

SHELLHARBOUR Aquatic Facilities Review

JUNE 2026



Shellharbour
CITY COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Shellharbour City Council acknowledges the Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters on which Shellharbour stands. We pay our respects to Dharawal Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise and honour the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to Country including land, waters, skies, and all living things, and the cultural, spiritual, and economic significance of these places. In particular, we acknowledge the deep and ongoing relationship of the Dharawal people with the ocean, Lake Illawarra, and the waterways that sustain life and culture.

Council is committed to meaningful reconciliation: building respectful relationships, promoting cultural safety, and working in genuine partnership to support self-determination and improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Executive Summary

Shellharbour City Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its four aquatic facilities - Warilla Pool, Albion Park Pool, Oak Flats Pool and the Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool - to understand current performance, future community needs, financial and environmental impacts, and the long-term sustainability of aquatic service provision across the Local Government Area (LGA).

The Review responds to ageing assets, shifting demographic conditions, evolving community expectations, rising operational costs, and the need to align capital investment with evidence-based demand and strategic policy directions.

Shellharbour's population of 79,738 (2023) is forecast to reach 100,809 by 2046, with substantial growth concentrated in Calderwood, Tullimbar and Albion Park. These growth areas encompass a high proportion of families and children, indicating an increasing future need for aquatic education, recreation and therapy services.

The Review highlights:

- Strong community support for aquatic facilities, especially those that are affordable, close to home, safe and clean.
- High demand for heated and indoor facilities, with Oak Flats the only heated year-round pool in the LGA.
- Significant socio-economic disadvantage in suburbs such as Warilla and Albion Park Rail, where access to low-cost recreation is particularly important.
- Transport disadvantage, with 5% of households owning no vehicle and higher rates in Warilla and Albion Park Rail, indicating the importance of local provision.
- Seasonal limitations and lack of sheltered/indoor water space as key participation barriers.

Operational and Infrastructure Performance

Across Council's aquatic facilities, utilisation varies significantly:

- Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool – highest use, 161,478 visits (2024/25), free and open year-round.
- Oak Flats Pool – high and growing year-round usage, 151,689 visits (2024/25).
- Albion Park Pool – strong seasonal attendances, 46,724 visits (2024/25).
- Warilla Pool – declining usage, 14,754 visits (2024/25), lowest attendance despite hosting school carnivals.

Overall, 76% of all summer attendance occurs at Oak Flats and Beverley Whitfield, demonstrating clear patterns of community demand.

All four facilities operate at a net deficit, consistent with most Australian public aquatic centres. Combined operational losses for the 2020–2025 period total \$6.51 million, offset in part by Council's successful Aquatic Programs (Learn to Swim and Aqua Aerobics), which generated a positive \$517,000 surplus over the same period.

Given utilisation and net operational costs, the current subsidy per visit for the 2024/25 financial years is:

- Warilla: \$22.45
- Albion Park: \$7.11
- Oak Flats: \$5.39
- Beverley Whitfield: \$1.40
- National median for outdoor pools: \$6.29 (2023/24)

Subsidy levels indicate a significant imbalance between facility cost and utilisation, especially at Warilla.

All facilities are approaching or past their expected design life (45–60 years), with major renewals identified through recent Asset Condition Reports:

- Warilla Pool – \$4.56M in recommended works
- Albion Park Pool – \$5.06M in recommended works
- Oak Flats Pool – \$6.63M in recommended works
- Beverley Whitfield Pool – \$2.38M in recommended works

Structural deterioration, outdated plant systems, accessibility non-compliance, inefficient filtration, and degraded concourses are common across all sites. Replacing a 50m pool shell is estimated at \$4M, with modernisation costing considerably more.

Council has allocated ongoing funds for maintenance (2025–2029), but major long-term investment will require State/Federal support.

The Review identifies clear opportunities to support Council's Net Zero 2035 target through:

- Electrification of heat (heat pumps replacing gas boilers)
- Solar PV and battery storage
- Water-saving technologies
- Embedding Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles into all future infrastructure decisions

With respect to seasonal operation models, the Review identifies a number of opportunities for each facility:

Warilla Pool

Characterised by low usage, high subsidy, ageing infrastructure and proximity to alternative aquatic options.

Recommended approach: Seasonal reduction, aiming to reduce the current subsidy per visit.

Options include:

- Operating only during peak summer (Dec–Jan)
- Operating December–March with reduced weekday hours
- Considering long-term decommissioning aligned to community engagement

Albion Park Pool

Strong seasonal demand, good community value, strong programming potential.

Recommended approach: Trial a season extension, with the view of maintaining or improving the current subsidy per visit.

Models include:

- September school holidays to ANZAC Day (cost-neutral option)
- Full extension (26 September–19 April)

Oak Flats Pool

Flagship facility with significant year-round usage, central location and robust program delivery.

Recommended approach: Retain year-round services, prioritise major renewal planning and consider staged expansion.

Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool

Highest attendance, unique heritage and tourism value, lowest cost per visit.

Recommended approach: Maintain access but review lifeguarding model.

Conceptual long term infrastructure options are explored that provide high-level concepts of what could typically be achieved at each facility and indicative upfront capital infrastructure costs (as estimated and benchmarked against case studies). Further detailed cost-benefit analysis, exploration of funding opportunities and consultation with the community and key stakeholders is recommended to be carried out to support any future infrastructure decisions.

KEY CONCLUSIONS



1. Shellharbour's aquatic network delivers significant social, health and economic benefits, but faces major sustainability challenges.



2. Infrastructure is ageing, requiring substantial investment over the next 10 - 15 years.



3. Community demand is not evenly distributed, with clear preferences for Oak Flats and Beverley Whitfield.



4. Financial sustainability must be considered, with strategic decisions needed regarding Warilla Pool's future.



5. Environmental impacts are significant, and a transition to energy-efficient, low-carbon operations is essential.



6. Investment prioritisation is critical - modernisation should focus first on Oak Flats aquatics redevelopment and Albion Park renewals.



7. A new Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics & Leisure Facility at Albion Park Rail is not financially feasible and not required to meet community needs at this time.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Prioritise Oak Flats for major renewal, including plant, pool shell and accessibility upgrades, with planning for expanded indoor/covered water space.



2. Implement service changes at Warilla Pool with operations from 9am to 5pm, with long-term (10+ years) consideration of repurposing for open space recreation and playgrounds .



3. Trial a seasonal extension at Albion Park Pool to confirm demand outside current operating months.



4. Enhance Beverley Whitfield Pool's amenity and access; and undertake a review of patrol models.



5. Pursue State and Federal co-funding, targeting infrastructure renewal, energy transition and accessibility improvements.



6. Continue community engagement to ensure future aquatic investment reflects demographic change, equity considerations and service demand.

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Council has commissioned a review of its aquatic facilities with a view to understand, not only current asset opportunities and challenges, but also current and future demands of the community, trends and social connections that the community value from the City's aquatic locations. The review places Shellharbour's services in the context of the local and regional community and identifies a number of pathways for Council to consider investing as aquatic assets reach the end of their useful life. The review also provides current data on each aquatic facility's financial and environmental performance.

1.2 Literature Review

There are a number of relevant strategic and operational documents relating to Council's Aquatic Facilities that has been produced since 2000. The following have been considered in the preparation of this Review:

- 2000 – Concept Design Report commissioned for development of Warilla and Oak Flats Pools and provided to Aquatic Facilities Working Party in 2013
- 2011 – Aquatic Facilities Asset Management Plan
- 2013 – Shellharbour Council's Aquatic Facilities Working Party
- 2014 – Aquatic Facilities Workshop
- 2015 – Shellharbour Aquatic Facilities Review (Draft)
- 2017 – Leak Detection Asset Reports for Warilla and Oak Flats Pools (i)
- 2019 – Leak Detection Asset Reports for Warilla and Oak Flats Pools (ii)
- 2020 – Open Space & Recreation Needs Study
- 2020 – Open Space & Recreation Strategy
- 2023 – Asset Condition Reports for Council's four (4) Pools
- 2024 – Grant application submitted for Regional Aquatic, Sport & Leisure Precinct Masterplan at Albion Oval, Albion Park Rail
- 2024 – Aquatic Facilities Review undertaken
- 2025 - Grant application submitted for Oak Flats Aquatic Centre Masterplan Project

2 Review Context

2.1 Council's Service Review Program

As the needs of the community and the challenges of operating environment change over time, it is important that Council continually review how services are delivered to ensure that they meet community needs in a way that is sustainable in the long term. The Service Review Framework within Council's Delivery Program 2025-2029 is made up of four key inputs that include the (i) service review program, (ii) audits, (iii) business plans and (iv) business improvement. These inputs build upon work that has been previously completed while considering Council's efficiency, productivity, financial sustainability and governance.

Council is committed to delivering efficient and cost-effective services that ensures its long-term financial sustainability balanced with managing the changing priorities and expectations of the community when it comes to what modern aquatic, leisure and sporting infrastructure now looks like. Many newly constructed modern aquatic facilities are now not only swimming pools but are developed as multi-purpose aquatic facilities with 'dry' based health, fitness, commercial and public spaces included within the overall aquatic and leisure footprint.

Council's Service Review Program supports continuous improvement and allows Council the opportunity to determine the right mix of services, review and optimise service levels, build staff capacity and skills, explore alternative approaches and identify new opportunities. In 2023/24, the focus of the program was a desktop audit of all services to form a holistic view of Council's operations, forming baseline data, which will trigger a prioritisation process to inform the rolling service review program. This continual improvement focus within the Delivery Program will continue through 2024/25 and into 2025/26 to increase focus on business improvement and innovation to improve the overall organisational performance.

From a specific aquatics perspective, Shellharbour City Council recognises the benefits of aquatic facilities and acknowledges the enormous contribution of swimming pools to the health and wellbeing of its community. This philosophy is evident within the Community Facilities Action Plan where Council acknowledges they will maximise community access to its community facilities and where facilities are deemed no longer fit-for-purpose, are underutilised and/or in poor quality, move to decommission, consistent with Council's assets disposal policies.

2.2 Transforming Swimming Pools Into Multi-Purpose Facilities

The public swimming pool has long been recognised as an important piece of social infrastructure, not only does it provide an avenue for exercise, it is also a place for leisure and socialisation. Increased physical activity, improved mental health, stress reduction and an opportunity for social interaction have all been associated with the provision of a community swimming pool.

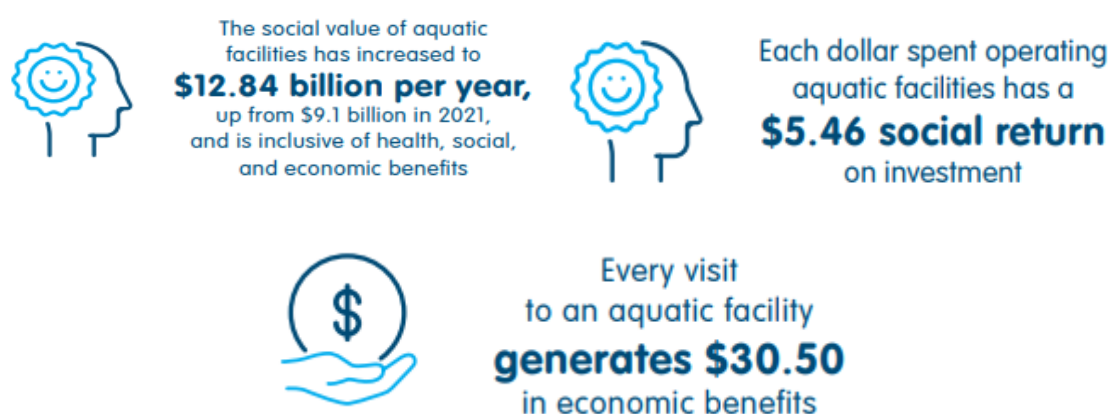


Figure 1 – Economic and Social Value of Aquatic Facilities
Royal Life Saving State of Australian Aquatic Facilities 2025

Aquatic health and fitness activities represent an important activity choice for people of all ages, although with an ageing population, there is an increased demand for heated water areas, pools suitable for therapy and programmed older adult exercises. Nonetheless, it has become apparent in recent decades that local swimming pools, particularly those dependent on seasonal visitations, can place significant financial pressure on councils. In part, this can be due to fluctuating attendance numbers, ongoing maintenance requirements and ageing infrastructure.

Across Australia, a large number of public pools have closed over the last 30 years due to a number of changing attitudes and trends that can be themed as:

decreasing popularity
 sun exposure
 club-based competitive swimming
 large multi-purpose facilities

Year-round multi-purpose facilities that incorporate other recreation and leisure uses are a vastly different model to that of the seasonal local pool. Compared to the historic community swimming pool, the multi-purpose facility combines a range of aquatic and non-aquatic uses, which may include a gym, fitness classes, sports facilities such as indoor courts and health services such as physiotherapy services. They may also incorporate other multi-purpose spaces for leased commercial rooms, community/festival events, day care/creche facilities or cafés.

Research on the provision of multi-purpose aquatic centres highlighted that this model with a varied range of services, is necessary in order to attract users from both within and outside the council area, including:

- those who are interested in leisure and recreation,
- those who wish to use the centre for competitive training and fitness, and
- those seeking education and health therapies.

These centres should also cater to the needs of children through the provision of shallow water areas, fun zones and interactive equipment (such as inflatables) to enhance their appeal to the broader community.

Underpinning the development of multi-purpose centres is an aim to:

- Overcome seasonality and offer year-round, flexible and multi-generational activities
- Meet a range of accessibility needs and provide programs and services for users of various abilities, physical conditions and skill levels
- Generate income beyond that of general admission and swimming programs
- Boost the number of reasons to visit a Centre and encourage repeat visits

Due to the larger scale operation of a multi-purpose centre, their construction and ongoing costs (staffing, maintenance etc.) are significantly higher than that of a standalone seasonal community swimming pool. There is also evidence to suggest that incorporating a wider range of uses facilitates a more financially viable outcome for Council and the centre, particularly through health and fitness activities, food and beverage sales and other revenue generating activities such as special events and secondary spend options.

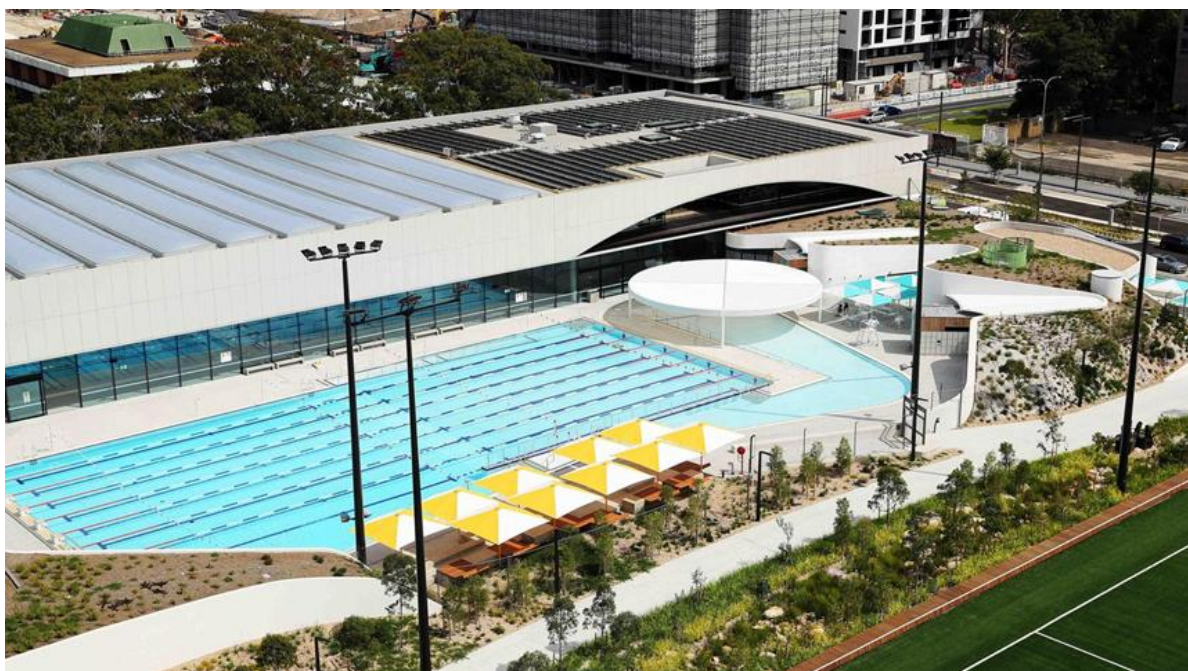


Figure 2 – Gunyama Park Aquatic & Recreation Centre Zetland (City of Sydney Council) and Adjoining Multi-Purpose Synthetic Sports Field

2.3 Multi-Purpose Aquatic Facility Design

The potential development of a multi-purpose aquatic and recreation facility can stimulate local interest in relation to the various plans and services that Council could consider during its analysis phase. Organised formal aquatic groups (specialist users of pools) may dominate consultation processes, whilst the general resident or casual and recreation user (who are generally the highest users of pools), may not be involved or heard. In many cases when a council is faced with developing or redeveloping an aquatic and recreation facility, the debate about the components that a facility should include to serve its local community and visitors appropriately, may at times, be dominated by:

- A priority for long course competition, lap swimming and training facilities (50m or 25m lap pools) at the expense of not considering or including multi and high use variable depth water spaces as well. Participation trends generally show that most people use these facilities for recreation, fun, enjoyment, socialisation, education and therapy.
- A request for deep water to meet specialist sport needs, which can add operating costs and restrict those who can use the water space (selection of these areas must be done with financial and user impacts clearly highlighted). Water polo is an example of this specialist sport, with the need for a regulation size pool of 25m x 16.5m required for competition. Sydney Olympic Park has a specialised utility pool for water polo which is 33m x 25m with a depth of 3.5m whilst other Centres such as Uni Active Aquatic Centre (University of Wollongong) configure their 50m pool for water polo by using dedicated

water polo lane ropes and goals and segregating the 2.4m deep end of the pool for game play. From a user perspective, water polo has 300 clubs nationally with 46 clubs based in NSW who have 8000 registered members. Illawarra Water Polo Club is based at the Uni Active Aquatic Centre at Wollongong University via a term-based program with competition and training conducted on Monday and Wednesday evenings with up to 50-60 participants.

- A lack of a co-ordinated operating strategy for other existing pools in Council's project area and user catchment population which can lead to duplication of the same types of components and services in the same user zones.

Therefore, facilities should be designed with a commitment to environmental sustainability, integrating best practice safety measures, be inclusive and support a broad range of community users, including recreational swimmers, families, learn to swim participants, fitness users, people living with disabilities, youth, multicultural communities, gender diverse communities and therapy clients.



Figure 3 – Aquanation Maroondah Leisure, Ringwood, Victoria

3 Council's Role in Sport, Leisure & Recreation

3.1 Local Government Act 1993

Section 8A (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 – Guiding principles for councils

Councils should;

- (b) carry out functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers
- (e) work co-operatively with other councils and the State Government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community
- (f) manage lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way

Section 8B of the Local Government Act 1993 - Principles of sound financial management

Councils should;

- (b) invest in responsible and sustainable infrastructure for the benefit of the local community

The following International, National, State and Regional policies and plans identify alignment for Council in the provision of aquatic infrastructure:

3.2 Alignment with International Goals

In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) that provided a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At the heart of these SDG's was a global partnership recognising that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and generate economic growth. Aquatic facilities contribute to the United Nations SDGs in the following areas;

SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing

- Aquatic Facilities reduce drowning risks and promote physical activity for all ages.
- They contribute to reducing obesity, cardiovascular diseases and mental health conditions through swimming and recreational programs.

SDG 4 – Quality Education

- Aquatic facilities provide swimming and water safety education to children and adults.
- The industry offers vocational training for swim teachers and lifeguards supporting job readiness.
- Early childhood development is enhanced by water familiarisation and learn to swim activities.

SDG 5 – Gender Equality

- The aquatic industry has high female workforce participation (58% female staff).

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Pools generate employment in roles such as lifeguards, instructors (learn to swim & aqua aerobics), customer service and centre managers.

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- Aquatic facilities drive infrastructure innovation, including water treatment, energy efficiency and automation.
- Investment in regional infrastructure ensures equitable access to swimming facilities.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

- Areas where pools are located ensure inclusive access to aquatic facilities for all, regardless of age, disability, economic status or background.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Public pools provide safe, inclusive and accessible spaces for recreation and community engagement.
- Investment in energy efficient, eco-friendly aquatic facilities contributes to sustainable urban development.

SDG 13 – Climate Action

- Aquatic facilities can implement sustainable water and energy use practices and provide education opportunities to users of facilities about sustainable practices.
- Water safety education builds resilience against drowning risks.

3.3 Alignment with Federal Government Policy

Sport 2030

- Reduce inactivity in Australians by 15% by 2030
- Have a thriving Australian sport and recreation industry

Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

- Ensure aquatic facilities are available and accessible to people of all backgrounds and abilities
- Ensure risk is factored into the safe design of aquatic facilities

Equal Access to Public Aquatic Facilities - Royal Life Saving

- Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and experiences, aquatic facilities enable the building of community
- Aquatic facilities become models of change for the rest of society because they proactively tackle inequality in order to undo previous patterns of discrimination and disadvantage

The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia - Royal Life Saving

- Exploring opportunities for local governments to collaborate and partner on aquatic facility provisioning and sharing of costs and benefits
- There are a multitude of health, social and economic benefits that are attributable to the availability of an aquatic facility

Economic benefits of Australia's Public Aquatic Facilities - Royal Life Saving

- A weekly visit to a pool is enough to take most people out of the 'physically inactive' category
- The average aquatic facility creates \$2.72 million a year in value to the community

3.4 Alignment with NSW Government Policy

NSW Healthy Eating & Active Living Strategy 2022-2032

- Ensure healthy eating and active living are prioritised in cross-government and national planning, infrastructure and transport initiatives
- Easier access to information, programs and services that enable people to adopt healthy eating and active living behaviours in their own lives
- NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038

- Deliver with local government, sports and other private partners, regional and metropolitan district sports infrastructure programs

NSW Practice Note 15 Water Safety

- Council's risk management process needs to be systematic and comprehensive
- Councils are strongly encouraged to categorise swimming pools and other still water environments under their control to determine and maintain the appropriate personnel, safety equipment and signage needed to counter risk to patrons

NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2026

- We want the community to know more about the health needs women and girls have
- Women and girls must get the support they need for their health and mental health

Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2020-2024

- Increase the availability and use of multi-purpose facilities
- Increase participation in sport and active recreation for populations underrepresented in participation including females, Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders

NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

- Prioritise planning and investment in major projects that will have the most impact on the visitor economy

NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027

- Working collaboratively with LGBTIQ+ people to improve their health outcomes
- A holistic approach that acknowledges the wider social, psychological, societal and cultural factors which may affect an individual's health journey

3.5 Alignment with Regional Policies

Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041

- Create a diverse visitor economy
- Utilise smart infrastructure to drive resilience, prosperity and vibrant places

The Value of Tourism to Sydney Surrounds South 2022

- 653,000 daytrips and 150,00 overnight stays to the Shellharbour LGA
- Providing \$254million total domestic tourism to the Shellharbour LGA

Shellharbour Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023

- Unlock potential opportunities in the visitor economy
- Continue to improve services and infrastructure to support population and business growth, economic inclusiveness and life outcomes

Regional Growth Area State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042

- Great neighbourhoods with open spaces and amenities
- Reducing the carbon impact of infrastructure projects

Illawarra Shoalhaven Sport and Active Recreation Plan 2018 -2023

- Constructing, maintaining and managing sport and active recreation infrastructure and programs in local communities
- Collaborating with the community to identify sporting infrastructure and program needs

3.6 Shellharbour City Council Plans and Policies

Strategic Projects Advocacy Plan 2024/2025

- Develop an inclusive and accessible Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics & Leisure facility

Community Facilities Strategy 2021-2031, Community Facilities Action Plan 2021-2031 & Community Facilities Needs Study 2021-2031

- Community facilities will be planned, managed and activated to meet the needs of people across the LGA and also be responsive to place
- Community facilities and the activities they support will provide affordable and equitable access, consistent with Council's commitments to inclusion and social justice principles

Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2020 & Open Space & Recreation Needs Study 2020

- Work with the NSW Government and neighbouring councils to pursue the establishment of a new Regional Leisure & Aquatic Centre accessible to Shellharbour residents
- Investigate the feasibility of a new heated indoor pool in the Shellharbour LGA to support year-round access to swimming and pool related activities
- Investigate the feasibility of a new ocean pool in the Shellharbour LGA to support increased access to sea water pool activities
- Conduct regular pool assessments, including usage and quality audits, to inform ongoing scheduling, capital works and maintenance

- Continue to develop and implement incentives that encourage resident access to water-based activities, including to local pools, ocean and lake-based activities
- Identify open space locations and playgrounds suitable for water-play infrastructure

Communications & Engagement Strategy 2025-2029

- Deliver tailored communication and engagement to meet the needs of our diverse communities
- Strive for innovation and creativity

Zero Emissions Strategy 2022-2050

- Belonging to the community and guiding Council's decisions regarding services, projects and works programs
- Consistent with the commitments and legislative requirements within the Local Strategic Planning Statement and Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041
- Minimising environmental impacts of operations via sustainable procurement practices including prioritising low or zero carbon products, services and assets
- Integrating climate risk assessment into decision making to build resilience into strategic planning, development activities, projects and asset management

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2026

- Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of Council facilities
- Explore and implement initiatives to enhance access and inclusion for people with disabilities

Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035

- Construct and upgrade buildings and infrastructure that meet current and future community needs
- Facilitate sustainable development that considers current and future needs of our community and environment

Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035

- Long Term Financial Plan - Council will systematically assess asset conditions and determine funding to ensure desired condition levels are achieved at the best value for Council
- Asset Management - Sustainably managing Council's infrastructure assets for present and future generations whilst complying with all legislative and regulatory requirements

Delivery Program 2025-2029

- Determining what is achievable over 4 years, what the priorities are and how programs will be scheduled

Operational Plan 2025-2026

- Identifying the projects, programs and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the commitments of the Delivery Program

3.7 Council's Open Space & Recreation Needs Study

3.7.1 Key Findings

In late 2018, Council engaged the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) within the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to conduct an Open Space and Recreation (OSR) Needs Study and an OSR Strategy to guide Council decision making on open space and sport and recreation facilities across the Shellharbour Local Government Area for 2020 - 2030. To gain an accurate cross-section of community opinions in the Shellharbour LGA, a computer assisted telephone survey was designed to capture responses from a representative sample of ages, suburb of residence and gender. The phone survey (on landline and mobile) sampled a total of 401 people, weighted to both the population age, gender profile and residential patterns across the Shellharbour LGA. Key Aquatic feedback and data from the OSR Needs Study identified the following key themes and messages expressed by the community:

- The value in having pool facilities that were close to home, offer value for money or are free, are accessible to all, and are clean and well supervised.
- A community preference for access to a heated indoor pool (within or without a broader leisure centre) that can deliver a range of water-based activities all year round.
- The importance of having a variety of pool facilities available, including a range of sizes, locations and water temperatures, and affordable swimming lessons (or other class options).
- The need for upgraded facilities, including more shaded or undercover areas, co-located with other services such as cafés, and have well maintained and safe amenities.

This is highlighted in further detail in Figure 4 and Table 1.

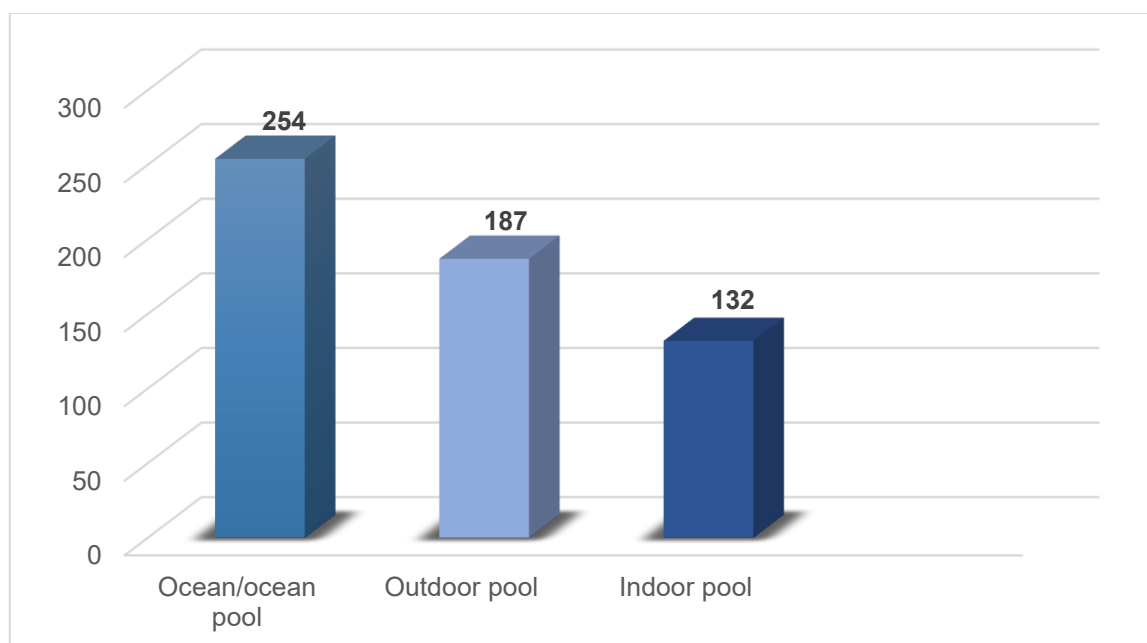


Figure 4 – Preferred Swimming Location for Shellharbour LGA Residents

Table 1 – Shellharbour LGA Residents feedback on Council's Pools

Location	Theme of Feedback
Warilla	- Close to Home - Has undercover facilities - Pool is unheated - Closed for 7 months a year - Lacking modern facilities - No leisure play areas - Could create a recreation hub also incorporating adjacent users - Surrounded by open space - Good street exposure - Has space to host other community events

Table 1 – Shellharbour LGA Residents feedback on Council's Pools

Location	Theme of Feedback
Albion Park	- Close to home, other community facilities and shops - Closed for 7 months a year - Lacking modern facilities - No leisure play areas - Located in an attractive setting, shaded areas - Centre is well maintained - Plenty of space - Could create a recreation hub also incorporating adjacent active users - Friendly staff - Canteen/kiosk on site
Oak Flats	- Roof over heated pool (25m) should be installed - Has heated facilities - Can swim in Winter - Has a variety of pools to choose from - Offers squad training, swimming lessons and aqua aerobics - Close to home - Nice layout - Quiet and not too busy - Lacking modern facilities - No leisure play areas - Too similar to other pools

Table 1 – Shellharbour LGA Residents feedback on Council's Pools

Location	Theme of Feedback
Beverley Whitfield	- Salt water - Close to home - Open all year - Access to shops and other facilities - Clean - More shading and seating needed - Free - Nice location - Tourism attraction - Well patrolled but only in Summer
General comments across all pools	- Crowded and not enough seating - Need an indoor pool in Shellharbour - have to travel to Kiama - Pools have poor accessibility - Need a hydrotherapy pool - Pools do not cater to all groups - Difficulty finding somewhere to swim in Winter - Difficulty in supervising children around pools - Age barriers in accessing the pool

As outlined within the engagement feedback, there were a number of drivers for swimming pool use, including:

- Proximity to home, price of entry, cleanliness and presence of Lifeguards/staff.
- Barriers to participating in aquatic activities included a lack of accessible facilities, high cost of participation, distance to home and perceived age limitations.
- Clean aquatic environments and surrounds was mentioned a number of times, highlighting the importance of ensuring that these areas are well-maintained to promote ongoing use.
- Existing pool facilities provide a limited aquatic experience for users, particularly with consideration to the limited range of pool types, lack of heated pools and no indoor facilities.

- There is strong community interest in additional heated pools, and to some degree, an indoor facility.
- The age of the existing facilities also limits user experience, particularly for those with mobility challenges and seeking interesting experiences for young children.
- The pools are generally well located within surrounding green spaces, however in some cases are not located close to other facilities such as kiosks or cafes. Beverley Whitfield Pool was highlighted as a pool that has good access to food and other services.
- Only one 25m pool is heated in the LGA, which some of the community find difficult to manage particularly in winter months.

4 The Shellharbour Community

4.1 Overview

Shellharbour City is bounded by Wollongong City to the north, the Tasman Sea to the east, the Municipality of Kiama to the south and Wingecarribee Shire to the west. Shellharbour City Council (SCC) provides and maintains four (4) outdoor pool facilities with swimming options provided during specified times and seasonal periods for both residents and visitors. These four facilities are situated in various geographic locations throughout the 147km² of the SCC Local Government Area (LGA), in the suburbs of Warilla (North East location), Oak Flats (Central location), Albion Park (Western location) and Shellharbour (South East location). The Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool (Shellharbour) site was chosen in 1894, initially constructed in 1895 and upgraded in 1993 for completion in 1994. Oak Flats Pool constructed in 1964 and opened in 1965, Warilla Pool constructed in 1975 and opened in 1976 and Albion Park Pool constructed in 1977 and opened in 1978. The Warilla, Oak Flats and Albion Park facilities are outdoor chlorinated 50m pools whilst the Beverley Whitfield 50m pool located on the foreshore of the Shellharbour village is an ocean pool. Council's three (3) chlorinated pools charge an entry fee, whilst Beverley Whitfield Pool is free to use and open year-round.

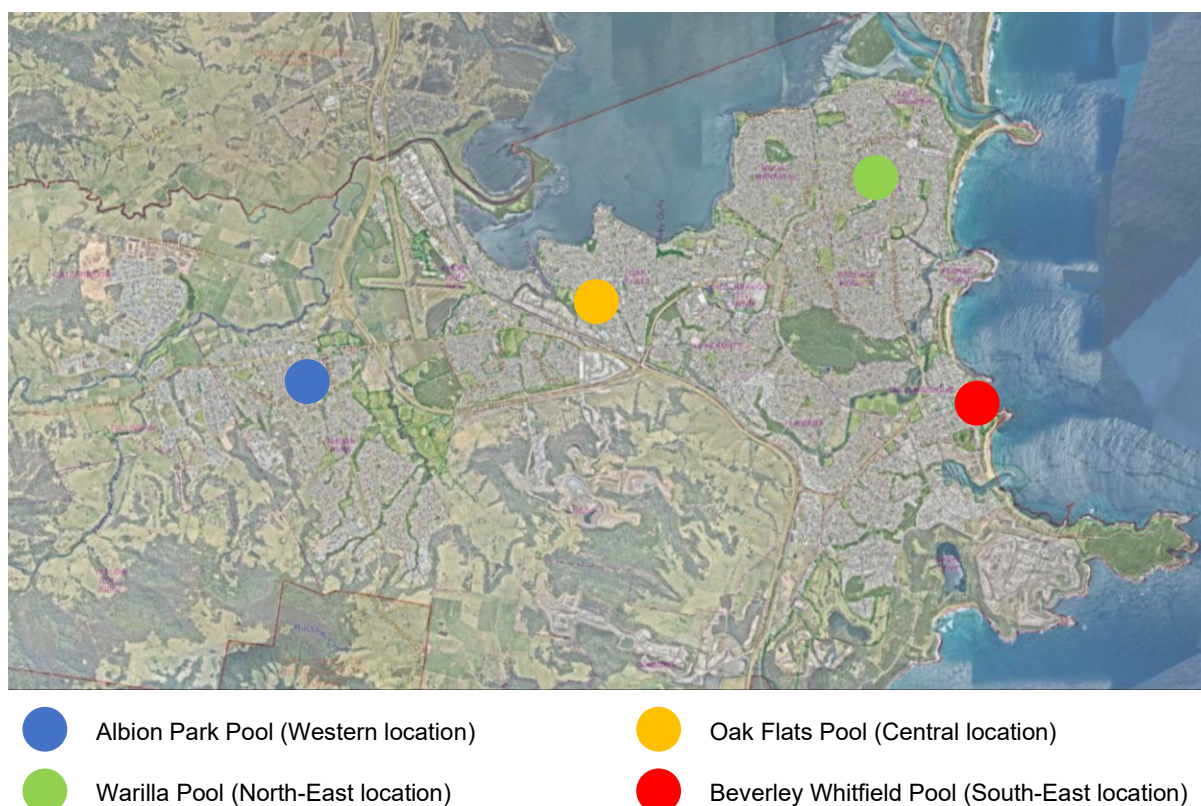


Figure 5 – Overview of current Council Pool Locations

Royal Life Saving Australia's report on The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia, outlines that while the life expectancy of a public swimming pool is 50 years, a small number of pools continue to be serviceable beyond this. Oak Flats Pool is an example of this, as it has been in operation now for over sixty (60) years. Across Australia, the vast majority of pools built during the 50's, 60's and 70's have reached, or are reaching, the end of their operational life.

This Aquatic Facilities Review seeks to initiate discussion with all stakeholders to assist with the decision-making process regarding the future direction and viability of Council's three (3) outdoor 50m chlorinated swimming pools.

4.2 Community Snapshot

There were 79,738 residents in the Shellharbour LGA identified in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2023, with the population forecast for this year (2025) being 84,277. The population for the Shellharbour LGA by 2046 is estimated at 100,809.

Calderwood, located in the city's west, will see the highest population growth with an increase of almost 400%. Other locations forecast to receive significant growth include Blackbutt, Shellharbour City Centre and Shell Cove. 91% percent of Shellharbour residents are Australian citizens, 16.1% being born overseas, 10% non-English speaking and 5% of residents are Indigenous Australians. The estimated Population Density of the City is equivalent to 540.8 persons per square kilometre.

Table 2 – LGA breakdown of Population, Households and Dwellings (2021)

	Forecast Year					
Summary	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046
<i>Population</i>	76,561	86,120	92,878	97,056	99,338	100,809
<i>Change in population (5yrs)</i>	---	9,559	6,758	4,177	2,282	1,470
<i>Average annual change</i>	---	2.38%	1.52%	0.88%	0.47%	0.29%
<i>Households</i>	28,501	31,374	33,816	35,795	37,168	38,046
<i>Average household size</i>	2.65	2.71	2.71	2.67	2.62	2.59
<i>Dwellings</i>	29,912	32,810	35,405	37,507	39,009	39,988
<i>Dwelling occupancy rate</i>	95.28	95.62	95.51	95.44	95.28	95.14

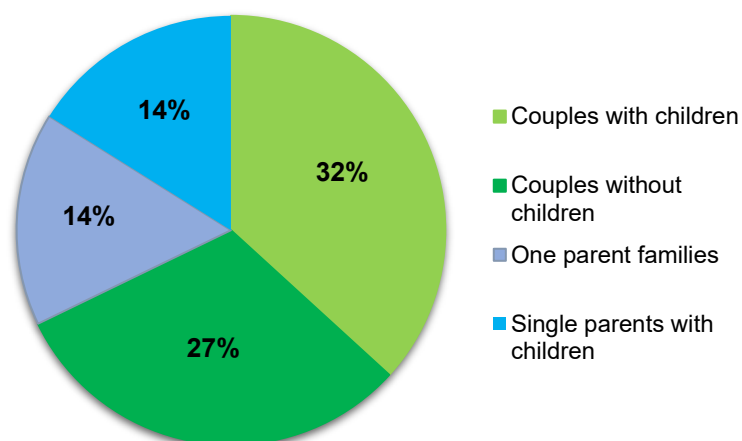


Figure 6 - Shellharbour LGA Breakdown of Family Structure (2021)

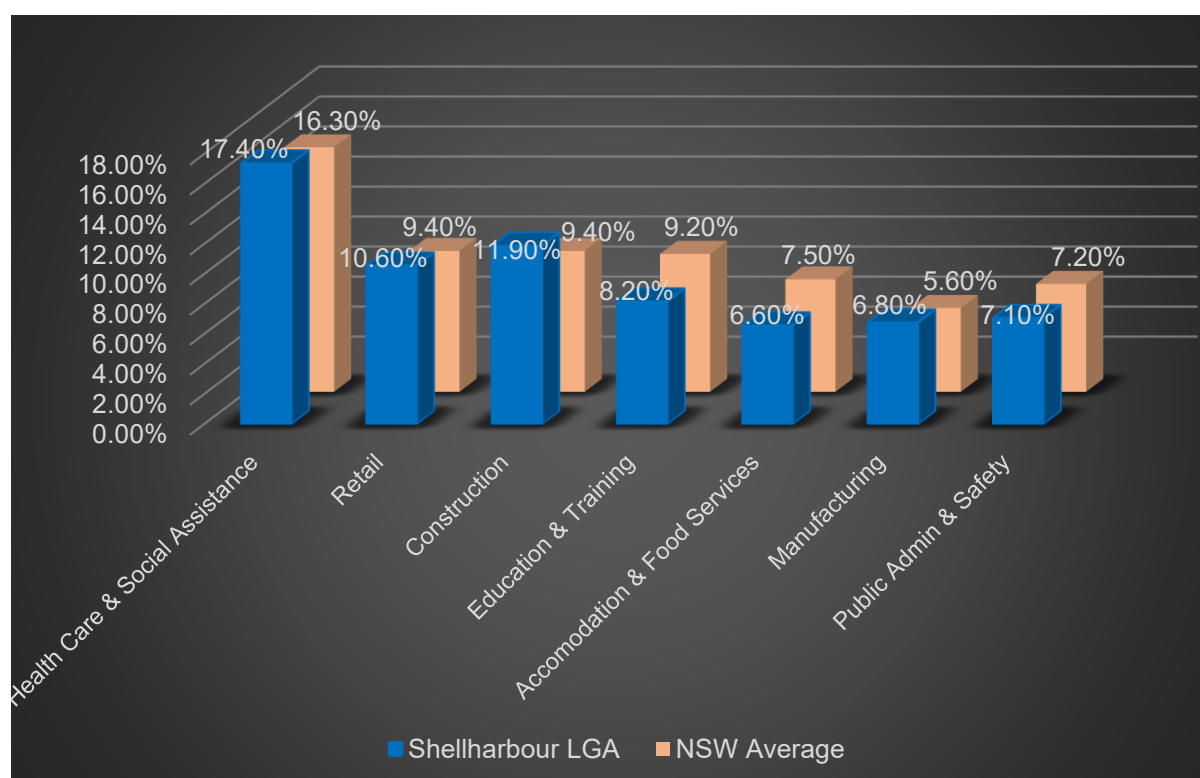


Figure 7 – Shellharbour LGA Breakdown of Top Industry Sectors Jobs (2021)

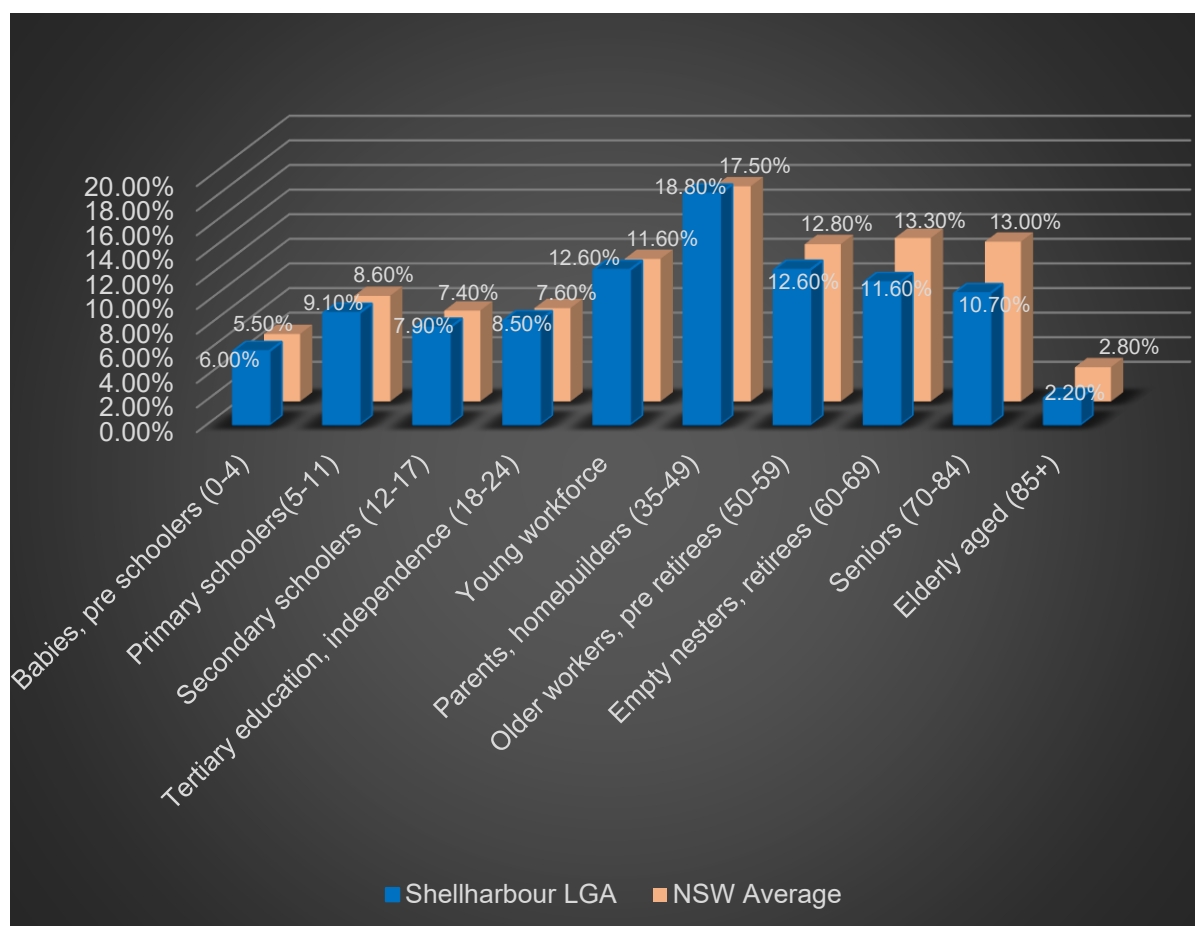


Figure 8 – Shellharbour LGA Breakdown of Age of Residents (2021)

In reviewing aquatic facilities, it is important to note the spatial differentiation in where population is forecast to grow the most (and the least). Between 2021 and 2041, population growth is forecast to be concentrated in the precincts of Calderwood/Rural Balance (160.7%), and Albion Park (+100.5%). Demand for facilities is therefore likely to increase most in these areas. The smallest population growth is forecast in precincts of Warilla (3.2%) and Albion Park Rail (+5.6%), which may indicate less need for increasing facilities provision. It is important to note that slower population growth is not the same as population decrease, meaning that these areas still require maintenance of their existing stock of facilities (ID Population Forecast 2025).

Growth in the population of children and youth can indicate a need for more recreational and leisure amenities at aquatic facilities, as well as a higher demand for learn-to-swim classes. Between 2021 and 2041, the largest growth in the population aged 0-17 is forecast to occur in the precincts of Calderwood/Rural Balance (+114.7%) and Albion Park (+74.1%). The population aged 0-17 is forecast to decrease the most in the precincts of Warilla (-19.4%) and Oak Flats (-10.1%) (ID Population Forecast 2025).

Meanwhile, the population aged 60 and above is forecast to grow the most between 2021 and 2041 in the precincts of Calderwood/Rural Balance (+426.5%) and Albion Park (+165.2%). The population aged 60 and above is forecast to decrease in Albion Park Rail (-7.1%), and slightly increase in Warilla (+31.3%) and Oak Flats (+33.0%) (ID Population Forecast 2025). An ageing population is likely to increase demand for heating in pools, as well as shade structures and better access for people with mobility restrictions.

Physical activity levels are differentiated across the LGA, with 81.5% of the population aged 15 and over in Warilla not meeting the 2014 physical activity guidelines in 2022, compared with 78% in Albion Park – Macquarie Pass, and 78.5% in Albion Park Rail/Shellharbour/Oak Flats. The LGA average is 78.9% (PHIDU 2022).

Access to low-cost recreational and fitness facilities such as public pools, especially within walking distance from home, is associated with improved physical health outcomes through both the activity of using the pool, as well as the active transport route to get to the pool (Davern et al. 2017). Car dependence, in contrast, has been found to produce adverse physical, mental, and social health outcomes (Davern et al. 2017).

Prevalence of disability and long-term health conditions in the catchment areas of aquatic facilities can have a bearing on the location of a facility (e.g. within walking distance of people's homes, or accessible via public transport), as well as requirements for the facilities themselves (e.g. flexible toilet and changing amenities, hoists, and ramps to enter pools). The precincts with the highest rates of people needing daily assistance due to a disability are Albion Park Rail (10.7%) and Warilla (9.0%). These are also the precincts with the highest rates of long-term health conditions, at 43.3% and 39.8%, respectively. Meanwhile, the Calderwood/Rural Balance precinct has the lowest rates of both needing assistance due to a disability (3.4%) and long-term health conditions (28.3%). The LGA average rate of people needing assistance due to a disability is 7.1%, and for long-term health conditions it is 36.3% (ABS Census 2021).

Furthermore, with a changing climate, extreme heat and heatwaves are becoming more frequent. Research shows that people who are more disadvantaged, including people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, those who are aged or elderly, and those on low incomes, are more vulnerable to the impacts of extreme heat (Australia Institute 2024).

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure cooling facilities such as public pools are accessible to such vulnerable populations.

A review of Shellharbour's Domestic Tourism Economy in the context of its public pools is also provided in Appendix A.

4.3 Council's Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Comparisons

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census (next one will be released after the 2026 Census results are processed). SEIFA 2021 is based on Census 2021 data, and consists of four indexes, each focusing on a different aspect of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Key demographic factors that influence the demand for swimming, leisure preferences and sports participation are age, gender, health status and disability, cultural background, income, employment and education.

Table 3 – LGA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage 2021

Local Government Area	Resident Population	Ranking in NSW of 129 councils	Ranking in Aust of 547 councils
Shellharbour	76,271	69	290
Kiama	23,074	117	513
Wollongong	214,564	91	364
Shoalhaven	108,531	65	279

Disadvantage Indicators – indicates unemployment, low incomes or education levels, single parent families, low skilled occupations & poor English proficiency.

An area may have a high score if there are few households with low incomes, people without qualifications or few people in low skilled occupations or a low score if there are many households with low income, or many people without qualifications and many people in low skilled occupations.

Table 4 – LGA Index of Education & Occupation 2021

Local Government Area	Resident Population	Ranking in NSW of 129 councils	Ranking in Aust of 547 councils
Shellharbour	76,271	41	214
Kiama	23,074	107	480
Wollongong	214,564	97	430
Shoalhaven	108,531	54	257

Education & Occupation Indicators – indicates relatively higher education and occupation status of people in the area in general.

An area may have a high score if there are many people with higher education qualifications or in highly skilled occupations or a low score if there are many people without qualifications, in low skilled occupations or many people unemployed.

Table 5 – LGA Index of Economic Resources 2021

Local Government Area	Resident Population	Ranking in NSW of 129 Councils	Ranking in Aust of 547 Councils
Shellharbour	76,271	100	426
Kiama	23,074	119	522
Wollongong	214,564	75	336
Shoalhaven	108,531	74	330

Economic Resource Indicators – indicates variables in access to economic resources related to income and housing.

An area may have a high score if there are many households with high income or many people who own their home or a low score if there are many households with low incomes or many households paying low rent.

At a more granular level, when considering the future of aquatic facilities in different locations within the LGA, it is important to compare levels of advantage and disadvantage across suburbs.

There is a broad divide in socioeconomic disadvantage across the LGA. The SEIFA indices of disadvantage for the Warilla and Albion Park Rail precincts are 902.0 and 930.7, respectively. Meanwhile, the indices for the Calderwood/Rural Balance and Shellharbour precincts are 1071.6 and 1046.8, respectively. The NSW benchmark is 1000 (ABS Census 2021).

Furthermore, low-income households make up 31.7% of households in the Warilla precinct, and 27.4% of households in the Albion Park Rail precinct. In the Calderwood/Rural Balance precinct, only 10.7% of households are considered low-income, and 15.8% of Albion Park precinct households earn low incomes (ABS Census 2021).

Access to social infrastructure, such as aquatic facilities, has implications for social equity, as more disadvantaged areas often experience lower provisions of recreational amenity and

services (Davern et al. 2017). It is also more important for people on low incomes and experiencing multiple disadvantages to have access to nearby, low-cost recreational and social infrastructure than others with a higher level of advantage and capacity to travel further and spend more for leisure, fitness, and social connection.

4.4 Shellharbour City Growth Areas

The Shellharbour Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) was adopted by Council on 18 November 2025 and guides the future of land use planning across the Shellharbour LGA for the next 20 years. Since the previously adopted LSPS in 2020, Council has supported new homes in Calderwood and Shell Cove, helped pave the way for the new Shellharbour Hospital, and introduced key strategies for net zero emissions, open space and active transport.

The LSPS includes Planning Priorities and Actions which Council will lead and aim to deliver before the next review. These actions focus on planning for housing, sustainability, infrastructure and local centres.

Centres across the City's existing urban areas are well serviced by utilities, public transport, walking and cycling, education, health and community infrastructure. Places like Warilla, Albion Park and Oak Flats are expected to be home to more medium density housing, with higher density living in Shellharbour City Centre.

Opportunities for new and revitalised housing in Warilla is likely to be popular due to its proximity to both Shellharbour City Centre and Port Kembla, the provision of services (e.g. schools and community facilities) and proximity to the water – both Lake Illawarra and Warilla Beach.

The LSPS is supported by the NSW Government's low and mid-rise housing reforms which aim to address housing affordability and supply by reintroducing medium-density housing close to local town centres and transport hubs, particularly Warilla, Albion Park and Shellharbour City Centre. The objective of the reforms is to fill the "missing middle" between detached homes and high-rise towers – enabling dual occupancies, terraces, townhouses, and low- to mid-rise flats within an 800 metre walk of services – thereby boosting housing diversity and choice. The reforms are intended to accelerate the rollout of up to 112,000 new homes across the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region by unlocking underutilised R1, R2, R3 and R4 zones, while retaining important development safeguards for parking, light access, and frontage. The policy promotes compact, context-sensitive growth that leverages existing infrastructure, supports affordability, and maintains community character.

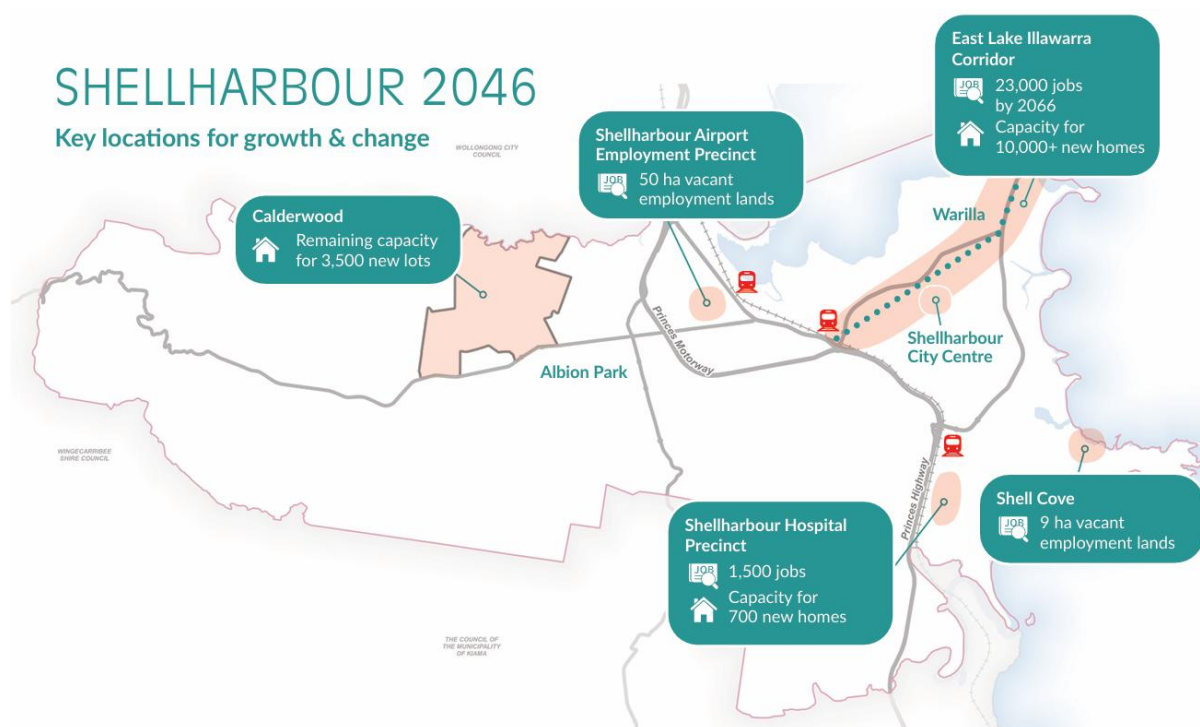


Figure 9 – Shellharbour 2046 Key Locations for Growth and Change (LSPS 2025)

4.5 Catchment Areas

A catchment area is the geographic area for which a facility attracts customers. The size and shape of a catchment area will depend on how accessible a facility is and how far it is from any alternative facilities. As a catchment population increases, so does the ability for it to support larger infrastructure and facilities with a greater range of amenity and programming options.

Table 7 presents the recommended level of investment and community need, depending on catchment size and scale of a proposed aquatic facility. For example, the inclusion of an indoor 50m pool should only be considered for Level 4 or 5 developments, with a large enough catchment population to support the additional operating costs of staffing, programmed and reactive maintenance and the financial responsibilities that are inherent with an increased facility footprint.

To provide additional information to councils when considering the type and size of a particular development, each level of development can also be equated to general operational costs, which are based on the leading benchmark information from the Aquatics & Recreation Victoria - Indoor Aquatic & Recreation Facility Development Guidelines below. Independent organisational assessments of facilities and services were conducted to monitor organisational performance and provide decision makers with comprehensive, unbiased and data driven analysis.

4.5.1 Travel Distance & Time

In relation to catchment population, councils need to be able to demonstrate that it would be able to draw on a sizable user zone to make an investment of this nature worthwhile. The final design, size and component mix for any project should be driven by Council's project feasibility study research and accompanying operational financial modelling to ensure the local catchment population's needs and future demands can be met satisfactorily.

This includes applying travel time/distance decay impacts to predicted catchment figures. The concept of travel time/distance decay is used in spatial interaction and accessibility analysis to represent the diminishing likelihood of visiting places with increasing travel impedance, which is mainly distance and travel time. For example, the proportion of site users typically declines as the distance from the aquatic site to the users' point of residence/work increases. This reflects people's willingness and ability to travel different times to different types of facilities. Nearly 6 million Australians drive more than ten (10) minutes to reach a public pool while 1.8 million Australians must drive more than twenty (20) minutes to reach a public pool as outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6– Australians by State with More Than 10 and 20-Minute Drives to a Public Pool

State / Territory	No. of Australians Who Have to Drive More Than 10 Mins To Access A Public Pool				No. of Australians Who Have to Drive More Than 20 Mins To Access A Public Pool			
	2021	Projected 2028	Projected 2030	Projected 2032	2021	Projected 2028	Projected 2030	Projected 2032
QLD	1,581,326	1,754,014	1,799,371	1,843,190	446,745	483,096	492,523	501,802
NSW	1,537,219	1,782,301	1,832,634	1,881,043	430,346	483,808	494,643	505,152
VIC	1,193,209	1,454,854	1,530,455	1,604,437	218,815	241,011	249,058	257,234
WA	654,240	774,358	797,739	820,393	186,755	210,656	215,207	219,933
NT	575,247	618,813	625,088	629,994	168,487	177,096	177,728	178,023
SA	290,389	317,070	321,258	324,534	114,575	124,012	125,422	126,536
TAS	71,112	85,736	87,477	89,080	52,084	62,525	63,577	64,536
ACT	51,453	59,984	62,960	65,750	952	2,434	2,933	3,414
National Total	5,981,112	6,874,403	7,084,595	7,286,437	1,632,833	1,798,472	1,835,046	1,870,744
Percent of Australians >10 mins drive from a public pool	24%	27%	28%	29%	7%	7%	7%	7%

Table 7 – Indoor Facility Development Guidelines (Aquatics & Recreation Victoria)

Level	Description	Catchment Population	Typical General Components
1	Rural	Under 10,000	*Shared competition and shallow water to reduced separate water areas *Dry/gym facilities as future development option *Usually linked to other community facilities to share management and operating
2	Local	10,000 - 40,000	*Limited program water combined with leisure water *Limited dry/gym facilities
3	District	40,000 - 70,000	*Ability to separate program and leisure water *Larger dry/gym facilities *Additional limited amenities
4	Major	70,000 - 100,000	*More extensive program and leisure water *Consideration of indoor 50m pool and complementary warm water pools *Increased gym and program space *Additional complementary amenities, food and beverage
5	Regional	100,000 - 150,000+	*Extensive and varied program leisure water and attractions *Inclusion of indoor 50m pool and separate warm water pools *Wellness/health club and extensive program room inclusions *Complementary services and amenities, crèche, food and beverage

Table 8 – Typical Aquatic Facility Components by Population within 20 minute Drive

Development Level			Typical Components																			
Population Catchment (within 20 minutes drive)	Level	Description	50m Lap Pool	25m Lap Pool	Leisure/Prog Pool	Splashpark/Slides	Warm Water Pool	Spa/Sauna/Steam	Dive Pool & Platforms	Marshalling Room	Grandstands	Broadcasting facilities	Plant Room(s)	Fitness Centre	Change Facilities	Reception/Cafe/Kiosk	Admin Office	Treatment Rooms	Program Room(s)	First Aid Room	Meeting Room	Creche
Over 1,000,000	9	International	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Over 500,000	8	National	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Over 100,000	7	State	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
70,000-100,000	6	Major	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
40,000-70,000	5	District	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
10,000-40,000	4	Local		Y	Y								Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
5,000-10,000	3	Rural		Y	Y								Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
2,500-5000	2	Remote		Y									Y		Y	Y	Y			Y		
800-2,500	1	Very remote		Y									Y		Y	Y	Y			Y		

(State of Australian Aquatic Facilities 2025 – Royal Life Saving)

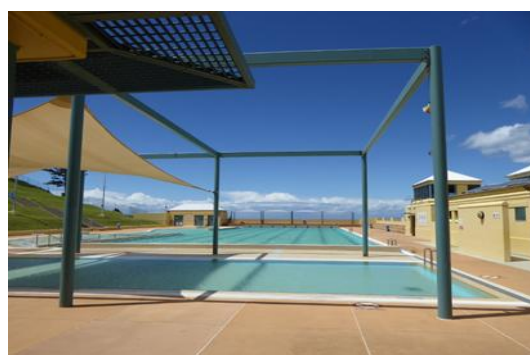
4.5.2 Aquatic Options Available for Residents

When a council pool is seasonal in its service to the community, the challenge for councils become: what do their customer's feel is an appropriate travel distance/drive time when seeking an aquatic centre that operates all year-round? Whilst Shellharbour City Council (SCC) residents have Oak Flats Pool which is operational 12 months a year, there are also numerous swimming, recreation and Learn to Swim options available in the neighbouring Kiama and Wollongong LGA's which provide more modern, indoor and heated facilities. There is also a definitive spatial overlay from these neighbouring LGA's (Wollongong & Kiama) with their aquatic centres being located within the catchment areas of all four (4) Shellharbour City Council pools which may adversely impact on the attendance figures at all centres.

It is commonly considered that a 15–20-minute drive is an acceptable period of time for a person to travel to a pool. Whilst several state and local governments have adopted the urban planning framework of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept (Victorian Government's Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) which focuses on creating liveable, accessible communities where residents can meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute return walk, it would not be possible or feasible to have a public pool located within a 20-minute walk of every Australian. Therefore, the following data has been provided focusing on drive-time (maximum of 20 minutes) for a person to attend a pool.



Kiama Leisure Centre heated indoor 25m pool



Port Kembla Ocean pool



McKeon's Swim School heated indoor 25m pool



Shellharbour Swim Academy heated indoor 25m pool

Figure 10 – Examples of Competing Aquatic Facilities

The idea that an aquatic facility being located within a 20-minute car ride means such facilities are accessible to all assumes that all people have the capacity, willingness, and time to drive a private car, or otherwise access other suburbs via road transport. Across the LGA, 5% of households do not own a car. In the Warilla and Albion Park Rail precincts, 8.2% and 6.3% of households do not have a car, respectively. In contrast, only 0.8% and 2.3% of households in the respective precincts of Calderwood and Albion Park/Rural Balance do not have a car (ABS Census 2021).

Although existing public pools are all close to bus stops on the Shellharbour route, if someone living within walking distance of the current Warilla Pool were to catch a bus to the Oak Flats swimming pool, it would require approximately 20 minutes' travel time each way on the bus, which is a likely deterrent for many people. Meanwhile, populations of suburbs which have high rates of car ownership have more capacity to travel by car to a public pool in another suburb, with more convenience and reduced travel time.

4.5.3 Proximity to Privately Owned Pools in the Shellharbour LGA

Table 9 outlines the Kiama and Wollongong LGA aquatic options with drive-times of 20 minutes or less and the associated travel distances including privately owned pools within the Shellharbour LGA that provide Learn to Swim classes. There are seven (7) privately owned pools within the LGA that provide Learn to Swim options less than a sixteen (16) minute drive from all four (4) of Council's pools. Five (5) of these privately owned pools are also indoor heated pools.

Table 9 – Privately Owned Pools within the Shellharbour LGA

SCC Pool	Travel Time (Mins)	Distance (Kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Learn To Swim
Shellharbour Swim Academy							
Warilla	3	1.5	Barrack Heights	Indoor heated 25m pool	Private owner	Private owner	Yes
Beverley	7	3.6					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	11	6.2					
Albion Pk	16	13.1					

Table 9 – Privately Owned Pools within the Shellharbour LGA

SCC Pool	Travel Time (Mins)	Distance (Kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Learn To Swim
Shellharbour Swim Academy							
Warilla	15	9.7	Albion Park	Indoor heated 25m pool	Private owner	Private owner	Yes
Beverley	15	11.6					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	12	7.2					
Albion Pk	1	0.6					
Leonie's Swim for Life							
Warilla	3	1.4	Barrack Heights	Indoor heated 15m pool	Private owner	Private owner	Yes
Beverley	7	3.5					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	11	6.1					
Albion Pk	16	13.0					
Zoe's Private Pool Lessons							
Warilla	3	1.3	Warilla	Outdoor heated backyard pool	Private owner	Private owner	Yes
Beverley	9	4.3					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	10	6.0					
Albion Pk	15	10.6					
Barb's Bubbly Swim School							
Warilla	7	4.2	Blackbutt	Outdoor backyard pool	Private owner	Private owner	Yes
Beverley	9	4.3					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	6	3.4					
Albion Pk	10	7.4					

Table 9 – Privately Owned Pools within the Shellharbour LGA

SCC Pool	Travel Time (Mins)	Distance (Kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Learn To Swim
Starfish Indoor Aquatics							
Warilla	12	6.8	Albion Park	Indoor heated pool	Private Owner	Private Owner	Yes
Beverley	12	8.5					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	9	3.7					
Albion Pk	7	3.9					
Sue's Swim Stars							
Warilla	14	9.1	Albion Park	Indoor heated pool	Private Owner	Private Owner	Yes
Beverley	16	12.2					
Whitfield							
Oak Flats	11	6.1					
Albion Pk	3	2.3					

4.5.4 Facilities within the Kiama LGA

The Kiama Municipality offers five (5) swimming locations which also includes a Learn to Swim option less than a 20-minute drive from all of Shellharbour City Council's four (4) pools. These facilities include a heated indoor 25m pool, one (1) outdoor 18m chlorinated pool, two (2) ocean pools and the various water spaces and activity areas within the Jamberoo Action Park.

Table 10 – Kiama LGA Pools Within a Twenty (20) Minute Drive of Shellharbour Pools

SCC Pool	Travel Time (min)	Distance (kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Gym	Sports courts & other services	Learn To Swim
Kiama Leisure Centre									
Warilla	17	16.5	Kiama	Indoor 25m pool & Leisure Centre	Council	Council	Yes	Indoor, Outdoor courts, Spa, Sauna, Creche	Yes
Beverley	15	14.1							
Whitfield									
Oak Flats	16	15.6							
Albion Pk	17	18.9							
Kiama Continental Ocean Pool (Black Beach Reserve)									
Warilla	17	16.6	Kiama	Ocean pool	Council	Council	No	No	No
Beverley	14	14.2							
Whitfield									
Oak Flats	15	15.7							
Albion Pk	16	19.0							
Kiama Rock Pool (Blowhole Pt)									
Warilla	20	17.7	Kiama	Ocean Pool	Council	Council	No	No	No
Beverley	18	15.3							
Whitfield									
Oak Flats	18	16.8							
Albion Pk	20	20.1							
Jamberoo Pool									
Beverley	18	16.4	Jamberoo	Outdoor 18m pool	Council	Council	No	No	No
Whitfield									
Oak Flats	19	14.5							
Albion Pk	13	10.2							



Table 10 – Kiama LGA Pools Within a Twenty (20) Minute Drive of Shellharbour Pools

SCC Pool	Travel Time (min)	Distance (kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Gym	Sports courts & other services	Learn To Swim
Jamberoo Action Park									
Albion Pk	9	6.3	Jamberoo	Outdoor Action Park	Private Owner	Private Owner	No	Multiple aquatic spaces	No

4.5.5 Facilities within the Wollongong LGA

Wollongong City offers seven (7) swimming locations including six (6) Learn to Swim options within a 20-minute drive from Shellharbour City Council's four (4) pools. These Wollongong LGA facilities include a heated indoor 25m pool, three (3) outdoor 50m heated chlorinated pools and two (2) privately owned heated indoor facilities.

Table 11 – Wollongong LGA pools within a 20 Minute Drive of Shellharbour Pools

SCC Pool	Travel Time (min)	Distance (kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Gym	Sports courts & other services	Learn To Swim
Berkeley Pool									
Warilla	15	12.8	Berkeley	Outdoor 50m pool	Council	Council	No	No	Yes
Albion Pk	14	15.8		Toddler's pool					
Dapto Pool									
Albion Pk	14	10.5	Dapto	Heated outdoor 50m pool Toddler's pool	Council	Council	No	No	Yes

Table 11 – Wollongong LGA pools within a 20 Minute Drive of Shellharbour Pools

SCC Pool	Travel Time (min)	Distance (kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Gym	Sports courts & other services	Learn To Swim
Western Suburbs Pool									
Warilla	18	14.8	Unanderra	Heated outdoor 50m pool	Council	Council	No	No	Yes
Albion Pk	15	17.6		25m pool					
McKeon's Swim School									
Oak Flats	20	22.5	Unanderra	Heated indoor 5 lane 25m pool	Private Owner	Private Owner	No	No	Yes
Albion Pk	14	16.6		12m program pool					
Port Kembla Ocean Pool									
Warilla	14	10.4	Port Kembla	Outdoor 50m pool	Council	Council	No	No	No
PK Swim School									
Oak Flats	16	11.9	Dapto	Heated indoor 10m pool	Private Owner	Private Owner	No	No	Yes
Albion Pk	17	11.6							

Table 11 – Wollongong LGA pools within a 20 Minute Drive of Shellharbour Pools

SCC Pool	Travel Time (min)	Distance (kms)	Suburb	Facility Type	Land Owner	Managed By	Gym	Sports courts & other services	Learn To Swim
Northern Stars Swim School Dapto									
Warilla	20	21.3	Avondale	Heated indoor 20m pool	Private Owner	Private Owner	No	No	Yes
Beverley	18	18.9							
Whitfield									
Oak Flats	15	10.9							
Albion Pk	10	8.7							

In addition to the currently available aquatic facilities outlined in Table 11 above, Wollongong City Council has also identified a West Dapto Leisure and Community Recreation Centre to support development at West Dapto and Wongawilli in the southwestern area of the Wollongong LGA. The planning for this proposed facility is still in its early stages and it is unclear to what scale this facility will be developed, only that it will likely have the capacity to support the growing West-Lake Illawarra area, including parts of Calderwood and Tullimbar. The West Dapto Development Contributions Plan 2025 identifies a future facility to be delivered by 2041.

4.6 Number of Outdoor Heated 50m pools within LGAs

The Royal Life Saving National Aquatic Infrastructure database shows there are approximately 800 (Olympic sized) 50 metre pools in Australia which equates nationally, to one 50-metre pool per 32,112 population. In comparison the United Kingdom has only 19 Olympic sized 50 metre pools, equating to one 50-metre pool per 3,543,684 population.

The current National benchmarks for aquatic facility provisioning are:

Capital Cities: 1 aquatic facility per 19,353 population (facility to population ratios)

Regional Cities: 1 aquatic facility per 12,237 population

National Average (including regional): 1 aquatic facility per 12,826 population

Council currently provides three (3) outdoor chlorinated 50m pools. Table 12 provides a comparison to other LGA populations and total area (km²) and it can be seen that when compared to other adjoining areas, Shellharbour could be viewed as having an oversupply of aquatic infrastructure or alternately that possibly other LGA's have an undersupply.

Table 12 – Number of Council Outdoor Chlorinated 50m Pools in Other LGAs

Council	No. of outdoor chlorinated 50m pools	LGA Population (approx.)	Population per chlorinated pool	Total area of LGA (km ²)	Area per chlorinated pool
Shellharbour	3	79,738	26,579	155	51.7
Kiama	0	23,002	N/A	258	N/A
Wollongong	4*	219,141	54,785	714	178.5
Shoalhaven	4	109,895	27,474	4,561	1,140.3
Sutherland	3	253,029	84,343	370	123.3
Eurobodalla	0	40,912	N/A	3,248	N/A
Campbelltown	2	184,784	92,392	312	156.0

* excludes the future West Dapto Leisure and Community Recreation Centre

Previous research has shown that when it comes to public pool planning processes, this can often be influenced or guided by vocal (but minority) stakeholder interests which can then result in facilities being developed that are not fit for purpose for the community capacity or do not support predominant recreational use. This often results in 50m pools being provided in communities without a sufficient business case for this type of pool, with inappropriate pool water depths for recreational use, favouring infrastructure suitable for sanctioned swimming competitions over community aquatic recreation.

Investment should ensure that aquatic facilities align with actual community demand (consultation), avoiding over catering or investing in aspirational infrastructure that does not match community needs. Facility planning should prioritise multi-purpose, flexible use designs, ensuring infrastructure is adaptable to changing community needs over time. Design should consider local climatic conditions, ensuring that indoor and outdoor facilities are appropriately planned for year round accessibility but with a focus on environmentally responsible and sustainable design principles.

5 Council's Aquatic Facilities

5.1 Warilla Pool – Site Characteristics and Surrounds

Warilla Pool is a seasonal pool situated in the eastern side of the Shellharbour LGA and located at Lot 11 DP 1125335 within the 5.4-hectare Shellharbour War Memorial Park (SWMP) site otherwise known as Nos. 55, 57, 59 & 61 Benaud Crescent, Warilla. Bensons Creek is located within the SWMP site, running north-east along the eastern side of the site. Warilla Pool has residential housing to the North, West and South of its location with Shellharbour Road and numerous businesses positioned to the East. The overall SWMP footprint contains a carpark, basketball court and a dog agility park at the northern end with a Community Centre located at the southern end.



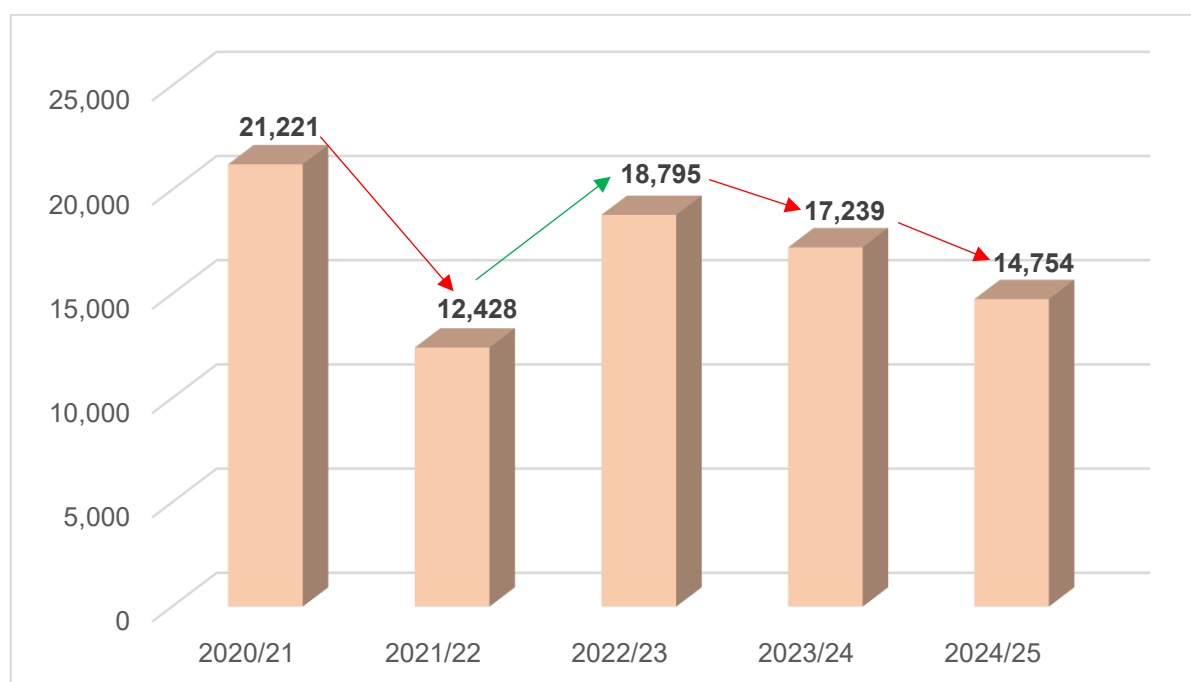
Figure 11 – Overview of Warilla Pool Site

Key site facilities include:

- Outdoor 50 metre, 7 lane pool
- Outdoor 20 metre toddler's pool
- Male and female changeroom
- Staff room amenities
- Plant room and storage area building
- Large, grassed area
- Carpark Area

As Warilla Pool is seasonal and only open to the public for a five (5) month window, pool attendances can be very dependent on the weather conditions and people's summer holiday location choices over this five (5) month period.

Figure 12 shows attendances at Warilla Pool from the 2020/21 season to the 2024/25 season. Post Covid, Warilla Pools' activity has continued to trend on a downward trajectory for the last three (3) years, with the highest attendance for the pool being the 2020/21 season. There was a 41.4% decrease from the 2020/21 season to 2021/22 but then a 51.2% increase between the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons. Current data identified an 8.2% decrease in attendance between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons and a further 16.8% decrease between the most recent 2023/24 and 2024/25 seasons.



2021/22 total is only based on 4 months data (March 2022 figures unavailable)

Figure 12 – Warilla Pool Seasonal Attendances (2020 - 2025)

Pool usage data at Warilla Pool for seasons 2023/24 and 2024/25 indicates that 87% and 86% respectively attended the pool from 9am onwards. Over the past 5 years, an average of 42% of the annual visitations occur over the December and January summer period, and a further

27% occur through February where Warilla hosted six (6) school swimming carnivals for schools both within the Shellharbour LGA and adjoining LGAs.

Table 13 – SWOT Analysis – Warilla Pool

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Current location provides an aquatic option for the community and Council on NE side of LGA - Highly valued by Centre users and the local community - Large grassed areas to accommodate carnivals and potential amenity features - Excellent accessibility to Centre for both foot and vehicular traffic - Hosted six (6) school swimming carnivals during the 2024/25 season	- Warilla has the lowest attendances in the LGA for its chlorinated pools - Centre has high subsidy per visit of \$22.45 - Centre opened in 1976 (48 years old) - Facilities and overall Centre presentation is outdated and requires modernising - No hot water shower facilities - Swimming options available at nearby Lake Illawarra, Warilla, Warilla Barrack Point & Little Lake beaches - Four (4) swimming options in the Wollongong LGA within twenty (20) minute drive of Warilla Pool - Three (3) in the Kiama LGA within twenty (20) minute drive of Warilla Pool - Seven (7) LTS options at privately owned pools within a fifteen (15) minute drive of Warilla Pool - Only open for five (5) months a year - Fifty (50) metre pool is not heated - Only 5km drive to Oak Flats' 2 heated pools - No kiosk for customer food options and revenue stream from sales - Operational deficit of \$331,257.96 for the 2024/25 season
Opportunities	Threats
- Investment in modernising the overall facility to meet industry standards and customer expectations - Developing a relationship with local businesses and sporting clubs to increase patronage - Developing a recreational link with adjoining activity at basketball court, passing foot traffic and proximity to business and residential areas - Potential for expansion and installation of shade structures, fitness equipment, splash pad within current footprint - Seek funding for facility improvements and sustainability efficiency to reduce the operational costs and increase attendance	- Financial constraints for the budgeting of recommended works from Asset Condition Report being \$4.56 million - Continued increase in \$value of recommended works required if not progressed - Potential for exposure to litigation/reputation harm if any incidents occur from not addressing ageing and non-compliant infrastructure - Community backlash with decommissioning (closure) of a pool in a low socio-economic area and a pool that has been in operation for 48 years - Heavily flood prone lot impacts facility and limits expansion potential - Attendances for 2024/25 season were the lowest over the last three (3) seasons and over this period attendances continue to decline - 86% of attendance from 2024/25 season uses pool from 9am onwards

5.2 Albion Park Pool – Site Characteristics and Surrounds

Albion Park Pool is a seasonal pool situated in the west of the LGA and is located at Lot 11 DP 743025 otherwise known as No.8 Russell Street, Albion Park. The pool location is also acknowledged within the greater public space footprint of 8A, 8B, 8C and 8D Russell Street which encompasses the following public facilities - Albion Park Community Centre, Albion Park Library, former Tongarra Museum, Di Gorman Oval for Soccer, Con O’Keefe Oval for AFL and cricket, Albion Park Pioneer Cemetery and Melaleuca Park. These facilities form part of the planned Con O’Keefe and Russell Street Precinct Master Plan.

Albion Park Pool has residential housing adjoining the public space areas to the North, West and South of its location with Russell Street and numerous businesses located to the East. There is also a car park and skate park located on the southern side of the pool.



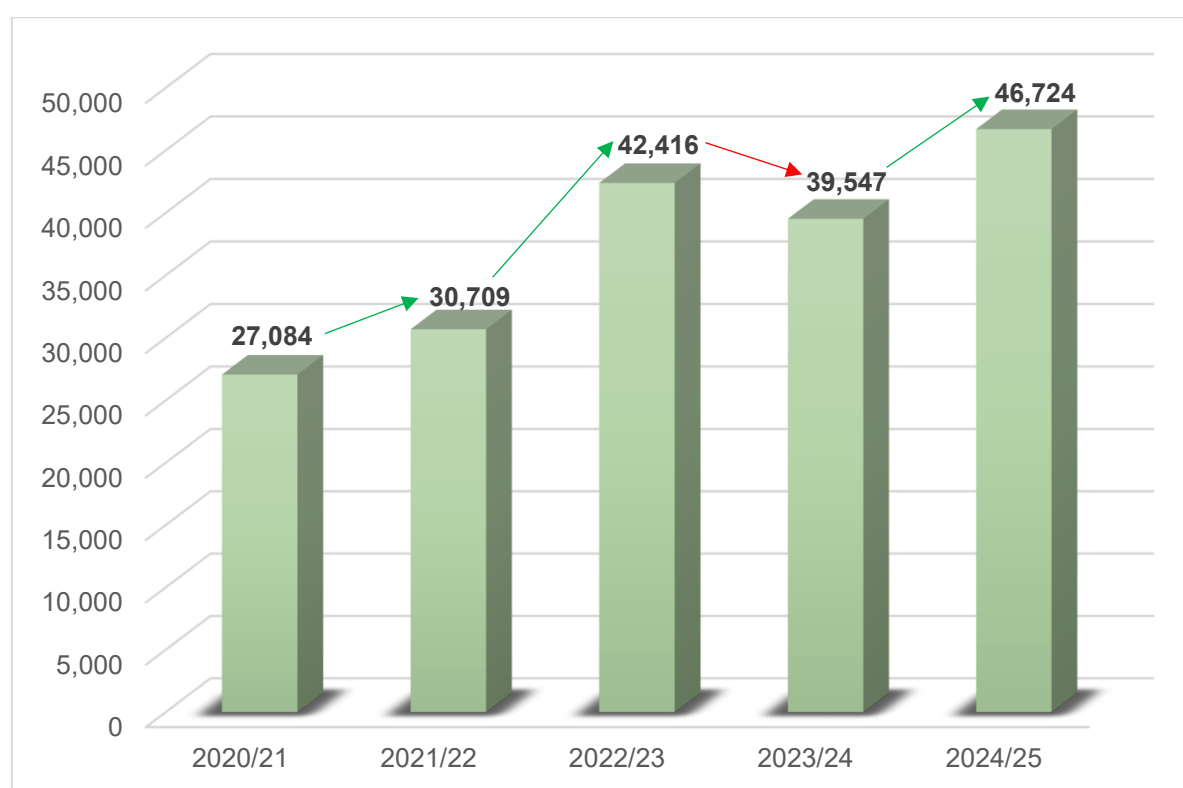
Figure 13 – Overview of Albion Park Pool Site

Key site facilities include:

- Solar heated outdoor 50 metre, 8 lane pool
- Outdoor 20 metre toddler’s pool
- Splash Park
- Swim Club Room
- Seven (7) Shade Shelters
- Disability Hoist for 50m Pool
- Kiosk
- Male, female and disabled changeroom
- Staff room amenities
- Plant room and storage area building
- Car Park Area
- Two (2) fitness stations

The Albion Park Swimming Club is associated with the Albion Park Pool and utilise the facility for Friday night point-score under a week-to-week lane hire booking.

Figure 14 shows attendances at Albion Park Pool from the 2020/21 season to the 2024/25 season. Post Covid, Albion Park continues to draw strong attendance numbers from November to March each year. Whilst there was a 9.1% decrease in attendance between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons, there was a 13.3% increase between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons and a 38.1% increase between the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons. There was a significant 15.3% increase in attendance from the 2023/24 to 2024/25 season with the 2024/25 Summer attendance being the highest figure recorded over the last 5 years.



2020/21 total is only based on 3 months data (Nov & Dec 2020 figures unavailable)

Figure 14 – Albion Park Pool Attendances (2020 - 2025)

As Albion Park Pool is seasonal and only open to the public for a five (5) month window, pool attendances can be very dependent on the weather conditions and customer's summer holiday location choices over this five (5) month period. Albion Park's average monthly attendance for this period is quite strong and despite only limited swimming club activity still attracts healthy attendance numbers, likely buoyed by facilities such as the splash-pad.

Table 14 – SWOT Analysis – Albion Park Pool

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Current location provides an important strategic aquatic option for residents on the western side of the LGA in growth areas such as Tullimbar and Calderwood - Highly valued by Centre users and local community - Interactive splash park, solar heating, BBQ, seating and shade structures have been installed over the last 4 years - Large public space area and Council infrastructure adjoins the pool as part of the Con O'Keefe Recreation Precinct Master Plan - Continued healthy attendances shows usage by local community - Only pool with a kiosk for customer food options and revenue stream from sales - Hosted thirteen (13) school swimming carnivals over the 2024/25 season - 2024/25 attendance was the highest in 5 years with 4 out of the last 5 years attendances increasing	- Centre opened in 1978 (46 years old) - Facilities and overall Centre presentation is outdated and requires modernising - Six (6) swimming options in the Wollongong LGA within a 20-minute drive of Albion Park Pool - Five (5) swimming options in the Kiama LGA within a 20-minute drive of Albion Park Pool - Seven (7) LTS options at privately owned pools within a sixteen (16) minute drive of Albion Park Pool - Only open for five (5) months a year - Proximity (6.9kms) to Oak Flats Pool which is open 12 months a year and has heated 50m and 25m pool options - Operational deficit of \$332,584.62 for the 2024/25 season
Opportunities	Threats
- Investment in modernising the overall facility to meet industry standards and customer expectations - Develop a recreational link to the clubs that use the adjoining soccer/cricket/AFL fields - Review viability of the current swimming season duration based on activity demand data - Review viability of current Centre opening times based on activity demand data - Accessibility to Albion Park business/shopping precinct - Seek funding for facility improvements and sustainability efficiency to reduce the operational costs - Adjoining land on western side of current footprint	- Financial constraints budgeting for recommended works from Asset Condition Report being \$5.06 million - Continued increase in \$value of recommended works required if not progressed - Potential for exposure to litigation/reputation harm if any incidents occur from not addressing ageing and non-compliant infrastructure

5.3 Oak Flats Pool – Site Characteristics and Surrounds

Oak Flats Pool is situated centrally within the LGA and located at Lot 1 DP 224750 otherwise known as No. 15 Hope Street, Oak Flats. The pool location is also acknowledged within the broader public space footprint of Moore Street & 94 Kingston Street, Oak Flats. On the southern side of Kingston Street, the public space area includes four (4) tennis courts, a small dog agility/exercise park with one (1) sealed and one (1) unsealed parking bay. On the eastern side of the pool, the public space area includes two (2) picnic shelters and a small children's playground. To the west is cricket and soccer playing fields, while there is residential housing to the north of the site.



Figure 15 – Overview of Oak Flats Pool Site

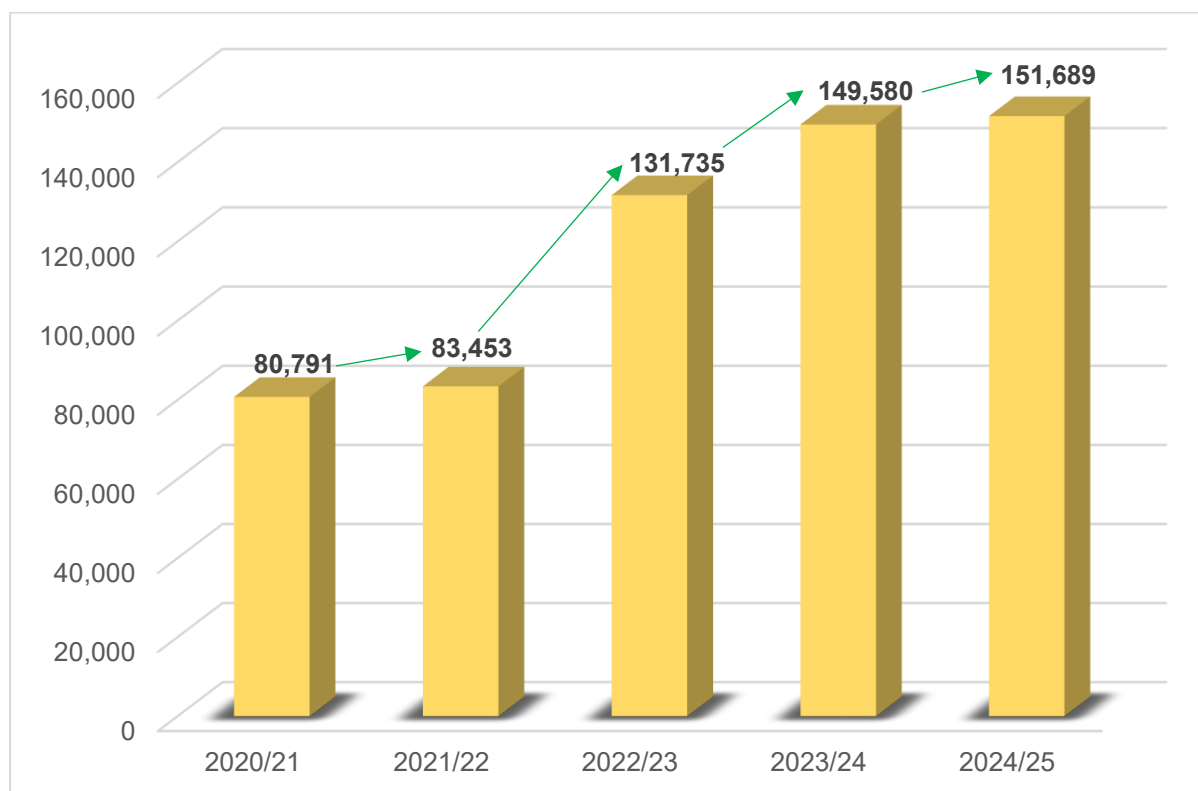
Key site facilities include:

- Heated outdoor 50 metre, 7 lane pool
- Heated outdoor 25 metre, 6 lane pool
- Outdoor 18m toddler's pool
- Swim Club Room
- Four (4) Shade Shelters
- Disability Hoist and mobile stairs for 25m Pool
- BBQ with shade structure
- Male, female and disabled changeroom
- Staff room amenities
- Two (2) separate plant rooms
- Storage area building
- Learn to Swim Office
- Carpark Area

The Oak Flats Swimming Club is associated with the Oak Flats Pool and utilise the facility 5 days per week (9-10 months of the year) for training, development and Friday night point-score under a licence agreement with Council. Swimming Club activity and Council's own Health and Fitness Programs (learn to swim, squads and aqua aerobics) help to drive attendances at this facility.

Figure 16 shows attendances at Oak Flats Pool from the 2020/21 season to the 2024/25 season. Following COVID, Oak Flats has experienced four (3) years of consecutive growth in attendance. Notably, a 63% increase in 2022/23, 13.5% increase in 2023/24 and a slight 1.4% increase in 2024/25.

It should be noted that in 2021, for the period from July until October, Oak Flats Pool was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns and the 2020/21 year was also hampered by capacity restrictions also due to COVID-19 restrictions.



2024/25 total is missing 25 days data for April, May & June

Figure 16 – Oak Flats Pool Attendances (2020 - 2025)

Table 15 – SWOT Analysis – Oak Flats Pool

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Highest Summer attendances (Nov-Mar) of the 3 chlorinated pools - Only chlorinated pool that is open for 12 months - Only Centre in the LGA with a heated 25m pool - Highly valued by Centre users and local community - Has heated outdoor 50m & 25m pools - Has an established Swim Club - Has an established Learn to Swim school - Has established Aqua Aerobics classes - Central location within the LGA - Close proximity to Central Ave and accompanying businesses - Hosted fifteen (15) school swimming carnivals for the 2024/25 season - 2024/25 attendance was the highest in five (5) years with continual increases each year over this period	- Oldest of Council's three (3) chlorinated pools, constructed 1964 and opened 1965 (60 years old) - No indoor pool option - Three (3) swimming options in the Wollongong LGA within a 20-minute drive of Oak Flats Pool - Four (4) swimming options in the Kiama LGA within a 20-minute drive of Oak Flats Pool - Seven (7) LTS options at privately owned pools within a twelve (12) minute drive of Oak Flats Pool - Facilities and overall Centre presentation is outdated and requires modernising - No kiosk for customer food options and revenue stream from sales - Staff, LG's & Program teams operate out of demountable rooms - Storage areas are limited for space - Operational deficit of \$819,118.93 for the 2024/25 season
Opportunities	Threats
- Investment in modernising the overall facility to meet industry standards and customer expectations - Developing a recreational precinct to link the adjoining tennis courts, public space areas and nearby businesses - Seek funding for facility improvements and sustainability efficiency to reduce the operational costs - Review viability of current Centre opening times based on activity demand data	- Financial constraints budgeting for recommended works from Asset Condition Report (\$6.63 million) - Continued increase in \$value of recommended works required if not progressed - Potential for exposure to litigation/reputation harm if any incidents occur from not addressing ageing and non-compliant infrastructure

5.4 Beverley Whitfield Pool – Site characteristics and surrounds

Beverley Whitfield Pool is an ocean pool situated in the east of the LGA and is located on the rock platform/foreshore area at Hockey Esplanade Shellharbour with the pool footprint acknowledged as being situated on Crown Land. Beverley Whitfield Pool is set within a broader public space area that has an adjoining amenities block which includes public toilets, showers, a Lifeguard and first aid room, local businesses along Hockey Esplanade and Addison Street as well as a caravan holiday park located south of the pool.

Since 1894, the Beverley Whitfield Pool has been an important visitor attraction for Shellharbour. It is historically and socially significant for generations of swimmers, school children, residents and visitors including holidaymakers and campers and has been recognised as local heritage item under the Shellharbour LEP2013 (Item I126). As explained in the OEH statement of significance: “Beverley Whitfield Pool has high historic, social and aesthetic significance, as the only extant example of a 19th century ocean bath in the Shellharbour area, and the only NSW ocean bath named in honour of an Olympic and Commonwealth swimmer, Beverley Whitfield. Whilst the place has been modified and upgraded, it continues to demonstrate these values”.

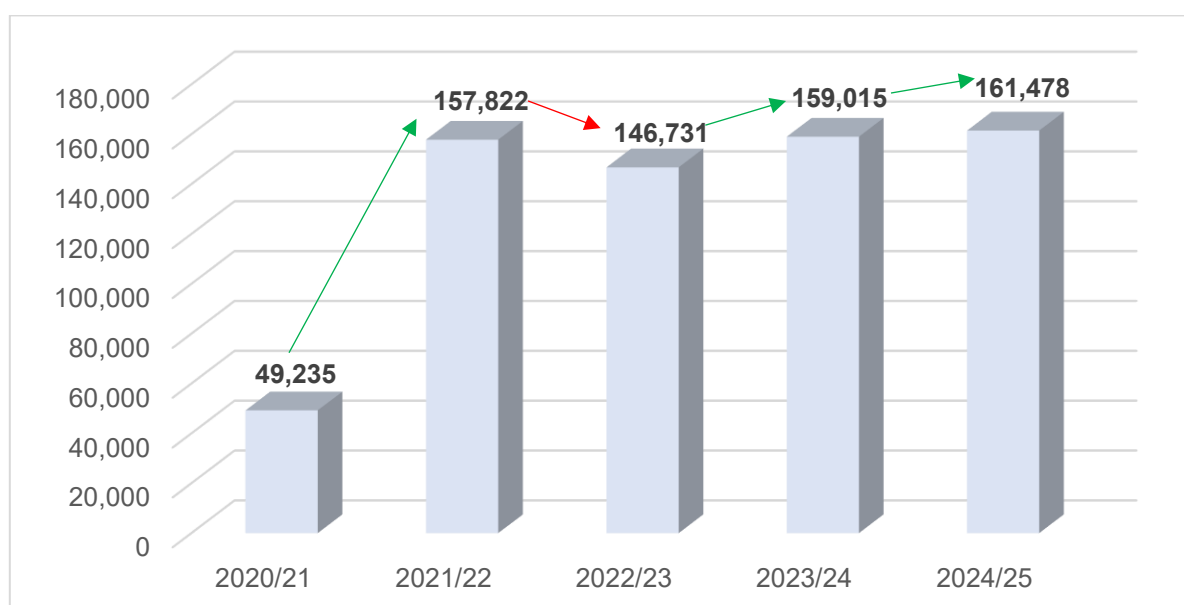


Figure 17 – Overview of Beverley Whitfield Pool Site

Key site facilities include:

- 50 metre, 7 lane pool
- 9 metre toddler's pool
- Shade shelter over toddler's pool
- Public toilets & change room amenities
- Shellharbour City Council Lifeguard patrol and first aid rooms
- Plant room
- Accessible ramp and wheelchair

Beverley Whitfield Pool is the most attended pool in Shellharbour's LGA. There are a number of factors that influence its popularity, including that it is free to use and open year-round. Users also often cite their preference for natural salt water over chemically treated chlorinated water. Figure 18 shows the average yearly attendance of over 150,000 people per year for the last 4 years.



2020/21 data is heavily impacted by COVID lockdowns and also represents a period where attendance numbers were not captured in the winter months

2024/25 data is missing 55 days data for July, April, May & June due to counter technical issues

Figure 18 – Beverley Whitfield Pool Attendances (2021 - 2025)

N.B. Prior to the 2021/22 season visitation at Beverley Whitfield Pool was estimated by lifeguards during patrol operations during patrol periods only. From the start of the 2021/22 year, Council installed people counters at the two entrances to the pool deck. This data is relied upon to estimate visitation at this location.

Table 16 – SWOT Analysis – Beverley Whitfield Pool

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Highest attendance of any pool in the LGA - Free and accessible to use 351 days a year - Only saltwater/rock pool in the LGA - Patrolled by SCC Lifeguards in peak periods - Current location provides an important strategic aquatic option on the south eastern side of the LGA - Access to Shellharbour Village, Shell Cove, numerous beaches and caravan park - Acknowledgment of the pools' cultural and historical importance, which has been designated as Heritage Item (I126) under the Shellharbour Local Environmental Plan 2013 with a portion falling within the Conservation Management Area (C295) - High foot traffic area around the pool area and surrounding precinct	- Pool water quality is determined by the clarity of the ocean conditions on the day - Risk factor associated with the pool being accessible to the general public 24hrs a day - Operational deficit of \$226,265.00 for the 2024/25 season as use of the pool is free with no identified avenue for a viable revenue stream
Opportunities	Threats
- Increasing Lifeguard patrols to cover all year due to continued high activity - Seek funding for facility improvements and sustainability efficiency to reduce the operational costs	- Financial constraints budgeting for recommended works from Asset Condition Report being \$2.38 million - Continued increase in \$value of recommended works required if not progressed - Potential for exposure to litigation/reputation harm if any incidents occur from not addressing ageing and non-compliant infrastructure

5.5 Pool Attendance Comparisons for the Summer Period

Collecting and analysing attendance data to determine how well-utilised a public swimming pool is, provides information to assist Council in making evidence-based decisions. Two (2) centres (Oak Flats and Beverley Whitfield Pool) are open all year round while two (2) centres (Warilla and Albion Park) are seasonal pools which are only open for the summer high-season period of 5 months (November to March). To provide a balanced comparison, the same November to March attendances were collated for each of Council's four (4) pools.

The programming of events also influences attendance levels at Council's swimming pools. Pools where programming is proactive and ongoing generally experience higher attendance levels. Programs such as Learn to Swim, all abilities programs, aqua aerobics, Education Department swim lessons, swimming club training, swimming carnivals, fun days with pool inflatables, events such as BBQ/film nights, fundraisers, lifesaving courses or first aid training all improve the utilisation of the pool.

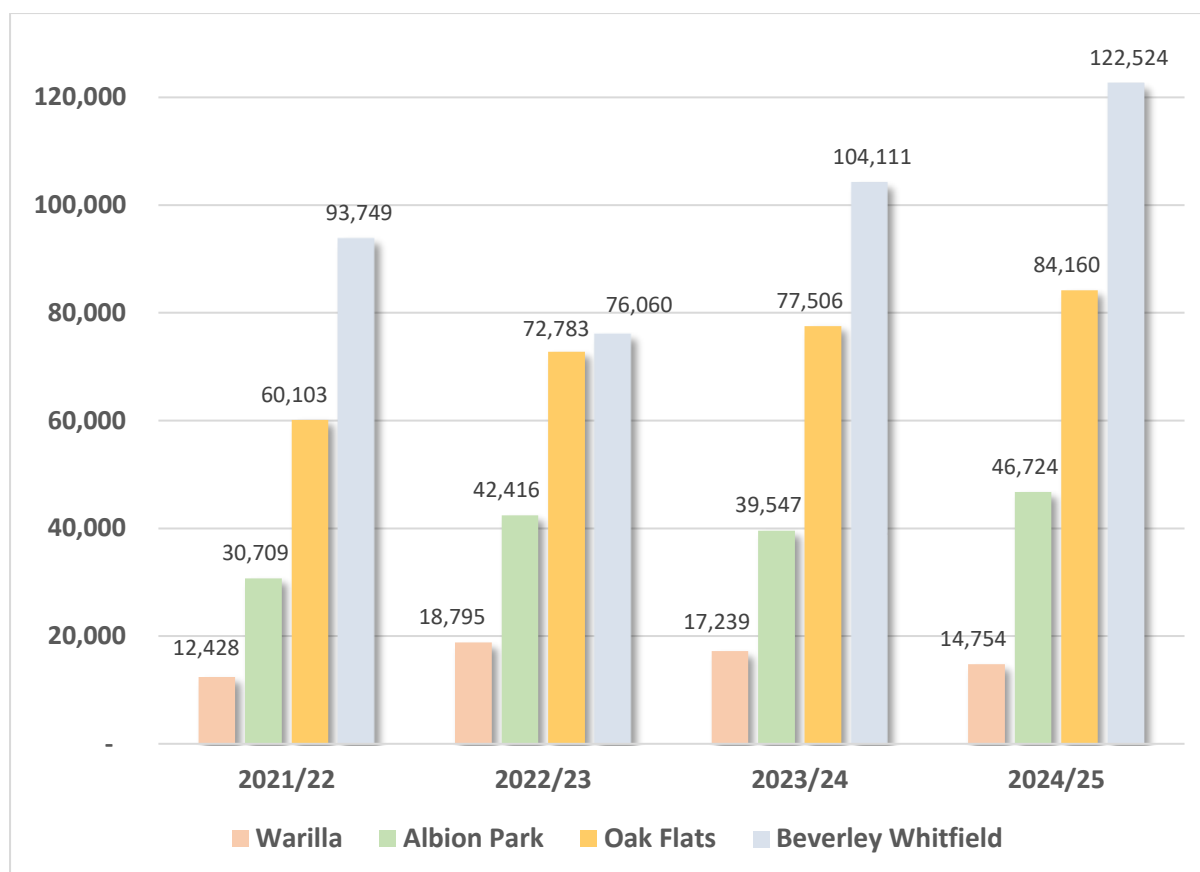


Figure 19 – Pool Attendance Comparisons for the November - March Summer Period

Warilla Pool's 2024/25 Summer attendance was a 16.8% decrease from the previous 2023/24 season which is its lowest attendance in 3 years. Warilla's low attendance figure (14,754) also includes the hosting of 6 school swimming carnivals and is 31,970 less in total attendance compared with Council's other 5-month seasonal pool at Albion Park. Albion Park Pool, on the other hand had a 15.3% increase for the 2024/25 season which was the highest attendance recorded over the last 4 years. Albion Park Pool continues to attract healthy attendance numbers which are supported by the popular children's splash pad/play area and the hosting of 13 school swimming carnivals.

Oak Flats (heated chlorinated water) and Beverley Whitfield (saltwater) both experienced increased attendances over the 2024/25 Summer period. Oak Flats with a 7.9% increase and Beverley Whitfield with 15% also recorded their highest summer period attendances in 4 years, continuing to prove popular locations that attract large numbers to their facilities.

5.6 Facility Provision

Across Council's facilities, ageing infrastructure and changing community expectations means that any plan to develop a new facility or upgrade a current swimming pool requires an evaluation/audit on the condition of the infrastructure, so accurate decisions can be made and effective consultation and communication can be provided.

The current provision of three outdoor chlorinated 50m pools, one 25m pool and one ocean 50m pool, only provides the opportunity for heated swimming at the Oak Flats facility and moderate (solar) heating at Albion Park. At this stage there is not an indoor swimming option provided within the Shellharbour City Council LGA for its current 80,000 residents, 653,000 day-trippers and 150,000 domestic overnight visitors (2022 Destination NSW statistics).

It's important to gain an understanding of each of Council's four (4) swimming pool facilities' utilisation, including attendances, activity times/seasonal access, programs provided to the community, water and energy use and other aquatic options available to SCC residents. Table 17 provides a snapshot of Council's existing aquatics operations and availability for the community.

In addition, it is important to understand that further swimming options exist outside the Shellharbour LGA at neighbouring Wollongong and Kiama LGA areas, these options are still very accessible to residents and would have an effect on SCC pool visitations as well as challenge the viability of continuing to provide three (3) outdoor chlorinated 50m pools at the existing locations. Shellharbour also has a range of natural swimming and recreation areas which compete to some extent with its aquatic facilities.

It is also important to consider that data on usage and attendance of pools can be impacted by the usability of the facility. For example, usage of Albion Park Pool has increased over the last few years, concurrent with improvements in the facility such as increased recreation upgrades such as the splash park, solar heating, and shade structures. Meanwhile, Warilla Pool lacks facilities such as heating, shade structures, and hot showers.

This phenomenon is demonstrated in responses to the Shellharbour City Council 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey, which found that people living in the Oak Flats precinct rated their satisfaction with swimming pools at 4.08/5, compared with the Warilla precinct rating of 3.69/5, and the Albion Park/surrounds precinct rating of 3.44/5. Since Oak Flats Pool is heated year-round and has other amenities and facilities that the other pools do not, these responses show that improvements in facilities may positively impact pool attendance.

Table 17 – Council’s Pools Days and Times of Operation

Location	Opening hours & Season duration	Number of days open to the public
Warilla Pool (Summer Season Only)	November – March (6am-6pm), 7 days a week Closed Xmas Day	150
Albion Park Pool (Summer Season Only)	November – March (6am-6pm), 7 days a week Closed Xmas Day	150
Oak Flats Pool (Open 12 months)	<u>Summer Season</u> 28 Sept 2024 - 30 April 2025 Mon-Fri (6am-7pm) Sat-Sun (6am-6.30pm) Closed Xmas Day <u>Winter Season</u> 1 May 2025 - 27 Sept 2025 Mon-Fri (6am-6.30pm) Sat (6am-2pm) Sun Closed	343
Beverley Whitfield Pool	Open and accessible to the Public at all times	351

- Total days open includes Public Holidays and programmed maintenance.
- Reactive maintenance, severe weather conditions and/or pool contaminations may impact on the total number of days a pool is open.

6 The Financial Impact of Council's Pools

6.1 Ageing Infrastructure Challenges

With all four of Council's Aquatic facilities built nearing 50 years ago, all of Council's existing swimming pools are in need of financial investment for ongoing maintenance and improvements as highlighted within the Aquatic Asset Condition Reports undertaken in September 2023 by Built Environment Collective (BEC) engineering, design and project management consultancy team.

The combined operational expenditure for swimming pools and the ever-increasing costs of replacing them, places tremendous pressure on Local Government to ensure these vital pieces of community infrastructure remain open and available to the public.

Council's four (4) year Delivery Program (2025-2029) for ongoing planned aquatics maintenance is outlined below.

Table 18 – Aquatics Maintenance Delivery Program (2025-2029)

Year	Project	Budget
25/26	Aquatics Renewals (Pool Pumps and Associated Equipment)	\$150,000
	Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool Modifications	\$400,000
26/27	Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool Concrete Deck Repairs	\$300,000
	Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool Plant Room Roof Renewal and Drainage Improvements	\$50,000
27/28	Shellharbour Ocean Pool Upgrades	\$576,546
	Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool Plant Room Roof Renewal and Drainage Improvements	\$150,000
	Shellharbour Ocean Pool Signage Compliance	\$25,000
28/29	Oak Flats Pool Upgrades (Plant & Equipment Replacements)	\$100,000
	Warilla Pool Upgrades (Plant & Equipment Replacements)	\$100,000



Beverley Whitfield Pool concourse



Oak Flats 25m pool Plant Room



Warilla Pool backwash outlet pipe and sump



Albion Park Pool Chemical Bunding

Figure 20 – Examples of Pool Asset Condition Challenges

6.2 Government Support and Funding Contributions

Council systematically assesses the asset condition and determines funding to ensure the desired condition levels are achieved at the best value for Council and the community. While there are State and Federal Government funding schemes and opportunities that become available, across Australia, councils cover 64% of the upfront capital costs for most aquatic facility developments, the Federal (Commonwealth) Government contributes the least (15%) with State and Territory Governments contributing 23% of aquatic infrastructure investment. Significant further investment from State and/or Federal Governments is required to assist councils with replacing, renewing or upgrading an aquatic facility. Without this investment support from Government, it is likely that a council may need to decommission a facility or persevere with a pool that has increasing maintenance costs and declining usability.

The primary approach for building or replacing aquatic facilities across Australia is for Local Government to develop an aquatic facility strategy and undertake a feasibility study and/ or business case to assess the demand and sustainability of a new or replacement facility. An estimation of costs is established, and generally, funding applications are made for state and federal government assistance. Consideration is also given to the level of funding the council has access to and can contribute towards the project.

Investment in aquatic infrastructure should be evidence based and aligned with community needs to ensure that facilities are appropriately sized, accessible and financially sustainable. Infrastructure decisions should prioritise communities or areas within the LGA with the greatest need, including growth areas and underserved populations. Council planning should avoid over investment in areas with adequate facilities and direct resources to locations with clear demand gaps. It is important to acknowledge that there are many examples of public pools with significant federal and state funding which have over-invested relative to their community capacity including multi-million-dollar facilities that have not fully met community needs.

Table 19 below provides an indication of the recent investment made by the three tiers of government for aquatic capital projects in NSW, for the years 2019 to 2022.

Table 19 – Government contributions for aquatic infrastructure projects (2019 – 2022)

Project Location	Local Govt (\$ Million)	State Govt (\$ Million)	Commonwealth Federal Govt (\$ Million)	Business/ Private (\$ Million)	Total Projects (\$ Million)
Parramatta Aquatic Centre (NSW)	50.1 (57%)	38.5 (43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	88.6
Goulburn Aquatic Centre (NSW)	20 (67%)	10 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	30
Batemans Bay Regional Aquatic, Arts & Leisure Centre (NSW)	4 (8%)	26 (47%)	25 (45%)	0 (0%)	55
Surf Coast Aquatic & Health Centre (VIC)	5.25 (14%)	13.5 (35%)	20 (52%)	0 (0%)	38.75
Northern Aquatic & Community Hub (VIC)	44.84 (73%)	8.5 (14%)	8.26 (13%)	0 (0%)	61.6

In 2024, the Australian Local Government Association reported that 25% of Councils have low financial sustainability and that a significant proportion of Councils also cannot properly maintain assets due to revenue constraints. They found that 167 Councils are not meeting target asset sustainability ratios which measure whether assets are being renewed and

replaced in an optimal way, relative to depreciation. There are also indications of shortfalls in capital maintenance for assets and insufficient funding being directed at asset renewal.

6.3 Asset Condition Reports

Asset Condition Reports are valuable documents that assist Council to determine the state, functionality, compliance and life expectancy of a facility and its plant and equipment. Asset Condition Reports assess the pool facility against key documents such as:

- The Building Code of Australia
- Workplace Health and Safety regulations
- The Royal Life Saving Society Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations and
- Australian Standards (AS) in areas such as AS1428 Design for Access and Mobility and
- AS3780 Storage & Handling of Corrosive Substances

An Aquatic Asset Condition Report was conducted of all four (4) Council swimming pools in September 2023 by Built Environment Collective (BEC) who provided detailed observations and feedback for each of Council's four (4) pool facilities in the following areas:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • Pool structure condition | • Asset condition ratings |
| • Concourse structure condition | • Recommendations |
| • Pool plant and plumbing | • Budget costings for recommended works |
| • Building and shade structures | |

The Aquatic Asset Condition Report highlighted common themes that existed across all facilities providing Council with the opportunity to implement improvements in the following areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Accessibility | • Compliance |
| • Environmental performance | • Plant/filtration upgrades |
| • Amenity upgrades | • Pool shell upgrades/replacement |
| • Signage | |

Improvements and recommendations were then categorised into the following areas to assist with the prioritising of works:

- Immediate
- Within the next ten (10) years
- Further testing and investigation

Each pool was then provided with a Budget Costing for these Improvements and Recommended Works with the final totals for each Centre being:

- Warilla - **\$4.56 million**
- Albion Park - **\$5.06 million**
- Oak Flats - **\$6.63 million**
- Beverley Whitfield - **\$2.38 million**

6.4 Warilla Pool Asset Condition Report Findings

The Asset Condition Report identifies that, in general, the Warilla Pool structures are in reasonable condition, with the 50m pool shell structure likely nearing the end of its design life. It recommends for Council to start budgeting to plan and provide some significant remediation, reconstruction work.

It was also recommended that:

- consideration be given to replacing the pool plant system and separating the 50m and toddler pools system;
- provision of a compliant chemical storage and delivery area be addressed.
- pool expansion joints should be repaired and appropriately sealed to limit any further degradation of the structure with a longer-term plan established to either remediate or replace the pools.
- ancillary amenities/office and storage building is in reasonably sound condition with no sighted structural defects. The internal finishes are ageing and could be replaced to provide a more welcoming and enjoyable experience for the users.

The recommended improvements for Warilla Pool from the Asset Condition Report are provided in Table 20 below. Key points indicated from the report costings include:

- Indicative estimate to demolish and rebuild a 50m x 20m pool with ramp excluding concourse is \$4 Million.
- Although there is a substantial saving in the cost of renovating the pool, there would not be any warranty available for the renovated pool and it would have a limited design life of 15-20 years. Whereas the new pool would have a design life of 40-50 years.

Table 20 – Recommended Works for Warilla Pool

Item	Works Required	Description	Estimated Cost excl GST
1	Pool Lift	Provide pool lift access to the 50m	\$40,000
2	Existing Balance Tank	Patch repair the existing balance tank lid and apply new protective and waterproof coatings	\$200,000
3	Renovate and waterproof seal pool joints	Cut recess into concrete install waterproof bandage and epoxy, 100m	\$200,000
4	Remediation of the steel shade structure coatings	Strip back and clean off any existing rust and apply new protective coatings	\$100,000
5	New plant and refurbished plant room	Refurbish and extend the existing plant room and provide new plant for both the toddler pool and 50m pool, will require new balance tank and potentially pool gutter and return line works to increase flow	\$2,500,000
6	Signage/Depth markers	Add depth markers and signage all around	\$25,000
7	New 50m pool waterproofing and remediation	Investigate the concrete shell further, patch repair any areas of defect and apply a new waterproof membrane and waterline tiles	\$1,500,000
TOTAL			\$4.56 million

6.4.1 Warilla Pool Maintenance and Improvements since 2020

Even before the receipt of the Asset Condition Reporting, Council has committed to ensuring Warilla Pool continues to service the community to a high standard, and since 2020 has committed to the following planned major maintenance and upgrades:

- Main circulating pump new motor
- Compressor overhaul and rebuild
- New prominent auto-doser installation
- New awning/shade for 50m pool shallow end
- **Total - \$226,182.00**

6.5 Albion Park Pool Asset Condition Report Findings

Findings of the Asset Condition Report for Albion Park Pool include:

- In general, the pool structures are in reasonable condition with the 50m & toddler pool shell structures likely nearing the end of their design life. Therefore, it would be prudent for Council to start budgeting to provide some significant remediation/reconstruction.
- The expansion joints should be repaired and appropriately sealed to limit any further degradation of the structures. A longer-term plan to either remediate or replace the pools should be considered.
- Replacement of the pool plant system and separating the 50m and toddler pools system is required.
- Providing a compliant chemical storage and delivery area is the highest priority for future remediation works.
- The concourse/walkways around the pools are in adequate condition.
- The roof over the balance tank needs immediate attention with either a remediation or reconstruction to be considered.
- The ancillary amenities, office, club and kiosk building are in reasonably sound condition with no sighted structural defects. The internal finishes are ageing and could be replaced to provide a more welcoming and enjoyable experience for the users.

The recommended improvements for Albion Park Pool from the Asset Condition Report is provided in Table 21 below. Key points indicated from the report costings include:

- Indicative estimate to demolish and rebuild a 50m x 20m pool with ramp excluding concourse is \$4 Million.

- Although there is a substantial saving in the cost of renovating the pool, there would not be any warranty available for the renovated pool and it would have a limited design life of 15-20 years. Whereas the new pool would have a design life of 40-50 years.

Table 21 – Recommended Works for Albion Park Pool

Item	Works Required	Description	Estimated Cost excl GST
1	Pool Lift	Provide pool lift access to the 50m	\$40,000
2	Renovate and waterproof seal pool joints	Cut recess into concrete install waterproof bandage and epoxy, 100m	\$200,000
3	New plant and refurbished plant room	Refurbish and extend the existing plant room and provide new plant for both the toddler pool and 50m pool. Will require new balance tanks and potentially pool gutter and return line works to increase flow	\$2,500,000
4	Signage/Depth markers	Add depth markers and signage all around	\$25,000
5	New 50m pool waterproofing and remediation	Investigate the concrete shell further, patch repair any areas of defect and apply a new waterproof membrane and waterline tiles	\$1,500,000
6	New toddler pool waterproofing and remediation	Investigate the concrete shell further, patch repair any areas of defect and apply a new waterproof membrane and tiles.	\$500,000
7	New concourse structure	Replace all concourses around the pool area.	\$300,000
TOTAL			\$5.06 million

6.5.1 Albion Park Pool Maintenance and Improvements since 2020

Even before the receipt of the Asset Condition Reporting, Council has committed to ensuring Albion Park Pool continues to service the community to a high standard, and since 2020 has committed to the following planned major maintenance and upgrades:

- Installation of solar heating and pool blankets
- Installation of splash play area and barbeques/awnings
- Main circulating pump overhaul and bearing replacement
- Compressor overhaul and rebuild
- Priming/screen box replacement
- Solar heating pump mechanical seal replacement
- Splash play facility pump mechanical seal replacement
- New prominent auto-doser installation
- New pool cleaner
- **Total - \$1,045,390.00**

6.6 Oak Flats Pool Asset Condition Report Findings

The Report identified that, at Oak Flats, the pool structures are in reasonable condition with the 50m pool shell structure specifically nearing the end of its design life. The report recommended that Council start to budget to provide some significant remediation/reconstruction. Other recommendation include:

- The expansion joints should be repaired and appropriately sealed to limit any further degradation.
- The steel framing around the 25m pool is in poor condition and should undergo immediate remediation.
- Areas of the concourse around the 25m pool are showing some corrosion staining with further concrete investigations or remediation to be planned for.
- The pump/plant is all in working order with some major rectifications suggested to provide safer running.
- The ageing pool plant is non-compliant with the current NSW health guidelines and nearing the end of its useable life and should be replaced with new filters, pumps and pipework provided to split the toddlers and 50m pools.

The recommended improvements for Oak Flats Pool from the Asset Condition Report is provided in Table 22 below. Key points indicated from the report costings include:

- Indicative estimate to demolish and rebuild a 50m x 20m pool with ramp excluding concourse is \$4 Million.
- Although there is a substantial saving in the cost of renovating the pool, there would not be any warranty available for the renovated pool and it would have a limited design life of 15-20 years. Whereas the new pool would have a design life of 40-50 years.

Table 22 – Recommended Works for Oak Flats Pool

Item	Works Required	Description	Estimated Cost excl GST
1	Pool Lift	Provide pool lift access to the 50m	\$40,000
2	Steel framing remediation	Repair or replace corroded steel framing around the 25m pool	\$150,000
3	Renovate and waterproof seal pool joints	Cut recess into concrete install waterproof bandage and epoxy, 100m	\$200,000
4	New plant for the 50m & toddlers pool and refurbished plant room	Refurbish and extend the existing plant room and provide new plant for both the toddler pool and 50m pool, will require new balance tanks and potentially pool gutter and return line works to increase flow	\$2,500,000
5	New plant for the 25m pool	Refurbish the existing plant room and provide new plant, will potentially require pool gutter and return line works to increase flow.	\$1,000,000
6	Signage/Depth markers	Add depth markers and signage all around	\$40,000
7	New 50m & 25m pool waterproofing and remediation	Investigate the concrete shell further, patch repair any areas of defect and apply a new waterproof membrane and waterline tiles.	\$2,500,000
8	New concourse structure	Replace all concourses around the pool area.	\$200,000
TOTAL			\$6.63 Million

6.6.1 Oak Flats Pool Maintenance and Improvements since 2020

Even before the receipt of the Asset Condition Reporting, Council has committed to ensuring Oak Flats Pool continues to service the community to a high standard, and since 2020 has committed to the following planned major maintenance and upgrades:

- Main circulating pump 50m pool overhaul and bearing replacement
- New 25m pool pump
- New 25m pool heating
- 3 x new heaters for the 50m pool
- New prominent auto-doser installation
- New pool cleaner
- New pool blankets 50m and 25m pool
- New barbeques/awning and aluminium seating
- Change room upgrade / installation of cubicles
- New awning/shade for 50m pool shallow end
- **Total - \$932,610.00**

6.7 Beverley Whitfield Pool Asset Condition Report Findings

Findings of the Asset Condition Report for Beverley Whitfield Pool advise that:

- In general, the pool structures are in reasonable condition with the 50m pool shell structure likely nearing the end of its design life. Therefore, it would be prudent for Council to start budgeting to provide some significant remediation/reconstruction.
- The expansion joints should be repaired and appropriately sealed to limit any further degradation.
- The concourse/walkways around the pools are in poor shape and should undergo immediate patch repairs with Council to plan for future replacement.
- The pump/plant is all in working order with some minor rectifications suggested to provide safer running.

The recommended improvements for Beverley Whitfield Pool from the Asset Condition Report are provided in Table 22 below. Key points indicated from the report costings include:

- Indicative estimate to demolish and rebuild a 50m x 20m pool with ramp excluding concourse is \$4 Million.

- Although there is a substantial saving in the cost of renovating the pool, there would not be any warranty available for the renovated pool and it would have a limited design life of 15-20 years. Whereas the new pool would have a design life of 40-50 years.

Table 23 – Recommended Works for Beverley Whitfield Pool

Item	Works Required	Description	Estimated Cost excl GST
1	Concourse Repairs	Re-chase and fill in all previously repaired cracks	\$75,000
2	Pool Drain	Change pool drain to gravity	\$15,000
3	Plant room drainage	Add plantroom drainage/fix plant room drainage to minimise clogging	\$50,000
4	Pool Lift	Provide pool lift access	\$70,000
5	Renovate and waterproof seal pool joints	Cut recess into concrete, install waterproof bandage and epoxy, 100m	\$200,000
6	Plant Room Roof	Replace existing plant room roof panels with new slab and watertight access hatch	\$150,000
7	Signage/Depth markers	Add depth markers and signage all around	\$25,000
8	New 50m pool internal topping shell	Demolish and replace the internal topping shell with a new concrete shell design to current standards	\$1,500,000
9	New concourse structure	Replace all concourses around the pool area.	\$300,000
TOTAL			\$2.38 Million

6.7.1 Beverley Whitfield Pool Maintenance and Improvements since 2020

The following planned major maintenance and upgrades undertaken by Council since 2020 include:

- Check valve replacement
- Butterfly valves replacement
- Inlet line/strainer servicing
- **Total - \$215,610.00**

6.8 Revenue and Expenditure of Individual Pools & Programs

The following data is a summary of Council's income and expenditure on Pools from the 2020/21 period to the end of 2024/25. Income is generated via Council's scheduled fees and charges in areas such as pool entry costs, learn to swim, aqua and swim squad programs, special events and secondary spend options at pool kiosks. Expenditure encompasses financial responsibilities associated with staff wages, programmed and reactive maintenance, chemicals, electricity, water and natural gas costs.

All of Council's pools operated at a negative financial result through the 2020/21 to 2024/25 review period, which is offset by a small amount by Aquatic Programs (including learn to swim, aqua aerobics and intensive swim classes) which generally operated at a net profit as a standalone endeavour. The net position of Council's aquatics facilities is a financial loss in the range of \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million (excluding COVID impacted periods).

6.8.1 Comparative Financial Data for 2020/21 to 2024/25 Financial Years

Table 24 – Aquatic Programs Income and Expenditure Figures for 2020/21 to 2024/25

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Income	\$227,296.45	\$234,528.85	\$416,623.29	\$522,464.66	\$676,383.16
Expenditure	\$225,462.12	\$103,576.51	\$335,711.92	\$382,435.22	\$512,681.00
Financial Result	\$1,834.33	\$130,952.34	\$80,911.37	\$140,029.44	\$163,702.16

NB - Council's pool programs include Learn to Swim, Aqua aerobics and intensive swim classes

Table 25 – Pools Income and Expenditure Figures for 2020/21 to 2024/25

	Pool Facility	Income	Expenditure	Financial Result
2020/21	Beverley Whitfield	\$0.00	\$177,700.94	-\$177,700.94
	Warilla	\$28,618.03	\$295,758.98	-\$267,140.95
	Albion Park	\$75,611.74	\$344,099.22	-\$268,487.48
	Oak Flats	\$147,585.20	\$703,460.96	-\$555,875.76
	Total	\$251,814.97	-\$1,521,020.10	-\$1,269,205.13
2021/22	Beverley Whitfield	\$0.00	\$75,039.23	-\$75,039.23
	Warilla	\$22,800.16	\$92,596.41	-\$69,796.25
	Albion Park	\$61,733.59	\$121,410.01	-\$59,676.42
	Oak Flats	\$137,902.99	\$400,154.95	-\$262,251.96
	Total	\$222,436.74	-\$689,200.60	-\$466,763.86
2022/23	Beverley Whitfield	\$0.00	\$199,746.16	-\$199,746.16
	Warilla	\$28,551.54	\$318,227.54	-\$289,676.00
	Albion Park	\$75,851.85	\$388,918.58	-\$313,066.73
	Oak Flats	\$183,461.21	\$920,672.76	-\$737,211.55
	Total	\$287,864.60	-\$1,827,565.04	-\$1,539,700.44
2023/24	Beverley Whitfield	\$0.00	\$220,103.40	-\$220,103.40
	Warilla	\$30,086.20	\$353,452.15	-\$323,365.95
	Albion Park	\$85,800.44	\$358,480.22	-\$272,679.78
	Oak Flats	\$221,549.80	\$934,871.28	-\$713,321.48
	Total	\$337,436.44	-\$1,866,907.05	-\$1,529,470.61
2024/25	Beverley Whitfield	\$0.00	\$226,265.00	-\$226,265.00
	Warilla	\$39,093.04	\$370,351.00	-\$331,257.96
	Albion Park	\$107,666.38	\$440,251.00	-\$332,584.62
	Oak Flats	\$218,472.07	\$1,037,591.00	-\$819,118.93
	Total	\$365,231.49	-\$2,074,458.00	-\$1,709,226.51

NB - Beverley Whitfield Ocean pool is free to use, therefore income is not generated for Council at this location

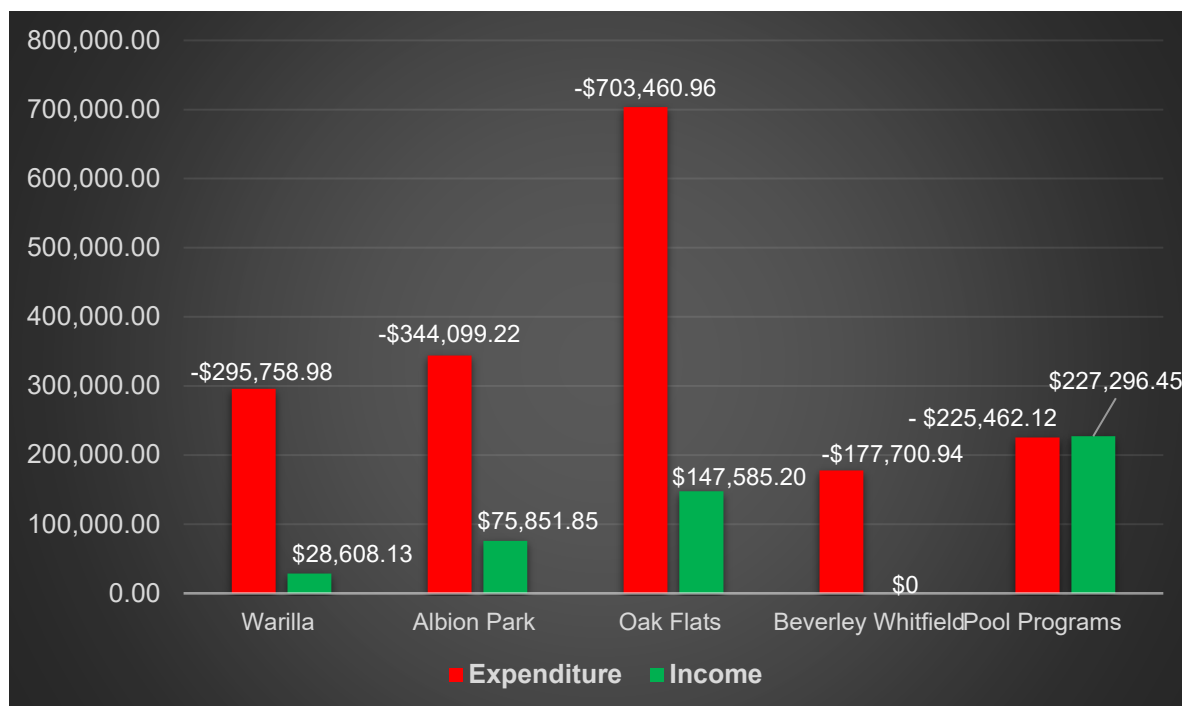


Figure 21 – Pools & Programs Income and Expenditure Graph (2020/21)



Figure 22 – Pools & Programs Income and Expenditure Graph (2021/22)

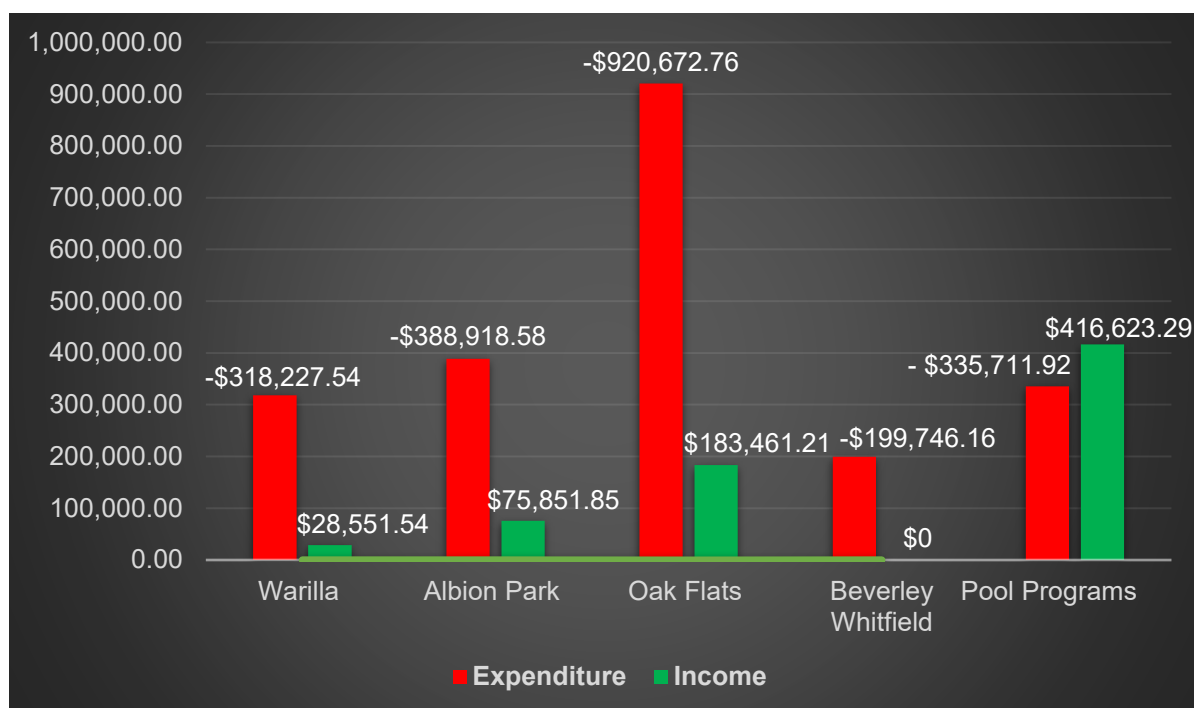


Figure 23 – Pools & Programs Income and Expenditure Graph (2022/23)



Figure 24 – Pools & Programs Income and Expenditure Graph (2023/24)

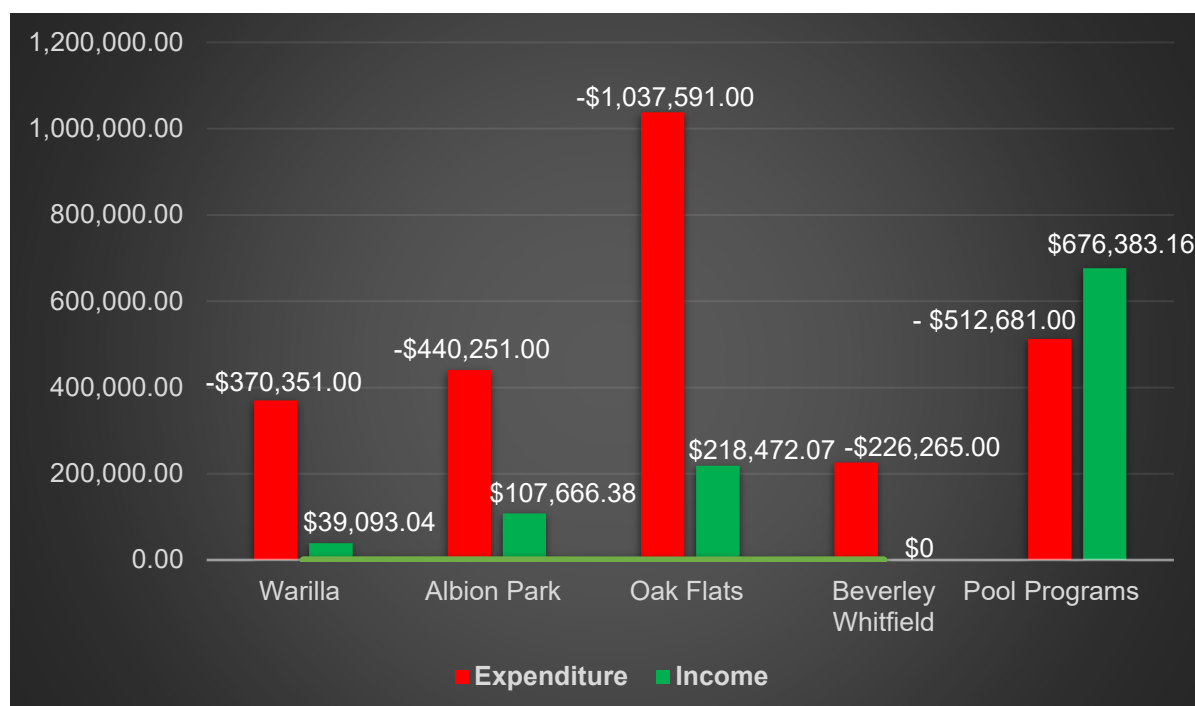


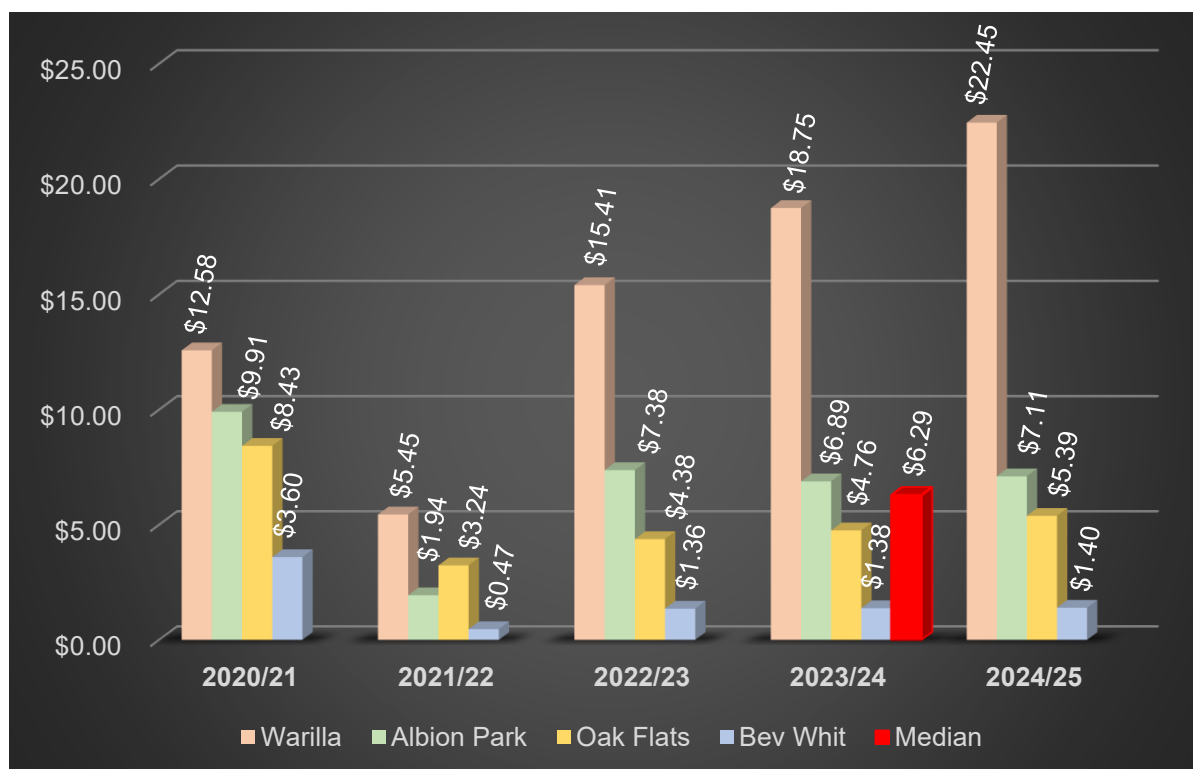
Figure 25 – Pools & Programs Income and Expenditure Graph (2024/25)

6.8.2 Subsidy per visit

The subsidy per visit fee is used as a comparison figure between swimming seasons, a key performance indicator (KPI) for business performance at an individual Centre and as a comparative performance measure against other Centres within Council's LGA. The operational benchmarks for Australian Public Aquatic Centres publication are prepared annually by the University of South Australia (Uni SA) via its Customer Experience Research Metrics and Performance Indicators (CERM PI) research team.

The CERM PI benchmarking program for 2023-2024 had eighty-three (83) aquatic centres from around Australia contribute information, with these results then combined with data from two previous financial years to raise the participating centres to 212 respondents. The survey and associated results identified, that outdoor pools have a higher subsidy per visit (\$6.29 per visit) than an indoor/outdoor pool facility (\$1.61) or a fully indoor multi-purpose facility (\$1.70). This is due to the fact that indoor facilities provide a greater spread of activities (gyms, program pools etc.) that allow a Centre to operate year-round and subsequently increase their revenue stream capability. Research has shown that some councils are subsidising their swimming pools by up to \$50 per visit.

The outdoor pool subsidy per visit results for Oak Flats (\$4.76) and Albion Park (\$6.89) are encouraging figures when benchmarked against the \$6.29 subsidy per visit result from the CERM PI 2022-24 benchmarking program.



The subsidy per visit for each pool is calculated by dividing the net profit or loss figure from the financial statement by the number of annual pool visits (attendance)

Figure 26 – Shellharbour Pools Subsidy Cost per visit (2020 - 2024)

Figure 27 illustrates Shellharbour's fees and charges for general pool admission in comparison with other Council LGA's facilities and relative to the median subsidy identified in the CERM PI 2022-24 benchmarking program from 65 Aquatic Centre respondents nationally.

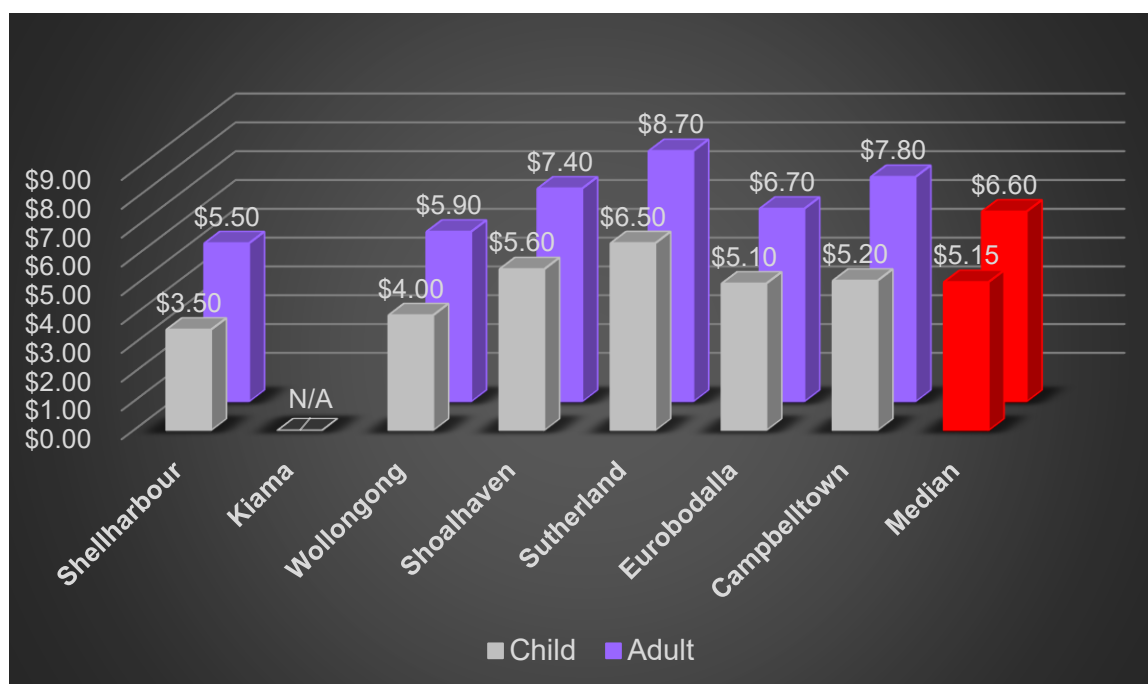


Figure 27 – Council Outdoor Pools Adult and Child swim prices comparisons

Council's four pools have delivered a collective operational deficit of \$6,514,366.55 over the five-year financial period from 2020 - 2025 whilst Council's Programs (Learn to Swim & Aqua aerobics) delivered a favourable financial result of \$517,429.64 over this same period. Swim Schools (Learn to Swim) can be especially profitable for both Councils and private providers, hence the private sector's interest in providing their facilities and LTS services. It should be noted that the provision of lap swimming by the private sector is almost non-existent as it is generally not financially profitable and usually requires subsidising.

Oak Flats Pool is acknowledged for 47.4% (\$3,087,779.68) of this overall 5-year deficit figure, Warilla for 19.6% (\$1,281,237.11), Albion Park for 19.2% (\$1,246,495.03) and Beverley Whitfield for 13.8% (\$898,854.73). Analysis of these operational deficit figures, factored in with each pool's (a) attendance as a comparable percentage of the overall Summer five-month totals, (b) the subsidy per visit result and the (c) estimated cost of the asset report recommendations, provided the following assessment of each pool.

Warilla – Acknowledged for 20% of the overall 5-year operational deficit figure and 7% of the summer attendances. Attendances have decreased each year over the last 3 years with the subsidy per visit increasing as a result. Warilla had a \$4.56million asset report estimation for recommended works into the future.

Albion Park - Acknowledged for 19% of the overall 5-year operational deficit figure and 17.5% of the summer attendances. Attendances have increased 3 out of the last 4 years resulting in

a low subsidy per visit figure. Albion Park had a \$5.06million asset report estimation for recommended works into the future.

Oak Flats - Acknowledged for 47% of the overall 5-year operational deficit figure and 32.5% of the summer attendances. Attendances have increased each year for the last 5 years providing a low subsidy per visit result. Oak Flats had a \$6.63million asset report estimation for recommended works into the future.

Beverley Whitfield - Acknowledged for 14% of the overall 5-year operational deficit figure and 43.5% of summer attendances. Attendances have increased each year over the last 3 years providing a very low subsidy per visit result. Beverley Whitfield Pool had a \$2.38million asset report estimation for recommended works into the future.

Summary

76% of summer attendances attend either Oak Flats (chlorinated) or Beverley Whitfield (saltwater) pools. Summer attendances (November to March) have increased each year over the last 3 years at Oak Flats, Albion Park and Beverley Whitfield Pools but decreased each year at Warilla Pool over the same period.

7 Environmental Impact of Council's Pools

7.1 Overview

Pools are large energy consumers due to the amount of energy required to maintain specific water and environmental conditions. Pool water and environment heating alone can contribute up to 80% of site energy use. There are a number of opportunities for councils to target their energy use to reduce both energy costs and carbon emissions.

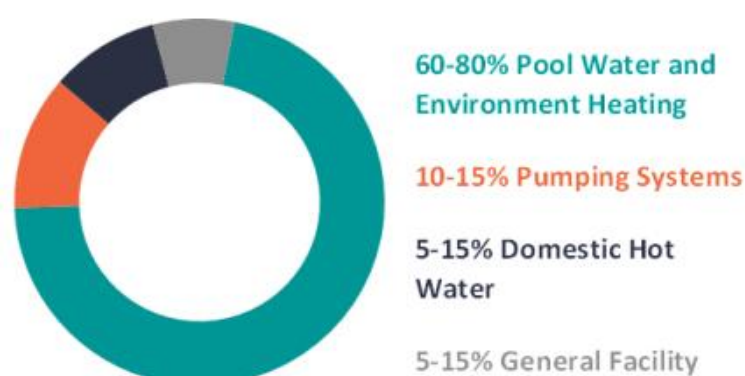


Figure 28 – Typical Pool Facility Energy Usage (NSW Office of Environment & Heritage)

Within a typical pool facility, the majority of emissions occur due to the consumption of electricity and gas. For Council's pools, electricity powers the plant/filtration system, pool cleaners, chlorine units and staff and public amenities, whilst natural gas is utilised to heat the pool water at Oak Flats. Pool water heating is controlled to ensure that the facility remains comfortable for use but due to the large thermal mass of the pool, heating requires a substantial amount of energy. Exposure to the external weather conditions results in outdoor pools losing heat faster than indoor facilities.

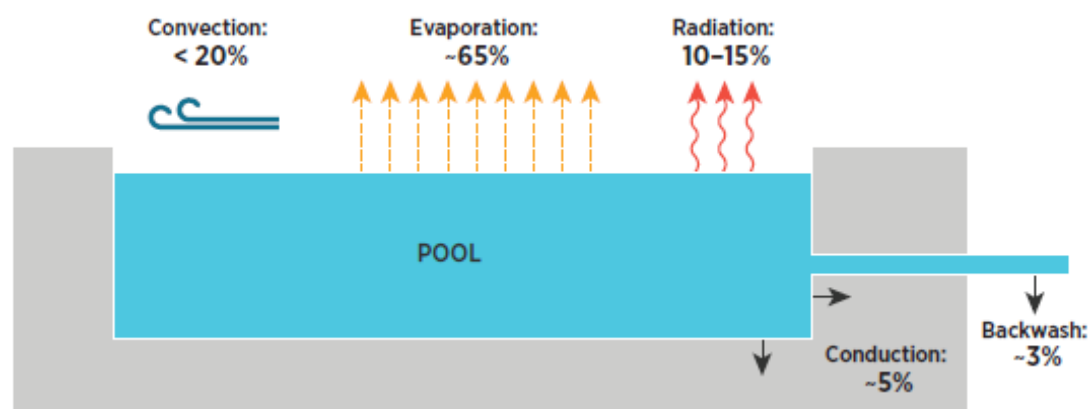


Figure 29 – Typical Distribution of Heat Loss (NSW Office of Environment & Heritage)

7.2 Electricity Consumption

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) reports that renewable energy sources accounted for 9% of Australian energy consumption in 2021/22 including solar, wind and hydro. With electricity generation remaining one of the major causes of greenhouse emissions in Australia, targeting the energy performance of one of the most energy- intensive types of buildings (aquatic facilities) can contribute towards reducing these harmful emissions.

Significant progress can be made towards Net Zero by improving the efficiency of Council's assets and equipment. Net zero emissions is achieved when the total greenhouse gas emissions generated by a facility are balanced by an equivalent amount of emissions removed or offset. This is typically accomplished by first reducing emissions through energy efficiency improvements, electrification and renewable energy integration, and then offsetting any unavoidable and residual emissions that cannot be eliminated through operational measures. Emissions are classified into three (3) categories:

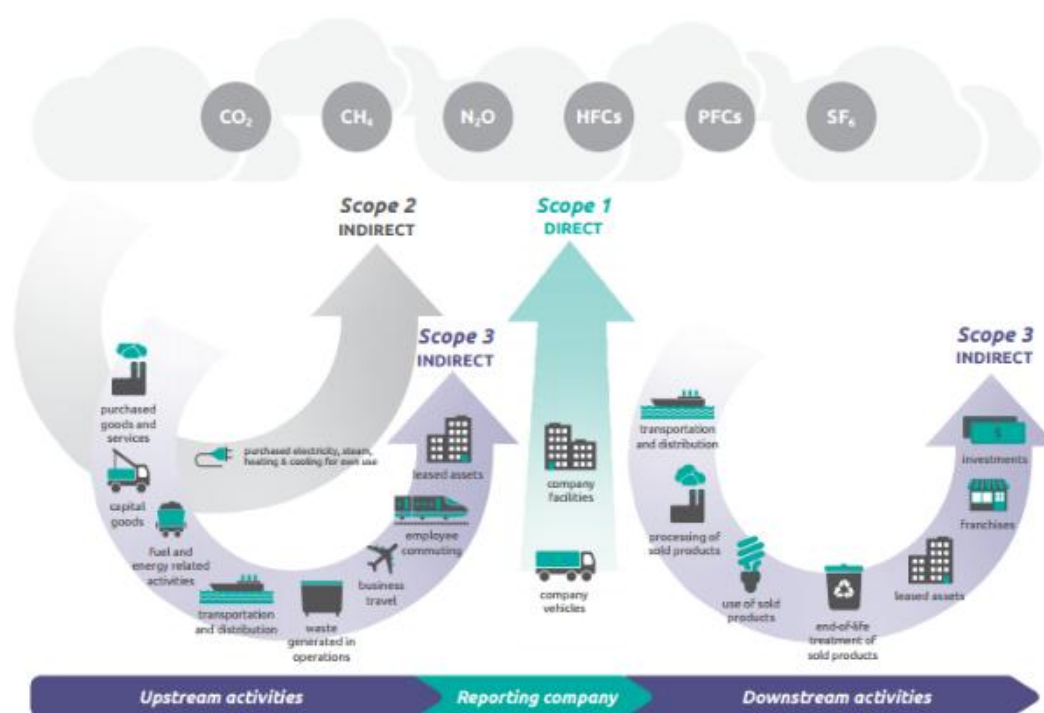


Figure 30 – Scope 1, 2, & 3 Emissions Explanation (ghgprotocol.org)

Prior to any major facility upgrade or new development project, establishing design and performance standards to reduce the water, waste and energy generated should be investigated. In the context of energy efficiency, sustainability and operational feasibility compared to 25m pools, 50-metre pools take up twice the land, cost twice as much to build, use twice as much energy, emit twice as much carbon emissions and cost more to staff as they will require more lifeguards to supervise pool users.

The Brimbank Aquatic & Wellness Centre in Victoria (Figure 31 below) was recognised for its “world leading” sustainable design by the Green Building Council of Australia. The Australian authority on sustainable design has given the centre its highest rating, a Six-Star Green Star Design score. Sustainable design features included rooftop solar systems, rainwater harvesting, double glazing windows throughout, promotion of natural light, recycled content materials, reuse of demolition waste, water sensitive urban design, electric vehicle charging points and the ‘electrification of heat’.



Figure 31 – Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre, Victoria

Electrification of heat relates to the replacement of combustion-based heating systems (gas boilers) with electric heating technologies (heat pumps). A heat pump is a device that uses a small amount of energy to move heat from one location to another. Heat pumps used for heating pools, extract heat from an external heat source to heat the water. Heat pumps require electricity to operate; however, when coupled with on-site solar PV and battery storage, a significant proportion of the electricity demand can be supplied by renewable energy generated on-site. This can substantially reduce, and potentially eliminate, operational greenhouse gas emissions associated with pool heating, depending on the level of renewable energy self-sufficiency achieved. Unlike gas heaters, heat pumps do not rely on fuel combustion and therefore produce no direct on-site greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide.



Figure 32 – Gas Boiler

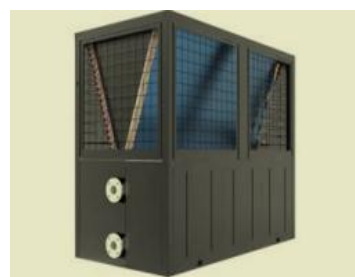


Figure 33 – Electric Heat Pump

Further innovative sustainable strategies specifically for indoor pools relate to applying the high energy efficiency approach of the German 'Passivhaus' standard. The 'Passive house' is a standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological footprint and has been developed at St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre Exeter, UK (Figure 34 below). It typically involves:

- Very high levels of insulation
- Extremely high-performance windows (e.g. triple glazed)
- Insulated frames
- Airtight building fabric
- Thermal bridge free construction
- Mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery



Figure 34 – St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre, Exeter, UK

This 'Passivhaus' quality standard is supported by a Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) study on the energy performance and water usage of aquatic centres which found that a respective 34% and 20% reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved by combining several architectural and electromechanical features, including:

- Double glazing
- Insulation upgrades
- Air and water temperature reductions
- Pool covers
- Use of high-density materials
- Glazed solar pool-water heating systems
- LED lighting

Belgravia Leisure's Sustainability's Green Road Report also recommends implementing:

- Waste and resource recovery methods
- Water efficient fittings and fixtures
- Lower ceiling heights
- Reducing skylights, louvres and vents which allow heat to escape
- Building envelope sealing

As legislated in the 2022 Climate Change Act, the Australian Federal Government has committed to a 43% emissions reduction target below 2005 levels by 2030 and the ultimate goal of net zero emissions by 2050. Similarly, the NSW State government has outlined a pathway towards net zero emissions by 2050 with interim targets of 50% and 70% reductions below 2005 levels by 2030 and 2035 respectively.

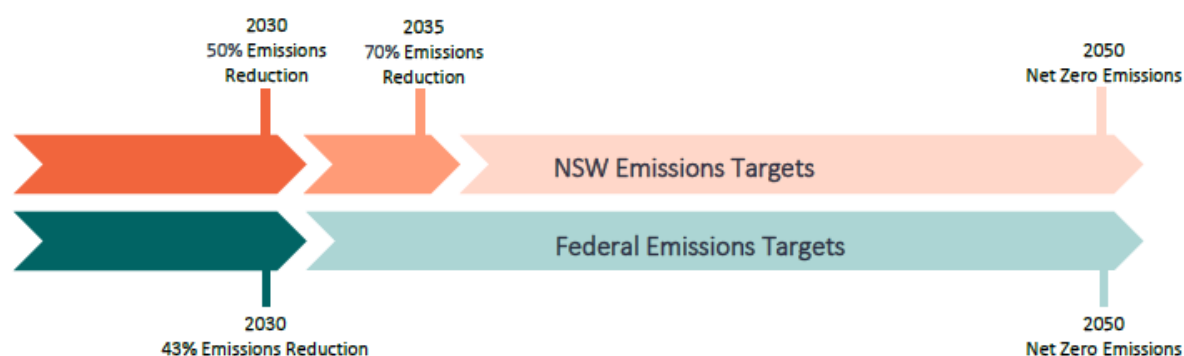


Figure 35 – Australian Federal and NSW Governments' Net Zero Targets

The following data highlights the level, classification and cost of electricity consumption at each of Council's four (4) pools:

Table 26 – Electricity Usage Comparison Across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

Electricity	Warilla (Open 5 months)	Albion Park (Open 5 months)	Oak Flats (Open 12 months)	Beverley Whitfield (Open 12 months)
Cost	\$12,235.11	\$13,749.69	\$49,914.86	\$17,578.70
kWh	73,652.42	82,032.67	229,954.17	107,499.01
tCO ₂ -e	53.77	59.88	167.87	78.47
GJ	265.15	295.32	827.84	217.03

(kWh) - kilowatt hour, equivalent to the energy consumed by a 1,000 watt or 1 kilowatt electrical appliance operating for 1 hour

(Tonnes CO₂-e) - is the standard unit used to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions by expressing the warming impact of all greenhouse gases as an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

(GJ) - gigajoule, a unit of measurement of energy consumption. A gigajoule equals a billion joules. One gigajoule of natural gas is approximately equivalent to 27 litres of fuel oil, 39 litres of propane, 26 litres of gasoline or 277 kilowatt hours of electricity

Research from 65 Aquatic Centre respondents nationally within the 2023-24 National Operational Benchmarking Survey from the University of South Australia's Customer Experience Research Metrics and Performance Indicators (CERM PI) research team indicates a median electricity consumption of 144, 541kWh per centre.

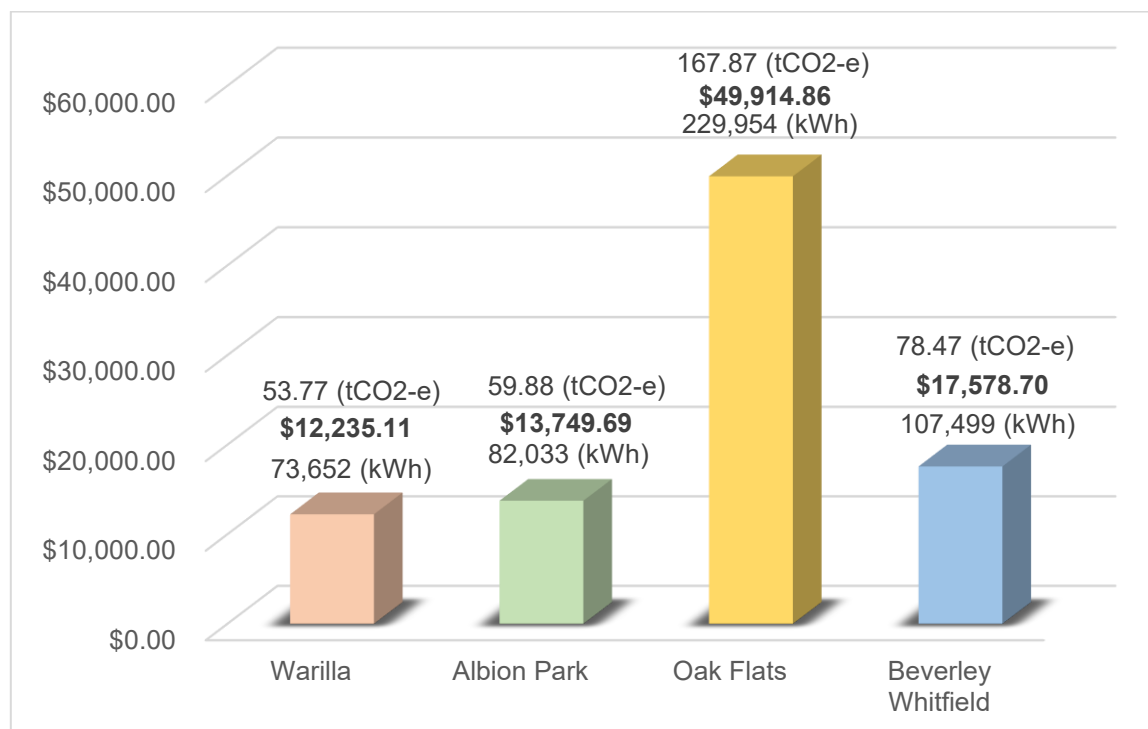


Figure 36 – Electricity usage comparison across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

Table 27 – Ten Highest Ranking Council Facilities for Cost of Electricity (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

#	Name	Cost (\$)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	316,788.04
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	241,255.48
3	Waste Disposal Depot	170,516.45
4	Electricity Account Summary	133,589.96
5	The Links - Golf Course Club House	112,147.99
6	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	61,962.49
7	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	49,914.86
8	Airport - Terminal	39,077.30
9	Beverley Whitfield Pool	17,578.70
10	Albion Park Pool	13,749.69

**Table 28 – Ten Highest Ranking Council Facilities for Electricity Consumption (kWh)
(1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)**

#	Name	Consumption (kWh)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	1,537,990.14
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	1,087,524.81
3	Waste Disposal Depot	914,807.13
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	518,258.22
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	240,231.07
6	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	229,954.17
7	Airport - Terminal	145,877.49
8	Beverley Whitfield Pool	107,499.01
9	Myimbarr Community Park - Amenities	95,584.85
10	Croom Regional Sporting Complex - Indoor Stadium	90,162.70

Table 29 – Ten Highest Ranking Council Facilities for Electricity Emissions (tonnes CO₂-e) – (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

#	Name	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	1,122.73
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	793.89
3	Waste Disposal Depot	557.46
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	322.49
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	170.37
6	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	167.87
7	Airport - Terminal	106.49
8	Beverley Whitfield Pool	78.47
9	Albion Park Pool	59.88
10	Myimbarr Community Park - Amenities	56.35

Table 30 – Electricity usage comparison across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

Electricity	Warilla (Open 5 months)	Albion Park (Open 5 months)	Oak Flats (Open 12 months)	Beverley Whitfield (Open 12 months)
Cost	\$12,923.39	\$16,993.67	\$59,905.87	\$18,073.65
kWh	73,362.45	95,958.65	220,619.63	105,911.02
tCO ₂ -e	51.35	67.17	154.43	74.14
GJ	264.10	345.45	794.23	381.28

(kWh) - kilowatt hour, equivalent to the energy consumed by a 1,000 watt or 1 kilowatt electrical appliance operating for 1 hour

(Tonnes CO₂-e) - tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, a gas produced both naturally by animals and through human activities such as burning gasoline, coal, oil and wood

(GJ) - gigajoule, a unit of measurement of energy consumption. A gigajoule equals a billion joules. One gigajoule of natural gas is approximately equivalent to 27 litres of fuel oil, 39 litres of propane, 26 litres of gasoline or 277 kilowatt hours of electricity

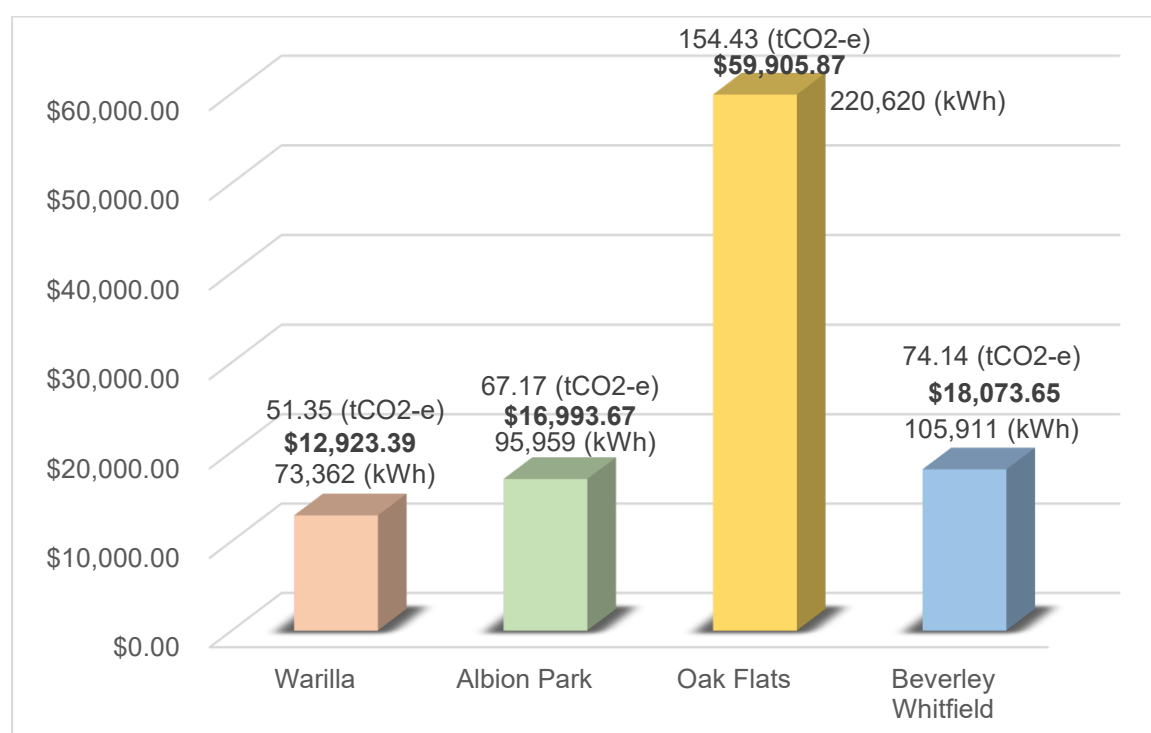


Figure 37 – Electricity usage comparison across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

Table 31 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Cost of Electricity (1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Cost (\$)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	406,852.75
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	287,681.30
3	Waste Disposal Depot	216,788.03
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	138,211.17
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	71,125.74
6	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	59,905.87
7	Airport - Terminal	47,711.88
8	Beverley Whitfield Pool	18,073.65
9	Albion Park Pool	16,993.67
10	Myimbarr Community Park - Amenities	14,850.84

Table 32 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Electricity Consumption (kWh) (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Consumption (kWh)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	1,541,752.55
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	1,131,632.26
3	Waste Disposal Depot	977,409.78
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	558,371.94
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	231,356.09
6	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	220,619.63
7	Airport - Terminal	145,145.14
8	Croom Regional Sporting Complex - Indoor Stadium	107,492.17
9	Beverley Whitfield Pool	105,911.02
10	Albion Park Pool	95,958.65

Table 33 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Electricity Emissions (tonnes CO₂-e) – (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e)
1	Street lighting (not metered)	1,079.23
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	792.14
3	Waste Disposal Depot	607.12
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	318.09
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	161.21
6	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	154.43
7	Airport - Terminal	101.60
8	Beverley Whitfield Pool	74.14
9	Albion Park Pool	67.17
10	Illawarra Fire Centre	52.90

Summary

Three (3) of Council's pools ranked in the top 10 Council facilities for the highest cost (Table 27) of electricity and emission totals (Table 29) associated with electricity usage. These results highlight the importance for Council to develop a strategy that transforms its aquatic facilities from high consumers of electricity into modern, environmentally responsible and financially sustainable community assets. Embedding Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles into future aquatic infrastructure decisions will be a priority which supports Council's own commitment to achieving net zero operational emissions by 2035.

Electricity generation remains one of the major causes of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. Therefore, focusing on addressing the energy performance of aquatic facilities which are one of the most energy intensive type of buildings, will contribute towards reducing these harmful emissions.

7.3 Natural Gas Consumption

The majority of older aquatic facilities run on natural gas, highlighting the importance for Land Managers to electrify existing centres and increase their energy efficiency. Oak Flats is the only Council pool in Shellharbour utilising natural gas for its function of providing heated water. The following data highlights the level, classification and cost of the natural gas consumption at Oak Flats Pool.

Table 34 – Natural Gas consumption at Oak Flats Pool (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

Natural Gas	Oak Flats (Open 12 months)
Total Cost (\$)	\$59,079.08
Total Consumption (MJ)	3,893,106.96
Median Total Consumption (MJ)	3,993,817
Total Consumption (GJ)	3,893.11
Scope 1 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	200.61
Scope 2 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	0
Scope 3 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	51
Total Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	251.61

(MJ) is the abbreviation for megajoule, which is a unit of measurement of energy consumption. A megajoule equals a million joules.

The Median value provided above is taken from 65 Aquatic Centre respondents nationally within the 2023-24 National Operational Benchmarking Survey from the University of South Australia's Customer Experience Research Metrics and Performance Indicators (CERM PI) research team.

Table 35 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for cost of Natural Gas (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

#	Name	Cost (\$)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	59,079.08
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	38,585.21
3	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	28,237.10
4	The Links - Golf Course Club House	16,948.70
5	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	5,123.51
6	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	1,547.83
7	Flinders Child & Family Centre	1,253.09
8	Shell Cove Community Centre	281.09
9	Warilla Swimming Pool	151.23
10	Albion Park Showground	100.19

Table 36 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Natural Gas Consumption (t CO₂-e) (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

#	Name	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	251.61
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	158.58
3	The Links - Golf Course Club House	68.36
4	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	20.01
5	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	5.54
6	Flinders Child & Family Centre	4.19
7	Shell Cove Community Centre	0.46
8	Warilla Swimming Pool	0.20
9	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	0.12
10	Albion Park Showground	0.09

Table 37 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Natural Gas Consumption (MJ) (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

#	Name	Consumption (MJ)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	3,893,106.96
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	2,453,697.58
3	The Links - Golf Course Club House	1,057,746.13
4	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	309,583.02
5	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	85,647.01
6	Flinders Child & Family Centre	64,907.81
7	Shell Cove Community Centre	7,094.71
8	Warilla Swimming Pool	3,027.38
9	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	1,808.33
10	Albion Park Showground	1,449.20

Table 38 – Natural Gas consumption at Oak Flats Pool (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

Natural Gas	Oak Flats (Open 12 months)
Total Cost (\$)	\$130,955.73
Total Consumption (MJ)	5,254,099.00
Median Total Consumption (MJ)	3,993,817
Total Consumption (GJ)	5,254.10
Scope 1 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	141.87
Scope 2 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	0
Scope 3 Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	36.07
Total Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	339.57

(MJ) is the abbreviation for megajoule, which is a unit of measurement of energy consumption. A megajoule equals a million joules.

Table 39 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for cost of Natural Gas (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Cost (\$)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	130,955.73
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	63,557.69
3	The Links - Golf Course Club House	28,880.28
4	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	5,864.05
5	Flinders Child & Family Centre	1,984.11
6	Shell Cove Community Centre	1,607.35
7	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	1,393.31
8	Warilla Swimming Pool	138.48
9	Centenary Hall	128.44
10	Albion Park Showground	127.57

Table 40 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Natural Gas Consumption (t CO₂-e) (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	339.57
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	161.53
3	The Links - Golf Course Club House	71.98
4	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	14.17
5	Flinders Child & Family Centre	4.41
6	Shell Cove Community Centre	3.66
7	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	3.14
8	Warilla Swimming Pool	0.13
9	Centenary Hall	0.11
10	Albion Park Showground	0.11

Table 41 – Ten highest ranking Council Facilities for Natural Gas Consumption (MJ) (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

#	Name	Consumption (MJ)
1	Oak Flats Swimming Pool	5,254,099.00
2	Civic Centre - Public spaces	2,499,274.00
3	The Links - Golf Course Club House	1,113,652.00
4	Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park	219,301.00
5	Flinders Child & Family Centre	68,287.00
6	Shell Cove Community Centre	56,686.00
7	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	48,562.00
8	Warilla Swimming Pool	1,975.00
9	Centenary Hall	1,650.00
10	Albion Park Showground	1,630.00

Oak Flats Pool is the highest ranked Council facility for both the consumption of natural gas and the associated cost of its usage. Transforming Oak Flats Pool from a high consumer of natural gas into a modern, environmentally responsible and financially sustainable community asset will require embedding Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles that optimise thermal performance and energy efficiency into any future aquatic infrastructure decisions made by Council for the Centre. This approach will also support Council's own commitment to achieving net zero operational emissions by 2035.

Ongoing sustainable asset management will continue to reduce the environmental impacts of the aquatic operations through the electrification of heat via heat pumps, on site renewable energy generation through Solar Photovoltaic (panels), load shifting through battery storage and sustainable procurement practices including prioritising low or zero carbon products, services and assets. These initiatives could provide significant financial savings for Council based on the current 2024/25 Oak Flats Pool annual cost of natural gas usage (\$131K).

Summary

The cost of natural gas consumption at Oak Flats Pool from 2023/24 to 2024/25 increased by 121.6% (\$71,876.65) with the total consumption of natural gas increasing by 25.9%. These figures acknowledge the increasing cost of natural gas for aquatic facility providers and importance of implementing the electrification of heat by replacing combustion-based heating systems (gas boilers) with electric heating technologies (heat pumps).

7.4 Water Consumption

Aquatic facilities consume millions of litres of water annually with leaks, evaporation and inefficient filtration systems providing significant areas of concern for aquatic centre land managers (councils). Asset Reports undertaken in 2023 by engineering consultants verified the same issues with leaks and inefficient filtration systems identified at all three (3) of Council's chlorinated pools.

The following data highlights the level, classification and cost of water consumption at each of Council's four (4) pools. It should be noted that Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool does not utilise any town water for the pool to function and is therefore not included in the following tables and graphs.

Table 42 – Water consumption comparison per quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023)

Water usage Period	Warilla (Open 5 months)		Albion Park (Open 5 months)		Oak Flats (Open all year)	
	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)
1 July 22 - 30 Sept 22	\$880.96	358	\$4,098.92	1,670	\$6,073.84	2,470
1 Oct 22 - 31 Dec 22	\$8,575.00	3,430	\$2,672.50	1,069	\$5,302.50	2,121
1 Jan 23 - 31 Mar 23	\$5,522.50	2,209	\$4,952.50	1,981	\$7,227.50	2,891
1 Apr 23 - 30 Jun 23	\$1,932.50	773	\$4,075.00	1,630	\$9,737.50	3,895
Total	\$16,910.96	6,770	\$15,798.92	6,350	\$28,341.34	11,377

Table 43 – Water consumption comparison per quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

Water usage Period	Warilla (Open 5 months)		Albion Park (Open 5 months)		Oak Flats (Open all year)	
	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)
1 July 23 - 30 Sept 23	\$1,161.39	443	\$4,248.71	1,634	\$6,166.05	2,360
1 Oct 23 - 31 Dec 23	\$8,992.56	3,368	\$4,157.19	1,557	\$7,176.96	2,688
1 Jan 24 - 31 Mar 24	\$7,769.70	2,910	\$5,393.40	2,020	\$9,051.30	3,390
1 Apr 24 - 30 Jun 24	\$2,843.55	1,065	\$5,289.26	2,445	\$10,415.67	3,901
Total	\$20,767.20	7,786	\$19,088.56	7,656	\$32,809.98	12,339

Table 44 – Water consumption comparison per quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

Water usage Period	Warilla (Open 5 months)		Albion Park (Open 5 months)		Oak Flats (Open all year)	
	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)	(\$)	(kL)
1 July 24 - 30 Sept 24	\$915.81	343	\$4,157.19	1,557	\$3,791.40	1,420
1 Oct 24 - 31 Dec 24	\$7,155.60	2,680	\$5,409.42	2,026	\$5,986.14	2,242
1 Jan 25 - 31 Mar 25	\$6,202.41	2,323	\$4,373.46	1,638	\$5,852.64	2,192
1 Apr 25 - 30 Jun 25	\$1,198.83	449	\$4,627.11	1,733	\$8,135.49	3,047
Total	\$15,472.65	5,795	\$18,567.18	6,954	\$23,765.67	8,901

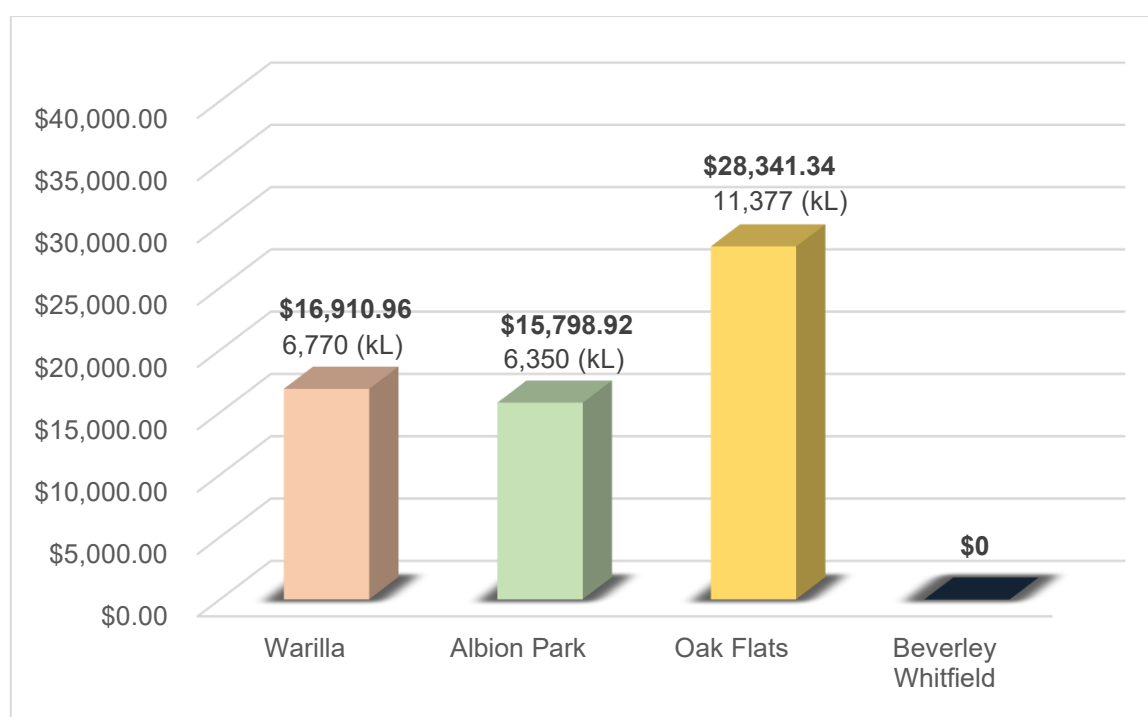


Figure 38 – Water consumption comparison quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023)

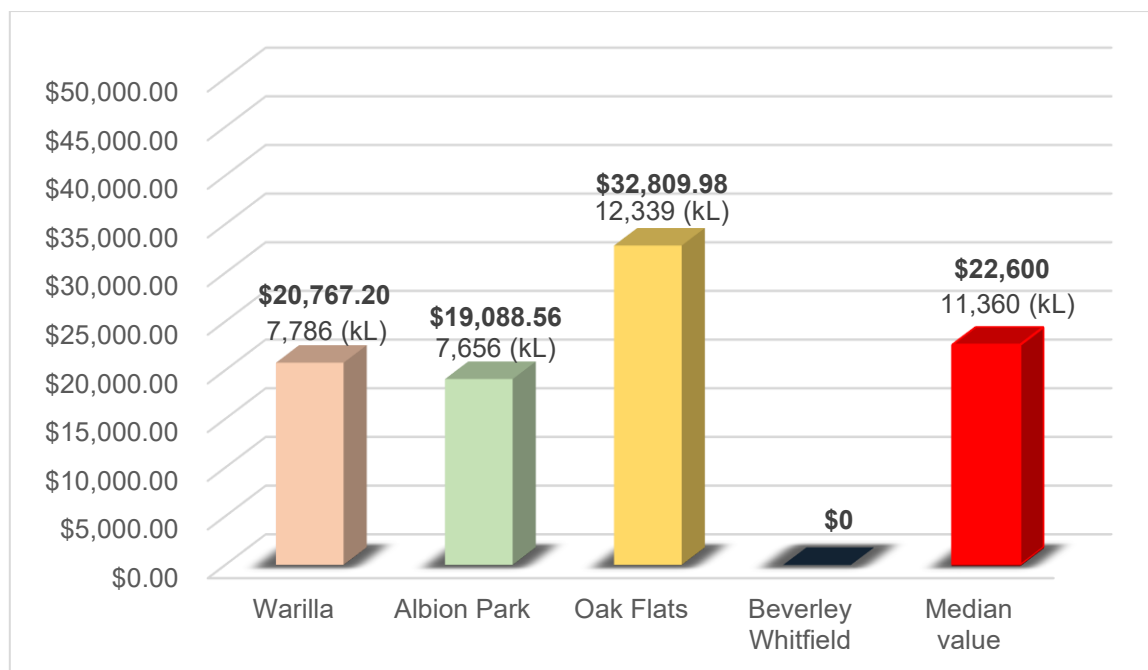


Figure 39 – Water consumption comparison quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024)

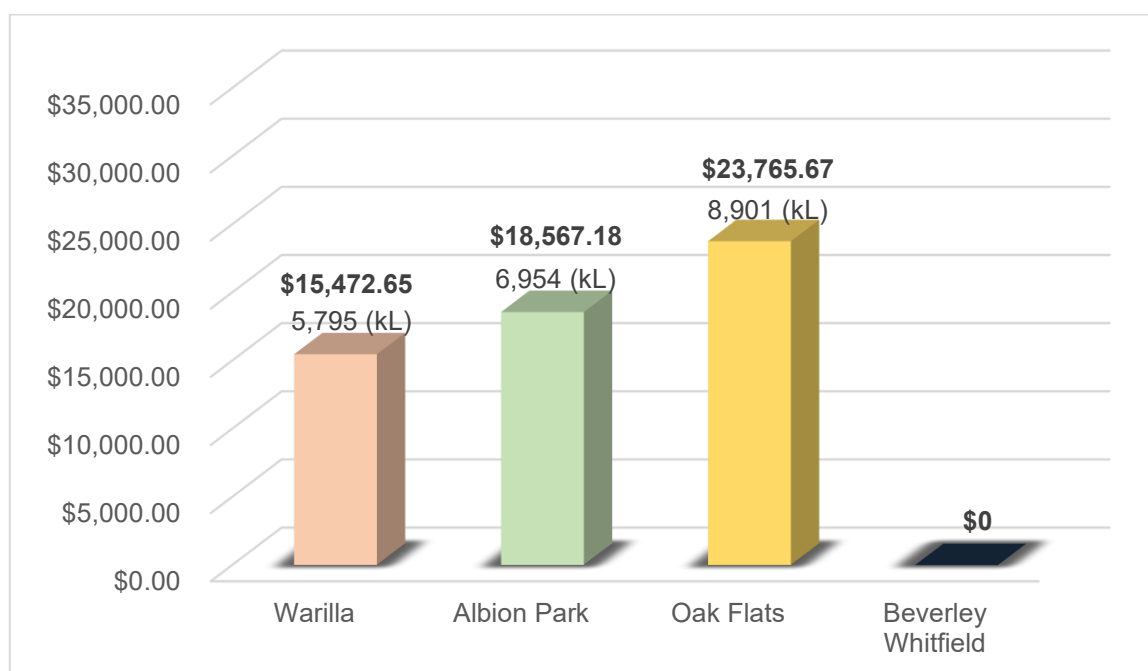


Figure 40 – Water consumption cost comparison quarter across Shellharbour City Council Pools (1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

Analysis of the recent data shows that:

- Warilla Pool had a 15% increase in water usage from season 2022/23 to 2023/24 which resulted in a 22.8% increase in the cost of water usage. While comparisons

between the 2023/24 to 2024/25 figures highlight a 25.6% decrease in in water usage and a 25.5% decrease in costs.

- Albion Park Pool had a 20.8% increase in water usage from season 2022/23 to 2023/24 which resulted in a 15.7% increase in the cost of water usage. While comparisons between the 2023/24 to 2024/25 figures show a 9.1% decrease in in water usage and a 2.7% decrease in costs.
- Oak Flats Pool had an 8.4% increase in water usage from season 2022/23 to 2023/24 which resulted in a 15.7%% increase in the cost of water usage. While comparisons between the 2023/24 to 2024/25 figures highlight a 27.8% decrease in in water usage and a 27.5% decrease in costs.

Summary

Encouragingly, all three (3) of Council's chlorinated pools experienced a decrease in water usage and cost for the 2024/25 season. Sydney Water Corporation (SWC) advise that council-owned aquatic facilities in Sydney use around 1,000ML of water each year, experience an average water wastage of 22% due to leaks and base flows alone and that water consumption for aquatic facilities in NSW highlighted a consumption range from 20L/bather to 60L/bather.

To ensure a more sustainable future for current and planned public aquatic facilities, Council should invest in water-saving technologies to reduce consumption and waste including initiatives such as;

- Leak detection programs using diagnostics to identify and repair water loss before costly failures occur such as visual inspections, pressure testing, specialised acoustic listening devices and dye testing
- Evaporation control strategies such as pool blankets, misting system and improved ventilation to minimise water loss in both indoor and outdoor pools
- Ultra-fine filtration systems (Regenerative media filters) which provides superior water clarity, eliminates backwashing, reduces chemical consumption and lowers water wastage compared to traditional sand filters
- Rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems to supplement pool level top-ups and irrigation needs

Australia's aquatic industry and governments must prioritise sustainability to ensure long term viability and affordability of public pool operations into the future while reducing their environmental impact.

8 Pool Operation Options

8.1 Context and Assumptions

It is important to review and assess how current aquatic operations meet the demands of the customers and community they are servicing. The following provides consideration based on existing pool facilities, infrastructure, demand and financial and environmental considerations.

In addition, on 28 October 2025, Council resolved:

That Council staff provide an urgent report about the cost of extending the Albion Park and Warilla Pool season in 2026 as a trial for the entirety of the spring and autumn school holiday periods in 2026 (terms 2 and 3 holidays). This would mean extending the current season to Sunday 19 April 2026 (school term 2 holidays) and starting the next season earlier on Saturday 26 September 2026 (school term 3 holidays).

This proposed extension would equate to an additional 8 weeks of operations (29 weeks total season) and has also been considered.

With respect to seasonal operations, particularly operational hours, consideration should also be given to providing consistency between facilities which will provide clearer and more reliable experience for customers of Council's pools.

It is also often observed from community and customer feedback that seasonal pools could be opened during school holiday periods, even during the off-season. Whilst this may seem like a pragmatic solution, it is often not feasible to simply 'turn on' a pool without a certain amount of planning and resources leading up to each period. This approach is not considered to be an efficient use of resources as there are difficulties in maintaining a dormant pool between uses, from facility security (including vandalism, unauthorised access/use) and maintaining water quality; and may result in additional costs with additional start-up and pack-down resourcing.

The following assessment is provided for financial information, including costs, for the 2025/26 financial year; and the operational costs explored exclude asset depreciation, which is a non-cash operational impact to Council.

8.2 Warilla Pool Operating Considerations

As outlined in Section 5 above, Warilla Pool currently operates five months of the year over the summer period and the subsidy per visit for the 2024/25 aquatic season was in the order of \$22.45. Patronage at this location is significantly lower compared to Council's other pools, with its highest use seen during December and January (summer peak) and bolstered through February and early March by various school carnivals and NSW Department of Education activities. Low utilisation of Warilla Pool can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

- the number of alternative free aquatic opportunities in close proximity (Lake Illawarra swimming areas, beaches and Beverley Whitfield Pool);
- lack of modern infrastructure embellishments (e.g. heating, splash pad, kiosk etc.); and
- no affiliated swimming club.

Despite its low utilisation, Warilla Pool provides a safe aquatic opportunity within an area of lower socio-economic advantage.

Based on utilisation and need, Council could consider the following operational models for Warilla Pool:

8.2.1 Existing Service (5-month Summer Operation)

The current five-month summer operation at Warilla Pool is largely accepted by patrons as adequate; except on the few "hot" days that are sometimes experienced in April and October. The current operational times and costs for Warilla Pool are summarised below, which provides a 20-21 week swimming season.

Warilla Pool Current Operation Times

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
1 November to 31 March	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	\$340,000
1 April to 31 October	Closed	

The current operating model sees continued high subsidy rates per visit and is not financially sustainable for the broader Shellharbour community. It is recommended that the operational hours within this operating model are reviewed.

8.2.2 Service Extension Options

A number of service extension models have been considered in the context of the Council resolution of 28 October 2025. As previously outlined, this proposed extension would equate to an additional 8 weeks of operations (29 weeks total season). The impacts of this option, along with 2 alternate options, is provided below.

8.2.2.1 Warilla Option 1 – Extension of Current Operations

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
26 September to 19 April	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	\$472,000
20 April to 25 September	Closed	

This option provides a 29-week long swimming season and will require approximately \$132,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

8.2.2.2 Warilla Option 2 – Alternate Season Extension of Current Operations

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 10am to 5pm	\$420,000
October (3 weeks)	Thursday to Sunday 10am to 5pm*	
1 November to 31 March (21 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	
1 April to end School Holidays (3 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 10am to 5pm	
20 April to September	Closed	

* with the ability to open additional days for carnivals/events and predicted hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 29-week long swimming season and will require approximately \$80,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

8.2.2.3 Warilla Option 3 – September School Holidays to ANZAC Day

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays to 30 November (10 weeks)	Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm*	\$360,000
1 December to 31 January (9 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	
1 February to ANZAC Day (11 weeks)	Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm*	
26 April to September	Closed	

* with the ability to open additional days for carnivals/events and predicted hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 30-week long swimming season which aligns with Council's overall aquatics summer season at Oak Flats and Beverley Whitfield Pools and Council's beaches. This option will require approximately \$20,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

The three service extension models are summarised in Figure 41 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Warilla Pool Season Extension Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season					■	■	■	■	■	■			\$340,000
1. Current Season Extension (29 weeks)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■			\$472,000
2. Alternate Season Extension (29 weeks)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■			\$420,000
3. Season Extension (30 weeks)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■			\$360,000

Figure 41 – Warilla Pool Service Extension Options

Given its high subsidy per visit and low utilisation, extending the season at Warilla Pool is not recommended as the demand does not support this option.

Other service extension models could also be considered and refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community.

8.2.3 Service Reduction Options

Consideration of reducing the service period at Warilla Pool would potentially provide a better financial outcome for Council, whilst continuing to service the Warilla area. The following are examples of service reductions that could be considered.

8.2.3.1 Warilla Option 4 – Peak Season Only

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
1 December to 31 January	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm*	\$170,000
1 February to 30 November	Closed	

* with the ability to open longer hours on hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 9-week, peak season swimming season for the time of the year during the summer school holiday break with the highest use for recreational swimmers of the facility. This option would reduce operational costs by approximately \$170,000 p.a.

Preferred 2026/27 Trial to Align with Customer Demand at Warilla Pool

8.2.3.2 Warilla Option 5 – December to March (Preferred)

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
1 December to 31 January (9 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm*	\$240,000
1 February to 31 March (8 weeks)	Thursday to Sunday 9am to 5pm*	
1 April to 30 November	Closed	

* with the ability to open additional days for carnivals/events and predicted hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 17-week swimming season for the hottest time of the year and during the summer school holiday break with the highest use for recreational swimmers, swimming carnivals and department of education uses. This option would reduce operational costs by approximately \$100,000 p.a.

The two service reduction models are summarised in Figure 42 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Warilla Pool Season Reduction Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season													\$340,000
4. Peak Season Only (9 weeks)													\$170,000
5. Season Reduction (17 weeks)													\$240,000

Figure 42 - Warilla Pool Service Reduction Options

Other service reduction models could also be considered and refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community. In addition, the cessation of services at Warilla Pool altogether could also be considered.

8.3 Albion Park Pool Operating Considerations

Albion Park Pool is a moderately well-attended facility that operates five months of the year over the summer period. The subsidy per visit for the 2024/25 aquatic season was in the order of \$7.11, which is comparable to the industry median of \$6.29 (in 2023/24).

Albion Park Pool is the only public aquatic facility in the west of the Shellharbour Local Government Area (noting that the Oak Flats Pool is only a 15-minute drive from most parts of Albion Park, Calderwood and Tullimbar). In addition to recreational and fitness users, utilisation at Albion Park Pool is aided by (amongst others):

- desirable modern infrastructure (solar heating and splash play);
- swimming club activities on Friday evenings;
- school carnivals and NSW Department of Education activities;
- lack of nearby, walkable aquatic opportunities; and
- hotter environmental conditions in the west of the City.

Based on utilisation and need, Council could consider the following operational models for Albion Park Pool:

8.3.1 Existing Service (5-month Summer Operation)

The current five-month summer operation at Albion Park Pool has been relatively successful, with good utilisation of the facility from season opening to season closure. The current model provides a good balance of availability during hotter periods, whilst on colder days attendances naturally fall – as the pool is only solar heated and therefore not regulated to a consistent

temperature. Recently, the existing operating model has been challenged by a small but vocal number of users of the facility who wish to see the facility open for a longer period.

The current operational times and costs for Albion Park Pool are summarised below, which provides a 20-21 week swimming season.

Albion Park Pool Current Operation Times

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
1 November to 31 March	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm*	\$340,000
1 April to 31 October	Closed	

* open to 8pm on Fridays for swimming club point-score only

The current operational model sees continued annual operating losses consistent with previous financial years; however, the comparatively lower subsidy per visit could be considered acceptable as providing benefit to the broader community.

8.3.2 Service Extension Options

As previously mentioned, there is a small but vocal number of users of the facility who wish to see Albion Park Pool open for a longer period during the Spring and Autumn season. Whilst there are strong numbers of people utilising the pool during the season, patronage does reduce as the season heats up (November) and cools down (March). As such, a trial season extension should be considered by Council to better determine demand in the earlier and latter parts of the broader summer season. This is evident by the Council resolution made on 28 October 2025 to consider a service extension at this facility.

The following service extension options provide examples and their potential financial impacts, other service extension models could also be considered and refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community.

8.3.2.1 Albion Park Option 1 – Extension of Current Operations

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
26 September to 19 April	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	\$474,000
20 April to 25 September	Closed	

This option provides a 29-week long swimming season and will require approximately \$134,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

8.3.2.2 Albion Park Option 2 – September School Holidays to ANZAC Day

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
26 September to ANZAC Day	Monday to Sunday 10am to 5pm*	\$340,000
26 April to September	Closed	

* with the ability to open additional hours for hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 30-week long swimming season which aligns with Council's overall aquatics summer season at Oak Flats and Beverley Whitfield Pools as well as Council's beaches. This option could also be provided cost-neutral compared to the current resourcing model.

Preferred 2026/27 Trial to Align with Customer Demand at Albion Park Pool

8.3.2.3 Albion Park Option 3 – September School Holidays to ANZAC (Preferred)

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays to mid-November (8 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm*	\$360,000
Mid-November to 28 February (14 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm	
1 March to ANZAC Day (8 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm*	
26 April to September	Closed	

* with the ability to open additional hours for hot days with sufficient notice and planning

This option provides a 30-week long swimming season and will require approximately \$20,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

The three service extension models are summarised in Figure 43 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Albion Park Pool Season Extension Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season													\$340,000
1. Current Season Extension (29 weeks)													\$474,000
2. Season Extension (30 weeks)													\$340,000
3. Alternate Season Extension (30 weeks)													\$360,000

Figure 43 – Albion Park Pool Service Extension Options

The above analysis demonstrates that there are potential suitable models for extending the swimming season at Albion Park Pool, whilst maintaining, or even improving, the subsidy per visit at the facility.

8.3.3 Service Reduction Options

Given its strong utilisation and community sentiment, service reductions to the summer swimming season at Albion Park are not recommended; however, minor adjustments to operational hours could be considered, particularly prior to 8am on weekdays and 9am on weekends when patronage is typically at its lowest.

Notwithstanding, Council may choose to consider any other service reduction refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community.

8.4 Oak Flats Pool Operating Considerations

Oak Flats Pool is a vibrant facility that is open year-round and is well attended in both summer and winter seasons. The subsidy per visit for the 2024/25 aquatic season was in the order of \$5.39, which is lower than the industry median of \$6.29 (in 2023/24).

Oak Flats Pool is centrally located within the Shellharbour Local Government Area and is typically accessible by car within a 15-minute drive from any part of the City. The relatively high utilisation of Oak Flats Pool is driven by:

- access to three different sized pools (50m, 25m and toddlers pool);
- desirable modern infrastructure (gas heating year-round);

- Council's Aquatic Programs (learn to swim, squads and aqua aerobics);
- swimming club activities, mornings and evenings on five to six days per week; and
- school carnivals and NSW Department of Education activities.

Based on utilisation and need, Council could consider the following operational models for Oak Flats Pool:

8.4.1 Existing Service (Year-Round)

The current year-round operation at Oak Flats Pool is largely accepted by patrons as adequate, with commentary on the pool typically focussed on the need for more lane availability particularly during peak activation times (swimming club and aquatic programs) – i.e. more/larger infrastructure.

The current service defines the summer season as the start of the September school holidays, through to ANZAC Day, with the winter season commencing 26 April through to late September. Operational times during each season are outlined below.

Oak Flats Pool Current Operation Times

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
<u>Summer</u> September School Holidays to ANZAC Day (30 weeks)	Monday to Friday 6am to 7pm Saturday & Sunday 6am to 6:30pm	\$840,000
<u>Winter</u> ANZAC Day to September School Holidays (22 weeks)	Monday to Friday 6am to 6:30pm Saturday: 6am to 2pm Sunday: Closed	

The current operational model sees continued annual operating losses consistent with previous financial years; however, the low subsidy per visit for this facility would be considered acceptable as providing benefit to the broader community.

8.4.2 Service Extension Options

As previously mentioned, Oak Flats Pool is a vibrant facility that is well utilised by the community. Despite being open year-round, there are still opportunities to extend operations, particularly in the Winter season. Service extensions that could be considered include:

8.4.2.1 Oak Flats Pool Option 1 – Extended Operational Times

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Year Round	Monday to Friday 6am to 7pm Saturday & Sunday 6am to 6:30pm	\$960,000

This option provides year-round swimming, 7-days per week and will require approximately \$120,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

8.4.2.2 Oak Flats Pool Option 2 – Winter Sunday Operations

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
<u>Summer</u> September School Holidays to ANZAC Day (30 weeks)	Monday to Friday 6am to 7pm Saturday & Sunday 6am to 6:30pm	\$880,000
<u>Winter</u> ANZAC Day to September School Holidays (22 weeks)	Monday to Friday 6am to 6:30pm Saturday & Sunday 6am to 2pm	

This option also provides year-round swimming, 7-days per week; however, maintain reduced trading hours on weekends. This option will require approximately \$40,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

These two service extension models are summarised in Figure 44 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Oak Flats Pool Season Extension Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season													\$840,000
1. Full Year Extended Hours													\$960,000
2. Winter Sunday Operations													\$880,000

Figure 44 – Oak Flats Pool Service Extension Options

The above service extensions could be well-suited to the existing pool facility and infrastructure; however, further service extensions and operating hours would be better explored when considering an upgraded facility such as those explored in Section 9.4.3 below.

8.4.3 Service Reduction Options

Given its strong utilisation, activation and ties to the local swimming and sporting clubs, service reductions to the aquatics service at Oak Flats Pool are not recommended.

Notwithstanding, Council may choose to consider any other service reduction refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community.

8.5 Beverley Whitfield Pool Operating Considerations

Beverley Whitfield Pool is Shellharbour City's most utilised pool. Whilst only patrolled in the summer swimming season, it is available to the community year-round and is free of charge. The subsidy per visit for the 2024/25 aquatic season was in the order of \$1.40, which is significantly lower than the industry median of \$6.29 (in 2023/24).

Beverley Whitfield Pool is the only ocean (saltwater) pool in the Shellharbour Local Government Area and its location and amenity prove to be a significant drawcard for its high utilisation.

Unlike other Council pools it is accessible to the public at all times of the day, year-round, and there is no way close/lock the pool. Consideration of lifeguard patrol hours should be focussed on managing this risk against the practicality of an ocean pool and people's preferred recreation times. In other words, operation of chlorinated pools will be focussed on activation and utilisation where Council has control of who accesses the facilities and when; whereas the operation of Beverley Whitfield Pool will focus on managing risk – in a similar way that Council manages its beaches and coastline.

Based on utilisation and need, Council could consider the following operational models for Beverley Whitfield Pool:

8.5.1 Existing Service

The current summer season lifeguarding operation at Beverley Whitfield Pool is generally accepted by patrons as being adequate. This likely due the fact most users can continue to access the pool at any time when lifeguards are not present, with the pool being perceived as a safe coastal place to recreate or undertake fitness activities.

Under the current operation, lifeguard patrols commence with the summer season at the start of the September school holidays and continue through to ANZAC Day in the schedule provided below which follows a similar pattern to the nearby Shellharbour South Beach ocean lifeguarding operations.

Beverley Whitfield Pool Current Lifeguard Operation Times

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	\$230,000
School Term 4 (10 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
Summer School Holidays (6 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
School Term 1 (9 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
April School Holidays through to ANZAC Day (3 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
ANZAC Day to September School Holidays (22 weeks)	Unpatrolled	

The current operational model sees continued annual operating losses consistent with previous financial years, particularly as the pool does not generate any income; however, the subsidy per visit for this facility is quite low and would be considered acceptable as providing benefit to the broader community.

8.5.2 Service Extension Options

Whilst the existing service is generally fit for purpose (resourcing consistent with other coastal areas and in times where most vulnerable users are likely present), the following service extension options could also be considered by Council.

8.5.2.1 Beverley Whitfield Pool Option 1 – Autumn Extended Patrols

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	\$260,000
October to 30 November (7 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
1 December to 31 January (9 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
School Term 1 (9 weeks)	Monday to Friday 1pm to 5pm Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
April School Holidays through to ANZAC Day (3 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
ANZAC Day to September School Holidays (22 weeks)	Unpatrolled	

This option extends the Summer Peak season by 3 weeks, and similar to ocean lifeguard patrols at Shellharbour North and Warilla Central beaches, provides extended patrols through autumn. This option will require approximately \$30,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

8.5.2.2 Beverley Whitfield Pool Option 2 – Summer Peak Season Extension

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	\$250,000
October to 30 November (7 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
1 December to 2nd week February (10 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
School Term 1 (8 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
April School Holidays through to ANZAC Day (3 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
ANZAC Day to September School Holidays (22 weeks)	Unpatrolled	

This option extends the Summer Peak season by up to 4 weeks and will require approximately \$20,000 p.a. of additional funding to resource.

These two service extension models are summarised in Figure 45 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Beverley Whitfield Pool Season Extension Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season													\$230,000
1. Autumn Extended Patrols													\$260,000
2. Summer Extended Patrols													\$250,000

Figure 45 – Beverley Whitfield Pool Service Extension Options

Both service extension options provided above demonstrate low-cost examples of season extension models that Council could consider; however, the current model is considered fit for purpose and there is no currently strong justification to extend lifeguarding patrols at the pool.

8.5.3 Service Reduction Options

Consideration of reducing the lifeguarding service period at Beverley Whitfield Pool could be implemented to provide a more sustainable financial outcome for Council, whilst continuing to service the Shellharbour area – noting that the pool would remain accessible year-round to the community. The following are examples of service reductions that could be considered.

8.5.3.1 Beverley Whitfield Pool Option 3 – Summer and Autumn Patrols

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Summer School Holidays (6 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	\$180,000
School Term 1 (9 weeks)	Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm	
April School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
End April School Holidays to Start September School Holidays (35 weeks)	Unpatrolled	

This option reduces lifeguard patrols to the summer and autumn periods only. Lifeguarding would be provided to a similar schedule as existing from mid-December to the end of the April school holidays, and is similar to ocean lifeguard patrols at nearby Shellharbour South Beach. This option would reduce operational costs by approximately \$50,000 p.a.

Preferred 2026/27 Trial to Align with Customer Demand at Beverley Whitfield Pool

8.5.3.2 Beverley Whitfield Pool Option 4 – School Holiday Patrols Only (Preferred)

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
September School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	\$208,000
School Term 4 (10 weeks)	Unpatrolled	
Summer School Holidays (6 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
School Term 1 (9 weeks)	Unpatrolled	
April School Holidays (2 weeks)	Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm	
End April School Holidays to Start September School Holidays (23 weeks)	Unpatrolled	

This option reduces lifeguard patrols to school holiday periods only. That is, 2 weeks in the spring school holidays, 6 weeks in the summer peak and 2 weeks in the autumn school holidays. This option would reduce operational costs by approximately \$22,000 p.a.

8.5.3.3 Beverley Whitfield Pool Option 5 – Cease Lifeguard Patrols

Season Periods	Operation Times	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Year Round	Unpatrolled	\$70,000

This option is to cease lifeguard patrols at Beverley Whitfield Pool altogether, whilst still maintaining access by the public to the ocean pool. This option maintains the availability of the pool to the community and aligns with other open ocean pool environments across the Illawarra which are also unpatrolled. By ceasing lifeguarding at Beverley Whitfield Pool this option would reduce operational costs by approximately \$160,000 p.a.

The three service reduction models are summarised in Figure 46 below. Each showing the spread of the season with a heatmap of resourcing required to operate.

Beverley Whitfield Pool Season Reduction Options	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated Annual Net Operational Cost
Current Season													\$230,000
3. Summer and Autumn Patrols													\$180,000
4. School Holiday Patrols													\$208,000
5. No Patrols													\$70,000

Figure 46 – Beverley Whitfield Pool Service Reduction Options

Other service reduction models could also be considered and refined to a specific budget target that is considered acceptable to Council and the community.

9 Infrastructure Options

9.1 Infrastructure Investment Options

With the current asset condition of its existing pool facilities now assessed, Council needs to determine the level of financial investment and resources to be invested for the ongoing provision of aquatic facilities to the community. The three (3) strategies and timeframes to consider are:

Short Term (1-5 years) – Minimalist Lower-Cost Spend

Medium Term (5-10 years) – Retrofit and Refurbish

Long Term (10+ years) – All new Infrastructure or Decommissioning (closing) of a Pool

9.1.1 Minimalist Lower-Cost Spend (Short Term 1-5 years)

Examples of smaller capital expenditure items that can be undertaken to improve pool usage and the overall presentation of the centre or decrease the operating costs of seasonal pools are outlined below:

- Installation of solar panels to assist with reduction in electricity expenditure as well as being used to supplement pool water heating.
- Installation of shade. Shade in the surrounding grounds/grassed areas and close to water areas are important for customers and assists in lengthening the time people are able to spend at the pool. Shade structures can be installed in areas such as over the shallow water section of the main pool, over the toddler pools or covering pools used for programs. The installation of shade for customers (and staff) has been identified as an important feature to improve a Centre's attendances.
- Upgrading of change room facilities.
- Installation of water play equipment.
- Aesthetic upgrade - painting, grounds maintenance, signage, fencing, furniture installed including bins, seating, BBQ's etc.

9.1.2 Retrofit and Refurbish (Medium Term 5-10 years)

Medium term options focus on more extensive retrofitting and refurbishing of existing and serviceable infrastructure to a higher standard with the inclusion of additional features and amenities to increase community involvement and align with industry best practice standards, including:

- Reconstruct existing pools to have edges cut down and wet deck and channels put in.
- Toddler pool removed and rebuilt with zero depth beach entry and water features.
- New plant rooms, filtration system and pipework, resulting in improved water quality.
- Installation of accessible pool hoists and equipment.
- New accessible change room facilities.
- New kiosk and reception at front entrance with first aid room, kiosk and entry made accessible via ramp access.
- New improved landscaped grounds including seating and bins.

9.1.3 New Infrastructure or Decommissioning a Pool (Long Term 10+ years)

Long term options include a broad range of possibilities that could be incorporated into the development of a new outdoor pool and/or a multi-purpose facility designed to produce superior community outcomes and experiences by replacing all of the existing facility infrastructure.

Long-term options also draw on the possibility that decisions to continue to operate existing pools (i.e. decommission / close a pool facility) may also be considered. This decision may be considered when the following evidence-based information is present:

- When the pool no longer meets the current and future needs of the community.
- When the facility usage is low and subsidy per visit is high.
- When the pool is unable to be repaired or maintained and has reached the end of its operational life.
- Increasing financial pressure with operating and maintenance costs.
- When community engagement supports the decision.
- When the pool is unsafe and presents a risk to users or operators and is unable to be rectified/repared appropriately.

In 2016, Georges River Council undertook an evaluation of the Kogarah War Memorial Pool at Carrs Park which identified electrical, mechanical, hydraulic and fire services issues due to the pool being in poor structural condition. Further to this, in 2019 old pipes from the pool were found to be leaking, with contaminated backwash water entering the Georges River. Subsequently, Georges River Council received a direction from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in relation to urgent environmental concerns. As a result, Georges River Council made a decision at this point to decommission (close) the pool.

Figure 47 is an excerpt from media showing public opposition to Kogarah Council's 2019 decision to demolish Kogarah War Memorial Pool at Carrs Park. Figure 48 illustrates the

abandoned Carrs Park site and Figure 49 demonstrates how the same footprint after careful and deliberate rehabilitation and landscape works, returns the site to the community.



Figure 47 – Public opposition against Kogarah Council’s 2019 decision to demolish Kogarah War Memorial Pool, Carrs Park



Figure 48 – Official decommissioning of the Kogarah War Memorial Pool, Carrs Park



Figure 49 – Landscaping works finalised in 2024 including a new open space area featuring grassed areas, landscape planting and picnic facilities on the site of the old Kogarah War Memorial Pool, Carrs Park

9.1.4 Modernisation Projects - Case Studies

There are a number of localities that have recently upgraded or are currently undertaking upgrades and modernisation of their aquatic facilities. The challenges faced with undertaking projects of this nature include finding the balance of community desire versus usage and demand, as well as an environment of escalating construction costs that can significantly

impact the ability to deliver the project. The following three (3) case studies provide a snapshot of the challenges, highlighting that they can be overcome with careful consideration and community input. Further aquatic modernisation project case studies are also presented in Appendix B.

CASE 1 – CARNES HILL AQUATIC CENTRE NSW (\$53.4MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Liverpool City Council will deliver a new aquatic centre that has been fully funded by the NSW Government Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program and will complement the Michael Clarke Recreation Centre and Carnes Hill Library site. The project is a result of the outcome of the Carnes Hill Recreational Precinct Revised Stage 2 Masterplan which was adopted by Council in November 2024 with construction completion and centre opening planned for late 2028. The new Centre will include:

- Indoor 8 lane 25m pool (Stage 1)
- Indoor 4 lane 20m Learn to Swim pool (Stage 1)
- Indoor children's splashpad and waterplay area (Stage 1)
- Outdoor 8 lane 50m pool (Later Stages)
- Multipurpose hall (Later Stages)



Figure 50 – Proposed new Carnes Hill Aquatic & Recreational Centre

CASE 2 – WAVES FITNESS & AQUATIC CENTRE NSW (\$55MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Hills Shire Council progressed with a knock-down rebuild of the entire facility and has delivered a new state-of-the-art swimming centre. It was the largest project ever undertaken by Hills Shire Council and the Centre has been fitted with a range of energy efficient equipment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs. Council fully funded the project and the new Centre includes both aquatic and recreation/fitness spaces:

- Outdoor 10 lane 50m pool
- Outdoor 10 lane 25m pool
- Outdoor Splash Pad/Play area
- Indoor 4 lane combined 25m LTS pool and program pool
- Indoor 4 lane 20m warm water program pool
- Indoor Leisure and Toddler pool/lagoon
- Gym and group fitness
- Spa, sauna and steam room

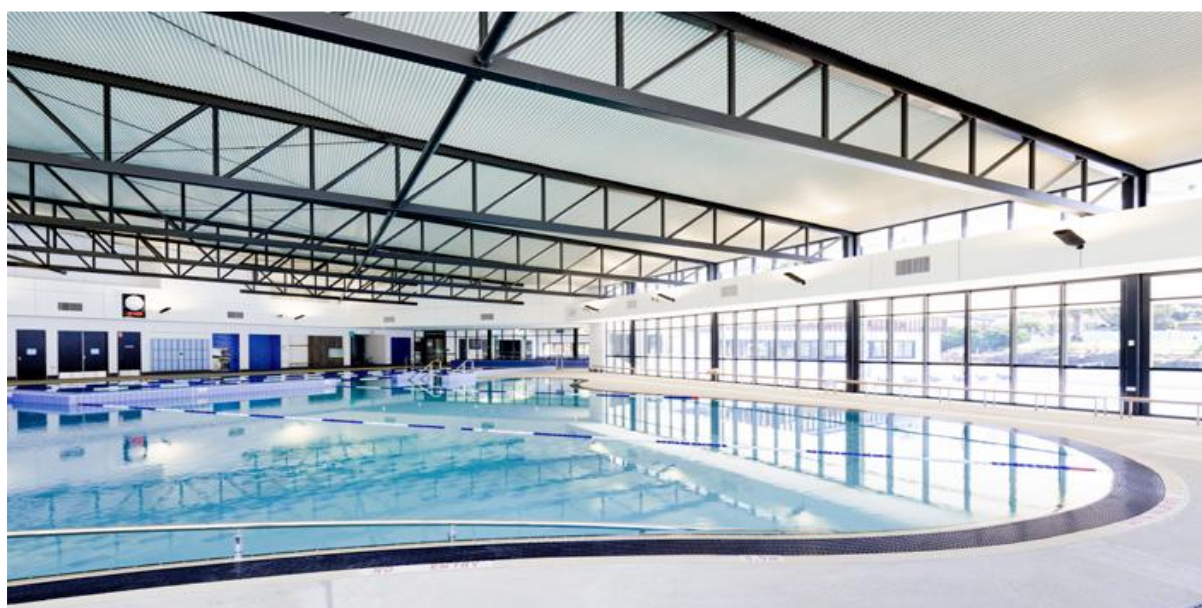


Figure 51 – Waves Fitness & Aquatic Centre

CASE 3 – CARNEGIE MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL VIC (\$75MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Glen Eira City Council delivered a modern accessible and sustainable aquatic centre which will meet the needs of future generations. The redevelopment was supported by a \$10million loan from Sport and Recreation Victoria and \$15million in funding from the Australian Government. The new Centre received a six-star design certification making it one of the most sustainable centres in Australia and includes:

- Outdoor 8 lane 50m pool
- Outdoor dive pool
- Outdoor splash pad/water play area
- Indoor 6 lane LTS 25m pool
- Indoor warm water 25m pool



Figure 52 – Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool

9.2 Warilla Pool Infrastructure Options

9.2.1 Short Term (1-5 years)

Minimalist lower cost capital expenditure options that can be undertaken during a short-term period at Warilla Pool are shown in Figure 53 below and focuses on financial years 2026/27 through to 2030/31.

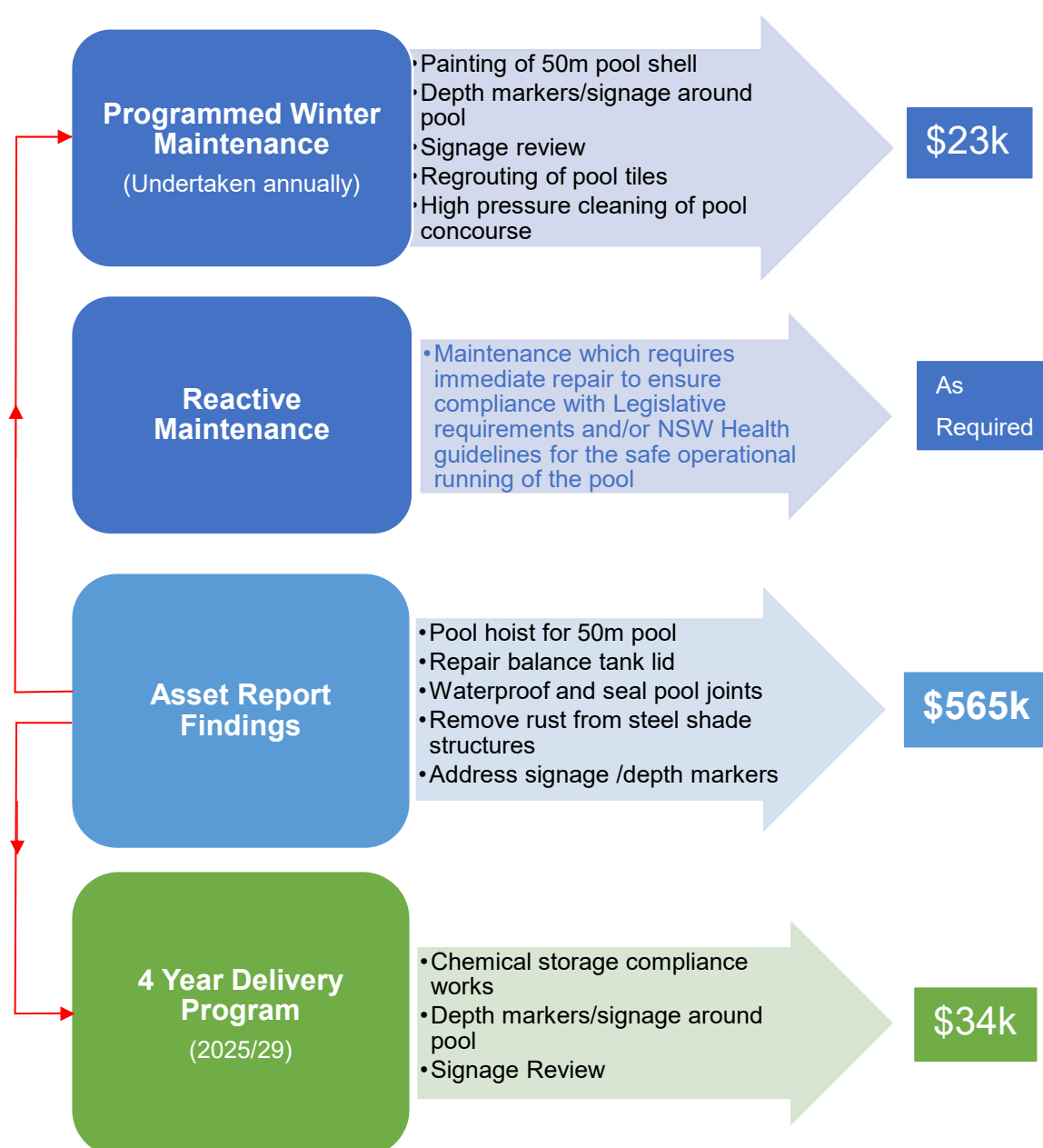


Figure 53 – Warilla Pool Short Term Capital Expenditure

These works are considered to be essential works to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the pool and to maintain the integrity of the asset.

9.2.2 Medium Term (5-10 years)

More extensive retrofitting and refurbishment capital spend options that have already been programmed and can be undertaken during a medium-term period is shown in Figure 54 below for financial years 2030/31 to 2035/36.

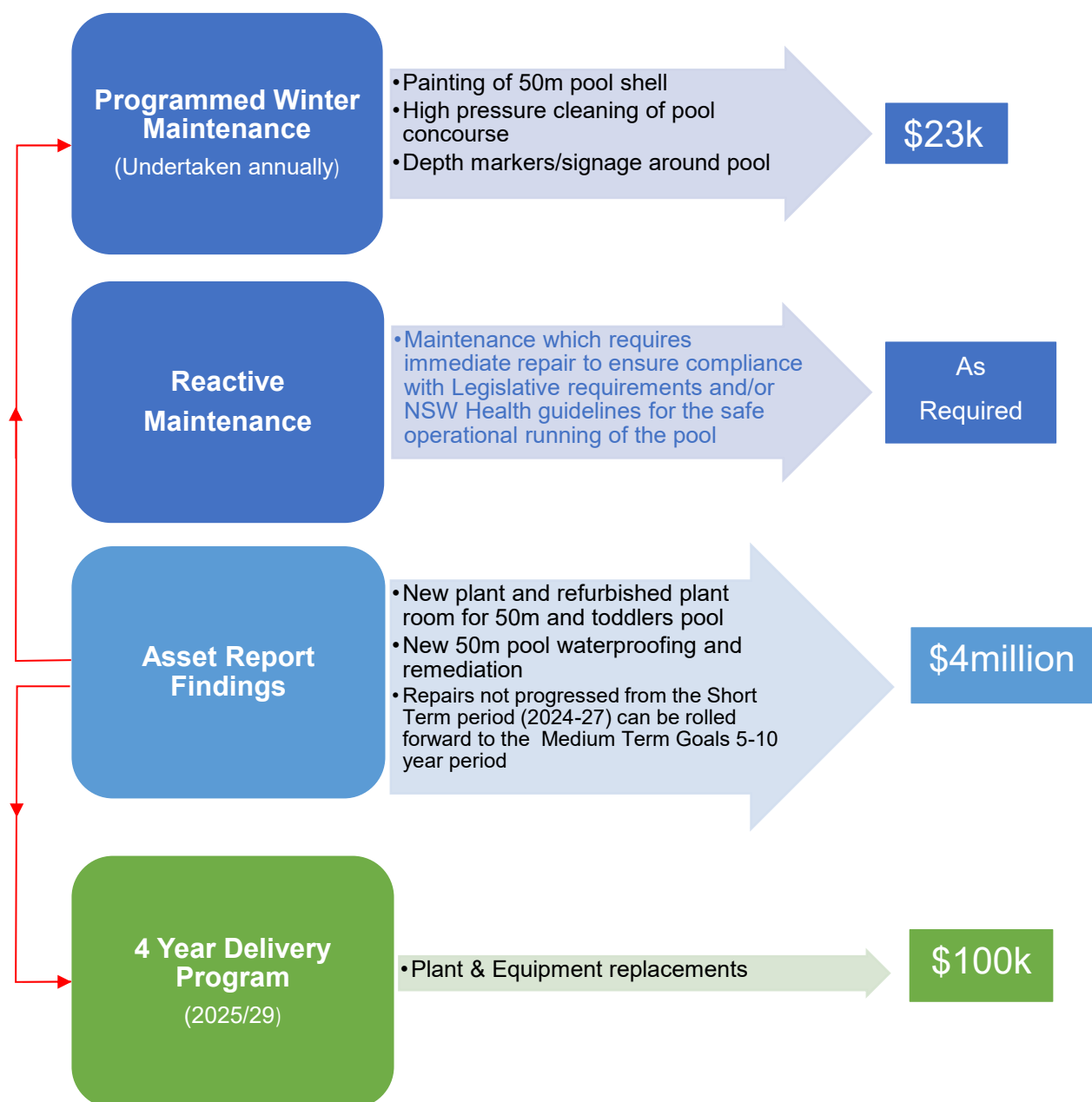


Figure 54 – Warilla Pool Medium Term Capital Expenditure

Delivery of higher value works should be prioritised against Council's longer term infrastructure options and operational model. Expansive refurbishment works would not be recommended should Council be considering more comprehensive upgrades of the facility, or similarly, decommissioning the facility.

9.2.3 Long Term (10+ years)

Long term options focus on decisions that will impact much further into the future in more than 10 years from now. With the Asset Condition Report advising that Warilla Pool will reach its useful life within the next 10 to 15 years, any 'Long Term' decision should focus on whether the community needs warrant the replacement of the pool infrastructure or whether it is decommissioned. Key metrics when evaluating the suitability for replacement of Warilla Pool include:

- Pool opened in 1976, fifty (50) years ago.
- Open for 5 months (November – March), 2024/25 attendance of 14,754 is the equivalent of an average 2,951 visitations per month, 738 per week or 105 per day.
- 2024/25 Subsidy per visit = \$22.45
- 2024/25 operational deficit of \$331,257.96 (Revenue \$39,093.04 & Expenditure \$370,351.00)
- 2024/25 water usage cost is \$15,472.65 with the pool water not being heated.
- 2024/25 electricity usage cost of \$12,923.39
- Approximately 8,000* homes within a five (5) minute drive to Warilla Pool, 20,000* within ten (10) minutes and 29,500* homes within a fifteen (15) minute drive of the pool (* homes within the Shellharbour LGA).
- Seven (7) privately owned pools within the Shellharbour LGA that provide Learn to Swim options less than a sixteen (16) minute drive from Warilla Pool.
- Three (3) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Kiama LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Warilla Pool.
- Four (4) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Wollongong LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Warilla Pool.

***Summary:** Continued low attendances with a high subsidy per visit and operational deficit of \$331k for 2024/25, questions what level of further capital investment should be allocated to Warilla Pool. The 2024/25 Summer attendance was the lowest experienced over the last five (5) years with a third consecutive season of declining attendance.*

A detailed action plan is recommended to investigate how the ongoing lack of activity at Warilla can be addressed to possibly stimulate a long-term increase in activity for the Centre OR Council consider whether continued operation of the facility is economically viable for the community.

As outlined above, it is estimated that the continued refurbishment and replacement of the existing infrastructure at Warilla Pool (like-for-like) will likely cost Council in the order \$4.8 million over the coming 10 to 15 years. These types of works often do not resolve energy and operational efficiency needs and will lack the types of infrastructure that typically appeal to modern customers. It is also estimated that these works will only extend the life of the pool by up to 15 to 20 years, leaving the need further infrastructure investment into the future.

Given the utilisation and demographic of the facility, this Aquatic Facilities Review has identified two potential long-term infrastructure options for the Warilla Pool site, including a renovation of the existing site to bring the facility up to modern standards; or to potentially decommission the pool and change the use of the site as an expanded recreation area and community park. The infrastructure options provided demonstrate a high-level concept only of what could typically be achieved at the facility and indicative upfront capital infrastructure costs (as estimated and benchmarked against case studies). It is recommended that further detailed cost-benefit analysis be undertaken, research on available funding opportunities and consultation with the community and key stakeholders be carried out to support any future infrastructure decision.

9.2.3.1 Warilla Pool Option 1 – Renovation and Modernisation

- 50m pool increased from 7 lanes to 10 lanes
- Installation of new plant and refurbishment of existing plant room
- Installation of a children's splash pad/play area
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Installation of BBQ, shelter and seating
- Installation of solar heating
- Re-establishment of original entry to pool from Benaud Crescent (closure of current entrance)
- Installation of a kiosk area
- Installation of outdoor fitness stations
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Warilla Pool Option 1, is Case 11 – Capricorn Coast Brian Dorey OAM Aquatic Centre, QLD which was valued at \$13 million.

9.2.3.2 Warilla Pool Option 2 – Decommissioning of Pool Facility, Replaced with Community Park

- Demolition of existing infrastructure
- Footpaths connecting existing basketball courts and dog exercise area with the new community park infrastructure
- Seating/tables
- BBQ's
- Shade structures
- Children's BMX pump track
- Fitness station circuit areas
- Amenities block – toilets, family/unisex change rooms from existing infrastructure
- Children's playground

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). Similar infrastructure projects that align with the renovation of Warilla Pool Option 2 are:

- Case 12 – Epping Aquatic Centre, NSW; and
- Case 13 – Kilsyth Centenary Pool, VIC.

Neither of these decommissioning projects have reported project values – however, the estimated cost of such a project would vary depending on the level of parkland embellishment selected and likely to be a lesser capital value than a pool replacement of refurbishment project.

It should be noted that decommissioning Warilla Pool may present challenges from a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) perspective, particularly if the site becomes underutilised or vacant for an extended period. A reduction in legitimate activity and passive surveillance could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and perceptions of reduced public safety. Should Council pursue decommissioning, further investigations would be required to identify and assess appropriate future uses of the site, ensuring the area remains active, well-maintained and integrated with the surrounding community. Any future planning should consider CPTED principles, community needs, and opportunities to maintain positive activation of the space.

9.3 Albion Park Pool Infrastructure Options

9.3.1 Short Term (1-5 years)

Minimalist lower cost capital expenditure options that can be undertaken during a short-term period at Albion Park Pool are shown in Figure 55 below and focuses on financial years 2026/27 through to 2030/31.

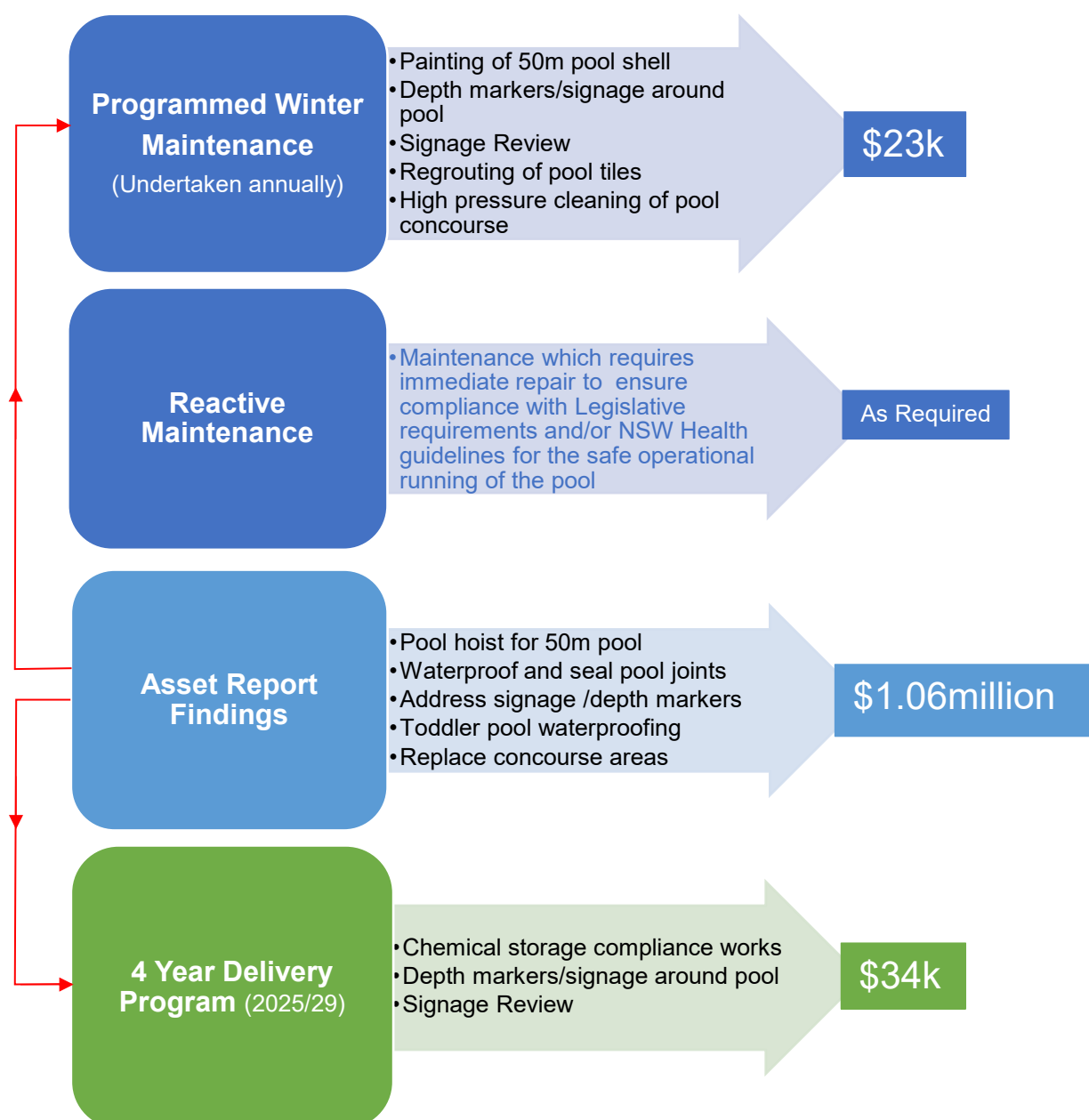


Figure 55 – Albion Park Pool Short Term Capital Expenditure

These works are considered to be essential works to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the pool and to maintain the integrity of the asset.

9.3.2 Medium Term (5-10 years)

More extensive retrofitting and refurbishment capital spend options that have already been programmed and can be undertaken during a medium-term period is shown in Figure 56 below for financial years 2030/31 to 2035/36.

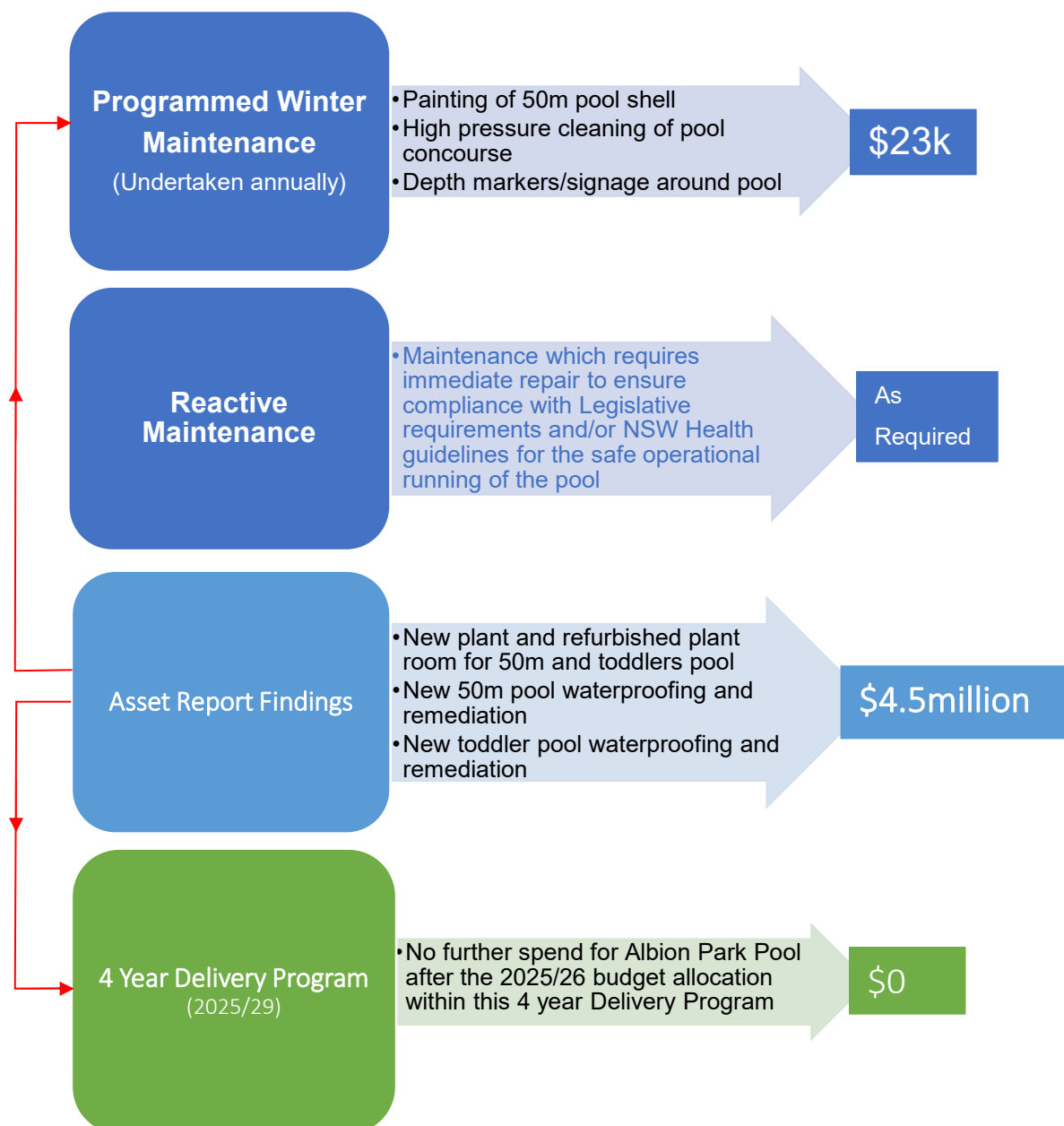


Figure 56 – Albion Park Pool Medium Term Capital Expenditure

Delivery of higher value works should be prioritised against Council's longer term infrastructure options and operational model. Expansive refurbishment works would not be recommended should Council be considering more comprehensive upgrades of the facility. Notwithstanding, implementation of such works will assist in delaying the need for more comprehensive upgrades whilst maintaining a high performing facility.

9.3.3 Long Term (10+ years)

Long term options focus on decisions that will impact much further into the future in more than 10 years from now. With the Asset Condition Report advising that Albion Park Pool will reach its useful life within the next 10 to 15 years, any long-term decision should focus on whether the community needs warrant the replacement of the pool infrastructure, whether it is decommissioned or whether a more significant facility is considered for the west of the Shellharbour LGA. Key metrics when evaluating the long-term options of Albion Park Pool include:

- Pool opened in 1978, forty-eight (48) years ago.
- Open for 5 months (November - March), 2024/25 attendance of 46,724 is the equivalent of 9,345 visitations per month, 2,336 per week or 334 per day.
- 2024/25 subsidy per visit = \$7.11
- 2024/25 operational deficit of \$332,584.62 (Revenue \$107,666.38 & Expenditure \$440,251.00)
- 2024/25 water usage cost of \$18,567.18
- 2024/25 electricity usage cost of \$16,993.67
- New splash pad/water play area installed in 2020.
- Solar heating installed in 2020.
- 3,000 homes within a five (5) minute drive to Albion Park Pool, 12,700 within ten (10) minutes and 31,900 homes within a fifteen (15) minute drive of the pool.
- Seven (7) privately owned pools within the Shellharbour LGA that provide Learn to Swim options less than a sixteen (16) minute drive from Albion Park Pool.
- Five (5) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Kiama LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Albion Park Pool.
- Six (6) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Wollongong LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Albion Park Pool.

As outlined above, it is estimated that the continued refurbishment and replacement of the existing infrastructure at Albion Park Pool (like-for-like) will likely cost Council in the order \$5.6 million over the coming 10 to 15 years. These types of works often do not resolve energy and operational efficiency needs and will lack the types of infrastructure that typically appeal to modern customers. It is also estimated that these works will only extend the life of the pool by up to 15 to 20 years, leaving the need further infrastructure investment into the future.

Summary: Whilst Albion Park Pool had an operational deficit for 2024/25 of \$332k, the 2024/25 season the highest experienced attendance over the past five years.

Based on the healthy attendances that continue to increase at this location, the opportunity to expand Albion Park Pool's operational window from a 5 month (Nov – March) seasonal model could be explored.

Albion Park has also received substantial investment to modernise the Centre over the last five (5) years with the installation of a splash pad/water play area, solar heating and two (2) fitness/cardio stations. Closure and decommissioning of Albion Park Pool is not currently considered in this review, due to its strong activation and low subsidy per visit.

Given the relatively high utilisation of the facility, with consideration of future growth and an identified West Dapto Leisure and Community Recreation Centre that will have strong geographical connections with the Calderwood, Tullimbar and (to a lesser extent) Albion Park communities, this Aquatic Facilities Review has identified two potential long-term infrastructure options for the Albion Park Pool site. The options explore a renovation and modernisation opportunity, as well as a larger embellishment which could provide better opportunities for activation and the ability to provide learn to swim and other value-add services. The infrastructure options provided demonstrate a high-level concept only of what could typically be achieved at the facility and indicative upfront capital infrastructure costs (as estimated and benchmarked against case studies). It is recommended that further detailed cost-benefit analysis be undertaken, research on available funding opportunities and consultation with the community and key stakeholders be carried out to support any future infrastructure decision.

9.3.3.1 Albion Park Pool Option 1 – Renovation and Modernisation

- 50m pool increased from 8 lanes to 10 lanes
- Installation of new plant.
- Refurbishment of existing plant room
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Modernising of change rooms
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Albion Park Pool Option 1, is Case 14 – North Bellarine Aquatic Centre, VIC – valued at \$15 million.

9.3.3.2 Albion Park Pool Option 2 – Upgrade and Expansion of Facility

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 50m pool on eastern side of existing footprint
- Installation of new plant
- Installation of new plant room
- Relocation of existing splash pad/play area
- Relocation of existing swim club room
- Relocation of storage areas
- Relocation of fitness stations
- Installation of a six (6) lane 15m program pool (outside existing facility footprint)
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk
- Reservation of space for the future installation of a ten (10) lane 25m pool

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Albion Park Pool Option 2, is Case 15 – Inverell Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$24.9 million.

9.4 Oak Flats Pool Infrastructure Options

9.4.1 Short Term (1-5 years)

Minimalist lower cost capital expenditure options that can be undertaken during a short-term period at Oak Flats Pool are shown in Figure 57 below and focuses on financial years 2026/27 through to 2030/31.

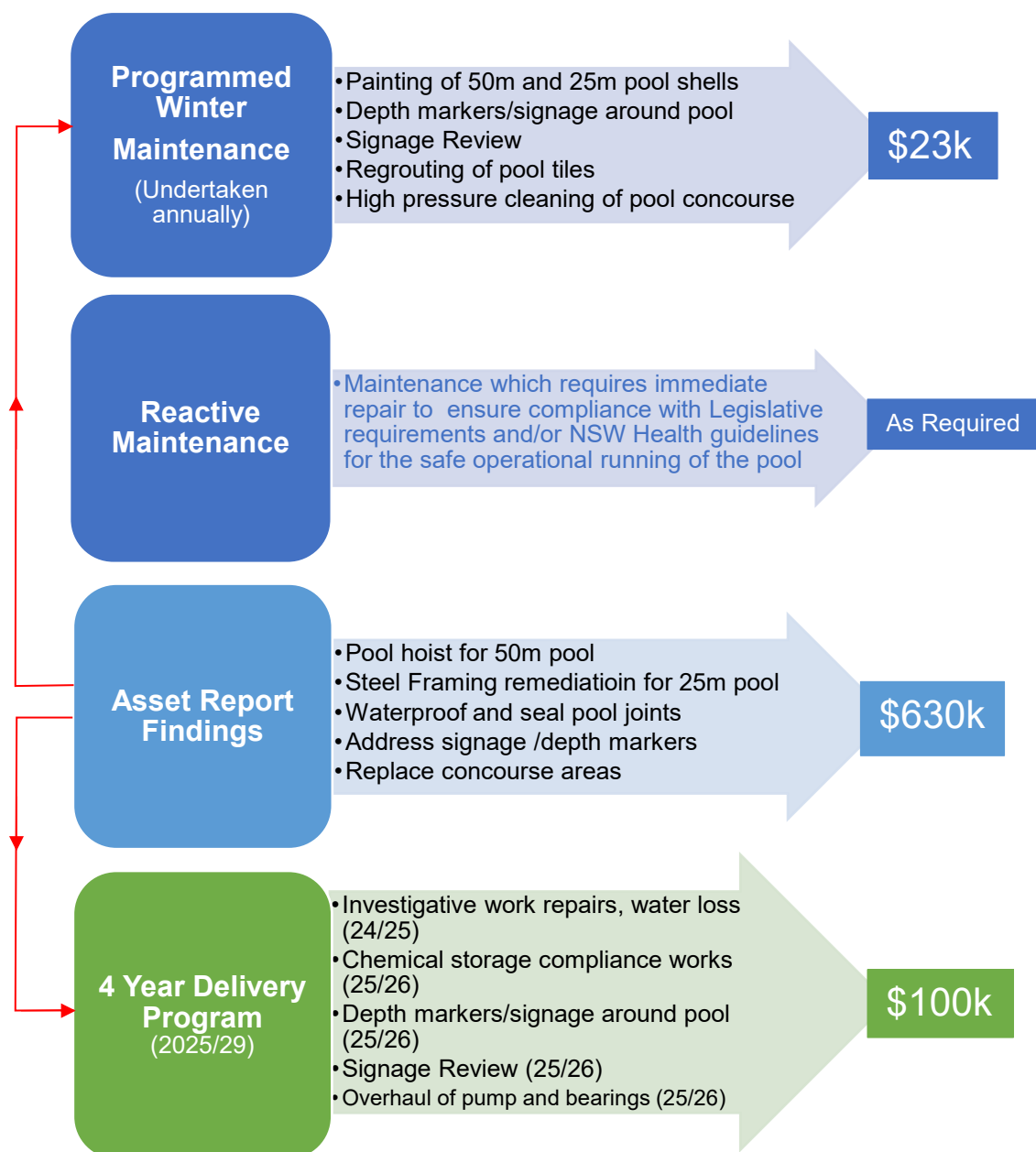


Figure 57 – Oak Flats Pool Short Term Capital Expenditure

These works are considered to be essential works to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the pool and to maintain the integrity of the asset.

9.4.2 Medium Term (5-10 years)

More extensive retrofitting and refurbishment capital spend options that have already been programmed and can be undertaken during a medium-term period is shown in Figure 58 below for financial years 2030/31 to 2035/36.

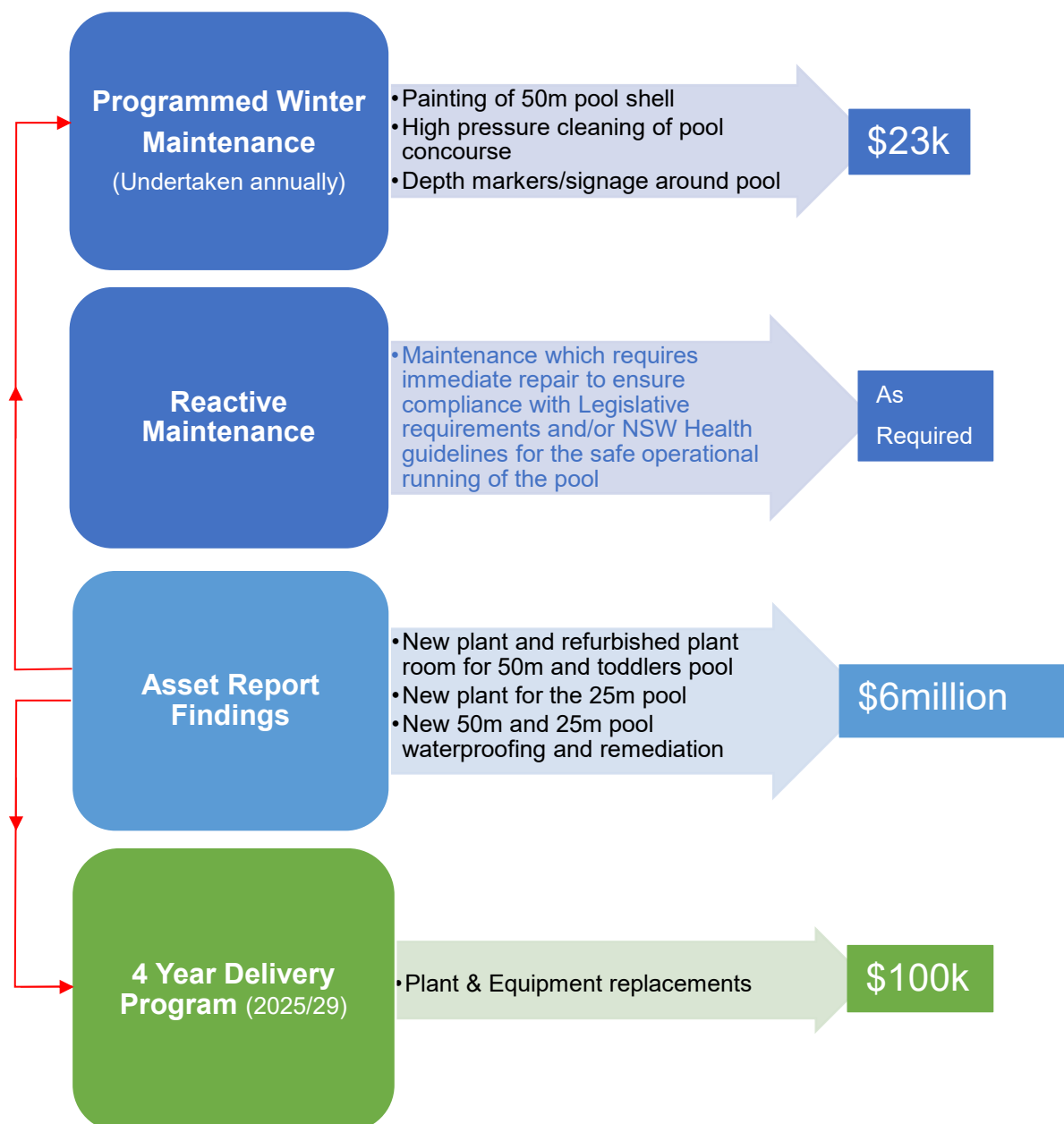


Figure 58 – Oak Flats Pool Medium Term Capital Expenditure

Delivery of higher value works should be prioritised against Council's longer term infrastructure options and operational model. Expansive refurbishment works would not be recommended should Council be considering more comprehensive upgrades of the facility. Notwithstanding, implementation of such works will assist in delaying the need for more comprehensive upgrades whilst maintaining a high performing facility.

9.4.3 Long Term (10+ years)

Long term options focus on decisions that will impact much further into the future in more than 10 years from now. With the Asset Condition Report advising that Oak Flats Pool will reach its useful life within the next 10 to 15 years, any long-term decision should focus on whether the community needs warrant the replacement of the pool infrastructure, whether it is decommissioned or whether a more significant facility is considered. Key metrics when evaluating the long-term options of Oak Flats Pool include:

- Pool opened in 1965, sixty-one (61) years ago.
- Open 12 months, 2024/25 attendance of 151,689 per season is equivalent to 12,641 visitations per month, 3,160 per week or 451 per day.
- Subsidy per visit = \$5.39
- 2024/25 operational deficit of -\$819,118.93 (Revenue \$218,472.07 & Expenditure \$1,037,591.00)
- 2024/25 water usage cost of \$23,765.67
- 2024/25 electricity usage cost of \$59,905.87
- 3,000 homes within a five (5) minute drive to Oak Flats Pool, 23,000 within ten (10) minutes and 32,500 homes within a fifteen (15) minute drive of the pool.
- Seven (7) privately owned pools within the Shellharbour LGA that provide Learn to Swim options less than a sixteen (16) minute drive from Oak Flats Pool.
- Four (4) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Kiama LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Oak Flats Pool.
- Three (3) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Wollongong LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Oak Flats Pool.

As outlined above, it is estimated that the continued refurbishment and replacement of the existing infrastructure at Oak Flats Pool (like-for-like) will likely cost Council in the order \$6.9 million over the coming 10 to 15 years. These types of works often do not resolve energy and operational efficiency needs (particularly with Oak Flats Pool being one of Council's leading consumers of natural gas) and will lack the types of infrastructure that typically appeal to modern customers. It is also estimated that these works will only extend the life of the pool by up to 15 to 20 years, leaving the need further infrastructure investment into the future.

It is estimated that a more comprehensive like-for like replacement (with some modernisation and energy efficiency improvements) would cost in the order of \$16 million.

Summary: *Whilst Oak Flats Pool had an operational deficit of \$819k for 2024/25, this is offset slightly by the \$163k generated in revenue from programs such as Learn to Swim, squads and aqua aerobics. Oak Flats Pool hosts over 95% of the programs provided for the community which includes 1100 children in Learn to Swim, 90 children on a waitlist and 10,800 annual aqua aerobics participants which contributes to the high attendance figures of over 150,000 annually and 84,000 over the (Nov – March) Summer period. The provision of a kiosk at Oak Flats Pool to initiate a secondary spend revenue stream (food and merchandise) should be explored as a priority based on the pool being operational year-round and the high level of activity experienced at this Centre. Closure and decommissioning of Oak Flats Pool is not currently considered in this review due to its high utilisation and value to the community.*

Given the high utilisation, central locality within the Shellharbour LGA, active and engaged sporting groups and hirers and the demographic of the facility, this Aquatic Facilities Review has identified two potential long-term infrastructure options for the Oak Flats Pool site. Both options include a covered 25m pool – this item was highly rated within Council's Open Space & Recreation Strategy and Study (2020) – and will provide greater support in expanding Council's Health and Fitness Programs and general activation of the site. This will also reduce the number of program cancellations and pool closures due to poor weather and storm events that impact on the current open-air facility.

Option 1 provides a moderate scale upgrade over the existing facility footprint, while Option 2 provides a larger footprint, bringing the facility more prominently towards the main street and potential youth zone and recreational opportunities that tie to the existing sporting precinct.

The infrastructure options provided demonstrate a high-level concept only of what could typically be achieved at the facility and indicative upfront capital infrastructure costs (as estimated and benchmarked against case studies). It is recommended that further detailed cost-benefit analysis be undertaken, research on available funding opportunities and consultation with the community and key stakeholders be carried out to support any future infrastructure decision.

9.4.3.1 Oak Flats Pool Option 1 – Upgrade of Facility with Indoor 25m Pool

Development of both indoor and outdoor areas

Outdoor area includes:

- 50m pool installed in a north/south direction
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Splash pad play area

Indoor/covered area includes:

- All new configuration of assets within the indoor space
- Installation of ten (10) lane 25m pool
- Entry area integrated with cafe, seating and shopping space
- Lifeguard and Learn to Swim staff offices
- Change rooms, toilets, showers including unisex/family room
- First Aid room
- Storage area
- Installation of new plant room
- Installation of new plant

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Oak Flats Pool Option 1, is Case 16 – Clarence Regional Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$29.1 million.

9.4.3.2 Oak Flats Pool Option 2 – Indoor Leisure Facility and Site Upgrade

- Development of both new indoor and outdoor areas.
- Existing Kingston Street access to Centre blocked off at Moore Street roundabout.
- Front access eastern parking area provided via Moore Street & Kingston Street roundabout intersection.
- Rear access western parking area provided via Fisher Street and Hope Street intersection.

Outdoor area includes:

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 50m pool in a north/south direction at eastern end of facility
- Installation of a zero-depth beach entry at the shallow end of the 50m pool.
- Installation of a Youth Precinct at western end of facility footprint.
- Installation of footpaths linking rear carpark and youth precinct to the front entry of the facility.
- Consolidating existing sporting infrastructure (cricket, tennis) and community space (dog activity park) with aquatic facility footprint.

Indoor area provides upper and lower levels, which include:

Lower level

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 25m pool
- Installation of a six (6) lane 15m program pool
- Installation of splash pad play area
- Installation of new plant rooms
- Installation of new plant

Upper level

- Front Entrance
- Learn to Swim office
- Meeting room/s
- Storage room/s
- Change rooms, toilets and showers
- Café, shop and seating
- Lifeguard office
- First Aid room

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Oak Flats Pool Option 2, is Case 17 – Mount Druitt Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$40.6 million.

9.5 Beverley Whitfield Pool Infrastructure Options

9.5.1 Short Term (1-5 years)

Minimalist lower cost capital expenditure options that can be undertaken during a short-term period at Beverley Whitfield Pool are shown in Figure 59 below and focuses on financial years 2026/27 through to 2030/31.

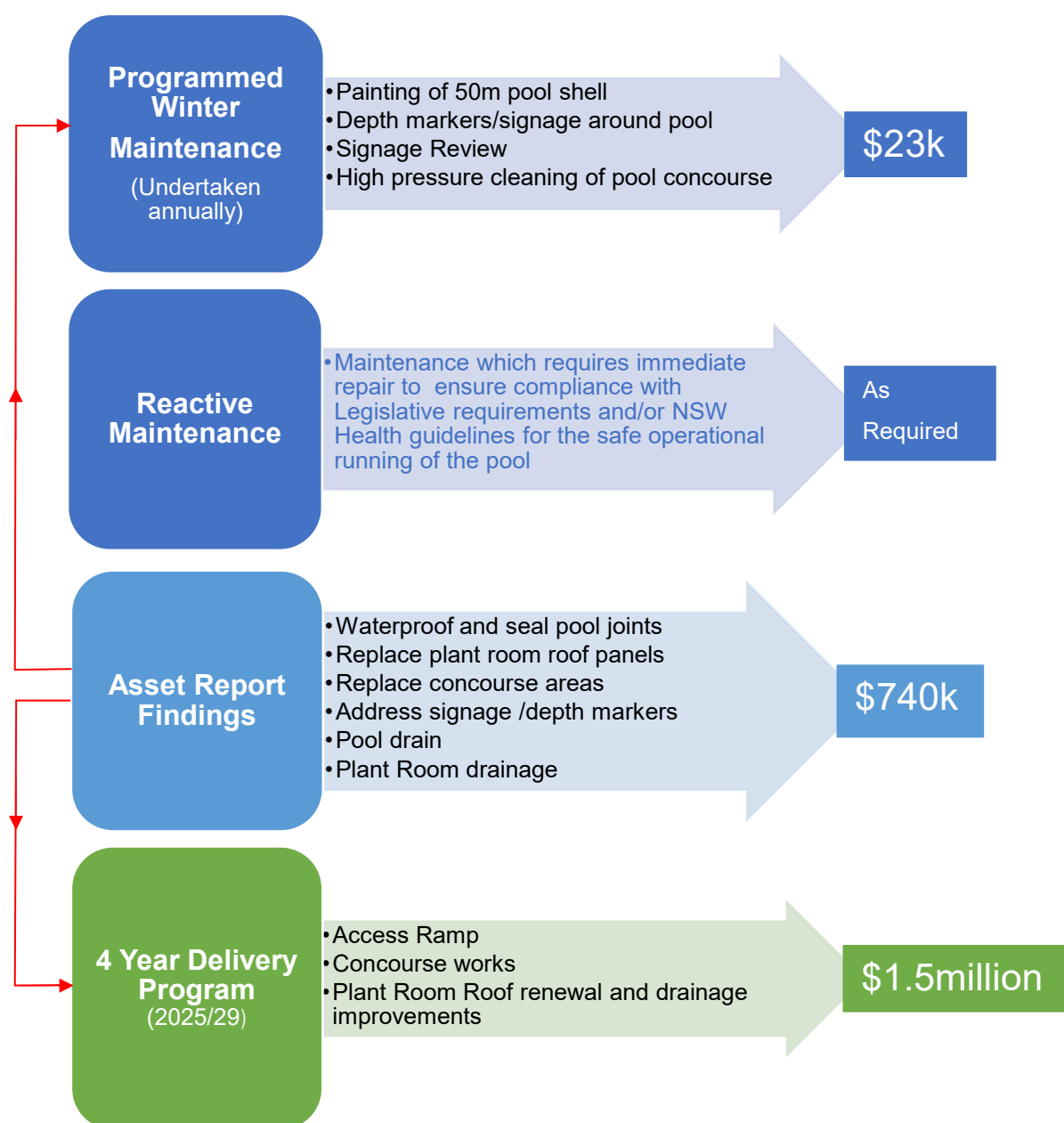


Figure 59 – Beverley Whitfield Pool Short Term Capital Expenditure

These works are considered to be essential works to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the pool and to maintain the integrity of the asset.

9.5.2 Medium Term (5-10 years)

More extensive retrofitting and refurbishment capital spend options that have already been programmed and can be undertaken during a medium-term period is shown in Figure 60 below for financial years 2030/31 to 2035/36.

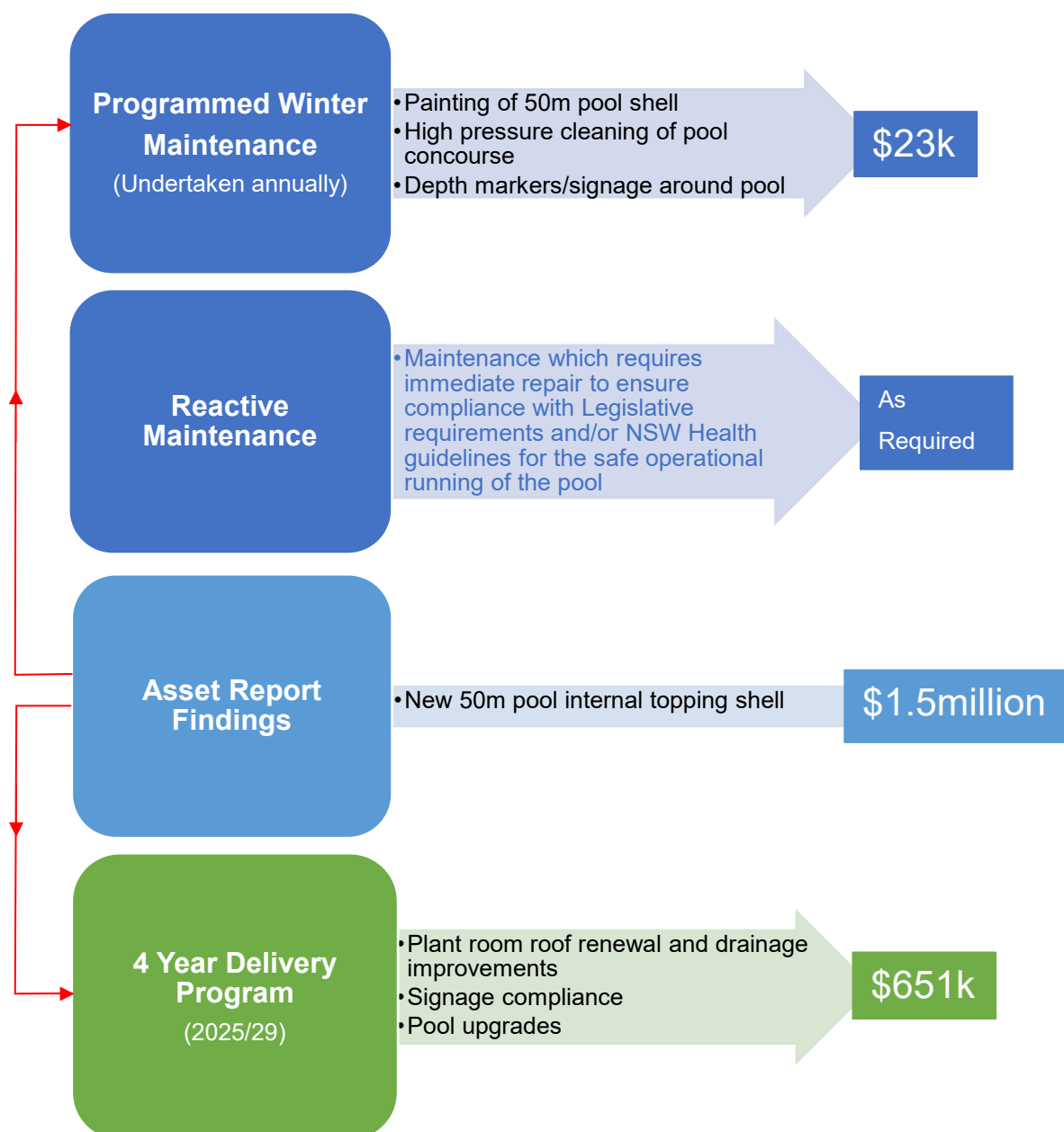


Figure 60 – Beverley Whitfield Pool Medium Term Capital Expenditure

These works will be considered to be essential works to ensure proper asset lifecycle management, though Council will have some flexibility to the scale and scope that any works are undertaken based on observed asset performance.

9.5.3 Long Term (10+ years)

Long term options focus on decisions that will impact much further into the future in more than 10 years from now. Beverley Whitfield Pool is unique with the Shellharbour LGA context, in that it is Council's only ocean pool, it is a local heritage item and it is heavily constrained within its physical environment. Therefore, as the pool reaches the end of its useful life within the next 10 to 15 years, long-term decision should focus on what type and scale of renovation is appropriate for the locality and that closure and decommissioning of this facility is not recommended. Key metrics when evaluating the long-term options of Beverley Whitfield Pool include:

- Pool opened in 1896, hundred and twenty-eight (128) years ago.
- Open 12 months, 2024/25 attendance of 161,478 per season is equivalent to 13,456 visitations per month, 3,364 per week or 480 per day.
- 2024/25 subsidy per visit = \$1.40
- 2024/25 operational deficit of \$226,265.00 (Revenue \$0 & Expenditure \$226,265.00)
- 2024/25 water usage cost of \$0 as the pool does not draw on town water
- 2024/25 electricity usage cost of \$18,073.65
- 4,000 homes within a five (5) minute drive to Beverley Whitfield Pool, 14,500 within ten (10) minutes and 26,000 homes within a fifteen (15) minute drive of the pool.
- Seven (7) privately owned pools within the Shellharbour LGA that provide Learn to Swim options less than a sixteen (16) minute drive from Beverley Whitfield Pool.
- Four (4) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Kiama LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Beverley Whitfield Pool.
- One (1) swimming and Learn to Swim options within the Wollongong LGA less than a 20-minute drive from Beverley Whitfield Pool.
- Toddlers' pool recently replaced in 2019.
- Pool is recognised as a local heritage item under the Shellharbour LEP2013 (Item I126).
- Cost of replacement approx. \$5 million.

Summary: *Beverley Whitfield Pool ran at an operational deficit of \$226k for 2024/25. This facility is free for the general public to utilise and does not draw on any town water. This pool has the highest attendances in the LGA with over 160,000 people attending annually and 122,000 enjoying the pool during the (Nov – March) Summer period. Beverley Whitfield Pool remains as the only saltwater swimming pool option in the Shellharbour LGA. Whilst it will be prudent to review extent, or the need, for continued lifeguard patrolling, the asset remains a highly valued facility for the Shellharbour community.*

As the pool is heavily constrained and identified as a local heritage item, any future refurbishment of this pool would be limited to the existing footprint. Modernisation and safety options should continue to be considered from time to time as evident with the recently completed accessibility ramp project in 2025.

9.6 Consideration of a Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics and Leisure Facility

Council's Strategic Projects Advocacy Plan in 2023/24 and in 2024/25 identified a future potential regional-scale aquatic facility located at Albion Oval in Albion Park Rail. The concept for the site (Figure 61) ties a proposed synthetic multi-platform sports fields with a regionally significant leisure and aquatics facility.

The proposed synthetic playing field facility aims to provide sustainable surface options that encourage more people to be active, to play and participate in community sport in a manner that supports natural surfaces and can meet current and future demand. As part of this project, Council would deliver a synthetic playing field to accommodate AFL Auskick, cricket and two (2) full size football fields. The precinct would also include inclusive amenities and changeroom facilities, covered tiered seating and carparking.

The Strategic Projects Advocacy Plan (2024/25) identified a proposed leisure and aquatic facility that would aim to enhance access to purpose-built facilities and contribute to the holistic health and welfare of the broader community. The Centre would seek to include both indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, indoor sports and fitness and space for allied health providers.

The combined project value for this concept is in the order of \$120 million, with the aquatic and leisure facility component making up \$100 million.



Figure 61 – Proposed Arrangement for a Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics and Leisure Facility at Albion Oval

9.6.1 Site Selection and Rationale

Albion Oval was identified as a site for a regionally significant multi-sport precinct for a number of reasons:

- Centrally located within the LGA – Albion Oval has the potential to reach all urbanised homes in Shellharbour within a 15-minute driving catchment (more than any existing pool in Shellharbour).
- Access to public transport – Albion Oval is close to a number of public transport modes, including the Albion Park Airport, Albion Park Train Station and a number of bus stops.
- Vehicle access – Albion Oval has good vehicular access from the Princes Highway, Tongarra Road and provides ample off-street carparking.
- Close geographic proximity to Croom Sporting Complex and Terry Reserve Sports Precinct, offering strong ties to the existing sporting and leisure opportunities.

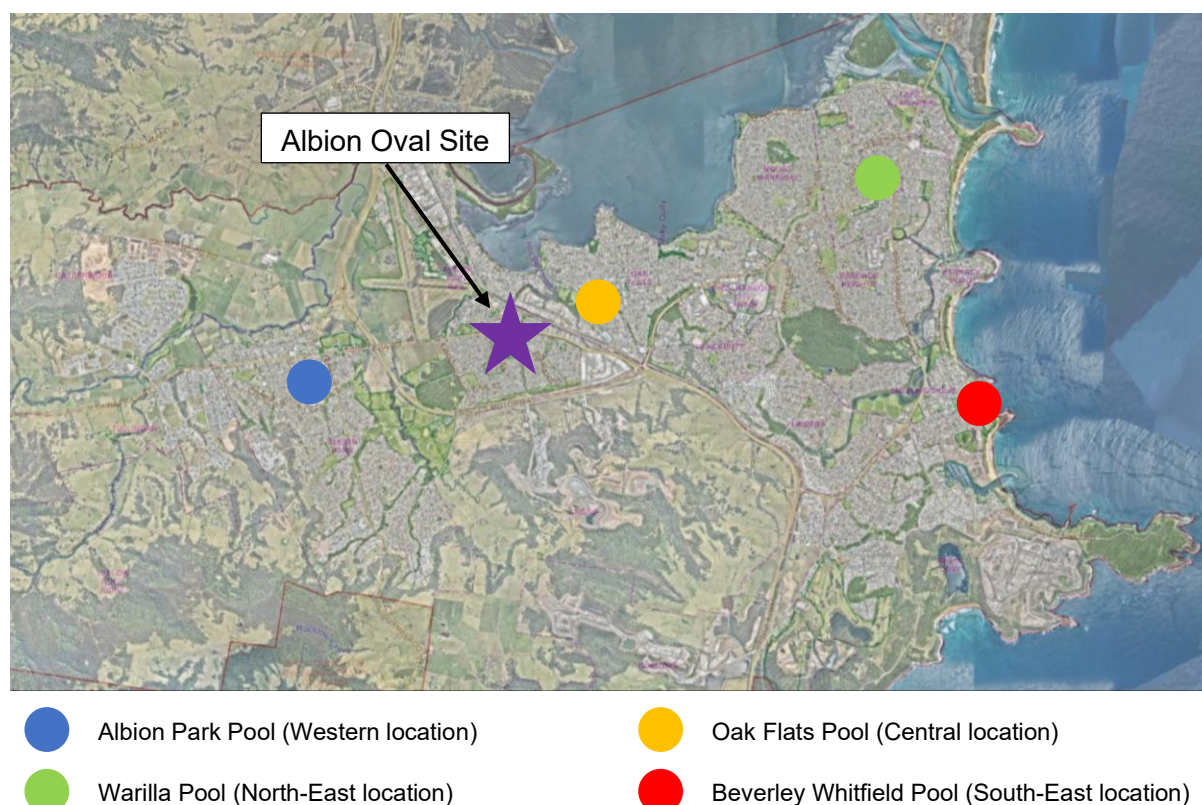


Figure 62 – Overview of current Council Pool Locations and Potential Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics and Leisure Facility

9.6.2 Potential Impacts of a Region-Scale Facility

A regional multi-sports, aquatics and leisure facility could provide benefits to the community as outlined above; however, a number of other factors would also need to be considered in the context of affordability and inter-generational equity and impacts to other Council facilities.

At an estimated cost of \$120 million, which consists of \$100 million for the Aquatic & Leisure Centre facility, \$8 million for the synthetic field and sports courts component, \$7 million for the stormwater detention basin and \$5 million for carpark/s and other ancillary infrastructure, the feasibility of providing a development of this scale far exceeds Council's current capacity and means.

In order to deliver this project, Council would need to attract significant investment from other levels of government, loan funding and/or seeking opportunities via a public-private partnership. In addition, asset depreciation for such an asset is in the order of \$1.9million annually and would likely impact the sustainability of Council's operating ratio, pushing existing deficit budget positions further into deficit.

Given the cost to build and operate a regional-scale facility, Council would need to consider the feasibility of operating all of its other existing aquatic sites. As mentioned earlier, it is unlikely that Council, or the community, will find it acceptable to close or decommission Beverley Whitfield Pool, which is likely to remain operating. In order for Council to consider a facility of this scale, it would be recommended to cease operation of Albion Park, Oak Flats and Warilla Pools.

Due to the number of significant financial constraints and impacts to other aquatic facilities, it is not recommended that Council pursue this option further.



10 Conclusion

Council's three (3) outdoor chlorinated pools at Oak Flats, Warilla and Albion Park are 61, 50 and 48 years old respectively and continue to be utilised, to varying degrees, by residents and visitors alike – as utilisation figures in this document identify. The ongoing ability to keep these ageing pieces of infrastructure functioning and well maintained is a testament to the commitment and expertise of Council's aquatics staff. This observation includes the quality of the pool water, overall cleanliness of each facility and the level of safety and supervision that's provided to the community on a daily basis. That's not to say, that each facility does not have its own specific areas for improvement as outlined within the overall financial, operational and environmental performance of each aquatic centre.

This review outlines the challenges and opportunities Council faces in the short, medium and long term, particularly in managing ageing aquatic infrastructure with limited financial resources while prioritising future funding opportunities. While engineering assessments conducted in 2023 highlight that each of Council's chlorinated pools are nearing the end of their asset life within the coming decade, this provides opportunities for Council to explore adaptable operating models and future facility design that reflects real community needs so Council can deliver cost-effective, high-quality outcomes.

10.1 Oak Flats Pool

Council's short-term infrastructure priority should be focussed on the Oak Flats Pool, the City's oldest chlorinated facility, which has a relatively large amount of componentry that requires renewal, higher-cost maintenance needs and Council's pool with the highest energy consumption. Decisions on renewal, replacement or upgrade explored in Section 9 should be considered following detailed cost-benefit analysis, available funding opportunities and in consultation with the community and key stakeholders. Notwithstanding, it is likely that a future covered 25m pool and outdoor 50m pool will be a highly valued outcome for this facility.

10.2 Albion Park Pool

Albion Park Pool is the only public aquatic facility servicing the west of Shellharbour LGA and is relatively well utilised during its 5-month operating season, providing a subsidy of \$7.11 per visit, which is comparable to the 2023/25 industry median of \$6.29 per visit. Section 8 explores various levels of service that could be considered for Albion Park Pool, and it is recommended that Council consider trialling options to provide a longer swimming season at the facility, with operations reflecting peak usage hours, while minimising impacts to the operational deficit of the pool.

As Albion Park Pool nears the end of its asset life, Council should consider options for renewal, replacement or upgrade as explored in Section 9. Of particular note is the forecast delivery of the West Dapto Leisure and Community Recreation Centre that will have strong geographical connections with the Calderwood, Tullimbar and (to a lesser extent) Albion Park communities. It will be important for these communities that Council maintain a local pool within this area, however the scale of investment should be commensurate with relative benefit derived and nearby attractors.

10.3 Warilla Pool

It is apparent from this Review that the current operating hours of Warilla Pool, with its high subsidy of \$22.45 per visit (2024/25), is not financially sustainable and its low visitation numbers illustrates that the facility does not provide the same benefit to the community as Council's other pools. This is likely due to the variety of free aquatic opportunities in close proximity to the pool, such as Lake Illawarra, Warilla and Shellharbour beaches and the ocean pool. With respect to levels of service explored in Section 8, it is recommended that Council explore reducing operating hours that decrease the financial loss of operating Warilla Pool. Similarly, operational decisions on any future major capital expenditure or embellishments at the facility should be reviewed and avoid seeking to extend the pool's operations beyond its forecast asset life.

10.4 Beverley Whitfield Pool

Beverley Whitfield Pool is a highly utilised coastal asset, providing a natural seawater aquatic facility that is open to the public year-round. As there are no physical barriers or controls that prevent access to the facility, the pool is utilised at nearly all times of day, and often when lifeguards are not present, particularly early mornings, late afternoons and throughout winter. Beverley Whitfield Pool is also one of the few open ocean pools in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven that are patrolled by lifeguards. With respect to levels of service, it is recommended that Council consider changing its lifeguard service to reduce the operational cost of the pool such as the options explored in Section 8, noting that the pool remains accessible to the public, whether lifeguards are present or not.

10.5 Albion Oval Regional Multi-Sports, Aquatics and Leisure Facility

This option introduced a new aquatic facility location within the Shellharbour LGA, as identified within Council's Strategic Projects Advocacy Plan, would have several impacts to Council's long-term financial sustainability and would necessitate the closure of all other Council chlorinated facilities. Accordingly, further consideration of this facility is not recommended.

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13 Attachments

- <https://shbr.t1cloud.com/T1Default/CiAnywhere/Web/SHBR/ECMCore/Rendition/Get?docsetId=12264714&renditionType=pdf&suite=ECM> - Shellharbour Ocean Pool
- <https://shbr.t1cloud.com/T1Default/CiAnywhere/Web/SHBR/ECMCore/Rendition/Get?docsetId=12264717&renditionType=pdf&suite=ECM> - Warilla Pool
- <https://shbr.t1cloud.com/T1Default/CiAnywhere/Web/SHBR/ECMCore/Rendition/Get?docsetId=12264716&renditionType=pdf&suite=ECM> - Oak Flats Pool
- <https://shbr.t1cloud.com/T1Default/CiAnywhere/Web/SHBR/ECMCore/Rendition/Get?docsetId=12264715&renditionType=pdf&suite=ECM> - Albion Park Pool
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Appendix A – Shellharbour's Domestic Tourism Economy

Shellharbour's Domestic Tourism Economy

DESTINATION SYDNEY SURROUNDS SOUTH (DSSS)

Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) in regional NSW and is an important conduit between the NSW Government, local governments and tourism businesses across the Sydney Surrounds South region. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the Sydney Surrounds South visitor economy. The Sydney Surrounds South region comprises the five local government areas of Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Wollongong and Wingecarribee (the Southern Highlands). Each LGA has their respective vision for the future, projects and priorities, which are relevant to the sustainable growth of that region.



**Every minute of every day,
Tourism delivers \$6,270 of
domestic visitor spend into
Sydney Surrounds South**

**That is over \$9.0 million per day!!
A value that has grown by 56.1%
in the last year alone.**

Figure 63 – Value of Tourism to Sydney Surrounds South 2022 Report

Shellharbour's Domestic Tourism Economy Comparisons

Table 45 below highlights the 2022 visitation levels to the Shellharbour LGA and the comparisons with fellow SSS councils.

Table 45 – Sydney Surrounds South (SSS) Visitor & Tourism Economy (January 2022 - December 2022)

	Domestic Overnight 	Daytrip 	Total Domestic Tourism
Shellharbour			
Visits	150,000	653,000	804,000
Share of SSS	4%	9%	7%
Expenditure (\$Million)	\$149	\$105	\$254
Share of SSS %	6%	12%	8%
Kiama			
Visits	428,000	806,000	1,234,000
Share of SSS	11%	11%	11%
Expenditure (\$Million)	\$224	\$88	\$312
Share of SSS %	9%	10%	9%
Wollongong			
Visits	890,000	3,213,000	4,104,000
Share of SSS	23%	43%	36%
Expenditure (\$Million)	\$449	\$313	\$761
Share of SSS %	19%	35%	23%
Wingecarribee			
Visits	607,000	1,005,000	1,611,000
Share of SSS	16%	14%	14%
Expenditure (\$Million)	\$345	\$191	\$536
Share of SSS %	14%	21%	21%
Shoalhaven			
Visits	1,615,000	1,481,000	3,096,000
Share of SSS	42%	20%	27%
Expenditure (\$Million)	\$1,042	\$170	\$1,212
Share of SSS %	43%	19%	37%

Appendix B – Case Studies

Modernisation Projects - Case Studies

CASE 1 – CARNES HILL AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$53.4MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Liverpool City Council will deliver a new aquatic centre that has been fully funded by the NSW Government Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program and will complement the Michael Clarke Recreation Centre and Carnes Hill Library site. The project is an outcome of the Carnes Hill Recreational Precinct Revised Stage 2 Masterplan which was adopted by Council in November 2024 with construction completion and centre opening planned for late 2028. The new Centre will include:

- Indoor 8 lane 25m pool (Stage 1)
- Indoor 4 lane 20m Learn to Swim pool (Stage 1)
- Indoor children's splashpad and waterplay area (Stage 1)
- Outdoor 8 lane 50m pool (Later Stages)
- Multipurpose hall (Later Stages)



Figure 64 – Proposed new Carnes Hill Aquatic & Recreational Centre

CASE 2 – WAVES FITNESS & AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$55MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Hills Shire Council progressed with a knock-down rebuild of the entire facility and has delivered a new state-of-the-art swimming centre. It was the largest project ever undertaken by Hills Shire Council and the Centre has been fitted with a range of energy efficient equipment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs. Council fully funded the project and the new Centre which took 24 months to construct includes both aquatic and recreation/fitness spaces:

- Outdoor 10 lane 50m pool
- Outdoor 10 lane 25m pool
- Outdoor Splash Pad/Play area
- Indoor 4 lane combined 25m LTS pool
- Indoor 4 lane 20m warm water program pool
- Indoor Leisure and Toddler pool/lagoon
- Gym and group fitness
- Spa, sauna and steam room



Figure 65 – Waves Fitness & Aquatic Centre

CASE 3 – CARNEGIE MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL, VIC

(\$75MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Glen Eira City Council delivered a modern accessible and sustainable aquatic centre which will meet the needs of future generations. The redevelopment of 21 months was supported by a \$10million loan from Sport and Recreation Victoria and \$15million in funding from the Australian Government. The new Centre received a six-star design certification making it one of the most sustainable centres in Australia and includes:

- Outdoor 8 lane 50m pool
- Outdoor dive pool
- Outdoor splash pad/water play area
- Indoor 6 lane LTS 25m pool
- Indoor warm water 25m pool



Figure 68 – Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool

CASE 4 – GUILDFORD SWIM CENTRE, NSW

(\$25MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Cumberland Council is delivering a new state-of-the-art Aquatic Centre to its community which will transform the current 50-year-old facility. The \$25million modernisation project was jointly funded by Council and \$14.6 million from the NSW Government's WestInvest Program. Construction will commence at the start of Q2 2025 and will include the following:

- Indoor five (5) lane 25m pool
- Learn to swim program pool
- Eight (8) lane outdoor 25m pool
- Children's splash play area
- Changerooms, back of house office space, multi- purpose area for events and community activities
- External storage facilities
- New signage and landscaping
- 1,000m2 of solar collection panels planned for the roofing space, to provide the majority of lighting power during the day as well as reduced costs for the large filtration system



Figure 66 – Proposed new Guildford Swim Centre

CASE 5 – GOULBURN AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$29.8MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Goulburn Mulwaree Council delivered the once in a generation project in 18 months. The \$29.8million redevelopment was joint funded with the NSW Government who provided a \$10million grant for the project. The aquatic spaces contain:

- Indoor 8 lane 25m pool
- Refurbishment of existing indoor pool for use as a program pool
- Indoor leisure pool
- Hydrotherapy pool
- Outdoor pool upgrades including waterplay area
- New entrance plaza with café
- Gym



Figure 70 – Goulburn Aquatic Centre

CASE 6 – FRANKSTON REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE, VIC

(\$49.7MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Frankston City Council has provided a first-class facility to the regional community which was undertaken in partnership with both the Federal and Victorian Governments. The project received \$13.5million from the Federal Governments Regional Australia Development Fund (RDAF) and \$12.5million from the State Government and contains the following aquatic areas:

- Indoor 50m pool with movable boom
- Learn to swim pool
- Children's pool with beach access
- Aquatic Playground
- Warm water exercise pool



Figure 67 – Frankston Regional Aquatic Centre

CASE 7 – HAWTHORN AQUATIC & LEISURE CENTRE, VIC

(\$25MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Boroondara City Council conducted an extensive redevelopment of its previous Aquatic Centre which is managed by YMCA Victoria. The high-quality \$25million project was fully funded by Council, constructed over 24 months and provides the following aquatic and fitness areas:

- Outdoor 9 lane 50m pool
- Indoor 20m warm water pool
- Gym/group fitness



Figure 68 – Hawthorn Aquatic & Leisure Centre

CASE 8 – TOBRUK MEMORIAL AQUATIC CENTRE, QLD

(\$23.7 MILLION CONSTRUCT ONLY)

Cairns Regional Council contributed \$18.9million to the redevelopment project whilst the Federal Government contributed \$4.8million from the Regional Development Projects in Northern Australia Fund. The new complex provides the following aquatic areas:

- Outdoor 10 lane 50m pool
- Outdoor 6 lane 25m pool for LTS and hydrotherapy activities
- 25m Program pool
- Toddler's pool and waterplay area
- Artificial Waverider



Figure 69 – Tobruk Memorial Aquatic Centre

CASE 9 – GIPPSLAND REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE, VIC

(\$57MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Latrobe City Council delivered the centre via an \$8million investment from Sport & Recreation Victoria's Community Sports Infrastructure Loan Scheme and \$46million from the Victorian Government's Latrobe Valley Sports and Community Initiative. The project took 23 months to construct and provides the following aquatic areas:

- Indoor 8 lane 50m pool with moveable boom
- Outdoor 4 lane 25m pool
- Indoor learn to swim/leisure pool
- Two (2) large water slides
- Indoor water play zone
- Warm water therapy pool with spa and hydro zone



Figure 70 – Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre

CASE 10 – ‘SPLASH’ CRAIGIEBURN LEISURE & AQUATIC CENTRE, VIC

(\$37MILLION CONSTRUCT ONLY)

Hume City Council delivered the largest capital works project ever delivered by Council which was constructed over 18 months. The Victorian Government contributed \$3million to the project and the new Centre provides the following aquatic areas:

- Indoor Children's Aqua Play zone
- Leisure, toddler and learn to swim pools
- Warm water exercise pool and spa
- Indoor 8 lane 50m pool



Figure 71 – ‘Splash’ Craigieburn Leisure & Aquatic Centre

CASE 11 – CAPRICORN COAST BRIAN DOREY OAM AQUATIC CENTRE, QLD

(\$13MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Livingstone Shire Council secured \$13million in Commonwealth Government funding under the Community Development Grants program to deliver a new 50m swimming pool and other facility upgrades for the Capricorn Coast Brian Dorey OAM Aquatic Centre situated at Cooee Bay. Features of the facility upgrade include:

- 50m pool suitable for competitions, lap swimming and school carnivals
- Amenities block including a 'changing places' all accessibility changeroom
- Administration office area
- Year-round functionality with modern heating pool heating and thermal covers for maximum user comfort
- All ability entrance to the complex and access to all areas including pools
- Extensive shade coverage over the pool with new landscaping
- Upgraded filtration systems



Figure 72 – Capricorn Coast Brian Dorey OAM Aquatic Centre

CASE 12 – EPPING AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(DECOMMISSION 1)

Since April 2024, the Epping Aquatic Centre has been closed. Reports in 2015 found the pool to be leaking 15,000 litres of water daily and costing over \$300,000 yearly in maintenance.

The City of Parramatta Council planned to eventually repurpose the current pool site at Dence Park into a recreational precinct with outdoor courts, youth infrastructure and green spaces. After considering a range of recommendations Council is progressing with a detailed feasibility study for a new aquatic centre and indoor recreation site at two (2) other possible locations in the LGA away from the Dence Park site (below).

In response, a community advocacy group called 'Save Epping Pool' was formed to lobby local government in an attempt to keep the facility at its current location and has been vocally championing the pool for a decade. Consequently, Council has now made a decision to upgrade the pool in a limited capacity for a temporary reopening at a cost of around \$13.5million, allowing the centre to reopen for the next ten years.



Figure 73 – Epping Aquatic Centre

CASE 13 – KILSYTH CENTENARY POOL, VIC

(DECOMMISSION 2)

Yarra Ranges Council made the decision in October 2023 to permanently close the Kilsyth Centenary Pool due to structural failures and high maintenance costs. The iconic dome and pool structures were removed with works progressing shortly after the decision was made. The area is being converted into open space at Kiloran Park as part of a master plan developed in 2025. With the closing of Kilsyth Centenary Pool, Council partnered with Belgravia Leisure to support staff and residents by encouraging the use of other nearby aquatic facilities within the Local Government Area.



Figure 74 – Kilsyth Centenary Pool

CASE 14 – NORTH BELLARINE AQUATIC CENTRE, VIC

(\$15MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

The first stage of the project focuses on the outdoor 50m pool and is part of a larger investment in the North Bellarine area, funded jointly by the City of Greater Geelong and the Australian Government. It is situated at the Drysdale Sporting Precinct, providing essential aquatic facilities to the growing North Bellarine area. The facility features include:

- Outdoor 8-lane 50m heated pool
- 16kWs solar system and updating of plant
- Kiosk
- Pavilion
- Covered tier seating
- All abilities change rooms
- Landscaping



Figure 75 – North Bellarine Aquatic Centre

CASE 15 – INVERELL AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$24.9MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Inverell Shire Council has undertaken a renewal project to replace the 60-year-old facility at Inverell. The total project is valued at \$24.9million and the project was funded through the SEQ Liveability Fund under the SEQ City Deal, with the NSW Government contributing \$6.1 million.

The facility features include:

- Outdoor/indoor heated 8-lane 50m pool with a partial roof Over shallow area) and moveable swim wall
- 20m x 10m warm water program/therapeutic pool with moveable floor
- Indoor zero depth splash park
- Café
- Multi-purpose activity room
- Wellness/consulting rooms
- Solar heating



Figure 76 – Inverell Aquatic Centre

CASE 16 – CLARENCE REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$29.1MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

The project redeveloped the former Grafton Olympic Pool and was backed by Clarence Valley Council to the tune of \$3.8million in council funds as well as redirecting \$882,000 in proceeds from the sale of the South Grafton Visitor Information Centre quarantined for Economic Development and Tourism to the redevelopment of the pool facility. The new Centre features include:

- Outdoor 50m 8-lane heated pool with grandstand
- Outdoor inclusive zero depth splash pad
- Two outdoor waterslides
- Indoor 25m 8-lane heated pool
- Indoor combined program/ and leisure pool
- New front entrance, change rooms and amenities
- Shade areas
- Green technology including solar power and rainwater tanks



Figure 77 – Clarence Regional Aquatic Centre

CASE 17 – MOUNT DRUITT AQUATIC CENTRE, NSW

(\$40.6 MILLION DESIGN & CONSTRUCT)

Blacktown City Council is undertaking a \$40.6 million renewal of the Mt Druitt swimming centre which was opened in 1975. The project is funded by the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program and includes the following features:

- Outdoor 8-lane 50m pool
- Indoor 25m pool
- Indoor splash park
- Extensive upgrading of the plant machinery
- High-efficiency Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Specialised filtration systems
- Inclusive modern amenities and change rooms
- Kiosk
- Community meeting rooms
- Landscaping



Figure 78 – Mount Druitt Aquatic Centre

Appendix C – Aquatic Facility Infrastructure Options

Infrastructure options are explored in Section 9 which reference recent case studies of completed projects of a similar type and scale to that being discussed. This appendix depicts how these proposed options would translate to Shellharbour's existing facilities.

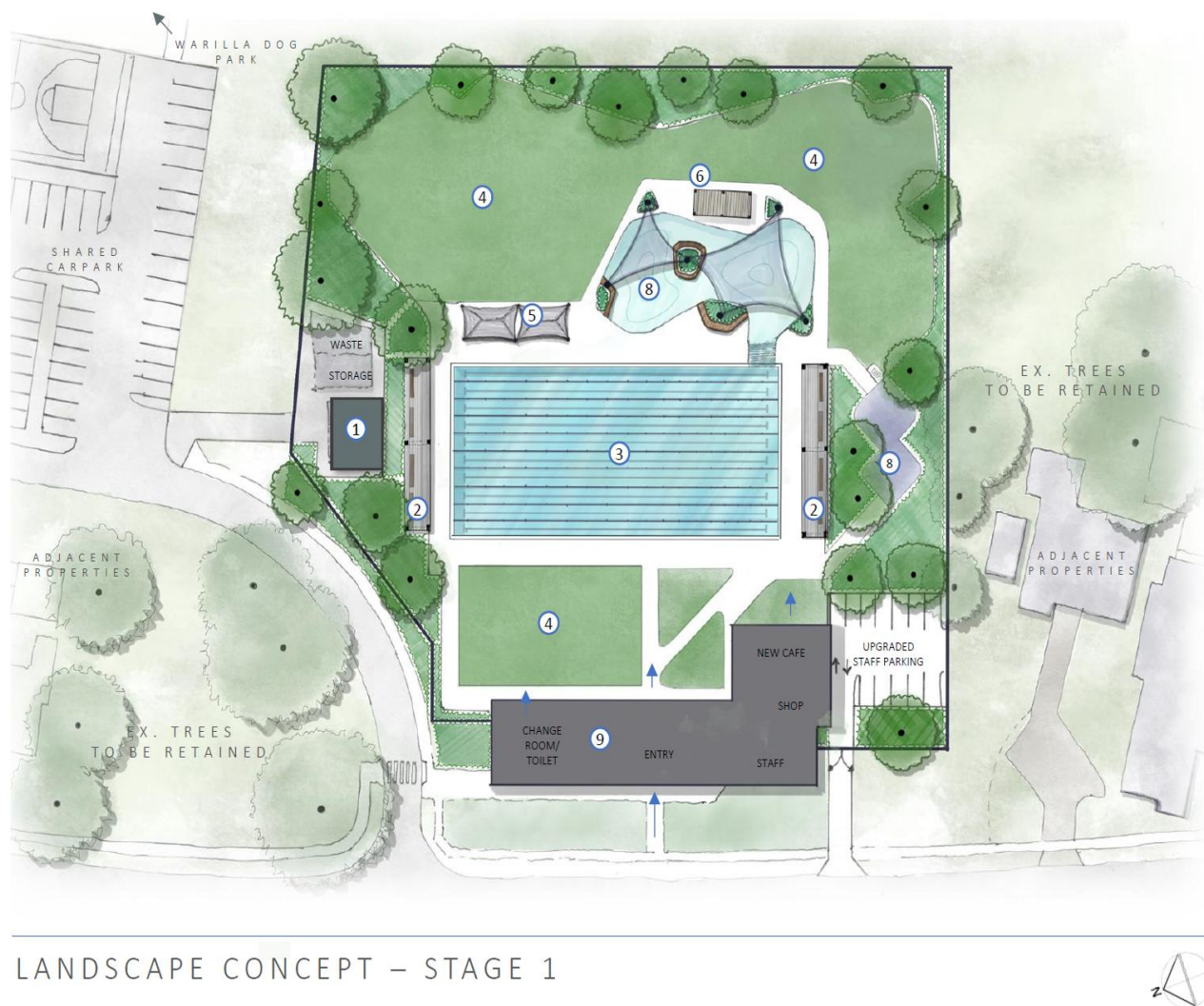
The infrastructure options provided demonstrate a high-level concept only of what could typically be achieved at the facility and indicative upfront capital infrastructure costs (as estimated and benchmarked against case studies). It is recommended that further detailed cost-benefit analysis be undertaken, research on available funding opportunities and consultation with the community and key stakeholders be carried out to support any future infrastructure decision.

Warilla Pool Option 1 – Renovation and Modernisation

- 50m pool increased from 7 lanes to 10 lanes
- Installation of new plant and refurbishment of existing plant room
- Installation of a children's splash pad/play area
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Installation of BBQ, shelter and seating
- Installation of solar heating
- Re-establishment of original entry to pool from Benaud Crescent (closure of current entrance)
- Installation of a kiosk area
- Installation of outdoor fitness stations
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Warilla Pool Option 1, is Case 11 – Capricorn Coast Brian Dorey OAM Aquatic Centre, QLD which was valued at \$13 million.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 79 below.



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ① UPGRADED PLANT ROOM | ⑥ NEW PICNIC SETTING / BBQ AREA |
| ② RE-INSTALL EXISTING SHADE STRUCTURES | ⑦ ZERO-ENTRY BEACH POOL WITH SHADE COVERAGE |
| ③ 50M POOL – 10 LANE | ⑧ OUTDOOR FITNESS STATIONS |
| ④ FLEXIBLE OPEN SPACE | ⑨ RENEWED AQUATIC CENTRE FACILITY & SIGNAGE |
| ⑤ OUTDOOR PICNIC AREA – UTILISING EX. SHADE STRUCTURES | |

INSPIRATION PALETTE



Figure 79 – Conceptual Renovation and Modernisation of Warilla Pool

Warilla Pool Option 2 – Decommissioning of Pool Facility, Replaced with Community Park

- Demolition of existing infrastructure
- Footpaths connecting existing basketball courts and dog exercise area with the new community park infrastructure
- Seating/tables
- BBQ's
- Shade structures
- Children's BMX pump track
- Fitness station circuit areas
- Amenities block – toilets, family/unisex change rooms from existing infrastructure
- Children's playground

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). Similar infrastructure projects that align with the renovation of Warilla Pool Option 2 are:

- Case 12 – Epping Aquatic Centre, NSW; and
- Case 13 – Kilsyth Centenary Pool, VIC.

Neither of these decommissioning projects have reported project values – however, the estimated cost of such a project would vary depending on the level of parkland embellishment selected and likely to be a lesser capital value than a pool replacement or refurbishment project.

It should be noted that decommissioning Warilla Pool may present challenges from a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) perspective, particularly if the site becomes underutilised or vacant for an extended period. A reduction in legitimate activity and passive surveillance could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and perceptions of reduced public safety. Should Council pursue decommissioning, further investigations would be required to identify and assess appropriate future uses of the site, ensuring the area remains active, well-maintained and integrated with the surrounding community. Any future planning should consider CPTED principles, community needs, and opportunities to maintain positive activation of the space.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 80 below.



FUTURE MASTERPLANNING

The second proposal suggests the potential decommission Warilla Pool. This will support the strengthening of the Albion Park and Oak Flats Aquatic Centre asset upgrades. The site would be incorporated into the broader park boundary, with future master planning underpinned by Shellharbour City Council's 2041 Strategic Planning Framework:



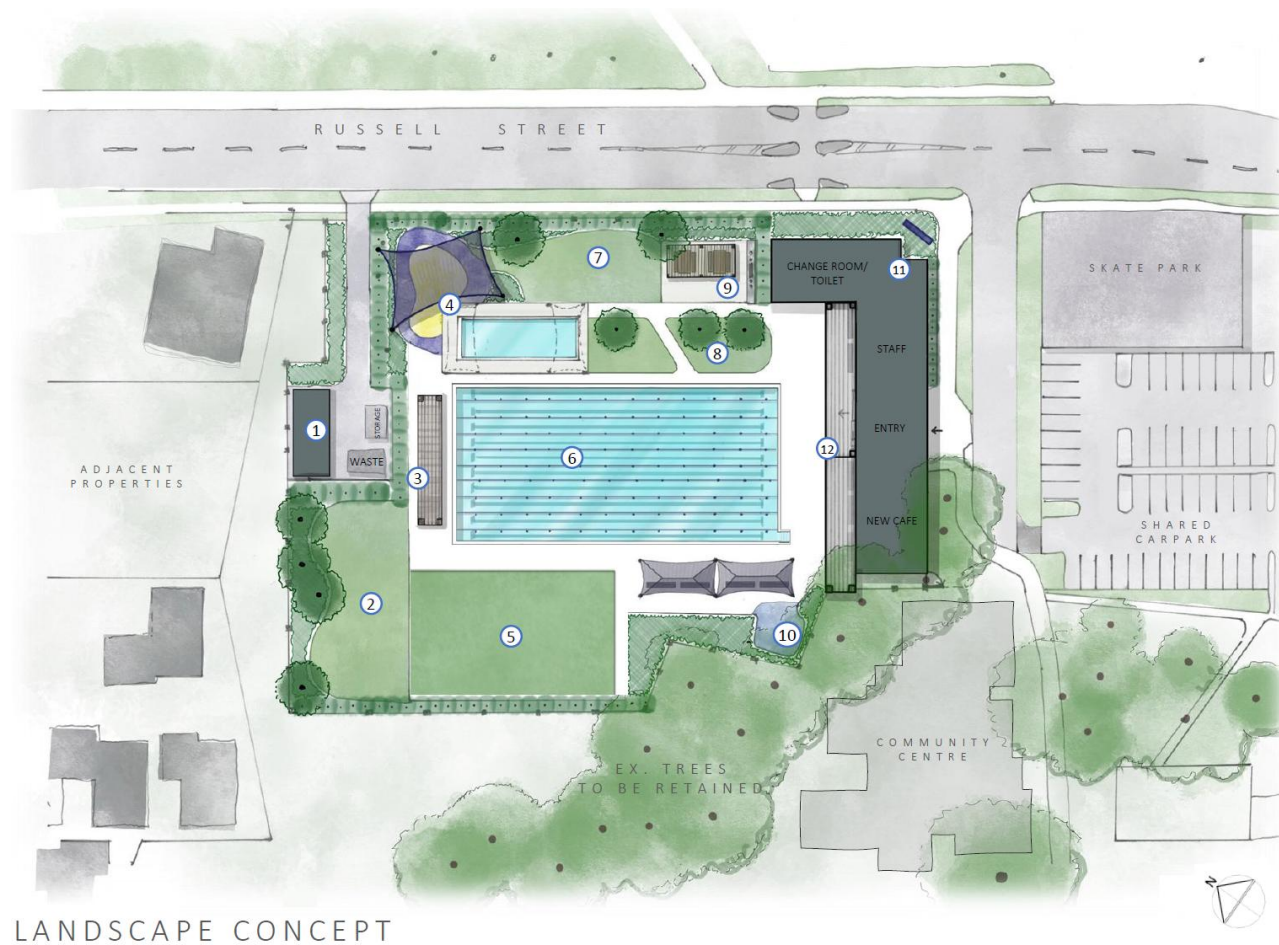
Figure 80 – Conceptual Initiatives for a future Warilla Community Park

Albion Park Pool Option 1 – Renovation and Modernisation

- 50m pool increased from 8 lanes to 10 lanes
- Installation of new plant.
- Refurbishment of existing plant room
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Modernising of change rooms
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Albion Park Pool Option 1, is Case 14 – North Bellarine Aquatic Centre, VIC – valued at \$15 million.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 81 below.



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ① UPGRADED PLANT & CLUB ROOM | ⑦ ENHANCE EXISTING OPEN SPACE |
| ② NEW FLEXIBLE OPEN SPACE | ⑧ UNIFY OPEN SPACE & PATHWAYS |
| ③ RE-INSTALLING EXISTING SHADE STRUCTURES | ⑨ ENHANCE EXISTING PICNIC AREA, PROPOSED BBQ AREA |
| ④ SPLASH PAD & SMALL POOL TO BE RETAINED & RENEWED | ⑩ FITNESS STATION TO BE RETAINED |
| ⑤ OPEN SPACE / LAWN | ⑪ RENEWED AQUATIC CENTRE: FACILITY & SIGNAGE |
| ⑥ 50M POOL - 10 LANE | ⑫ RENEWED AQUATIC CENTRE: AWING |

INSPIRATION PALETTE

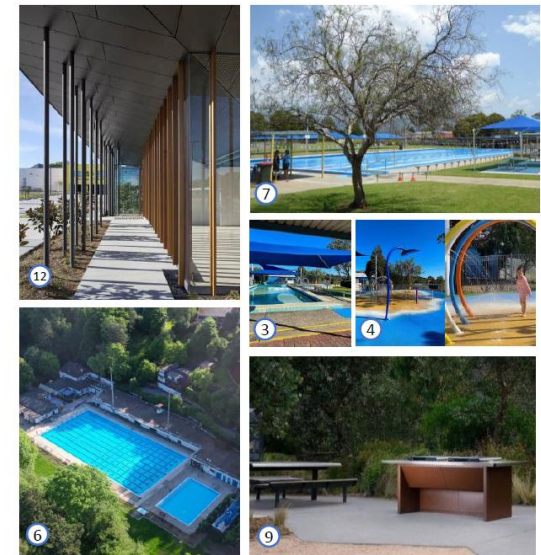


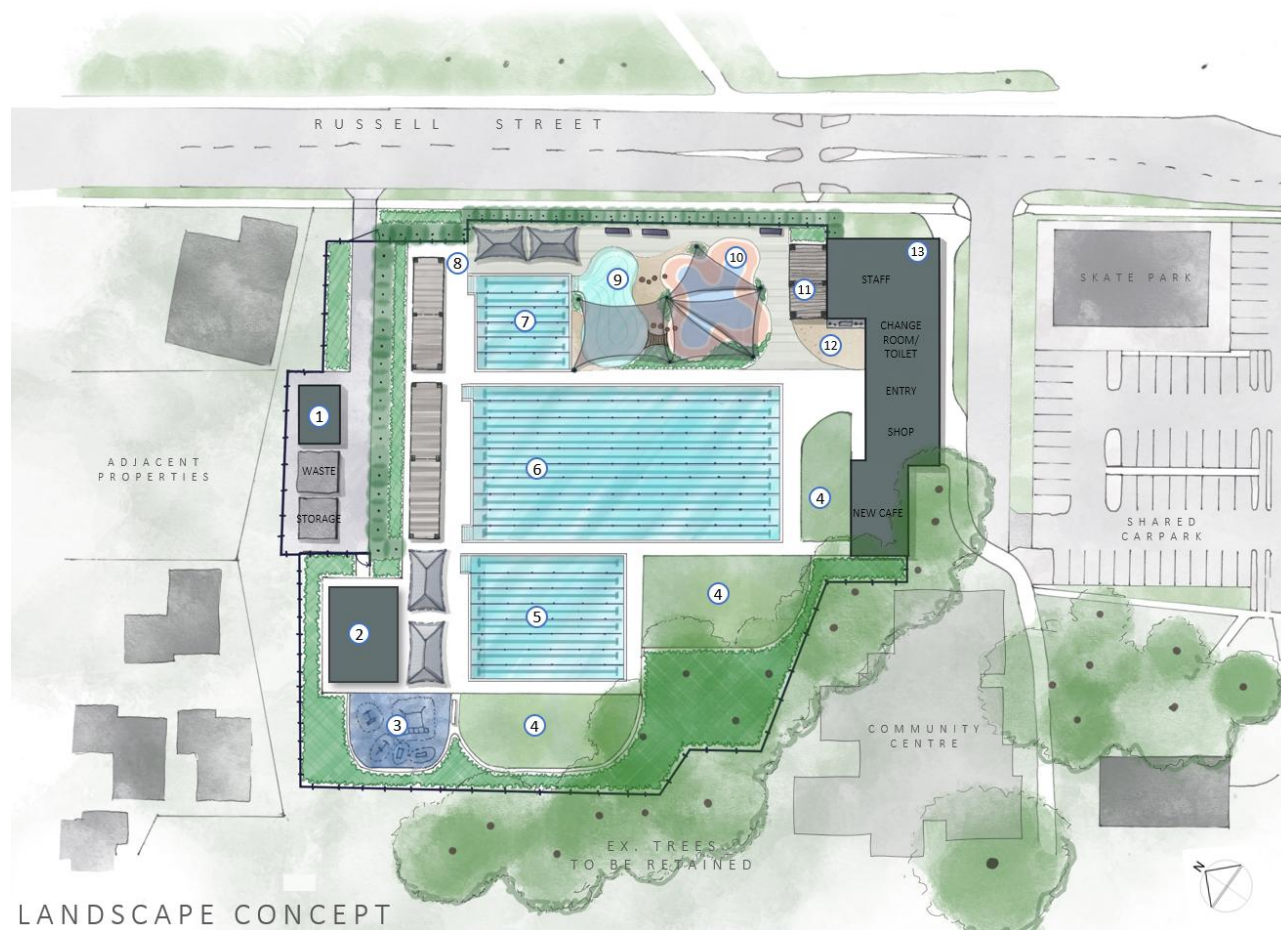
Figure 81 – Conceptual Renovation and Modernisation of Albion Park Pool

Albion Park Pool Option 2 – Upgrade and Expansion of Facility

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 50m pool on eastern side of existing footprint
- Installation of new plant
- Installation of new plant room
- Relocation of existing splash pad/play area
- Relocation of existing swim club room
- Relocation of storage areas
- Relocation of fitness stations
- Installation of a six (6) lane 15m program pool (outside existing facility footprint)
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Modernising of entry area integrated with kiosk space
- Installation of outdoor tables and seating area outside kiosk
- Reservation of space for the future installation of a ten (10) lane 25m pool

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Albion Park Pool Option 2, is Case 15 – Inverell Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$24.9 million.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 82 below.



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| ① UPGRADED PLANT ROOM | ⑧ RE-INSTALL EXISTING SHADE STRUCTURES |
| ② NEW CLUB HOUSE BUILDING | ⑨ ZERO ENTRY BEACH POOL |
| ③ UPGRADED OUTDOOR FITNESS | ⑩ SPLASH PAD WITH WATER PLAY |
| ④ NEW FLEXIBLE OPEN SPACE | ⑪ RE-INSTALLED EXISTING PICNIC STRUCTURE |
| ⑤ (FUTURE) 25M POOL – 8 LANE | ⑫ OUTDOOR BBQ AREA |
| ⑥ 50M POOL – 10 LANE | ⑬ UPGRADED AQUATIC CENTRE FACILITY |
| ⑦ 15M POOL – 6 LANE | |

INSPIRATION PALETTE

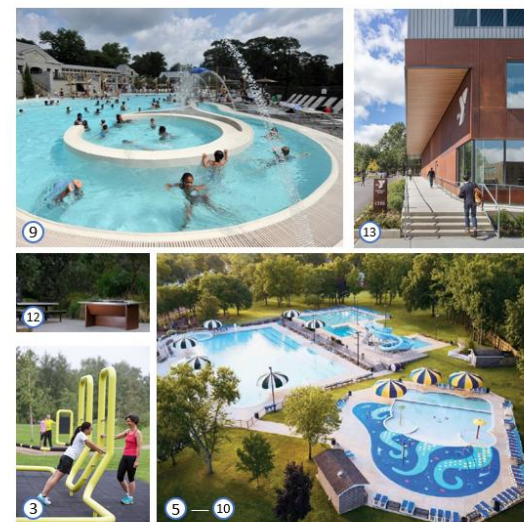


Figure 82 – Conceptual Upgrade and Expansion of Albion Park Pool

Oak Flats Pool Option 1 – Upgrade of Facility with Indoor 25m Pool

Development of both indoor and outdoor areas

Outdoor area includes:

- 50m pool installed in a north/south direction
- Installation of shade structures in appropriate areas
- Splash pad play area

Indoor/covered area includes:

- All new configuration of assets within the indoor space
- Installation of ten (10) lane 25m pool
- Entry area integrated with cafe, seating and shopping space
- Lifeguard and Learn to Swim staff offices
- Change rooms, toilets, showers including unisex/family room
- First Aid room
- Storage area
- Installation of new plant room
- Installation of new plant

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Oak Flats Pool Option 1, is Case 16 – Clarence Regional Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$29.1 million.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 83 below.



INDICATIVE IMAGES

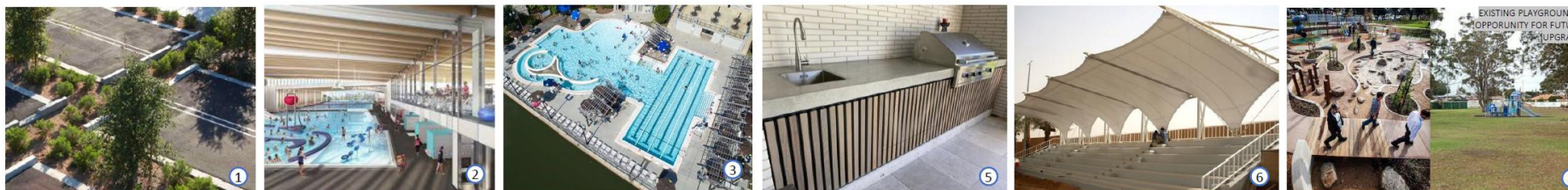


Figure 83 – Conceptual Upgrade of Facility and Small Indoor 25m Pool at Oak Flats

Oak Flats Pool Option 2 – Indoor Leisure Facility and Site Upgrade

- Development of both new indoor and outdoor areas.
- Existing Kingston Street access to Centre blocked off at Moore Street roundabout.
- Front access eastern parking area provided via Moore Street & Kingston Street roundabout intersection.
- Rear access western parking area provided via Fisher Street and Hope Street intersection.

Outdoor area includes:

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 50m pool in a north/south direction at eastern end of facility
- Installation of a zero-depth beach entry at the shallow end of the 50m pool.
- Installation of a Youth Precinct at western end of facility footprint.
- Installation of footpaths linking rear carpark and youth precinct to the front entry of the facility.
- Consolidating existing sporting infrastructure (cricket, tennis) and community space (dog activity park) with aquatic facility footprint.

Indoor area provides upper and lower levels, which include:

Lower level

- Installation of a ten (10) lane 25m pool
- Installation of a six (6) lane 15m program pool
- Installation of splash pad play area
- Installation of new plant rooms
- Installation of new plant

Upper level

- Front Entrance
- Learn to Swim office
- Meeting room/s
- Storage room/s
- Change rooms, toilets and showers
- Café, shop and seating
- Lifeguard office
- First Aid room

A number of case studies of aquatic infrastructure projects across Australia is provided in (Appendix B). A similar infrastructure project that aligns with the renovation of Oak Flats Pool Option 2, is Case 17 – Mount Druitt Aquatic Centre, NSW which was valued at \$40.6 million.

This option is conceptually depicted in Figure 84 below.



Figure 84 – Conceptual Leisure Facility and Site Upgrade of Oak Flats Pool

Appendix D – Community Engagement Evaluation Report



AQUATICS REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

JUNE- JULY
2026

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BACKGROUND

Shellharbour City Council is aiming to complete a full-scale review of its aquatic facilities. Our pools play an important role in the well-being of our community, from swimming lessons and fitness to recreation, rehabilitation, social connection, and community sport. The review aims to understand current asset opportunities and challenges.

Given that the city's aquatic facilities are between 46 and 60 years old, they need significant upgrades to remain safe, accessible, and financially sustainable. Tying these realities to the community priorities helps Council understand what the community needs now and into the future, and what options are realistic.

Council is examining a wide range of information to understand how our pools are performing today and what will be needed in the future. This includes:

- Attendance data for each facility
- Population growth and demographic trends
- Age and condition of each pool, buildings and equipment
- Operational costs and subsidy per visit
- Environmental impacts (energy, water and gas use)
- Community feedback

This approach ensures the strategy is evidence-based, fair and sustainable.

Purpose of Engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Identify what our community loves most about aquatic facilities.
- Hear community priorities around the future of their local aquatics facility
- Identify current community pinch points for use.
- Understand community appetite for change or increased investment and its cost.
- Establish a basis for ideas and new initiatives at aquatics facilities.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

How We Engaged

To understand community use of and aspirations for the City's aquatic facilities, a range of promotional channels were used to encourage participation and gather self-selected feedback. The primary target audience was residents and aquatic facility user groups within the Shellharbour Local Government Area. Community engagement opportunities were promoted through Council's Shellharbour Snapshot e-newsletter, social media channels (Facebook and Instagram), the Let's Chat Shellharbour engagement platform, on-site signage, and direct communication with registered user groups. A media release was also issued, generating additional coverage through local print and radio media.

The Aquatics Review Let's Chat page was open from 29 June to 20 July 2026 and invited community feedback through an online survey.



Online survey

- 339 survey responses were received from 323 contributors.
- 1,212 people viewed the page, and 42 people followed for updates.
- Feedback collected across 22 questions covering demographics of users, use priorities, accessibility, improvement and suitability areas, and community ideas or desires.



Written submissions

- 2 emails sent to local swimming clubs
- Feedback was received via email, customer requests, and informal feedback to staff onsite.



Online presence

- 2 social media posts shared to Stories
- 89 likes or reactions, 18 shares, and 23 comments, all with positive sentiment
- 23,739 views

SURVEY - DEMOGRAPHICS



339 SURVEY RESPONSES



38.5% AGED 35-49
32.4% AGED 50-64
18.5% AGED 65+



94.1% LIVE IN
SHELLHARBOUR
24.4% CAME FROM ALBION PARK
AND THE GREATER WEST



73.2% FEMALE
26.8% MALE



50.44% VISIT THE POOL 5-7
DAYS A WEEK



74.3% USE OAK FLATS POOL

SURVEY - KEY FINDINGS

What we heard



40% COME FOR LAP SWIMMING



54% SUPPORT INCREASED FEES FOR IMPROVED FACILITIES



PROXIMITY TO HOME IS THE MOST ACCESSIBLE FEATURE



MOST SUPPORTED IDEA: EXTEND THE OPEN SEASON



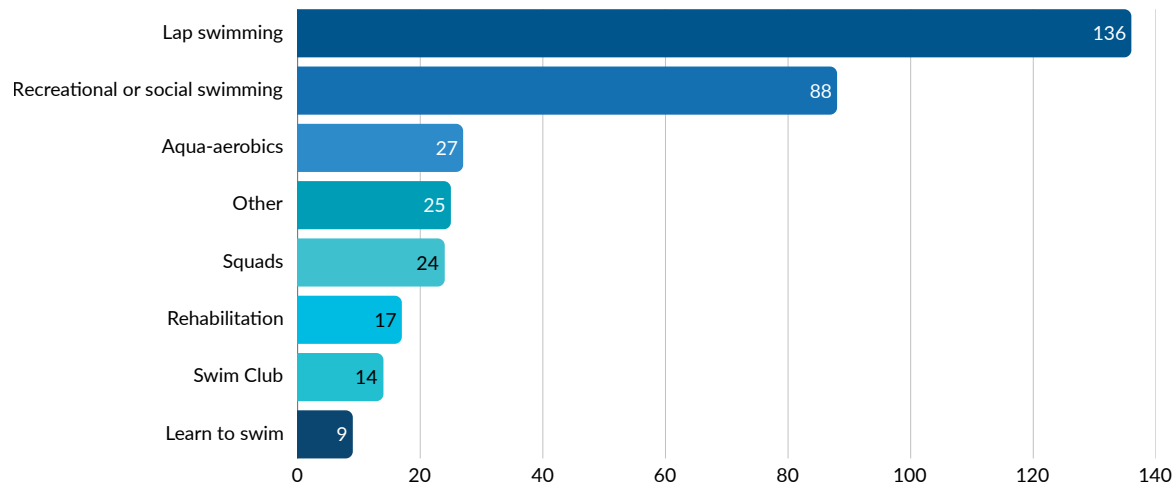
FREE ENTRY MAKES BEVERLEY WHITFIELD A HIGHLIGHT



LEAST SUPPORTED IDEA: MORE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

SURVEY - RESULTS

Q: What brings you to the pools most often?
(Multi choice)



Our pools are used for a variety of activities every day. To see what the most common use is, we asked respondents to pick from a list of activities that we see in our pools.

40%

Of survey respondents use the pools for lap swimming.

Q: How do you get to the pool?

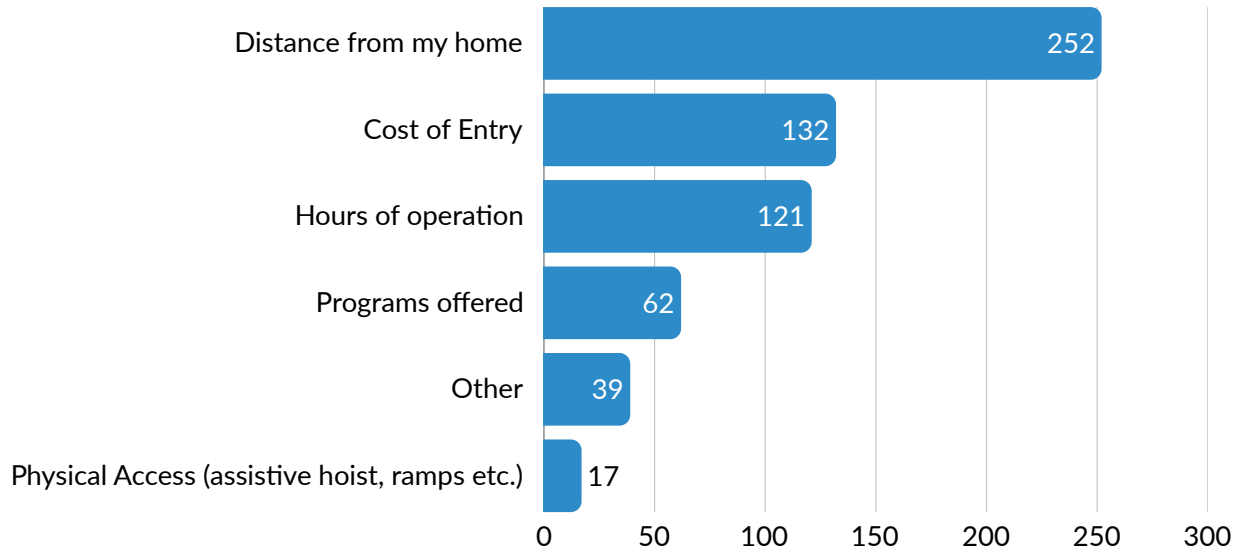
We asked respondents how they get to our pools. Respondents typically drive themselves or travel with family to the pool. No respondents stated that they used Taxi or ride-share service as their mode of transport.

87.9%

Of survey respondents drive themselves to the pool.

SURVEY - RESULTS

Q: What makes Shellharbour Pools most accessible for you?



Q: Please tell us why

Beverley Whitfield and Oak Flats pools were mentioned as the most accessible.

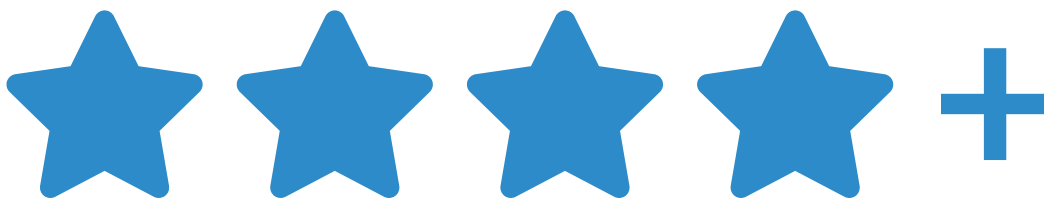
The most common reasons include:

- Cost
- Accessibility
- Albion Park is not open year-round
- Aqua aerobics or other programs

Most common reasons pools are inaccessible:

- Overcrowding at Oak Flats pool
- Need for updates –highlighted indoor heated facility
- Extend AP open season and hours

Q: Rate our pools



59%

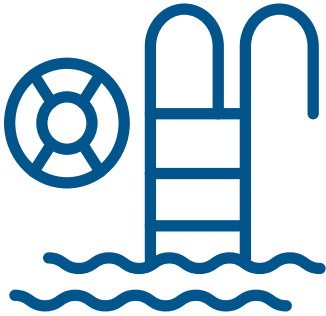
Respondents rated our pool
4 stars or above

Respondents highlighted a high satisfaction rate with our pools, with an average star rating of 3.7 stars. More than 59% of respondents rated them 4 stars or higher, with over 25% of respondents rating the pools 5/5 stars.

SURVEY - RESULTS

Q: Share why the pools do or do not meet you or your family's needs

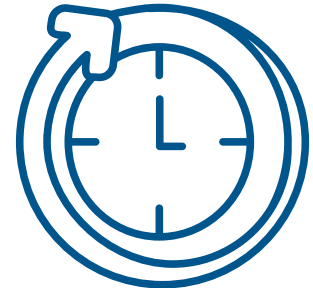
Respondents highlighted these key themes:



11% seeking a indoor heated facility



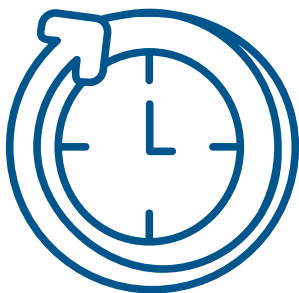
10.9% highlighted Oak Flats is overcrowded



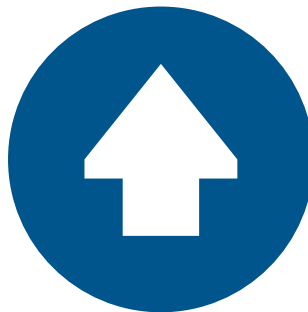
9.9% suggested extending Albion Parks season

Q: Tell us what you think could be changed or improved to encourage more people to use Shellharbour's Pools

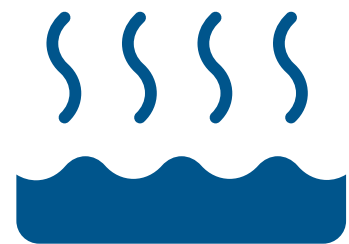
Respondents highlighted these key themes:



27.5% extend opening hours, particularly of Albion Park Pool



24.4% updated facilities including showers, maintenance or the possibility of an indoor heated facility.

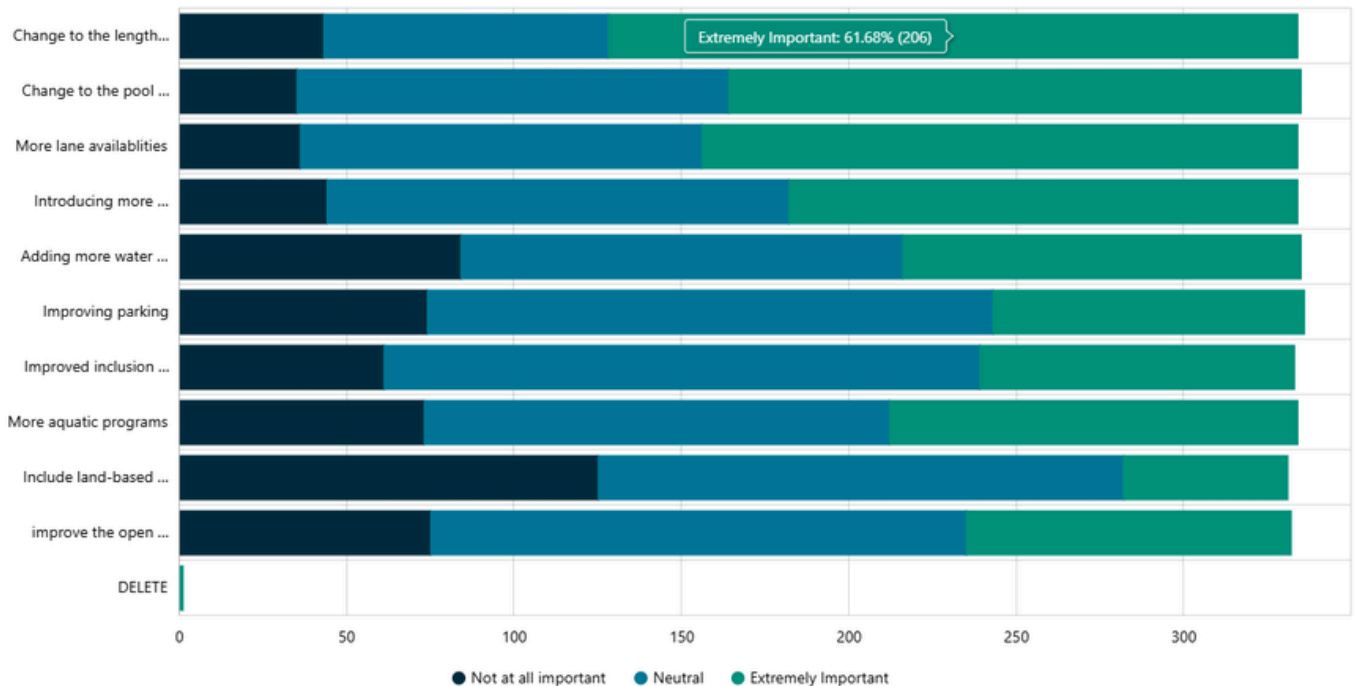


12.9% heat Albion Park and Warilla Pools

SURVEY - RESULTS

Q: Thinking of the pool you visit most, tell us how important the below improvements are:

(Matrix)



The improvement rated most important was “change to the length of the pool season with 61.7% rating it extremely important. The least important was the inclusion of land-based activities, with 37.8% rating it not at all important.

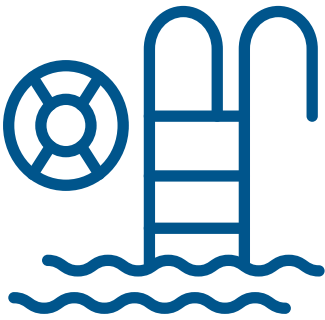
Q: Council's aquatic centres are ageing, the cost of new facilities or upgrades and refurbishments must be considered. As a community member do you support major investment in aquatics?

88.7% Average support rating for investing financially in facilities upgrades or refurbishment.

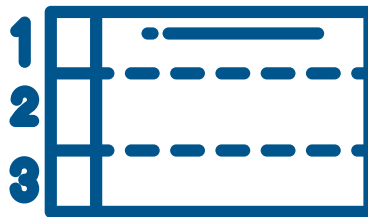
SURVEY - RESULTS

Q: Tell us in order what you would like to see in a future or new facility by ranking these ideas from most want to least want:

Top 3 rated ideas



Indoor heated pool



Increased lane capacity
at all pools



Shade areas including
over pools

Q: Do you support an increase in entry fees for improved facilities?

53.6% Support increased fees for improved facilities



The top reasons given for support were:

- If it means the facilities will be updated, particularly showers, heating or an extended season.
- Conditional support for increased service delivery and then fee's returning to the normal rate.
- Support for a user-pays model (i.e. only facilities that have upgrades incur a higher fee.).



The top reasons not to support were:

- The fees are already too expensive
- Cost of living is too high.
- Council should only use rates to cover improvement costs.

LOCATION SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

Comparison of fee increase support between different pool users

Reviewing the user responses by which pool they identify as visiting, we can see some variation in support for a fee increase; the following identifies these differences:

- Warilla - 61.7% support
- Albion Park - 56.5% support
- Oak Flats - 51.7% support
- Beverley Whitfield - 50% support

A common theme underlying this variation in support was that Beverley Whitfield is currently free to access; therefore, users are not supportive of changing this arrangement.

Priority improvements that were identified for each location

Some differing common themes were submitted depending on the location. The top two requests for each location are listed below.

Albion Park Pool:

- Upgrading the diving blocks.
- Creating a space for water polo with deeper water.

Oak Flats Pool:

- Reducing overcrowding (particularly by providing more lanes for lap swimming).
- Provide more Aqua Aerobics.

Warilla Pool:

- Heat the facility.
- Provide more family-friendly activities (toddler space, inflatable play).

Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool:

- Improve the lane ropes.
 - Provide lockers for belongings.
- 

HIGHLIGHTED COMMENTS

We received many positive comments from the community, particularly about staff and the social environment, some highlights are:

Featured Contributions

Great community vibe especially for seniors and children

Contribution 5 of 5 | 10 July 2026

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the staff at Oak Flats who do an amazing job and are genuinely lovely.

Contribution 4 of 5 | 4 July 2026

The pool is a lovely environment with lots of locals gathering as a meeting place

Contribution 3 of 5 | 3 July 2026

Thank you for looking after the Bev Whitfield so well. Swimming there plays a huge positive role of my life and is a major part of why I live in Shellharbour. Outdoor pools like Warilla and Oak flats seem so much healthier, fun and more part of creating a community - I hope council can keep as many pools as possible and doesn't need to sacrifice them for an indoor aquatic centre.

Contribution 2 of 5 | 1 July 2026

Shellharbour pool is wonderful .It's safe to leave your things whilst your swimming .Nobody bothers you.

Contribution 1 of 5 | 30 June 2026

Just keep up the good work

Contribution 1 of 2 | 14 July 2026

Featured Contributions

So so grateful for our lovely pools

Contribution 3 of 3 | 14 July 2026

The oak flats staff are really good. Very friendly.

Contribution 2 of 3 | 30 June 2026

Thank you for hearing our ideas

Contribution 1 of 3 | 30 June 2026

Featured Contributions

Oak flats suits me, staff friendly

Contribution 2 of 2 | 14 July 2026

staff at oak flats is wonderful, competent, pleasant and helpful. Pool hygiene is very good.

Contribution 1 of 2 | 9 July 2026