



AQUATICS FACILITY

PLAN

Revised Report (May 2021)



City of
KINGSTON

DISCLAIMER

Information contained in this document is based on available information at the time of writing. All figures and diagrams are indicative only and should be referred to as such. This is a strategic document which deals with technical matters in a summary way only.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team is extremely grateful for the support and guidance provided by the community, council officers, representatives of government agencies, and other peak bodies who gave freely of their time to provide input into the plan.

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SUMMARY

STATE OF PLAY

WHAT?

In early 2020, serious structural issues resulted in the closure of Don Tatnell Leisure Centre, one of two Council-owned facilities.

In addition to closure of the Don Tatnell facility, Council committed to investing in high quality aquatics and leisure facilities and receive a report identifying future opportunities, inclusive of a funding strategy, for the delivery of aquatic and leisure facilities that meets the current and future needs of the Kingston community.

A three-stage process is proposed to ensure an outcome that meets the current and future needs of our community.

The Aquatics Facility Plan focuses on 'Stage 1 – Defining Service Provision' and will provide the overarching strategic response for the provision of aquatic facilities in Kingston.

Future stages include a robust 'Stage 2 – Site Assessment and Selection' process, and 'Stage 3 – Facility Design and Asset Management'.

WHY?

We know that changes in population, societal norms and lifestyle choices are significantly altering user choices, and our future planning needs to ensure that we continue to support our community accessing the facilities and services that they want, when they want, and how they want.

Trends in participation show a softening in demand for organised sport and a significantly increased demand for opportunities to participate in general physical activity for improved health outcomes. We also know that Kingston's population is growing and gradually ageing.

This is in combination with the understanding that less than one-third of the population meets the recommended weekly physical activity levels, and over half of our population is overweight or obese.

This highlights a need to reconsider how our aquatic facilities can change to better support the shifting demands of our community.

WHERE?

Given the geographical shape of Kingston, the location of more than ten facilities in neighbouring councils plays as important a role as our own two facilities in defining the service needs of the Kingston community.

We know that Don Tatnell had a strong membership base for its size and condition, with a particularly strong learn to swim program and uniquely local catchment profile. While Waves has a similarly strong membership base, utilising its location to the northern boundary of our municipality to capture an extended market beyond Kingston's boundaries.

However, there is a pocket of the municipality that borders the central/southern suburbs that could be better served, recently reinforced by the closure of Don Tatnell. Our planning aims to be cognisant of the range of facilities on offer, minimising duplication but maximising access.

WHO?

Council has undertaken a series of stakeholder engagement activities, ranging from case studies and engagement with peak bodies, to existing member and resident surveys.

This has provided important industry insights such as the increased demand for access to warm water pools for therapy and rehab, the growth of aquatic education programs, a trend for the development of multi-functional spaces, and a renewed focus on health and wellbeing offerings.

This context is vital in assisting the future planning of aquatic facilities in Kingston and will continue to be reviewed and built upon.

OUR GAME PLAN

HOW?

Council has the unique opportunity to reimagine service provision in Kingston. A set of principles have been developed to guide Council's planning, focusing on equitable access and maximising functionality:

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
1. PROVIDE ACCESS FOR ALL	Aim for all members of the Kingston community to have access to suitable aquatic and leisure services within a 5km primary catchment zone.
2. MAXIMISE USER MARKET	Maximise user potential by locating facilities in high/growth population areas and/or low existing facility provision areas of Kingston.
3. REDUCE FACILITY COMPETITION	Ensure facility locations consider the primary (5km) and secondary (10km) catchment zones of existing facilities both within and external to Kingston.
4. MINIMISE SERVICE DUPLICATION	Provide a varied and diverse range of aquatic facilities that deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes to the Kingston community now and into the future.

In order to appropriately enact these principles and ensure Council continues to serve the needs of our community now and into the future the following approach is recommended:

Two facility model, incorporating:

1. A 'Regional' level facility to the north that provides for the greater population needs of Kingston; and
2. A 'District' level facility to the central/south that extends the provision of aquatic and leisure facilities to a broader population.

The two-facility regional and district model is forecast to provide for up to 220,000 people, providing suitable opportunity to scale as Kingston grows.

The sheer volume of the current and future population that exists in the north of the municipality warrants the provision of a regional level facility, albeit needing to be cognisant of not duplicating services currently offered by other nearby competing facilities. The existing strong membership of Waves highlights the demand for a facility that caters to Kingston's north.

However, as previously noted there is a pocket of the municipality that borders the central/southern suburbs that could be better served. Don Tatnell's former membership base, particularly its strong learn to swim program, highlights a demand for services in this area.

As such, the proposed development of a 'district' level facility that extends the provision of aquatic facilities further south, in combination with the

regional facility to the north, will help to ensure the entire Kingston community has ongoing access to vital services that support its health and wellbeing.

WHEN?

There are a number of options for Council to consider in its delivery approach for providing aquatic facilities to the Kingston community, including the number of facilities, size of facilities, facility components and possible locations.

However, Council has the opportunity to create a new generation of aquatic facilities in Kingston and these actions cannot be delivered without fundamental change and substantial funding.

To focus efforts, it is recommended that Council:

1. Commissions the development of a new 'district' level central/south facility in Kingston in the short-term; and
2. Redevelop Waves as the current 'regional' level facility to the north as a medium-to-long term action

While there are several complex issues to resolve, Council has the obligation to pursue a sustainable funding model. There are a number of funding options for Council to consider including:

- Debt/loan borrowings
- Grants and contributions
- Proceeds from the sale of assets
- Delivery partnerships
- Other general income sources
- Developer contributions.



WHAT?

ABOUT THIS PLAN

In early 2020, serious structural issues resulted in the closure of Don Tatnell Leisure Centre, one of two Council-owned facilities. Council understands the importance of this facility to the local community and is now focusing on planning a new aquatic facility in Kingston. The project will be a major investment for Kingston and will follow a thorough process to ensure an outcome that meets the current and future needs of our community.

DISCUSSION PAPER

Since 2014/15 Council has been undertaking investigations and reviews into the operations of the Don Tatnell Leisure Centre (DT) and Waves Leisure Centre (Waves). In 2019, it was recognised that an overall analysis should be undertaken to provide a clear direction for council moving forward, culminating in the development of a Leisure Centres Discussion Paper.

Detailed investigations were undertaken in the form of literature reviews, trend identification, market analysis, facility performance reviews, and capital development options. The findings highlighted the need to review the current Kingston service delivery model to ensure Council meets the needs of the community now and into the future.

DON TATNELL CLOSURE

In developing the Discussion Paper, onsite investigations were undertaken at DT in late 2019 to assess the condition of the building and assets. These investigations identified numerous structural issues that posed a significant public safety risk. At an initial estimated cost of \$19m, they would require the Centre's closure for a minimum of 40 weeks to complete.

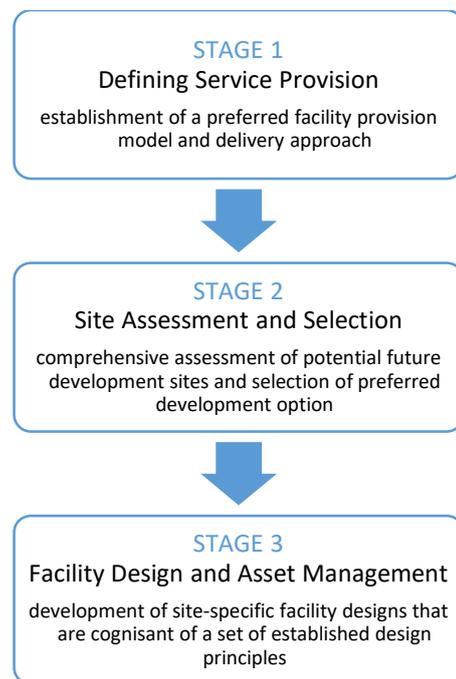
At the 24 February 2020 Council Meeting the following resolution was carried:

That Council:

1. Commit to investing in high quality aquatics and leisure facilities and receive a report identifying future opportunities, inclusive of a funding strategy, for the delivery of aquatic and leisure facilities that meets the current and future needs of the Kingston community;
2. Note the Don Tatnell Leisure Centre has reached the end of its useful life and agree to close the facility immediately;
3. Support the transition of members and users at the Don Tatnell Leisure Centre to the Waves Leisure Centre, Highett (where possible);
4. Invite members, community, stakeholders, and interest groups to attend community information sessions on these Council resolutions; and
5. Continue to investigate and report upon structural and building conditions at Don Tatnell Leisure Centre.

AQUATICS FACILITY PLAN

In order for Council to progress planning, the following three stage process is being applied:



The *Aquatics Facility Plan* (the Plan) focuses on 'Stage 1 – Defining Service Provision' and will provide the overarching strategic response for the provision of aquatic facilities in Kingston.

The Plan delivers the following:

1. Principles of provision
2. A preferred service provision model
3. A recommended delivery approach



WHY?

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Council acknowledges that Kingston is just one of many providers of sport, recreation, and aquatic services. We know that changes in population, societal norms and lifestyle choices are significantly altering participation, and our future planning needs to ensure that we continue to support our community accessing the facilities and services that they want, when they want, and how they want.

PLANNING CONTEXT

SPORT 2030 is Australia's first national sports plan, underpinned by the priority of 'More Australians, more active, more often' and reducing inactivity by 15%. It advocates a change in the definition of sport to be broadened to include all forms of physical activity, reflecting changing trends in participation.

ACTIVE VICTORIA provides a strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria, highlighting that time and lifestyle pressures mean Victorians are looking for more flexible options that better fit their circumstances and that more participate in active recreation than in organised sport.

Our **COUNCIL PLAN** includes a commitment to providing equitable access to services and facilities for all community members, irrespective of background and ability, while promoting an active, healthy and involved community, by focusing on ensuring the delivery of affordable aquatic services that are well utilised by a diversity of people.

The **KINGSTON PLANNING SCHEME** notes a key objective 'to promote a diverse range of social and recreational opportunities which provide for the changing leisure needs of the municipality's current and future population' by focusing on ensuring that the location of existing and proposed facilities is appropriate to current and projected needs.

Kingston's **PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN** focuses on increasing participation in physical activity, community activities and volunteering; improving community safety, social cohesion and reducing social isolation; while ensuring facilities, services and open spaces are accessible.

Council's **SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY** articulates a vision to provide a wide range of facilities that cater for different levels of abilities and needs, ensuring that they are accessible to and encourage people of all ages, genders, abilities and cultural backgrounds. In doing so, it promotes multi-use venues while ensuring financial viability and cost effectiveness of facilities.

PARTICIPATION TRENDS

- Trends in participation show a softening in demand for organised sport and a significantly increased demand for opportunities to participate in general physical activity for improved health outcomes.
- Participation rates in aerobics, running and walking, along with gym memberships, have all risen sharply over the past decade, while participation rates for many organised sports have held constant or declined.
- Walking, fitness/gym, and jogging/running make up 44% of all recorded activity.
- Typical aquatic centre activities such as fitness/gym and swimming are both in the top four participated in activities for adults, while yoga and Pilates are seventh and twelfth, respectively. Swimming is the highest participated in activity for children.

POPULATION INSIGHTS

- Kingston's population is projected to increase by more than 22,000 people by 2036 - largely driven by growth along the Nepean Highway in the north (Moorabbin, Highett, Cheltenham, Mentone).
- The population in the traditionally 'active' age range of 0-49 years is forecast to grow by nearly 9,000 people by 2036.
- However, there is an overall ageing of the population with those aged over 50 years forecast to grow by more than 12,000 people.
- Less than one-third of the Kingston population meets the recommended weekly physical activity levels.
- Kingston residents spend on average 4:37 hours sitting at work on a usual day.
- Just over half (57%) of our population is overweight or obese.



WHERE?

OUR FACILITIES

Given the geographical shape of Kingston, the location of more than ten facilities in neighbouring councils plays as important a role as our own facilities in defining the service needs of the Kingston community. Our planning aims to be cognisant of the range of facilities on offer, minimising duplication but maximising access.

EXISTING FACILITIES

- [WAVES](#) is over 20 years old and needs continued investment to ensure it remains fit for use.
- It has an estimated renewal cost of \$10-12m, to maintain the existing facilities.
- In 2018/19 it posted a net operating loss of nearly \$300,000, whilst servicing over 500,000 attendances, nearly 1,800 members and almost 2,000 learn to swim enrolments.
- More than 40% of its members come from Cheltenham and Highett, and it is worth noting that 11 out of its top 20 member suburbs are from outside of Kingston, in neighbouring Bayside and Glen Eira.
- The suburbs of Moorabbin, Highett, Cheltenham, and Mentone are projected to see significant growth by 2036.
- [Don Tatnell Leisure Centre](#) in Mordialloc was a 40year old facility that was closed due to structural issues in 2020.

PLANNING GUIDELINES

- Industry trends suggest 75-85% of a facility's members come from a 0-5km primary catchment area, while 15-25% come from a secondary catchment area of 5-10km.
- These catchments will be influenced by the range and quality of facilities/ services offered, natural and built barriers (i.e. freeways), travel times, and availability of competing facilities.
- Aquatics and Recreation Victoria provide the following guidelines for facility provision; rural (<10,000 population), local (10-40,000), district (40-70,000), major (70-100,000) and regional (100-150,000).
- The key differences between the types include the inclusion of gym facilities at the local level, separable program and leisure pools at district level, increased size and additional amenities at major level, and the inclusion of a 50m pool and attractions (slides etc.) at regional level.

FACILITY PROVISION

- There are 10 aquatic facilities within Kingston (including school and commercial facilities).
- An additional 10 council-owned aquatic facilities in neighbouring municipalities.
- There has been a proliferation of commercial gyms and swim schools in Kingston.
- 5 aquatic facilities are within the primary catchment (0-5km) of Waves, with a further 8 facilities within the secondary catchment (5-10km).
- The previous Don Tatnell facility had 5 aquatic facilities within its primary catchment (0-5km) are, with a further 3 facilities within the secondary catchment (5-10km).

PROVISION LEVELS

- Kingston's current (165,000) and future (187,000) population suggests there is demand for at least two facilities, their size being dependent on location and catchment.
- Given the geographical shape of Kingston, the location of facilities in neighbouring councils plays an important role in defining the service needs of the Kingston community.
- Kingston is well supported by two of the latest regional centres at its north (GESAC) and south (PARC), and impending upgrades to facilities in the east (NPAC) and west (SFLC).
- When reviewing existing facility locations, there appears a residential pocket that borders the central/southern suburbs that could be better served, reinforced by the closure of Don Tatnell.
- In planning for new facilities, the aim would be to service the widest possible catchment, whilst reducing overlap with competing facilities.
- Where population catchments overlap, consideration should be given to providing complementary rather than competing services.

Figure 1. Council owned aquatic centres: 5km catchment area





WHO?

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Council has undertaken a series of stakeholder engagement activities, ranging from case studies and engagement with peak bodies, to existing member and resident surveys. This all provides important context to assist the future planning of aquatic facilities in Kingston and will continue to be reviewed and built upon.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Case study research**
Consultation with Council representatives of aquatic facility developments, including Mornington Peninsula, Glen Eira, Frankston, Hume, Inner West (NSW) and Cockburn (WA).
- **Industry body engagement**
Consultation with relevant industry bodies including Aquatics and Recreation Victoria (ARV), Life Saving Victoria (LSV) and Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV).
- **Existing member surveys**
An existing 'Kingston Active' member survey was conducted in 2016 and May 2019.
- **Resident survey**
A telephone resident survey has previously been conducted. Re-confirming these findings is a key part of future consultation activity.
- **Community Consultation**
The draft Aquatic Facility Plan was released for community consultation in July 2020.

KEY INSIGHTS

FACILITY TRENDS

- A gradual ageing of the population is leading to increased demand for access to warm water pools for therapy and rehab exercise.
- Traditional facility revenue streams have been replaced by aquatic education programs underpinned by dedicated learn to swim pools, and increasingly by water play areas.
- The industry is experiencing progressively higher customer experience and service quality standards, combined with an increased focus on flexibility, variety, and affordability.
- This has seen a trend for the development of multi-functional spaces that provide a range of ancillary services to the customer while varying income streams for facility managers.
- Ancillary services now commonly provided:
 - Food and beverage (cafés etc.)
 - Wellness/ allied health (physio, chiro etc.)
 - Health and beauty (hair salons etc.)
 - Entertainment (arts centres, libraries etc)

MARKET TRENDS

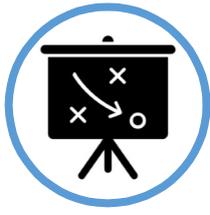
- Increased competition from private health and fitness operators. The advent of low-cost 24/7 operations eroding market share.
- A fragmentation of the market, with significant growth in smaller boutique operators such as boot camps, F45, yoga etc.
- New commercial providers entering the learn-to-swim market to capitalise on increased demand for swimming lessons.
- Significant investment in new and refurbished facilities lifting the quality and range of services provided, and user expectations.

MEMBER FEEDBACK

- More than 90% use a facility at least once a week, with nearly half (45%) 2-4 times a week.
- Most (46%) visit between 9am-midday.
- Nearly three quarters (75%) attend for general fitness, while 23% attend for learn to swim and 21% for relaxation.
- The services identified for improvement were fees and charges (26%) and too crowded (20%), while facilities identified for improvement were change rooms (48%), and air quality (15%).
- The variety of memberships (40%), increased fitness program space (24%), and health related services (23%), were the areas identified that would encourage more use.

RESIDENT VIEWS

- The leading reason for not using a centre was lack of interest (27%), utilising beaches (15%), too busy, and not liking swimming (both 14%).
- The majority visited between 9am and midday (33%), while most indicated that they used a facility less than monthly (30%).
- The main reasons for choosing a centre was proximity to home (55%), good facilities (14%) and the range of pools available (10%).
- The majority (67%) indicated that they would like to make greater use of aquatic facilities.
- The most highly identified priority areas for the future were improved health and fitness classes, improved gym/ weight facilities, and membership packages/ discount offers.



HOW?

THE STRATEGY

Council has the unique opportunity to reimagine service provision in Kingston. A set of principles have been provided to guide Council's planning, focusing on equitable access and maximising functionality while a two-facility model is proposed to enact these principles, ensuring Council continues to serve the aquatic facility needs of our community now and into the future.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles are proposed to assist Council in defining its service levels with respect to the provision of aquatic and leisure facilities.

1. **Provide access for all**

Aim for all members of the Kingston community to have access to suitable aquatic and leisure services within a 5km catchment zone.

2. **Maximise user market**

Maximise user potential by locating facilities in high/growth population areas and/or low facility provision areas of Kingston.

3. **Reduce facility competition**

Ensure facility locations consider the primary (5km) and secondary (10km) catchment zones of existing facilities both within and external to Kingston.

4. **Minimise service duplication**

Provide a varied and diverse range of aquatic facilities that deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes to the Kingston Community now and into the future.

PROVISION MODEL

For Council to appropriately enact the above principles, the following approach is recommended:

Two facility model, incorporating:

1. A 'Regional' level facility to the north that provides for the greater population needs of Kingston; and
2. A 'District' level facility to the central/south that extends the provision of aquatic and leisure facilities to a broader population.

RATIONALE

Utilising industry planning ratios, the two-facility regional and district model is forecast to provide for up to 220,000 people. As Kingston's population is forecast to grow to more than 187,000 people, this provides suitable opportunity for growth.

Given the geographical shape of Kingston, the location of facilities in neighbouring councils plays an important role in defining the service needs of the Kingston community.

Kingston is well supported by two of the latest regional facilities at its north (GESAC) and south (PARC), and impending upgrades to facilities in the east (NPAC) and west (SFLC).

The sheer volume of the current and future population that exists in the north of the municipality warrants the provision of a regional level facility, albeit needing to be cognisant of not duplicating services currently offered by other nearby competing facilities. The existing strong membership of Waves further highlights the demand for a facility that caters for the north of our municipality.

However, there is a pocket of the municipality that borders the central/southern suburbs that could be better served, recently reinforced by the closure of Don Tatnell. Don Tatnell's former membership base, particularly its strong learn to swim program, highlights a demand for services in this area.

As such, the proposed development of a 'district' level facility that extends the provision of aquatic facilities further south, in combination with the existing regional facility to the north, will help to ensure the entire Kingston community has ongoing access to vital services that support its health and wellbeing.



WHEN?

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

There are a number of options for Council to consider in its delivery approach for providing aquatic facilities to the Kingston community, including the number of facilities, size of facilities, facility components and possible locations. However, Council has the opportunity to create a new generation of aquatic facilities in Kingston and these actions cannot be delivered without fundamental change and substantial funding from Council.

DELIVERY OPTIONS

To assist in focusing Council's efforts in the short-to-medium term, the following approach is recommended:

1. Commissioning the development of a new 'district' level Central/South facility in Kingston (short-term action)

and

2. Redeveloping Waves as the current 'regional' level facility to the north (medium-term action)

Council's decision making will remain cognisant of future population growth, trends, and infrastructure investment within the municipality.

FUNDING

The total cost for the new 'district level' aquatic and leisure centre is estimated to be in the order of \$40-50 million, however, there are considerable variations that may occur including things such as soil remediation at the existing Don Tatnell site, land acquisition should an alternative privately owned site be preferred, and the final makeup of facility components.

Whilst there are several complex issues to resolve, Council has the obligation to pursue a sustainable funding model so that our community can continue to benefit from the many positive health and wellbeing outcomes that are associated with fit-for-purpose aquatic facilities.

There are a number of funding options for Council to consider:

Debt/loan borrowings

- Where appropriate, Council may utilise debt to fund capital expenditure
- Subject to it fulfilling agreed economic, social, or environmental benefits and not affect existing recurrent operations and/or cash flows

Grants and contributions

- Council actively pursues grant funding and other contributions to assist in the delivery of services and facilities

Proceeds from the sale of assets

- Council continually reviews its asset base
- Assets may be rationalised where they are deemed as either under-utilised, are surplus to requirements, or may no longer meet the service expectations of our community

Delivery partnerships

- Where Council and key partners (such as schools, private developers, or other councils) collaborate to deliver a new facility

Other general income sources

- Council may look to investigate and generate other alternate sources of revenue, as determined by Council

Developer contributions

- Collected from development in relevant areas
- Not be suitable for funding all actions

This Aquatics Facility Plan is based on the detailed Leisure Centre Discussion Paper December 2019. The Discussion Paper provides context and data for analysis purposes. It does not form part of the Aquatic Facility Plan but has been instrumental in informing Council’s strategic intent for the planning of aquatic facilities and services.



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