

# Rural City of Wangaratta Aquatic Plan for the future



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# 1. Executive Summary

This aquatic plan has developed from extensive work undertaken over an eight year period, the focus of which is the long term future provision of aquatic facilities for the Rural City of Wangaratta.

The essential question posed in the plan is:

***What type of sustainable aquatic facility provision do we aim to provide to the Wangaratta community for the next 50 years?***

Our community is evolving, increasingly diverse and ageing. We must be innovative and offer inclusive aquatic facilities that meet the demands of a changing population. We need to cater for our community's desire for flexible leisure opportunities, provide possibilities for traditional aquatic programming, and address the health and well-being needs of all age groups. In addition we aim to provide sustainable facilities that will meet the needs of the community on a local and regional level.

The implications of this proposed aquatic development have been determined based on a platform for future social, environmental and economic sustainability. Five options were considered with the following multi-faceted recommendation being presented:

1. The development of an outdoor 50 metre pool - to be co-located at the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC) which will provide the universally accepted standard for lap swimmers, aquatic education and competitive training for swimming events.

Partnered with the existing 25 metre pool this facility would create a regionally significant aquatic facility and be eligible for state level swimming events as well as hosting additional aquatic sports such as water polo.

2. The addition of a hydrotherapy pool - to be located at WISAC which will ensure adequate provision for aquatic therapy and aqua fitness programs at a time when the portion of our overall population over 65 years-of-age is projected to rise from 16% to over 25% by 2026.
3. The development of a toddlers/wading outdoor pool to be co-located at WISAC, to compliment the new outdoor 50m pool.
4. A splash park - to be located at Mitchell Avenue Playground in the Yarrunga neighbourhood which will provide a unique, free summer aquatic experience and be versatile for year round use, with flexibility for conversion to meet family activities in the cooler months.
5. Plan for the future redevelopment of the Olympic Pool and Yarrunga Aquatic Facility sites for appropriate recreational purposes in partnership with the community, that meet the needs of the local neighbourhoods and the wider community.
6. Progress the closure of the Yarrunga Aquatic Facility AFTER the construction of the Splash Park at Mitchell Avenue is complete.
7. Progress the closure of the Olympic Pool facility AFTER the construction of the new 50m outdoor pool is complete.

This recommendation is based on the following considerations:

1. Provision of infrastructure that meets the long term health and wellbeing needs of our community.
2. Improved capacity for operational and financial efficiencies.

3. Accessibility for the community – affordable, high quality and well planned infrastructure that all residents and visitors can access.
4. Ability to strengthen the provision of innovative and stimulating outdoor recreational facilities for our community.
5. Ability to provide aquatic infrastructure that facilitates use at a social, recreational, and competitive level.
6. Ability and capacity to implement – from a community, financial and infrastructure perspective this model provides the strongest position for implementation.

## 2. Wangaratta's Current Aquatic Landscape

Currently the Rural City of Wangaratta's aquatic facilities are dispersed throughout urban Wangaratta at three different locations:

- The Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC)
- The Olympic Pool
- The Yarrunga Family Swim Centre

There are also other aquatic facilities within the municipality including:

- Moyhu Primary School Swimming Pool
- Moore's Swimming – Mason Street, Wangaratta

### Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre

The Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC) opened in 2002. The Council owned facility is currently managed by the YMCA Victoria. The facility is a regionally significant health and wellness centre incorporating infrastructure beyond aquatics, including:

- Six squash/racquetball courts;
- three basketball/volleyball courts;
- group fitness rooms;
- a gym;
- a crèche; and
- a café.

Aquatic facilities incorporate:

- a 25 metre, eight lane pool built to current competition level requirements;
- an eight metre by ten metre program pool designed for aged and disabled access with full ramp and assisted lift facilities; and
- a leisure pool designed to entertain children including a beach entry and water features.

This facility is located in the Rural City of Wangaratta's prime sporting precinct known as 'The Parklands' which includes netball courts, tennis courts, four sporting ovals, a community centre and a multipurpose showgrounds precinct.

### Olympic Pool

Located in Swan Street, Wangaratta, this facility was opened in 1954 and is now 60 years old. This facility includes an unheated 55 yard (50.29 metre), seven lane outdoor swimming pool, a water slide and a twelve metre diameter octagonal toddler's pool.

### Yarrunga Pool

Opened in 1976 and located in Brash Avenue, Wangaratta, this facility is 38 years old. It includes an unheated free form leisure pool and a free-form toddler's pool with a beach entry. Some limited water play elements exist in the toddler's pool.

Table 1: Facility Open Hours

WISAC	Olympic	Yarrunga
Year Round	23 Nov – 10 Mar	16 Nov – 2 Mar
6am - 9pm (weekdays) 8am - 5pm (Sat) 8:30am - 7pm (Sun)	3:30pm – 6:30pm (weekdays) 1:00pm – 6:30pm (school holidays) 1:00pm – 6:00pm (weekends)	3:30pm – 6:30pm (weekdays) 1:00pm – 6:30pm (school holidays) 1:00pm – 6:00pm (weekends)

Visitation

Based on actual figures to 31/3/2015, there are estimated to be 393,425 total annual visits to the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre in 2014 -15 compared to 383,756 in 2013 – 2014.

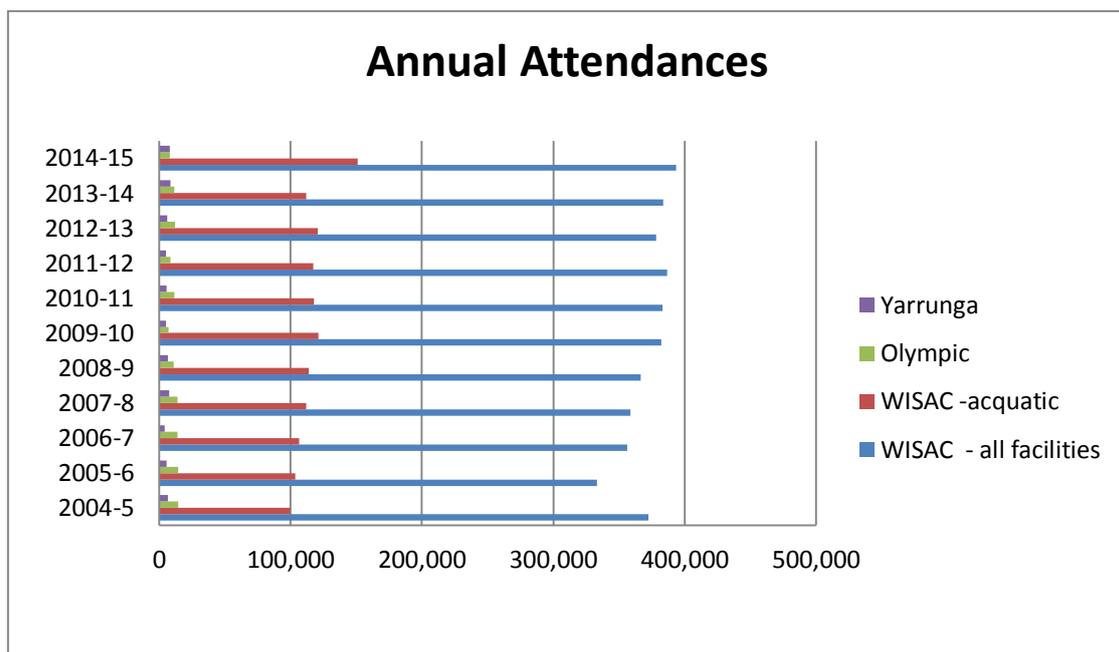
Aquatic visitation figures to 31/3/2015 have been estimated to comprise of 167,206 total annual visits in 2014-15, compared to 131,774 visits in 2013 -14. This represents a 21% increase in visitations to our aquatic facilities, as detailed:

Venue	2014/15	2013/14	%
Yarrunga Family Swim Centre	8,334 (-3%)	8,558	5% of aquatic visitation
Olympic Pool	8,029 (-30%)	11,556	5% of aquatic visitation
WISAC – aquatic	150,843 (+26%)	111,660	90% of aquatic visitation

The following graph shows the visitation numbers for the aquatic facilities within the municipality over the last decade.

As can be seen, currently WISAC accounts for 90% of aquatic visitations whilst attendances at both Yarrunga and Olympic have fallen by 7% and 27% respectively over the last ten years. Combined, both of these facilities annually serve just 10% of the total annual aquatic attendances in Wangaratta.

Graph 1: Aquatic Facilities – Visitation Rates; 2004 – 2005 to 2014 – 2015



In 2014-15, despite the formation of a community action group dedicated to the retention of the Yarrunga Family Swim Centre attendances declined, from 8,558 visits in 2013-14 to 8,334 in 2014-15. The Olympic Pool also experienced a decline in visitation, from 11,556 visits in 2013-14 to 8,029 in 2014-15.

In contrast visitation to the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre has maintained between 278,000 and 286,000 visits every year from 2009-10 onwards. Current estimates from 2014-15 are on track to continue this historical level of visitation.

### 3. Why do we need to redevelop our Aquatic Facilities?

As part of the process of establishing our preferred plan for the future, it is important that we understand why we need to address the question of aquatic facility provision within the municipality.

As the key provider of aquatic facilities within the municipality it is vital that Council planning and delivery occurs in a strategic, responsible and quality way. With this in mind, the following factors have driven our review and recommendation:

#### Infrastructure challenges

A key consideration in the review of our aquatic facilities has been the ability of the existing infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of our community. Extensive technical assessments and facility reviews have determined that both the Olympic Pool and the Yarrunga Aquatic facility are either at or nearing the end of their asset life. Both facilities require structural redevelopments to ensure they can meet the long term needs of the community.

In particular, the technical assessment undertaken in 2014 by Hydrautech Designs Pty Ltd found that the Yarrunga 'main pool structure is in poor condition' with the 'pool shell showing signs of significant heaving.' Large cracks were noted in the pool walls and the top of several pool walls were noted as being visibly off-level along their length. Crucially, it was noted that at the time of the inspection the pool was not in operation and therefore not being actively refilled with water, as it would normally be during the swimming season. It has not been drained by staff but had drained naturally 'indicating significant leaking from the pool structure.'

Final observations by Hydrautech noted that the necessary repair work was significant enough to be comparable to the cost of demolition and reconstruction of an entirely new pool shell.

Additional off-season evaluations are being made by structural engineers concerning the integrity of the building structures at the Olympic Pool after the collapse of a wall in the changerooms. Construction techniques have changed since the development of this site and great care must be taken to ensure that the facilities are safe for residents to use until the development endorsed in this plan is implemented.

Ageing infrastructure, including filtration systems and pipework at both sites has resulted in an inability to meet peak demands across the summer season. In addition, poor amenities require significant redevelopment that would demand large financial commitments. Initial concept planning estimates that over \$800,000 is required to redevelop the supporting infrastructure at the Olympic Pool site alone.

Maintaining multiple sites means that there is a significant duplication of infrastructure including cafés, filtration plants, and changing facilities. These aspects require ongoing maintenance and upgrades and require significant resource allocations. Consolidating these elements allows a strategic approach to the long term planning of infrastructure maintenance and upgrades.

## Meeting community needs

Upon assessment it has become evident that neither the Yarrunga Aquatic facility nor the Olympic Pool are currently fit for their community purpose. The quality of amenities, as well as the design and size of the facilities limit their ability to meet recreational and competition uses.

The Olympic Pool shell is built to old and out-dated standards that mean the pool is too long, not wide enough and not deep enough to support competition swimming. The Yarrunga Aquatic Facility is limited in its ability to facilitate learn to swim and swimming activities due to its unique shape and depth.

The program pool at WISAC is currently utilised at maximum capacity. With the population aged over 65 estimated to rise to over 25% of our population in the next 12 years, demand for aqua-therapy and rehabilitation programs will continue to increase. Demand for learn-to-swim programs also mean that they currently utilise the program pool, further reducing its availability for other programs.

However, it is also acknowledged that there is a strong community desire to maintain outdoor aquatic facilities. It is also important that facilities are multi-use and accessible to support use by all people within the municipality.

## Financial pressure and sustainability

The current aquatic facilities require significant financial contributions by Council to maintain and operate. Currently the delivery of aquatic facilities within the municipality requires a contribution by Council of \$579,912 annually. This cost is likely to continue to grow significantly if the current facilities are retained as the pressure of maintaining ageing infrastructure across multiple sites increases exponentially over time.

The cost of maintaining and operating the current facilities means that the per visit subsidy Council contributes is significant. As an example, in the 2012-2013 summer season, Council's per visit subsidy for the Yarrunga Aquatic facility was over \$21.00 per person for each visit.

## 4. What is our preferred plan for the future?

The following overview outlines our preferred option for the future development of aquatic facilities within the municipality. The preferred option is based on the informed view that this way forward will achieve the best immediate and long term outcomes for our community.

### New outdoor 50 metre and wading pools at WISAC

The development of an outdoor 50 metre pool - to be co-located at the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC) - will provide the universally accepted standard for lap swimmers, aquatic education and competitive training for swimming events. The new pool would be a 50 metre, 8 lane pool with correct depth for competitive swimming, solar heating, and waveless entry pool-edges.

Partnered with the existing 25 metre pool this facility would create a regionally significant aquatic facility and be eligible for state level swimming events as well as hosting additional aquatic sports such as water polo.



Figure 1: Impression of proposed 50 metre outdoor pool at WISAC

WISAC's new co-generation technology lends value to the co-location of pools, resulting in energy and cost savings. The WISAC roof space will also allow for solar heating that will facilitate an extension of the outdoor pool season

Co-location of a new 50 metre outdoor pool with the existing 25 metre indoor pool will allow WISAC to host major swimming carnivals and events as well as provide a unique outdoor and indoor recreational swimming experience.

Also planned for the facility is a wading pool that will enable safe and interactive play for smaller children. A small splash play centre is also planned to realise a family friendly aquatic and health facility.

## New Hydrotherapy Pool at WISAC

The addition of a hydrotherapy pool - to be located at WISAC - will ensure adequate provision for aquatic therapy and aqua fitness programs at a time when the portion of our overall population over 65 years-of-age is projected to rise from 16% to over 25% in 2026. The new hydrotherapy pool will be located in an area of the facility that provides easier access and greater privacy for people using the pool.

The additional hydrotherapy pool will reduce demand on the existing facility, allowing it to be further utilised for indoor swimming education.



Figure 2: Impression of proposed hydrotherapy pool at WISAC

The additional facilities established at WISAC will support the development of a premier health and recreation precinct that will provide exceptional facilities for the community and visitors. The WISAC facility will offer the capacity to provide a range of programs, services and events to the municipality and surrounding areas.

The additional aquatic facility developments will be accompanied by an upgrade and increase in change room facilities, as well as expansion of supporting aquatic plant.

### New no-depth Splash Park at Mitchell Avenue Playground

A splash park - to be located at Mitchell Avenue Playground in the Yarrunga neighbourhood - will provide a unique, free to access, aquatic and recreational experience for the community. The facility will be a zero depth design that will combine water and non-water elements to create a stimulating and engaging recreational space for children and their families. The splash park will be versatile enabling year round use with flexibility for conversion to meet family activities in the cooler months.

The facility will be developed within the established Mitchell Avenue Playground and will add to the play and community infrastructure that has recently been developed. The playground will become a recreational precinct that will provide accessible and inclusive play opportunities for the local neighbourhood and the wider community.



Figure 3: Impression of proposed splash park at Mitchell Avenue Playground

### Closure of Olympic Pool and development of the site for community recreation use

To support the consolidation of aquatic facilities, the Olympic Pool site will only be closed after the development and opening of the new 50 metre outdoor pool. The site will be redeveloped to an appropriate recreational purpose which will be determined through consultation with the community.

The new use of the site will reflect the recreational and social needs the local neighbourhood and the wider community.

## Closure of Yarrunga Aquatic Facility

After the establishment of the splash park at Mitchell Avenue Playground, the Yarrunga Aquatic Facility will be closed and the site redeveloped. The future planning for the site will be done in consultation with the community to ensure its purpose is appropriate for the neighbourhood and wider municipality.

The closure of the Yarrunga Aquatic Facility will allow for the consolidation of recreation and community facilities within the neighbourhood, and allow for new high quality and accessible facilities to be developed and used on a year round basis.

### How much will it cost?

Initial planning of the project indicates that the scope of works will require a significant financial commitment. The following figures indicate the estimated total cost of the project.

WISAC Developments – new 50 metre outdoor pool, new wading pool, and new hydrotherapy pool. Including all supporting infrastructure. - **\$12 Million**

Mitchell Avenue Playground - Splash Park - **\$500,000**

Demolition/Redundancy Works across Yarrunga and Olympic Pool sites - **\$1 Million**

### **Total Capital Expenditure - \$13.5 Million**

The capacity to fund the development of the project will be supported by several different financial opportunities including State and Federal Government funding, Council contribution and community contributions.

## 5. Why is this our preferred plan?

### It makes financial sense

A significant driver in the need to plan for our aquatic facilities has been the ability to develop a model that is more financially sustainable for Council and the community. The current facilities require significant upgrades. Even if these upgrades were funded the age of the infrastructure would continue to pose a financial burden long term to Council and the community.

A major factor in the option to locate an outdoor 50 metre pool with an existing indoor facility is the increased efficiencies in the operating costs. Preliminary estimates of the aquatic options considered as part of this plan indicate that there would be a significant annual operational savings derived from the co-location of aquatic facilities (estimated conservatively at \$50,000 per year). These savings would result from a combined consolidation of staffing, infrastructure and maintenance costs.

This option is also more cost efficient for Council to achieve than many of the other options considered. It aligns with current State and Federal policy in relation to recreational and aquatic facilities and as such enhances opportunities to secure funding.

### It delivers infrastructure that meets the long term needs of the community

This option considers and responds to the needs that the community will have for aquatic infrastructure long term. It considers our population growth, our changing demographics and social trends, and our financial and operational capacity to maintain significant community infrastructure.

This option is focused on providing high quality, accessible aquatic options that everyone can enjoy. The infrastructure will be designed and developed to support a variety of recreational, community and sporting uses with a focus on flexibility and inclusiveness.

This option consolidates infrastructure to enable a greater capacity to maintain and operate the facilities. It considers the life of the assets, and the need to develop infrastructure in a financially, socially and environmentally responsible way.

### It creates quality, dynamic and accessible aquatic infrastructure that meets community need

The co-location of facilities at WISAC, and in particular the development of an outdoor 50 metre pool at the site, will present increased aquatic opportunities for residents and visitors:

Swimming for Fitness	Lap swimming as a form of fitness incorporates some of the most frequent visitors to the WISAC facility. YMCA - Victoria records report that 'casual swimming' (not including swimming lessons, aquatic programs, birthday parties or school events) are currently at 87,962 facility visits during 2013-14 for WISAC.
Swimming for Sport	Swimming Club members currently hold eight training sessions at WISAC each week (five mornings and three afternoons). This equates to 125 weekly pool visits and 6,000 annual visits.  Water polo's (a sport formerly played in Wangaratta) needs cannot be met at the Olympic pool site. A new 50 metre pool a WISAC would provide appropriate facilities for this sport.
Swimming for Recreation	12,000 annual visits were recorded at the Olympic Pool in 2013-14. Many of these visitors were customers seeking a traditional summer 50 metre recreational opportunity and school swimming events.

Swimming Events	<p>Currently hosted at WISAC: Victorian Country - Short Course Swimming Championships (two day event, 500 swimmers, 1000 spectators), Ovens and Murray Short Course Championships (one day event, 130 swimmers, 120 spectators), School events are currently hosted at the Olympic Pool only.</p> <p>Future possibilities: Victorian Country - Long Course Swimming championships (three day event, 700 swimmers, 2500 paying spectators), Club Swimming Camps, School District Championships and flow on economic benefits</p>
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Through the provision of its improved facilities, the Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre will become a "one stop shop" for all aquatic needs servicing the entire local community for all its recreational and formal swimming requirements, with the new 50m outdoor pool, toddlers/wading pool and a new hydrotherapy pool for the benefit of our aging population. In addition, these facilities will provide the capacity for Wangaratta to host both regional and state competition level swimming events.

The development of a zero depth splash park at the Mitchell Avenue Playground will develop an intriguing and unique asset for the community. The facility will be free to access and use, supporting enjoyment for all families within the municipality. The play equipment will be designed to be multi-functional - allowing it to be converted for non-water recreational play uses during winter. This will help to establish the Mitchell Avenue Playground as a premier recreational and play space for the local neighbourhood and the wider community.

[It provides economic opportunities](#)

The proposed development allows the opportunity for the attraction of aquatic events and competitions. Already, the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre has hosted the Victorian Country Short Course Championships three times in the last four years. Standard estimations on the economic impact of sports tourism in a community states that each visitor contributes an average of \$249 per person, per day – extrapolating this data, the direct economic impact of this event contributes over \$371,200 to Wangaratta’s economy.

The Victorian Country Long Course Championships, undertaken by Swimming Victoria annually attracts more than 700 participants over three days from 40+ individual clubs. One hundred individual events attract over 2500 spectators. The estimated direct economic impact of attracting such an event to Wangaratta would be \$2.4 million. In 2014 the Victorian Country Long Course Championships were held at WAVES in Wodonga.

## 6. Achieving our Plan

### Financial Commitments and Funding Opportunities:

Grant programs exist at both the state and federal levels of government that may aid the Rural City of Wangaratta in meeting the cost of a major aquatic re-development. Preliminary consultation with the State Government department Sport and Recreation Victoria have indicated that state funding is unlikely to support the retention of three individual aquatic facilities in Wangaratta and encourage the consolidation and expansion of WISAC in order to broaden overall aquatic offerings to the entire community.

### Proposed Milestones

In order to progress the proposed option, aquatic upgrades are proposed to be spread over two stages. These stages are estimates and would be based on the ability to secure funding to facilitate stages.

#### Stage One – Mitchell Ave Splash Park

Date	Action
March 2015	Planning of Splash Park in consultation with the community begins. Splash Park planned and budgeted as part of the 2015/2016 budget.
July 2015	Construction of splash park to begin.
August 2015	Planning for future use of Yarrunga Aquatic Facility land to begin
November 2015	Opening of Mitchell Ave Splash park
May 2016	Redevelopment of the Yarrunga Aquatic site

#### Stage Two – WISAC Redevelopment

Date	Action
March – July 2015	Detailed planning of WISAC development commences
June 2015	Application of 2016-17 Community Facilities Funding Program - Better Pools Application to Federal Government's National Stronger Regions Program
November 2015	Announcements of funding applications
July 2016	Commencement of development
September 2016	Closure and rehabilitation of Olympic Pool site
November 2017	Opening of redeveloped facility

The net cost to Council for the WISAC development would be dependent on the ability to attract State and Federal funding. Council contributions would be budgeted for over the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017

financial years. It is also expected that there would be financial contribution to the project from the local community.

## 7. Aquatic Plan Development History

### Rural City of Wangaratta Aquatic Strategy

The development of the *Rural City of Wangaratta Aquatic Strategy* commenced in 2006 and underwent two reviews in 2009 and 2010. The purpose of developing an aquatic strategy was to gain an understanding of the immediate and long term requirements of the aquatic facilities in the Rural City of Wangaratta, giving consideration to community needs and organisational resources.

In 2013, Peddle Thorp Architects were engaged to complete detailed technical assessments and concept planning based for our aquatic facilities based on the 2012 Aquatic Strategy.

In 2014, the Rural City of Wangaratta committed to addressing the priority of establishing a clear way forward with the provision of aquatic facilities. The *Aquatics Plan 2014* is an extension of the previous work undertaken by Council, including a review of the previous community consultation undertaken, and culminates with a clear and considered recommendation for the future.

Research undertaken as part of the development of the plan includes:

- an assessment of the condition of the aquatic facilities;
- an analysis of demographic and participation trends;
- a review of broader Council and other relevant planning documents;
- an operational assessment of the aquatic facilities;
- an assessment of surrounding municipal proposed and existing facilities;
- the development of a series of case studies examining how other Councils address ageing pool infrastructure; and
- community consultation comprising stakeholder meetings, forums and a comprehensive survey.

During the research and review stage of our planning, a number of important considerations were highlighted for the future provision of aquatic leisure facilities within the municipality:

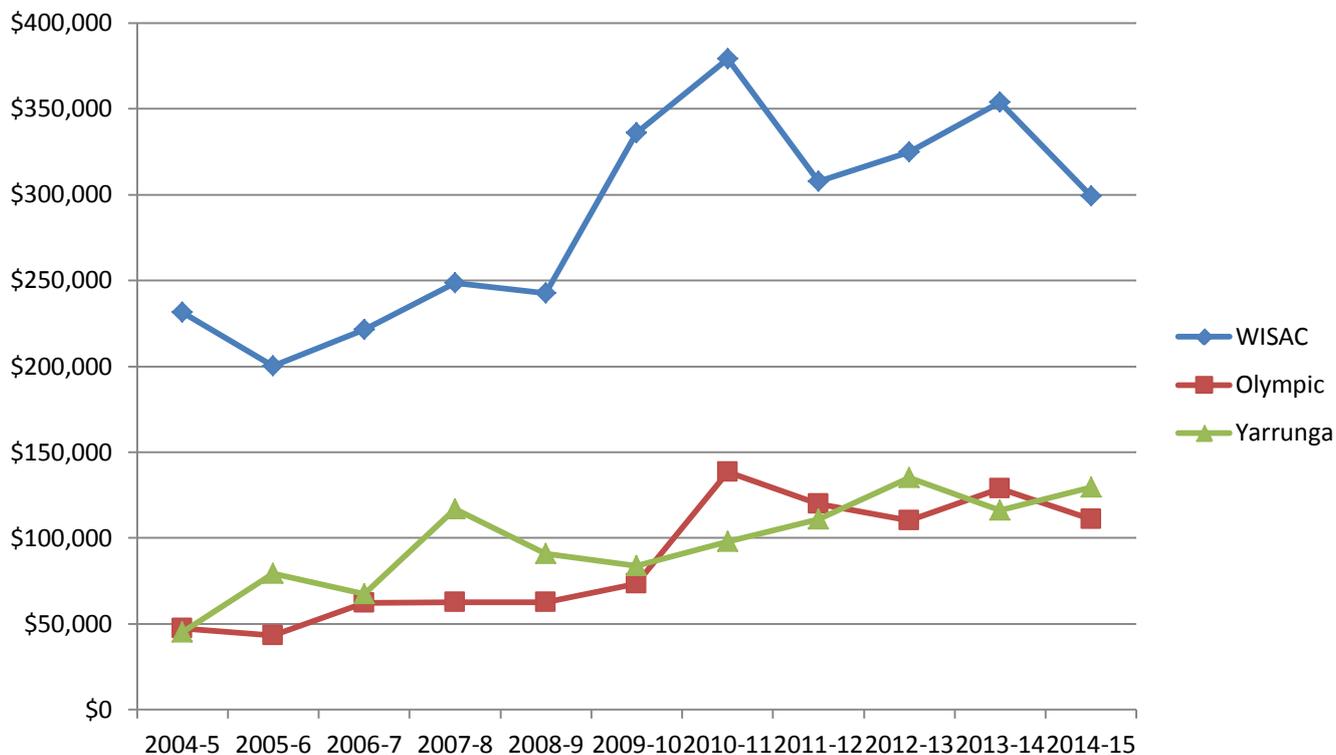
- The condition of Yarrunga Pool is not sound and requires replacement;
- There are declining attendance rates at both the Yarrunga and Olympic pool facilities due to ageing and inadequate facilities;
- There is a priority for an additional warm water program pool with a focus on health and rehabilitation;
- The operational costs of the current Olympic and Yarrunga outdoor pools will continue to increase exponentially due to the age of the infrastructure;
- Replacement or significant repair of the pool shells at Yarrunga and Olympic is cost prohibitive;
- There is community demand and need for outdoor aquatic facilities with a focus on informal social aquatic leisure opportunities; and
- Current trends and policy in recreation infrastructure development require new facilities to be fully integrated with other related community infrastructure, be multi-purpose in their nature, maximise annual use and provide for a range of community needs.

## 8. Current Aquatic Facilities – Operational Costs

In 2013-14 operational costs to Council of the WISAC, Olympic and Yarrunga Aquatic centres including management and maintenance fees were \$579,912.

Graph 2: Aquatic Costs; 2004 – 2005 to 2013 – 2014

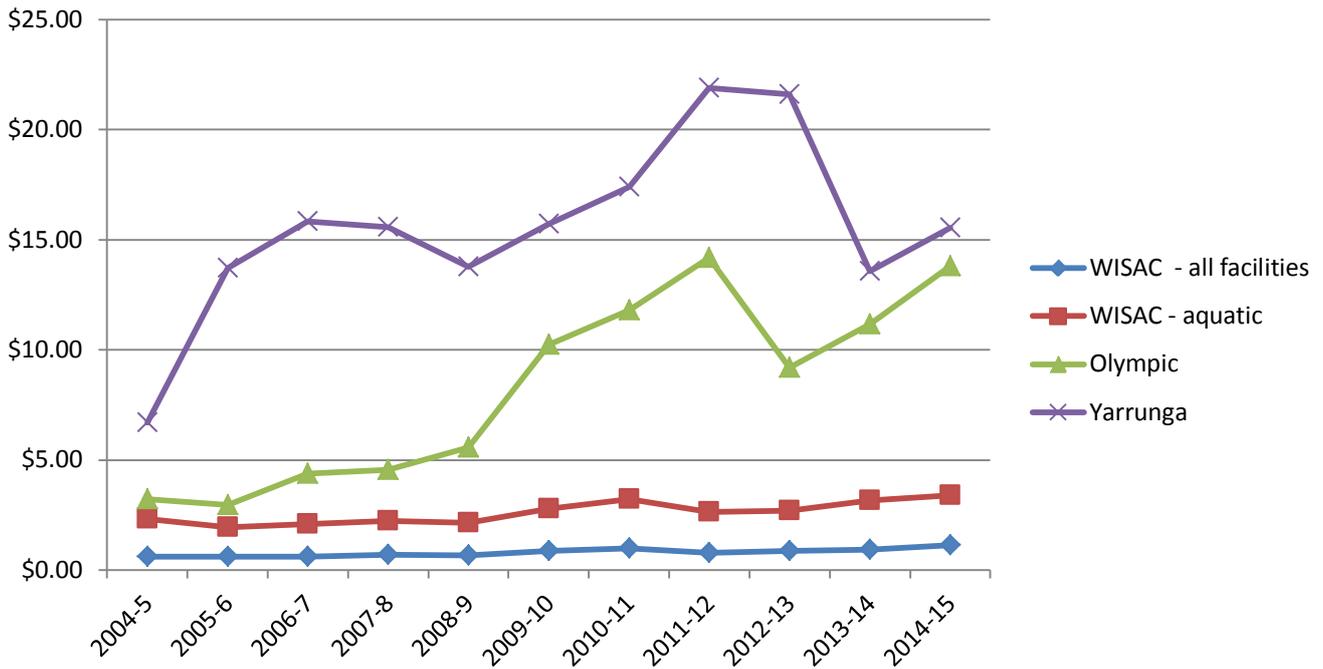
The following graph shows the changes to aquatic costs for Council over the last decade.



Since 2004-5 management fees for Council's three aquatic facilities have increased by 110% for the Olympic Pool and 191% for the Yarrunga Family Swim Centre. Increases in management fees for both these facilities have been attributed to the gradual reduction in pool visitations and rising operational costs.

In 2014-15 the combined management fees for the Olympic Pool and Yarrunga Pool (operating for 15 weeks of the year) cost \$40,000 more than the cost to manage the WISAC facility for 52 weeks of the year. As previously stated on page 4, this cost currently represents less than 10% of Wangaratta's total aquatic attendances.

Graph 3: Aquatic Facilities – Cost Subsidy



The cost subsidy per facility visit is calculated by dividing the total Council outlay on management and operations by the total number of visits annually. The aforementioned graph highlights the disparity between the cost of operating WISAC per facility visit and the two outdoor pools.

Council's cost subsidy per facility visit in 2013-14 was:

- WISAC - whole facility - \$0.92
- WISAC - aquatic - \$3.17
- Yarrunga Family Swim Centre - \$13.80
- Olympic Pool - \$12.41

It should be noted, that the subsidies for 2013-2014 are not reflective of the ordinary contribution made by Council. This rise has been attributed to 'free-of-charge' entry days, of which there were five during the 2013-14 summer. These 'free days' were provided due to abnormally hot summer temperatures and contributed to 925 extra child and adult visits in 2013-14 compared to 2012-13. Additionally there was 1531 extra school visits resulting from Yarrunga Primary choosing to hold summer activities during hot February weather.

In comparison, the 2012-13 the cost subsidy for the Yarrunga Pool was calculated at \$21.59 and more accurately reflects Council's tangible cost subsidy.

As of the March 2015 to date cost subsidies have been calculated for all three facilities:

- WISAC - whole facility - \$1.14
- WISAC - aquatic - \$3.39
- Yarrunga Family Swim Centre - \$15.53
- Olympic Pool - \$13.81

## 9. Aquatic Trends

Swimming has the third highest participation rate for recreation activities in Wangaratta, surpassed only by walking and cycling. Wangaratta's Olympic Pool and WISAC are home to the Wangaratta Swimming Club, a small but vibrant organisation that boasts numerous regional and state level competitors and also Olympian and Commonwealth athlete Belinda Hocking as a former member.

With an increasingly older demographic, (Wangaratta's population over 65 years of age is projected to rise from 16% to over 25% in the next 12 years) aquatic therapy and aqua fitness programs are continually growing in popularity.

### National and State Participation Trends

Key recreational participation trends have been identified from a review of National and State research. The 2010 Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) provides valuable information about the participation trends for persons aged 15 years and over in Australia and Victoria, as follows:

- In 2010, 82.3% of Australians participated at least once in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport. Victoria has a slightly higher rate of total participation (83.4%), which has increased from 77.4% in 2001.
- The Victorian rate of 'regular' participation in physical activity (three or more times per week) increased from 36.5% in 2001 to 48.7% in 2010. This is higher than the national rate of 47.7%
- Across all age demographics swimming rated as the third most popular form of recreation both nationally and in Victoria.

Table 2 below provides a list of the top ten physical activities undertaken in Australia and Victoria in 2010.

Table 2: Physical Activity ranking for Victoria and Australia 2010

Rank	Australia		Victoria	
	Activity	Participation Rate (%)	Activity	Participation Rate (%)
1	Walking	35.9	Walking	36.6
2	Aerobics / Fitness	23.5	Aerobics / Fitness	24.7
3	Swimming	13.0	Swimming	13.5
4	Cycling	11.9	Cycling	12.7
5	Running	10.6	Running	12.7
6	Golf	6.7	Golf	7.3
7	Tennis	6.0	Tennis	6.8
8	Bushwalking	4.8	Australian Rules Football	5.4
9	Football (soccer)	4.8	Basketball	4.8
10	Netball	3.9	Bushwalking	4.6

Source: "Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport – Annual Report 2010".

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' "Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities" (2009) provides information about the participation trends for children aged 5 to 14 years. Some of the key findings include:

- An estimated 63% of children aged 5-14 years participate in at least one organised sport outside of school hours.
- Participation in organised sport was highest amongst 9-11 year olds at 68%, compared with 58% for 5-8 year olds and 65% for 12-14 year olds.
- With both genders combined swimming rated as the most popular form of recreation with a participation rate of 19%. For boys the most popular sports were outdoor soccer (20%) followed by

swimming (17%) and Australian Rules football (16%). The most popular sports among girls were swimming (20%), netball (17%) and gymnastics (8%).

### Local Trends

Participation data collected during the community survey for the 2012 Recreation and Open Space Strategies indicated that swimming was the third most popular form of recreation for Wangaratta with a 20% participation rate. The gender breakdown found that swimming rated as the third most popular activity with males (22%) and females (15%).

Table 3: Physical Activity rankings for Wangaratta 2012

Rural City of Wangaratta		
Rank	Activity	Participation Rate (%)
1	Walking	61.0
2	Cycling	30.0
3	Swimming	20.0
4	Gym / Aerobics /Fitness	18.0
5	Bushwalking	7.0
6	Running / Jogging	5.0
7	Golf	5.0
8	Fishing	5.0
9	Tennis	5.0
10	Lawn Bowls	4.0

Wangaratta’s participation rate for swimming at 20% is higher than both State and Federal participation rates of 13%. This finding is a strong indication to the importance of swimming on the recreational landscape in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

## 10. Regional Benchmarking

The following table shows the aquatic facilities provided by Council's within the region:

Table 4: Municipal Aquatic Facilities

LGA	# of Facilities	Facility	50m Pool	25m Pool	Other distance	Toddlers Wadders Pool	Program or Hydro Pool	Spa or Sauna	Water Slide	Splash Pad	
<b>Wangaratta</b> Population – 29,018 Area sq km – 3,639	3	WISAC		✓		✓	✓				
		Olympic Pool (Outdoors)	✓			✓			✓		
		Yarrunga (Outdoors)				✓	✓				
<b>Indigo Shire</b> Population – 16,225 Area sq km – 2,044	5	Beechworth (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓				
		Chiltern (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓				
		Rutherglen (Outdoors)			✓ 33m		✓				
		Tangambalanga (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓				
		Yackandandah (Outdoors)		✓			✓				
<b>Moira Shire</b> Population – 29,483 Area sq km – 4,045	5	Yarrowonga (Outdoors)	✓			✓					
		Yarrowonga Foreshore (Outdoors)							✓	✓	
		Cobram (Outdoors)	✓			✓	✓				
		Numerkah (Indoors) (Outdoors)	✓		✓ 12.5m		✓	✓			
		Nathalia (Outdoors)	✓			✓					
Strathmerton (Outdoors)			✓ kidney	✓							
<b>City of Wodonga</b> Population – 37,131 Area sq km – 433	2	WAVES (Outdoor)	✓			✓	✓			✓	
		WISAC (Indoor)		✓		✓	✓	✓			
<b>Alpine Shire</b> Population – 12,879 Area sq km – 4,787	4	Mt Beauty (Outdoors)			✓ 33m	✓	✓				
		Bright (Indoor)			✓ 17m						
		Bright (Outdoor)								✓	
		Myrtleford (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓				
<b>Benalla</b> Population – 14,318 Area sq km – 2,375	1	Benalla (Indoors) (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓				
			✓			✓					
<b>Shepparton</b> Population – 62,352 Area sq km – 2,421	4	Aquamoves (Indoors) (Outdoors)		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
			✓			✓				✓	
		Tatura (outdoors)			✓ 33m	✓					
		Mooroopna (outdoors)			✓ 33m	✓					
		Merrigum (outdoors)					✓				

Within the North-East Region of Victoria there are five local government areas that have built or retained 50 metre pools; the Rural City of Benalla, Shepparton, Wodonga, Moira Shire and the Rural City of Wangaratta. Wodonga's 50 metre pool is a recently constructed facility, replacing their older 55 yard Olympic Pool, while Shepparton's Olympic Pool was refurbished due to its co-location with their new indoor aquatic facility, Aquamoves.

Both Benalla and Shepparton retain an aquatic facility with a 50 metre outdoor pool co-located with an indoor facility. Both indoor facilities incorporate a 25 metre pool, toddler/wading pool and program pool. Highlighting the significant role aqua-therapy programs play in programming, Shepparton's Aquamoves facility also maintains a designated hydrotherapy pool separate from its program pool.

## 11. Other options

In determining our preferred model for the future, many different options and details were considered. The following four options, in addition to our preferred option, were reviewed in depth as part of our process. These options were not considered preferential in their ability to address financial, social, recreational and environmental considerations.

### Option 1

WISAC	Olympic	Yarrunga
Add a hydrotherapy pool	Refurbish	Refurbish and add splash park
Strength		Weakness
Continuation of existing and improved aquatic infrastructure		Most expensive to build and operate of all options
Improved access for rehabilitation and learn to swim		Distance to two secondary schools requires provision of a bus to transport students to Olympic pool for competitive events
Economic flow on from build and café business		Biggest cost to Council as redevelopment of Olympic & Yarrunga will not attract more than \$200,000 season pool funding
Opportunity to introduce energy saving initiatives i.e.: grey water, solar heating		Continued maintenance of 3 sites with ongoing operational costs and duplication of infrastructure
		Inefficient use of facilities on a year round basis
		Increase greenhouse gas emissions
		Limited external funding opportunities

Option 2

WISAC	Olympic	Yarrunga
Add a hydrotherapy pool	Close site	Refurbish and add splash park
Strength		Weakness
Meets residents desire for a family leisure pool	No 50 metre pool impacting local/district/regional competitions will affect schools, swim clubs and lap swimmers	
Meets the needs of the socio-economically disadvantaged in Yarrunga	Only summer aquatic provision at Yarrunga Swim Centre	
Improve amenity for the community	Community attachment to Olympic Pool may result in negative response from public	
Improved access for rehabilitation and learn to swim	Limited external funding opportunities	
Fourth most expensive option		
Pools consolidated from 3 to 2		
Economic flow on from build and café business		
Rationalisation and redevelopment of existing resources		
Opportunity to introduce energy saving initiatives i.e.: grey water, solar heating		

Option 3

WISAC	Olympic	Yarrunga
Add a hydrotherapy pool and an extension to existing 25 metre pool to provide an indoor 50 metre pool	Close site	Close site and construct splash pad at alternate site
Strength		Weakness
Improved access for rehab and learn to swim	Community attachment to Olympic Pool may result in negative response from public	
Improved amenity for the community	Second most expensive option	
Two secondary schools will be able to walk to competitive pool facilities for events	An expensive option for effectively one pool	
Reduced maintenance and better economy of scale in the operations of an outdoor pool at WISAC	Risk of disturbance and damage to existing 25 metre pool (through extension process)	
Rationalisation of aquatic resources from 3 to 1 plus a Splash Pad at Yarrunga will reduce operational costs		
Reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of existing cogeneration power infrastructure		

Option 4

WISAC	Olympic	Yarrunga
Add a hydrotherapy pool	Refurbish and add splash pad	Close site
Strength		Weakness
Improved amenity for the community	Public reaction over loss of outdoor family leisure pool at Yarrunga	
Improved access for rehabilitation and learn to swim	Removes aquatic facilities from Yarrunga neighbourhood	
Cheapest option to build and operate	Only summer aquatic provision at Olympic pool and no aquatic presence below Tone Road (South Wangaratta) at all	
Pools consolidated from 3 to 2.	Refurbished 50 metre pool may not be able to meet current standards for competition	
Opportunity to introduce energy saving initiatives i.e.: grey water, solar heating	Continued investment in a sixty year old facility	
	Limited funding opportunities as redevelopment of Olympic will not attract more than \$200,000 seasonal pool funding	

## 12. Conclusion

The development of this plan is the first stage of addressing our aquatics future. The recommendation within this plan has been presented based on extensive consultation, research and review and takes a long term focus on the needs of our community.

A strategic and considered approach to detailed planning will occur, and a focus on implementation will begin. Partnerships with the community and key stakeholders will form an integral part of the planning and implementation stages as Council continues to work on behalf of the municipality to achieve best practice outcomes and opportunities.

The achievement of the recommendations within this plan will support outcomes that address the social, recreational and infrastructure needs for this and future generations.

18.1.1.4 (11.2.3.2) COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY REPORT

# Rural City of Wangaratta Community Feedback Summary Report



## 1. Introduction

Following from the endorsement of Wangaratta's Aquatic Plan on 16 September 2014, a process of engagement intended to clarify and discuss the endorse plan was undertaken with Wangaratta residents.

This report is intended to capture the response received during this process of engagement.

## 2. Background

The aquatic plan was developed from extensive work undertaken over an eight year period, the focus of which is the long term future provision of aquatic facilities for the Rural City of Wangaratta.

The essential question posed in the plan is:

***What type of sustainable aquatic facility provision do we aim to provide to the Wangaratta community for the next 50 years?***

The following recommendations were endorsed by Council on 16 September 2014 and formed the basis for the community conversations:

1. The development of an outdoor 50 metre pool - to be co-located at the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC) which will provide the universally accepted standard for lap swimmers, aquatic education and competitive training for swimming events.

Partnered with the existing 25 metre pool this facility would create a regionally significant aquatic facility and be eligible for state level swimming events as well as hosting additional aquatic sports such as water polo.

2. The addition of a hydrotherapy pool - to be located at WISAC which will ensure adequate provision for aquatic therapy and aqua fitness programs at a time when the portion of our overall population over 65 years-of-age is projected to rise from 16% to over 25% by 2026.
3. A splash park - to be located at Mitchell Avenue Playground in the Yarrunga neighbourhood which will provide a unique, free summer aquatic experience and be versatile for year round use, with flexibility for conversion to meet family activities in the cooler months.
4. Closure of the Olympic Pool and redevelopment of the site to an appropriate recreational purpose (to be determined through community consultation) that meets the needs of the local neighbourhood and the wider community.
5. Closure of the Yarrunga Aquatic Facility and redevelopment of the site for future residential development. This will allow for consolidation of recreation and

community facilities within the neighbourhood allowing for high quality and accessible facilities to be developed and used on a year round level.

### 3. Engagement Plan

Since the endorsement of the 2014 Aquatic Plan at the September 2014 Council Meeting engagement and communication with the community has taken place through the following formats:

- community members have been encouraged to make written submissions to Council and individual and group deputations have also been made to Administrators and Council officers;
- meetings with key stakeholders;
- ten scheduled conversations sessions throughout the municipality; and
- media releases and information distribution.

The conversation sessions were designed to encourage discussion on an individual basis with community members, with a central aim to provide detailed answers to community questions and concerns in a less intimidating environment. Conversation sessions were held:

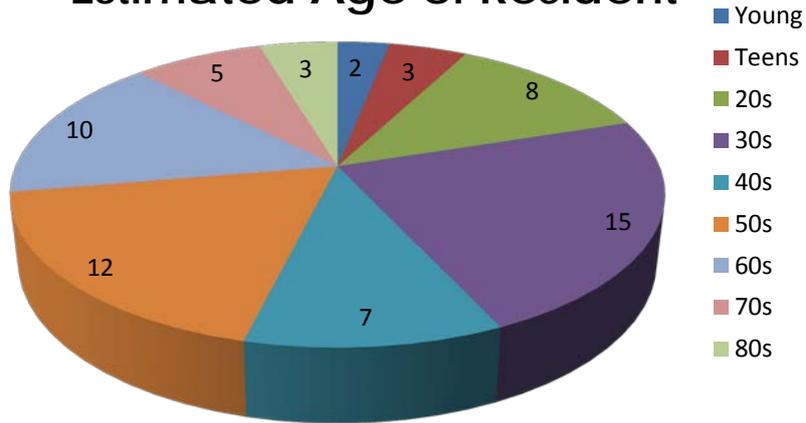
- three times at the Reid Street Kiosk;
- three times at the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatics Centre;
- once at the Milawa Post Office;
- once at the Bourke Street Post Office;
- once at the Whorouly Post Office; and
- once at the Whitfield General Store.

### 4. Engagement Results

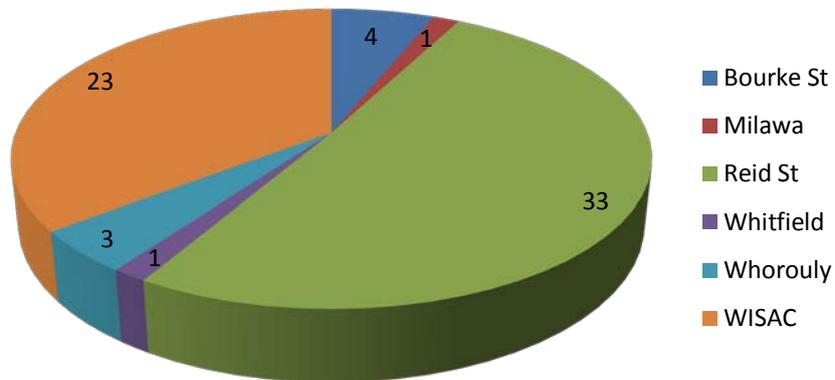
Overall, Council officers undertook 65 individual conversations during the conversation sessions. Of these 65 conversations:

- 8% of respondents were estimated to be under 20 years of age;
- 35% were estimated to be between the ages of 20 and 40 years of age;
- 29% were estimated to be between the ages of 40 and 60 years of age; and
- 28% were estimated to be over 60 years of age.

## Estimated Age of Resident

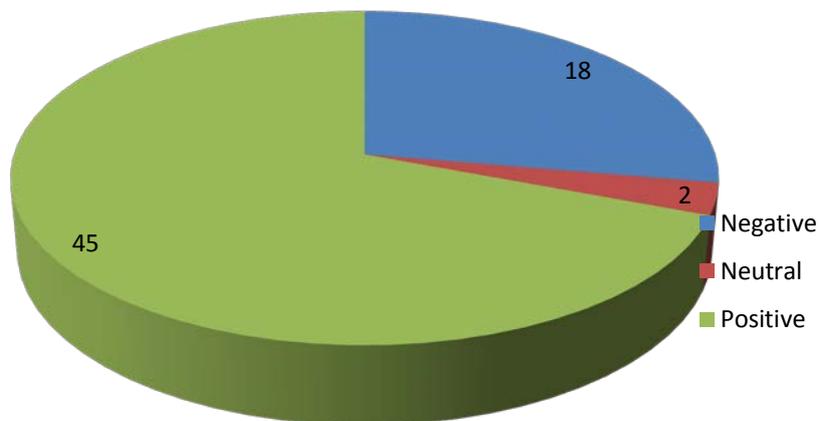


## Conversation Location



Of those 65 conversations 28% expressed a negative response to the endorsed plan, 3% were neutral and 69% expressed a positive response.

## Response to Plan



## 4. Quotes and Impressions

- There is a perception that this is another example of infrastructure being removed from South Wangaratta.
- Many that are opposed feel that we owe a little more to the disadvantaged within our community.
- Many people – including some who were opposed to the closing of Yarrunga, like the splash park concept.
- Of the 17 who indicated a negative response to the plan, the majority indicated that they had no problem with the plan in its entirety... except for the closing of the Yarrunga Pool.
- Of those perceived to be negative, many left the conversation with comments such as 'I'm glad I stopped by', 'I understand a bit better about the plan now', 'I didn't know anything about how much it would cost to rebuild/repair Yarrunga'.
- I've just bought a house in Brash Ave. Do you think that the development of the Yarrunga Pool land will make my house rise in value?
- I see shading as a concern for the new facility.
- I'm very excited for WISAC additions.
- I'm a Milawa Primary School teacher, I like the new development for swim lessons.
- Do we need a new Hydro-pool? I think we should keep the old one and build a new swim lesson pool instead.
- I was the first person to swim in the Olympic Pool when it was built! But it's past its prime and I support the new proposal.
- I don't think Council should incur any more debt.
- Could the old equipment from the Yarrunga pool be made available for the Myrtleford Pool?
- This is a very favourable outcome for the Swim Club.
- I want to make sure that the SEIFA index was considered in Yarrunga's case. I feel that Council has an obligation to our lower income areas.
- Love the plan.
- I like the plan overall, except for the closing of Yarrunga.
- Likes the plan overall, except for the closing of Yarrunga.
- I'm concerned about the consolidation of facilities, I wish we could develop two sporting hubs in Wangaratta.
- I'm a member of Y-SWAG and I think that plan is a great idea. But I don't want Yarrunga to close.
- Not enough room for people if all pools are in one location.
- What about access for Yarrunga residents.
- I like this splash park, especially that it will be free.
- I love the splash park idea!
- I'm very happy that the old pools will remain open until the new facilities are built.
- Great idea - love it! I live in Yarrunga and the Barr Reserve is central
- I'm a tri-athlete, I really like the new 50m proposal.
- Very supportive of the plan overall.
- Any chance of a sauna and spa as well? Shepparton has this in their Aquatic Facility!

- Don't close the Yarrunga pool.
- I'm more confident now about the plan.
- I was concerned but am glad I came down to get the full story.
- I'm disappointed I want facilities well maintained and open more often than they are
- What about the Yarrunga Primary School swim lessons?

## 4. Written Submissions

Council received a total of 149 letters in response to the Aquatics Plan, 115 of which were from letters developed by a community group objecting to the closure of Yarrunga Pool.

Two letters were received from local representative swimming organisations in favour of the endorsed plan.

Of those who expressed a negative response the majority indicated that their primary concern was regarding the closing of the Yarrunga Family Swim Centre. It was felt by some of those community members that the proposed removal of the pool would further disadvantage an area of Wangaratta for access to recreational facilities. Suggested amendments to the endorsed plan included a commitment to engaging with the community on the future use of the Yarrunga Family Swim Centre site and its retention as recreational open space, rather than residential development.

Additional community concerns revolved around the limitations of the proposed 50m pool at WISAC as a summer recreational swimming environment. The addition of a toddlers/wading pool to the development was proposed as an opportunity to increase the proposed development's flexibility for this purpose.

## 4. Deputations/Meetings

Council officers have attended ten meetings with concerned community members, both individual residents and members from the Save Yarrunga Pool group.

Additionally a presentation was given at the request of a local community group detailing the endorsed Aquatics Plan.

## 5. Conclusion

Key community feedback received focussed on the perception that Council did not consult sufficiently prior to the endorsement of the Aquatics Plan. Consideration was given to this issue during the development of the plan, however, it was felt that the community has been 'consulted out' during the 10 year period spanning the development of the 2007, 2009 and 2010 revision of the previous Aquatics Plans without any viable way forward behaving been identified.

Throughout engagement with the community several key themes were established as being of importance;

- the social/economic disadvantage of South Wangaratta;
- the need for an outdoor toddlers/wading pool at WISAC;
- an increase in transport opportunities from South Wangaratta to WISAC; and
- a concern about accessibility to aquatic facilities for residents.

Post the endorsement in 2014 important engagement has led to valuable improvement to the endorsed plan, including:

- the inclusion of a toddlers pool at the WISAC development;
- working with schools/services to support accessibility;
- a commitment to retain the Yarrunga Pool site for recreational purposes; and
- engaging with the community on the design of the splash park.

Council has resolved to work collaboratively with community members to explore solutions to these identified key themes, while preserving the long term sustainable focus of the endorsed aquatics plan.