

## 11.2 Mudgee Indoor Pool Update

REPORT BY THE MANAGER - RECREATION SERVICES  
TO 04 AUGUST 2021 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400088, FO640002

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager - Recreation Services on the Mudgee Indoor Pool Update;**
2. **note the comments in the project progress report on the indoor pool development;**
3. **resolve to approve the design options one and three to progress into business case development as summarised in the body of this report:**
  - a) **option 1 - new indoor 8 lane 25 metre pool and leisure play area. Retain existing outdoor facilities, with the exception of the outdoor toddler pool;**
  - b) **option 3 - new indoor 50 metre pool and leisure play area. Retain existing outdoor water park only and decommission existing outdoor pools to accomodate new pools; and**
4. **resolve to approve multi-function facilities such as gym and fitness room to be considered as options in the business case development.**

### Executive summary

This purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the varied actions completed to date regarding the proposed development of an Indoor Pool in Mudgee. It endeavors to provide Council with additional information to assist in guiding the scale and configuration of the project.

Features of this report include summaries of:

- Indoor Pool feasibility study and emerging industry trends
- Condition reporting on existing Mudgee pool
- Site identification and early planning
- Preliminary project brief
- Business case and concept design

The report concludes with a recommendation to proceed with the next phase of the project, being endorsing the business case to proceed with the preferred option one and three concept to allow further detailed concept design and financial analysis.

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

## Detailed report

The development of a regional indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre in the Mid-Western Region presents an opportunity for Council to significantly boost the quality and accessibility of public aquatic and recreational health facilities in the community. The below summary attempts to provide Council with an update on the developments for a regional indoor swimming complex.

### **Indoor Pool feasibility study**

In 2019, Council commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the financial and social implications of building and operating an indoor pool facility in Mudgee. It was also to identify current industry trends and provide potential design options for such facility. The feasibility study was placed on public exhibition to obtain public feedback from the community. The feedback indicated strong support for such facility development however highlighted that further investigation was required into the preferred site location and indoor pool design concept in particular facility inclusions.

Given the importance and significant investment required, it was resolved that in the best interest of the community that a longer term view was required to meet the needs of the community for decades to come. Further investigation into the site location and design principles were to be assessed.

### **Mudgee Pool Condition Report**

Council have been proactive in engaging a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a general condition assessment of the site. The purpose of the report was to identify any possible major defects that may impact the performance and asset life of the facility. The inspection was completed in May 2021 by GHD Pty Ltd outside the pool season to assist the assessment scope and limitations.

It is important to note that the report should not be viewed as an all-encompassing reporting dealing with issues to the facilities entirety. Rather it should be seen as a reasonable attempt to identify any significant defects visible at the time of inspection and general description of issues and remediation/recommendation proposals.

Based on the risk assessment and observations, the report surmises the following recommendations:

- All pools are in reasonable condition for their age and appeared to be reasonably watertight with no significant losses to report
- Given that the typical design life for a pool complex is 50 years and the Mudgee swimming pool was constructed in the 1960's, an estimated 10-year remaining life can be calculated when assessed against current overall condition rating
- It was stated that with periodic maintenance and repairs to any identified 'high' risk maintenance items the remaining life can be significantly extended past the estimated period calculated from the relevant predictive decay curves (as highlighted in the report)
- Items identified as Extreme or High should be as Priority items, and items identified as Moderate should be considered as part of maintenance activities

Council staff will consider the assets management strategies and options available to Council, including medium and long term works that should be undertaken in-line with the report findings.

### **Site Visits**

In early 2021 Council staff conducted site visits across Central West and Southern NSW with over 7 site visits being conducted. Sites were selected on relevancy to similar desired project scale, contemporary redevelopment site design and construction methodology.

A considerable amount of information was gathered from the visits to which included:

- benchmarking current regional facilities and gaining perspective on project scale
- potential facility inclusions and assessment on effective universal design principles
- methodology applied and lessons learnt from the various Aquatic Centre builds
- considerations to be given with any on-going operating costs associated with a redeveloped or expanded site

The site visit initiative included a Centre that is currently in the construction phase of a redevelopment of a similar scale to that desired for the Mid-Western Region.

**Preliminary Project Brief**

Supplement investigation completed by Council staff into the existing operational constraints, asset condition assessment and target user groups have contributed to the following preliminary project brief recommendations.

**Key Markets**

The following key markets and associated design principle are recommended for the indoor pool development:

<b>Key Market</b>	<b>Design Principle</b>
Recreation Users	Destination that provides all-year around swimming and water fun for all community members and varying types of swimming ability  Community activity hub that offers an array of target health, recreation and sporting programs, support services and casual leisure opportunities to all sectors of the community  Interactive aquatic playgrounds or active water spaces with splash pads, built in zero depths and fountains or splash buckets
Health, Fitness and Wellbeing	Exercising in water opportunities, including exercise and therapy activities  Increase the usability of program space and lane availability  Commitment to universal design and access for all principles  Ability to facilitate health and well-being programs for the community through diverse affordable programs, social interaction and developing civic pride
Aquatic Education	Learn to swim classes, squad swimming, school carnivals and teaching/water education program opportunities
Sports	Opportunity for increased swim and triathlon club participation and other aquatic sports
Public Safety	Addressing ageing assets on existing site

	Promoting awareness of water safety issues
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**Site identification**

Following extensive site investigation carried out by Council staff and recent consultation with Council, Council in principal supported the notion of an indoor Aquatic Centre on the existing Mudgee pool site and sections of the adjacent Lawson Park.

The major benefits being the central location, maintaining access to existing outdoor pool facilities such as the waterpark, catering for greater pool activities during peak periods and minimal impacts to facility access during the construction phase of an indoor complex.

Operating costs for an expanded site will need to be carefully considered and monitored as well any transition into the adjacent open space facilities of Lawson Park. This includes any environmental and site drainage factors.

In the early stages of planning it is envisaged that any new development would primarily be within the existing footprint or slightly directed towards either the west side or the eastern side in Lawson park.

**Concept Design**

A review of the feasibility study, design principles and site identification have directed Council to the following configuration options:

Option	Features
One	New indoor 8 lane 25 meter pool, program pool and leisure play area  Retain existing outdoor facilities, with the exception of outdoor toddler pool
Two	Retain and enclose existing outdoor pool facilities
Three	New indoor 50 meter pool, program and leisure play area  Retain existing outdoor water park only  Decommission existing outdoor pools and diviing boards to accomadate new pools

From a Council management perspective, all options are practicable in achieving year-round access to aquatic facilities for residents of Mid-Western. They also meet community needs in particular for young families, elderly residents and regular lap swimmers. It would also significantly enhance community capacity and civic pride in the Mid-Western region.

There is merit however in suggesting that given the ageing asset of the outdoor pool, financial stability considerations and ensuring future demands can be met that option three be the most preferred. Outdoor leisure would be available in option three through the existing water park and greenspace.

It is envisaged that the provision of an indoor 50 meter complex would see the annual operating deficit potentially double to that of an indoor 25m pool. This is a direct result of more supervision, energy costs for heating water and air and building structure. The indoor 50m pool however would

be able to cater for more users and meet pool availability needs during peak periods. In the instance of accommodating an indoor 25 meter pool in addition to a seasonal outdoor 50 meter pool the operating costs again would be significantly higher than that of any indoor pool only option.

Council may also decide to invest further developments in responding to contemporary and industry trends of modern aquatic and leisure centers by providing additional 'dry' facilities such as a gym and fitness room. These options may exist through a staged development process and would greatly enhance the health and wellbeing opportunities available at the complex.

In summary, at this point in planning phase the recommendation to Council on concept design objectives are as follows:

- utilising the existing site at Lawson Park Mudgee
- retain the existing water splash park and possibly outdoor 50m pool
- new minimum 8 lane x 25 meter or 50 meter heated indoor pool with disability ramps and suitable for short course swimming competition
- new indoor multi-purpose heated program pool with provisions for accessibility ramp, learn to swim programs, exercise and therapy activities
- new indoor leisure water play park that replaces the current outdoor toddler pool
- kiosk facilities that services both the swimming pool complex and adjacent Lawson park users
- internal seating and viewing areas to cater for regular activities, swimming carnivals and events
- multi-function room to service as a hired community space, staff training room and event purposes
- enhanced accessible and family change room
- administration offices and adequate storage solutions

Other considerations recommended to explore in the design of an indoor complex include:

- multi-functional facilities that would be able to offer additional health and wellbeing benefits (e.g gym and 'dry' area fitness rooms) whilst also being suitable to increase facility attendance
- improved entry-exit and parking allocations to the facility, ensuring that expected facility use is appropriately catered
- heritage and amenity aspects for existing pool infrastructure and adjacent Lawson park

### **Business Case and Concept Design**

Given the significant capital investment involved in a project of this scale, Council endorsed the development of a business case to assist in attracting funding to the project in the 2021/22 Operational Plan. The business case ensures that Council meet the requirements of the Office of Local Government capital review guidelines.

The business case is to be supported with design concepts that demonstrate Council's design strategy. The concept shall display items such as the proposed building envelope, strategy of pool configuration and associated rooms, and financial analysis of the facility.

## Community Plan implications

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Looking After Our Community</b>
Goal	Effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure
Strategy	Provide infrastructure and services to cater for the current and future needs of our community

## Strategic implications

### **Council Strategies**

Delivery and Operational Plan  
Recreation Strategy

### **Council Policies**

Not Applicable

### **Legislation**

Not applicable.

## Financial implications

This resolution does not commit Council to any new expenditure. Council committed funding towards the preparation of the indoor pool business case in the 2021/22 Operational Plan. If Council wishes to deliver the supporting actions identified within the business case, it will need to allocate appropriate resources and budget at the appropriate stage and time to progress to a construction phase.

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MANAGER - RECREATION SERVICES

SIMON JONES  
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

22 July 2021

*Attachments:* Nil

### APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER