsius or higher.

Regular aquatic users, including lap swimmers, rely on consistent opening hours and will find a location where they have confidence the centre will be open. This no doubt has had an impact on the number of community visits to DPIP.

8.5 Carnival Use

Strategic Objective One has a recommendation to explore opportunities to relocate school carnivals to other neighbouring aquatic centres. This section provides background information with regard to this recommendation. However, it is important to note that consultation with schools regarding potential relocation was not part of this project.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of DPIP, data for 2019/2020 is incomplete. Consequently, data from the completed 2018/19 season was used for the analysis. A quick review of year-to-date performance for 2019/20 indicates similar activity to 2018/19.

- Attendance by schools accounted for 74% (16,642 attendances) of usage at DPIP out of a total attendance of 22,317 in the 18/19 financial year.
- Of the total school attendance, 31% (5,052 attendances) represents schools outside the City of Casey.
- Attendance from non-Casey schools (5,052 attendances) accounts for 23% of total attendances (22,317).

- Activities are conducted for a total of 30 schools of which 21 are located in the City Casey.
- Casey ARC had 18,881 attendances swim lessons as part of the school curriculum and Casey RACE 61,218 in the 2018/19 financial year, for swimming lessons, as part of school curriculum.
- Data provided by the YMCA indicates that 28 schools participate in swimming lessons at Casey ARC. However, no school carnivals are held there.
- Similarly, at Casey RACE, 45 schools participate in swimming lessons. However, there are no individual school carnivals held at the centre.

8.5.1 Capacity for School Carnivals at other Centres

To understand the implications for a change to outdoor provision at DPIP, consultation was held with centre managers at Casey and CoGD centres. The key findings of these discussions are:

- NPAC in 2020 had 26 carnivals/districts in 2020. Total attendance for carnivals in Feb/March was approximately 13,000.

  The centre manager at NPAC indicated there was some capacity for limited carnivals at NPAC, which might require an extension of the carnival season to accommodate existing and new bookings.
- Centre managers at both Casey RACE and Casey ARC suggested there was currently no capacity to cater for school carnivals, in their current format.
- There is currently no capacity for any additional carnivals at Oasis, in their current format.
- All centres have some capacity for non-carnival aquatic activities.

DPIP plays an important role for the provision of aquatic services for local schools. In particular, Casey schools rely on the DPIP to host school carnivals.

The relocation of carnivals to NPAC is possible but may require schools to consider holding carnivals earlier or later in the carnival season.

Travel distance to NPAC is an issue that may cause some concern for Casey schools and requires further consultation to understand the full implications.

School carnivals may also be delivered differently with smaller groups utilising indoor facilities or centres with indoor or outdoor 25m pools rather than 50m.

The importance of DPIP to schools is to be acknowledged however the provision of carnival space on its own does not appear to be strong justification for the ongoing provision of an outdoor pool at the DPIP.

9. OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

9.1 Development Options

Following a preliminary review of key performance data and aquatic provision within Casey and neighbouring councils in the project it was agreed with the project control group that three options would be reviewed for development consideration at the DPIP:

Option 1 – Outdoor Aquatics

The replacement and enhancement of existing aquatic infrastructure to create a unique outdoor aquatic experience. Improved customer experience and increased usage through the heating of all aquatic spaces and provision of extensive water play

Option 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics

To complement the outdoor facilities with a range of indoor aquatic facilities that will enhance whole of community usage

Option 3 – No Aquatics – Water Play

To remove formal aquatics from the site and provide water play equipment that will enhance sense of community, social connection and affordable access to water play

9.2 Option 1 –Outdoor Aquatics Components

Casey has an opportunity to create a unique outdoor seasonal experience for local residents and the broader Casey community. The vision could be beyond a traditional approach that would replace and enhance existing facilities. DPIP could include components that will service a larger cross section of the community regardless of physical capability by providing components that would be traditionally offered in indoor aquatics.

9.2.1 Outdoor Aquatic Components

Facility elements that could be considered in outdoor provision include the following:

25m or 50m heated pool with lagoon section – mandatory (8 lane 50m or 10 lane 25m)	The decision between a 25m and a 50m pool will be largely based on the extent to which the Council anticipates the pool to be used for carnivals and squads. The change to 25m has a number of benefits including – Lower capital and operating costs – More space for other infrastructure and activities – a smaller pool can be less intimidating for people with low levels of water confidence With some adaption by schools the 25m pool could be used for swimming carnivals. However, it would provide a different level of service for these activities than a 50m pool but it is not a requirement that school carnivals are held in a 50 m pool.

Program pool (heated) – mandatory (200m2 – 300m2)	The outdoor program pool could be used for gentle exercise and swimming lessons. It is a unique opportunity to service older adults and people with mobility issues in an outdoor aquatic environment Swim lesson could be conducted on a seasonal basis. The unique nature of the environment might facilitate a program offering that could be delivered at a lower fee to users and fill a gap in the provision of swim lessons to the local community

Other components

- Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (600m2 – 800m2) - mandatory
- Kiosk/cafe and social spaces - mandatory
- Accessible change and changing places change spaces - mandatory
- Group change rooms in addition to public change areas - mandatory
- Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory
- Water slides or similar large – to replace existing - desirable
- Outdoor spa - desirable
- Meeting rooms - desirable
- Competition room - desirable
- Out fitness zones - desirable

The images below provide examples of design features and facilities that could be incorporated.

Outdoor 50m Pool and Water Play

Oak Park Swimming Pool, Moreland City Council, Australia

Outdoor 50m Pool and Water Play

Oak Park Swimming Pool, Moreland City Council, Australia

Outdoor Program Pool

Bold Park Aquatic Centre, Perth, WA

Lagoon Pool linked to 50m Pool

Port Kembla Pool, Port Kembla, NSW

Water Park

The Strand Townsville, Qld

Program/lap swimming pool incorporating relaxation spa zones

Alpamere Warterpark, Switzerland

The overall and architectural approach will be the key to creating something that is truly unique in outdoor pool provision. In creating its response the design team should undertake extensive community and industry consultation, as well domestic and international investigation of outdoor aquatic provision.

9.2.2 Pool Depth Design Consideration – 25m or 50m pool

While outdoor lap swimming pools provide less capacity to meet the needs of the whole of the community, consideration of pool depth can enhance overall provision and participation.

A shallow depth profile of 1–1.5 metres will provide some opportunities for seasonal swimming lessons and programming, safer access for children, water walkers and users who have lower levels of swimming skills and confidence. Shallower water will facilitate opportunities for the 'hot-day bobbers' to safely use the facility. Hot-day bobbers do not swim laps, preferring to use an outdoor pool to cool off when the weather is hot.

Shallower depth will also enhance overall safety supervision and minimise overall safety risks at the centre.

Pool depth of 1–1.5 metres will not disadvantage lap swimmer as it provides sufficient depth to tumble turn at the shallow end of the pool. There may be some restrictions on diving at the shallow end during competitions. However, this would only impact single lap relays, which do not form part of elite competition programs.

9.3 Option 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics

The provision of indoor aquatics in addition to the redevelopment of the outdoor area as highlighted in Option 1 will deliver year round aquatics to local residents, whilst at the same time enhancing the unique aspects of the outdoor aquatic experience for the community.

9.3.1 Indoor and Outdoor Aquatic Components

Indoor Aquatic Components

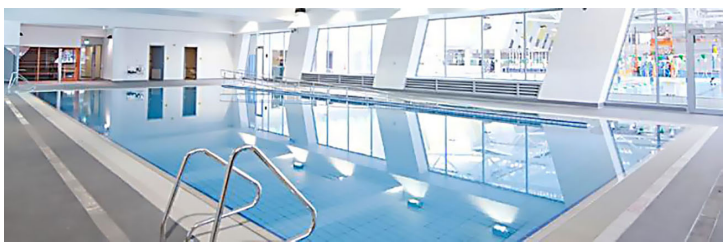
- Warm water exercise pool (300m2)
- Learn to swim pool (150m2)
- Indoor splash pad (150m2)
- Spa, sauna and steam room
- Accessible change and changing places change spaces – mandatory (in addition to outdoor accessible change)

Outdoor Aquatic Components

- 25m or 50m pool (heated)
- Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (400m2 – 600m2) - mandatory
- Water slides or similar large –to replace is existing mandatory
- Kiosk/cafe and social spaces – mandatory (to service indoors)
- Accessible change and changing places change spaces – mandatory
- Group change rooms in addition to public change areas - mandatory
- Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory
- Outdoor spa - desirable
- Meeting rooms - desirable
- Competition room - desirable
- Out fitness zones – desirable

Indoor health and fitness elements have not been considered for the following reasons:

- There is significant provision (both public and private) in the local area including at Endeavour Hill Leisure Centre which is less than 2 km as the crow flies from the DPIP, and at Freeway Sport, Oasis and a proposed 24/7 gym at Noble Park.



WWEP
GESAC, East Bentleigh, Vic

Indoor Aquatics
Smithton Wellbeing Indoor Recreation & Leisure, Smithton, Tasmania

9.4 Option 3 – Outdoor Water Play within a parkland setting

Option 3 would see the outdoor pool and associated facilities replaced by the provision of an outdoor, zero depth, aquatic play area and outdoor fitness with a parkland setting, offering a range of features. Access to the water park would be free and water play features would be included in the overall park precinct. It would provide the Casey community with access to a unique park experience and provide a meeting place for young families in particular. The water play area would provide a great environment for the community to cool off on hot summers days and allow for water familiarisation opportunities.

Outdoor Water Play Components

- Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (600m2 – 800m2) - mandatory
- Accessible change and changing places change spaces - mandatory
- Kiosk/cafe and social spaces – desirable (potentially a "pop up" café to service the community on hot days
- Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory
- Meeting rooms - desirable
- Out fitness zones – desirable

Seville Recreation Reserve

Yarra Ranges Council, VIC

Mildura Water Play Park

Mildura Rural City Council, VIC

Warburton Water Park

Yarra Ranges Council, VIC

9.5 Options Comparison

Option 1 – Outdoor Aquatics	Option 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics	Option 3 - Outdoor Aquatic Components
25m or 50m pool with lagoon section – mandatory (8 lane 50m or 10 lane 25m)	25m or 50m pool with lagoon section – mandatory (8 lane 50m or 10 lane 25m)	
Program pool– mandatory (200m2 – 300m2)	**Not required in this option due to provision of indoor program pool**	
Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (600m2 – 800m2) - mandatory	Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (400m2 – 600m2) - mandatory (could be smaller due to indoor water play provision)	Extensive water play areas including zero depth splash zones (1000 m2 plus) - mandatory
Water slides or similar large – to replace is existing mandatory	Water slides or similar large – to replace is existing mandatory	
Kiosk/cafe and social spaces - mandatory	Kiosk/cafe and social spaces - mandatory	Pop up kiosk to service the community on hot days
Accessible change and changing places change spaces - mandatory	Accessible change and changing places change spaces - mandatory	Accessible Public change rooms - Mandatory
Group change rooms in addition to public change	Group change rooms in addition to public change	

Option 1 – Outdoor Aquatics	Option 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics	Option 3 - Outdoor Aquatic Components
areas - mandatory	areas - mandatory	
Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory	Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory	Shaded areas and extensive seating - mandatory
Outdoor spa - desirable	**Not required due to indoor provision**	
Meeting rooms - desirable	Meeting rooms - desirable	Meeting rooms - desirable
Competition room - desirable	Competition room - desirable	
Out fitness zones - desirable	Out fitness zones - desirable	
	Indoor warm water exercise pool	
	Learn to swim pool	
	Indoor splash pad	
	Spa, sauna and steam room	

9.6 Options Review

9.6.1 Option 1 - Outdoor Aquatics – Pros and Cons

Pros

- Maintains and enhances current outdoor swimming pool provision for the local and broader Casey community
- The addition of water play features will provide a unique offering to the Casey community and will to be attractive to a broader cross section of the community leading to increased usage
- Heating of the water will facilitate increased bather comfort and provide the opportunity for consistent opening hours. These factors will contribute to increased patronage.
- School carnivals can continue to be facilitated at the site if required
- Redevelopment and inclusion of water play features will enhance the DPIP as a place for social connection

Cons

- The centre will continue to operate at a loss in the vicinity of losses identified in table 12.
- The extent of increased usage in relation to lap swimming is unclear due to the apparent low levels of swimming competency within the catchment area
- The capital cost of redeveloping the outdoor swimming pool will be significant. However, compared with Casey's indoor aquatic centres, the DPIP will have low levels of attendance
- Will not provide year-round aquatic usage
- Outdoor pools offered limited services and appeal for uses such as older adults, people with a disability and people with low levels of aquatic skills and confidence

9.6.2 Option 2 - Outdoor Aquatics – Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics

Pros

- The addition of indoor aquatics will provide year round aquatic exercise and provide activities for a much broader cross section of the community
- Indoor learn to swim and warm water program pools will significantly improve access to swim lessons and gentle exercise for residents in the immediate catchment.
- The provision of facilities for swim lessons could assist with addressing the low levels swimming competency in the local community
- Year round use and increased aquatic components and the associated programs and activities will significantly increase use and revenue at the DPIP.
- It enhances access and equity for Casey residents to Casey's aquatic facilities
- Use by a much broader cross section of the community for whom outdoor pools offered limited services and appeal such as older adults, people with a disability and people with low levels of aquatic skills and confidence
- Creation of community hubs and opportunities for social connection, particularly for older adults and people experiencing social isolation
- Issues highlighted for option 1

Cons

- The proximity of Oasis suggests that residents in the DPIP catchment already have reasonable access to indoor aquatics – learn to swim and warm water exercise pool
- That the CoGD is planning to spend $55 - $60 million on an aquatic centre that is just 3 km from DPIP is likely to have a significant impact on potential usage and viability of indoor aquatics, particularly LTS, at DPIP
- That CoGD offer a Council endorsed concession to key services including Learn to Swim, and incur greater financial costs as a consequence, which is not currently the approach within the City of Casey.
- The high levels of social disadvantage may necessitate a review of concession pricing strategies. Concession prices that enhance affordability will have an impact on financial viability
- Due to high levels of social disadvantage and cultural diversity it is unclear whether potential patronage would reflect industry benchmarking
- Due to factors above there is significant risk that large losses will continue to be incurred
- The addition of indoor aquatic elements and the associated office space and amenities will introduce substantial capital cost
- Issues highlighted for option 1

9.6.3 Option 3 – No Aquatics – Water Play

Pros

- The addition of water play features will provide a unique offering to the Casey community
- No cost access will enhance accessibility to the local and broader Casey community to water play activities
- Continues to provide access to aquatics at the site
- Low capital cost
- Minimal operating cost

- There is anecdotal evidence that water parks have become important and well attended community assets
- Provides the community with an accessible green space that they can connect with others, socialise and recreate
- Provides complementary aquatic facilities and associated aquatic activities to indoor aquatic facilities in the City of Casey and without impacting the capacity of residents to access indoor aquatic facilities.

Cons

- No swimming options at the DPIP
- Removal of a community asset may create angst in the community and mobilise the local community to resist the closure
- Carnivals will need to be relocated other pools. Due to limited availability in the traditional carnival season there may need to be an adjustment to when existing schools conduct carnivals
- The inability to secure the water play equipment within the confines of an aquatic centre presents challenges to minimising damage from vandalism
- Water play offers limited usage opportunities for cohorts other than children, although parents and carers are likely to attend the water park with their children.
- Will not provide year-round aquatic usage

9.6.4 Comparative Options Matrix

The table below illustrates the comparative difference between options against key criteria. Because there has been no detailed analysis of future capital and financial costs, the table should be used as for further discussion and investigation directional rather than as absolute decision making tool. The lack of clarity is demonstrated where there has been options have not been clearly scored. The table also does not allow for proportionality of score or importance of each factor.

Factor	**Option 1 Outdoor only**	**Option 2 Indoor & Outdoor**	**Option 3 Water park**
Whole of community use	2	3	1
Overall patronage	1 or 2	3	1 or 2
Financial viability	1 or 2	1 or 2	3
Capital Cost	2	1	3
Provision of aquatic services that residents cannot access at other sites	3*	1	2
Total	9 or 11	9 or 11	10 or 11

Best Outcome = 3, Mid Outcome = 2, Lowest Outcome = 1

***** Residents currently have access to Dandenong Oasis therefore the provision of indoor aquatics is the lesser option in terms of service provision.

The outdoor water play in the park will not fill the void created by the loss of the outdoor pool under option 3.

Option 1 also includes significant outdoor water play provision, albeit that access will not be free as in Option 3.

9.7 Decision Making Issues

The decision making process for the future of the DPIP is complex. The complexity is driven by the following factors, some of which are conflicting:

- Apparent low levels of swimming competency in the local community surrounding the DPIP and the need for overall competency to be improved
- The low levels of use of the current facility (approximately 5000 per annum outside of swimming carnivals)
- The role that the DPIP plays in facilitating school swimming carnivals; coupled with no capacity for carnivals at Casey ARC, Casey Race and Oasis and only limited capacity at NPAC during the traditional school swimming carnival season
- Community expectation that indoor aquatic infrastructure will be delivered at the DPIP due to the statement in the *Facility Hierachy (sic) and Provision* section of the Aquatic Strategy, that sates Casey's hierarchy includes the provision of year round indoor and outdoor aquatics facilities in Doveton
- Potential community activism if the existing facilities are not retained and enhanced and the outdoor swimming pool is closed. Consequently, community engagement will be required to monitor the expectations of the community
- The high cost of constructing and maintaining aquatic infrastructure
- The high operating cost of outdoor pools
- The proposed redevelopment of Oasis, and renewal of Noble Park and their proximity to residents of Doveton and Eumemmering
- The current public and private supply of Learn to Swim facilities within a 5-kilometre catchment of Doveton and Eumemmerring.
- The potential impact the proposed development of Oasis and pricing concessions (current and future) would have on viability of indoor aquatics at the DPIP
- The potentially long-term economic impact Covid19 will have on the finances of all levels of government and requirement to review capital and operational expenditure

9.7.1 Indoor Aquatics Issues

From a traditional planning perspective, Oasis being less than a 5-kilometre drive for the majority of Doveton and Eumemmerring residents suggests that there is reasonable access to aquatic services and facilities. Further, the current level of use of Oasis for swimming lessons by Doveton and Eumemmerring residents supports the notion that geographic accessibility for these residents is reasonable.

There is a proposal to undertake a $55–$60 million redevelopment of Oasis that will incorporate significant aquatic services which include LTS and will deliver vastly improved aquatic services to residents within the Oasis catchment, with little to no impact to operations due to the build taking place in a new location within the site.

The level of accessibility to Oasis, coupled with potential high operating and capital operating costs of indoor aquatics at DPIP suggests that justification for the development of indoor aquatics at the DPIP is relatively low.

9.7.1 Outdoor Aquatics Issues

The broader and more complex issue for Council to consider is whether to continue provide an outdoor swimming pool at the DPIP.

On face value, the low level of community use of the DPIP suggests that there is limited demand for aquatic services. However, it is important to reflect on contributing factors to low use including but limited to:

- Lack of heated water
- Temperature driven opening hours
- Lack of contemporary water play
- Poor quality facilities
- Local demographics

NPAC could also be considered an option for outdoor swimming for local residents. However, it is beyond the normal distance the majority of residents would travel to use aquatics facilities and consequently should not be considered a key pillar in aquatic provision for Doveton Eumemmering residents.

9.7.2 A Finance Decision only

Option 3 would appear to offer the best outcome from both a capital and operating cost perspective. The capital cost is likely to be lower because the infrastructure requirements are less. Similarly, operational costs are likely to be lower due in the most part, to the much lower staff resources required to manage and maintain the site.

9.7.3 Key Next Steps

Within the decision making process Council may need to consider a number of key questions including:

- What is the level of aquatic provision that the Council wants to provide residents in the DPIP catchment?
- Does the reliance on Oasis (and Noble Park) to service Doveton and Eumemmering residents achieve Council's access and equity objectives?
- What level of use (patronage) of the DPIP site does Council want to achieve?
- What is affordable to Council for the redevelopment of the DPIP?
- What is affordable to Council from an ongoing operational cost perspective?
- What is the community expectation for the future of Doveton Pool in the Park?
- What is Strategically sound from an aquatic facility provision perspective?

Consequently, the next phase of the project, whether that is part of DPIP master plan, or a future feasibility study, should explore the capital and operational implications of the options. A detailed understanding of these outcomes will enable the Council to make an informed decision on the best option for provision of aquatic services at the DPIP.