
MR18/001 REGIONAL AQUATIC, ARTS AND LEISURE CENTRE AT MACKAY PARK, BATEMANS BAY

File Ref: E12.6442

- Attachments:
1. Community Engagement Activities and Outcomes
 2. Why Council has not included a new 50m pool
 3. What Council has learnt from visiting other aquatic and arts facilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 26 March 2018, the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP and the Member for Bega, the Hon. Andrew Constance MP announced that Eurobodalla Shire Council was successful in receiving funding of \$26m to go towards the construction of the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre at Mackay Park, Batemans Bay.

This is a fantastic result for our community and means that we are now more than half way to achieving our goal. I am confident that our other funding applications to the Australian Government will be just as successful and we will be able to plan with confidence for the construction of the whole facility to benefit residents of Batemans Bay and all of Eurobodalla.

After more than 20 years of Batemans Bay residents calling and fund raising for the development of an indoor aquatic centre and advocating for purpose built arts and cultural facilities, we are now so close to seeing it happen. Every major community engagement activity undertaken by Council in the Batemans Bay area over the last two decades has consistently resulted in a strong desire in the community for new year-round aquatic facilities, particularly to provide for warm water therapy, learn to swim and suitably designed venues for performing arts, exhibition space for visual arts and workshop spaces. A summary of previous community engagement activities and outcomes is contained in Attachment 1 to this report.

I have heard these messages from the community, loud and clear, and with my fellow Councillors we are now acting on them. I am excited that the potential to finally deliver these much needed facilities for our community is closer than it has ever been. Council is doing everything it can to ensure we are successful in receiving sufficient grant funding and the \$26m from the NSW Government is a great step forward.

There are two critical factors in continuing to be successful with our grant funding applications:

1. A strong business case demonstrating that the proposed centre is affordable now and into the future.
2. Demonstrated community support for the proposed centre.

Council has a strong business case for the concept plan developed by Otium Planning Group, industry leaders in the planning and development of aquatic facilities. The business case is also supported by expert advice in the provision and operation of arts facilities. It demonstrates how the concept plan meets a broad range of community needs as expressed by the community, in accordance with best practice trends and based on the population characteristics of the community. The business case is supported by quantity surveying advice from Turner and Townsend, who again are leaders in their field and highly respected by governments. The business case demonstrates that we can build the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre for approximately \$46m and the ongoing operational costs over ten years are affordable.

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Based on all of the community engagement Council has undertaken over the last two decades, it is clear that the concept plan delivers on the community's highest priorities for an indoor aquatic centre and a purpose-built performing arts space. Most members of the community simply want Council to get on and build it. The prospect of an affordable indoor aquatic centre with dedicated pools for warm water therapy; learn to swim; leisure swimming and lap swimming, plus the new dedicated arts and cultural spaces, is one that the majority of our community fully supports and looks forward to becoming a reality.

In anticipation of continued success with our grant applications, Council is moving forward to develop detailed designs for the new centre. A request for Expressions of Interest has been issued for architecture companies to work with Council and our community in turning the endorsed concept plan into a ready to build design. I am pleased at the strong level of interest from highly qualified and experienced consultants who submitted Expressions of Interest to design the facility. We are also working with the Mackay Park Sunset Committee on developing a plan to engage with the community throughout this design phase.

We are getting on with the project, listening to our community and taking on board ideas and suggestions for the detailed design. Included in the request for Expression of Interest documents are a list of 29 detailed design principles that Council developed in collaboration with the Mackay Park Sunset Committee. The design principles include a requirement to maximise potential opportunities for expansion of the centre in the future, in accordance with Council's resolution to endorse the concept plan for the purpose of seeking grant funding on 29 August 2017. The design principles are now available to be viewed on Council's website.

One of the suggestions I and my fellow councillors have heard, including from the Batemans Bay Swim Club, is that the 25m lap pool should be increased from 8 lanes to 10 lanes to increase capacity for lap swimming. This would also ensure the pool exceeds compliance requirements for short course competitions. I am of the view that this can be accommodated within the centre without affecting the affordability of the project. This will need to be tested through the detailed design process, but I recommend to my fellow Councillors that we resolve to support this change to the concept plan being considered in the detailed design phase.

A range of other more detailed suggestions regarding the size and location of kitchen facilities, the shared use of meeting spaces, the need for a flexible performing space, the need for storage rooms, the design of the shared foyer, the opportunity for outdoor spaces to be included and many other ideas will all be considered during the detailed design phase and there will be further opportunities for community input during this phase.

Another suggestion I have heard is that Council should investigate the potential for providing for long distance lap swimming in the ocean through a dedicated netted area. This suggestion was raised by members of the Batemans Bay Swim Club. The provision of an ocean netted area may be an appropriate and more cost-effective alternative to the retention or refurbishment of the existing 50m pool at Batemans Bay. It would certainly be more affordable than including an indoor 50m pool in the proposed centre. It would also potentially be a great tourist drawcard as are similar netted swimming areas around Australia. I think this is an option worth exploring and discussing with our community.

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The proposed Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre must be a facility that meets the broadest needs and highest priorities of our community and it must be affordable for our community now and in the future. The concept plan endorsed by Council achieves these two key aims. While the concept plan will be subject to change throughout the detailed design phase, in response to further community input and to fit the total budget available to deliver the centre, the key components are the right ones for our community.

In addition to the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre on the southern part of the Mackay Park Precinct, Council will soon be seeking expressions of interest from development companies or consortiums to develop the northern precinct for uses consistent and compatible with the preferred uses for the precinct that Council has identified based on earlier community engagement. These uses include conference and event facilities, restaurants and cafes, tourist accommodation and residential accommodation. This process follows a preliminary expression of interest process undertaken in late 2016 and early 2017, in response to which four preliminary expressions of interest were received. This demonstrates that there is interest from the development community in the site.

In the meantime, Council is progressing negotiations with the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) for the use of the site and building during construction of the new Batemans Bay Bridge. I expect a positive, mutually agreed outcome to be reached. Given this, we have the time to get the planning right for any future development of the site.

With a new Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre on the southern precinct, the potential for conference facilities and accommodation on the northern precinct, and the retention of the playing fields in the western part of the precinct, Mackay Park will become a key destination for residents of Batemans Bay and Eurobodalla, and for visitors. This is the one of the largest projects for Batemans Bay and Eurobodalla, and I am thrilled that our community will see it delivered soon. These are exciting times for our community.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Thank the Premier the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP and the Member for Bega the Hon. Andrew Constance MP for coming to Batemans Bay on 26 March 2018 to announce \$26m of funding towards the construction of the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre at Mackay Park Batemans Bay.
2. Continue to advocate to the NSW and Australian Governments for funding to complete the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre.
3. Confirm that the Option 1 concept plan prepared by Otium Planning Group, is endorsed as the basis for undertaking the detailed design of the Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre at Mackay Park Batemans Bay.
4. Note that the ultimate design and components of the proposed centre are dependent on the total amount of grant funding received.
5. Support the inclusion of a 25m by 10 lane lap pool as a key component of the proposed centre, in addition to the dedicated warm water therapy, leisure and learn to swim,

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splash play area and waterslide components.

6. Not include a 50m pool in the proposed centre or retain the existing 50m pool.
7. Confirm that, during the design phase, consideration will be given to the potential to expand the facility, if and when needed into the future.
8. Note that, during the design phase, the capital and operational costs of the proposed centre will need to be reviewed to ensure the centre is affordable for our community.
9. Note that further engagement will be undertaken with the community during the detailed design phase and that a further report will be presented to Council in due course to endorse a Community Engagement Plan for this phase of the project that is being developed in collaboration with the Mackay Park Sunset Committee.
10. Investigate the potential for the provision of long distance swimming facilities in the ocean at an appropriate location in the Batemans Bay area.
11. Proceed with the issuing of Request for Expressions of Interest from development companies or consortiums to redevelop the northern precinct of Mackay Park (the former Bowling Club site) for appropriate uses consistent with the preferred development outcomes previously identified and agreed by Council.

REPORT

Introduction

On 29 August 2017, Council endorsed a concept plan option for the development of a regional aquatic centre, arts and cultural facility and gateway visitor centre on the southern part of the Batemans Bay Mackay Park precinct for the purpose of seeking grant funding to construct the facility and to inform the detailed planning and design process.

This decision of Council followed over a decade of community engagement on the need for aquatic and arts facilities in Batemans Bay and the preparation of a business case and concept plan options by expert consultants, demonstrating that the endorsed option meets the broadest and highest priority community needs in an affordable manner.

Council also resolved on 29 August 2017, to consider the potential to expand the facility, if and when needed into the future. Council has acted upon this resolution by including a requirement to maximise potential opportunities for expansion of the centre in the future in the design principles contained in the Request for Expression of Interest documents for the design of the centre.

What does the community want?

Council has undertaken a range of community engagement activities over many years to gain an understanding of community needs and wants in relation to aquatic and arts facilities in Batemans Bay. Attachment 1 contains a summation of the results of community engagement over the last 13 years, including the outcomes of the following activities:

- 2005 – Swimming Pools Strategic Review
- 2010 – Situation Analysis - Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Report

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- 2010 – Recreation and Open Space Strategy
- 2012 – Community Research Report
- 2013 – Hanging Rock Precinct Feasibility Study
- 2016 – Community Strategic Plan Review
- 2016 and 2017 – Batemans Bay Vision Engagement
- 2016 and 2017 – Community Engagement on Preferred Uses for Mackay Park Precinct
- 2016 – Establishment of Mackay Park Sunset Committee
- 2017 and 2018 – Community Information Sessions, Group Meetings and Information Kiosks

The consistent messages from the community in all of the above community engagement activities, were the need for an indoor year-round aquatic centre and new purpose built performance and arts spaces in Batemans Bay.

What are we proposing to build?

The concept plan endorsed by Council on 29 August 2017 responds to the strong and consistent messages from the Batemans Bay community by including the following components:

- An indoor aquatic centre with:
 - 25m, eight-lane pool with ramp access
 - 10m warm water therapy pool and spa
 - freeform indoor leisure pool that includes learn-to-swim and toddler areas
 - water play splash pad
 - waterslides
 - gym, group fitness and wellness area
 - amenities
- An arts and cultural centre with:
 - large flexible, flat floor auditorium with retractable seating for 500 people
 - dressing rooms, green room and storage
 - gallery/exhibition space and storage
 - rehearsal/dance studio/music room
 - 'wet' arts workshop space and storage
 - 'dry' arts workshop space and storage
 - meeting room
 - multi-purpose room
 - amenities
- Shared facilities with:
 - foyer
 - café
 - visitor information service
 - administration offices
 - plant and support services

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A business case was developed by industry leaders, Otium Planning Group, to demonstrate that the concept plan meets community needs and can be developed and operated affordably. In relation to the aquatic component, the business case states that:

“Successful, contemporary aquatic facilities are characterised by design and management that targets multiple market segments including recreations / leisure adventure; competition / training / fitness; education; and health and therapy. It is imperative that redevelopment of the Batemans Bay Pool incorporate contemporary and commercial features that will maximise usage and reduce operating deficits. The proposed different bodies of water with varying depths and temperatures will service a range of demographic and community needs.”

In relation to the arts component, the business case outlines the importance of flexible multi-use spaces, strong programming of the available spaces, the need for state of the art audio-visual equipment to attract touring shows and the need to balance community use with opportunities for nurturing local arts practitioners.

Critical to the affordability of the centre is the proposed shared front of house (foyer, reception, café, retail) and back of house (administration, plant room) functions.

The concept plan does not include a new 50m pool or the retention of the existing 50m pool on site. There are many reasons for this, including the additional capital and operating costs and the condition of the existing pool. Attachment 2 to this report provides a more detailed summary of the reasons why a 50m pool is not proposed in the new development.

Over the last few months Councillors and Council staff have visited a number of aquatic and arts facilities and have had conversations with operators of such facilities to test our concept plan with those directly involved in delivering these facilities. A summary of what we have learnt from these visits and conversations is contained in Attachment 3 to this report. I am confident, based on what we have learnt, that we are heading in the right direction with our concept plan.

How much will the centre cost to build and operate?

The concept plan has been costed by expert quantity surveyors Turner and Townsend and the operating performance has been modelled by Otium Planning Group.

The capital cost to construct the facility, based on the endorsed concept plan, is approximately \$46m. Council has applied for grant funding from both the NSW and Australian Governments through various funding streams to facilitate the construction of the whole of the centre. Thanks to the NSW Government we are now more than half way to this goal. Should the total funding received be less than \$46m, Council will consider how best to stage the construction of the facility so that the whole of the centre can be provided over time.

More important than the capital construction cost is the ongoing operational cost over time. While grant funding will be used to build the facility, rates and other Council revenue will be used to operate the facility. The operational costs must be affordable as I will not support a facility that requires a rate rise in order to be affordable.

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The business case demonstrates that the facility, based on the endorsed concept plan, will operate at a loss of approximately \$1m in the first year, reducing to approximately \$750,000 by year ten. In order to understand the actual impact of this on our community, we need to discount the current operating loss from the existing pool, community centre and visitor information centre (approximately \$630,000 in 2015/16) as these facilities are proposed to be included in the new centre. Therefore, the additional cost to the community will be in the order of approximately \$330,000 in year one reducing to approximately \$110,000 by year ten. I believe this level of additional cost can be accommodated within Council's forward budgets without the need for a rate rise.

What are the next steps?

While Council awaits the final outcome of all of our grant applications, we have commenced the detailed design phase through seeking Expressions of Interest for architecture companies to design the new centre. If Council is successful in receiving the total amount of funding, we want to be as close to shovel ready as possible, so that the new centre can be completed within the grant funding agreement timeframes.

We are working together with the Mackay Park Sunset Committee to prepare an Engagement Plan for the design phase of the project. We will need more input from key user groups to inform the design of the new centre and we will be seeking that input. When detailed design options have been prepared, we will put them out to the community for feedback, before a final design is endorsed by Council.

Conclusion

In the preparation of a concept plan and business case to support our applications for grant funding from the NSW and Australian Governments, Council has listened to our community and considered their needs and wants. We have considered the characteristics of our population, taken independent expert advice, reviewed the nature and condition of existing facilities, visited other similar facilities and taken on board the views and advice of those facilities' managers. We have also been very mindful of the capacity of our community to pay for any new facilities.

Having done this, we have a proposed concept which responds to the highest priority needs to our community in a financially responsible manner. We have developed a proposal that will deliver:

- an indoor aquatic centre for year round swimming access
- a warm water program pool
- a learn to swim pool, with freeform swimming and toddler areas
- a lap pool where swimmers will not be competing for space with other pool users
- a water play splash pad
- waterslides
- a gym, fitness and wellness area
- a purpose built, 'state-of-the-art' arts and cultural centre
- a flexible auditorium space suitable for a range of performances and other activities
- multi-purpose meeting and workshop spaces

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- modern visitor information services
- shared foyer, administration, plant and support services

With the announcement yesterday from the NSW Premier and Member for Bega that we will be receiving \$26m towards the construction of the facility, we are now more than half way to realising the concept.

We have commenced the detailed design phase through a competitive tender process to select an architect, and we will continue to advocate on behalf of our community to the NSW and Australian Governments with regard to our other funding applications.

We are also progressing with preparing Expression of Interest documents for the northern part of the Mackay Park Precinct and will work with the Mackay Park Sunset Committee and the broader community to ensure that all potential development outcomes in the precinct will benefit Batemans Bay and the whole of Eurobodalla.

We are as close as we have ever been to delivering on behalf of our community, facilities that they have been asking for, for decades. This is an exciting time and I encourage all of my fellow Councillors and the community to continue to support this tremendous opportunity for the Eurobodalla.

Attachment 1: Community Engagement Activities and Outcomes

2005 – Swimming Pools Strategic Review

In the preparation of a strategic review of swimming pools in Eurobodalla in 2005, a wide range of community consultations were undertaken, including a call for public submissions, surveys of clubs and schools, key stakeholder interviews (including with pool managers, swimming clubs, aquatic program providers, physiotherapists and representatives of schools and sports clubs), and a survey of local youth.

Feedback received in relation to the Batemans Bay pool included:

-) Need for a year-round facility, to ensure continuity of learn to swim and competitive swim training
-) Need more water space to meet user demand at peak times and growth in demand for low impact exercise opportunities (such as swimming, warm water therapy)
-) Pool is dated and in urgent need of upgrading and new facilities (25m indoor pool, hydrotherapy pool, freeform recreation pool, gym facilities, new change/kiosk/crèche)
-) Sports tourism – year round pool would facilitate training camps for elite athletes and regional scale events.

2010 – Situation Analysis - Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Report

Consultation undertaken for the preparation of the Situation Analysis for Arts and Cultural Infrastructure in Eurobodalla in 2010 included the following activities:

-) One-on-one interviews with key community stakeholders
-) Questionnaires to local schools, community groups and individual artists
-) Consultation with Council Committees and Council staff
-) Locality-based workshops for community groups and individuals
-) Engagement with Eurobodalla Tourism, South East Arts, PerfEx and Arts Exchange.

Priority issues raised from the above consultation in relation to facilities at Batemans Bay were:

-) Lack of specific purpose designed/built space – exhibition and performance space (varying sizes were suggested)
-) Lack of sufficient workshop spaces for rehearsals and visual arts.

Key improvements suggested for Batemans Bay were:

-) Suitably designed venue for performing arts suitable for visiting performers
-) A place for the celebration of culture
-) Storage space
-) Centrally located exhibition space (community gallery / regional gallery)

2010 – Recreation and Open Space Strategy

Consultation undertaken for the preparation of the Recreation and Open Space Strategy in 2010 included a community survey on recreation activities. The survey asked people to identify what they perceived to be gaps in provision of recreation facilities in their area. For the northern part of Eurobodalla, the top two perceived gaps in recreation facilities were:

1. Extended pool season
2. Events and performances

The Strategy found that, within the northern district, the two users groups that appear to be under catered for are seniors and youth. The Strategy specifically identified an unmet demand for an indoor aquatic centre at Batemans Bay.

2013 – Hanging Rock Precinct Feasibility Study

On 27 March 2012, Council resolved to develop a feasibility study for the Hanging Rock Precinct master plan project. The project was to develop a Regional Community and Sports Centre at the precinct. A household survey was undertaken to inform the development of the feasibility study. In relation to aquatic facilities, 53% of respondents indicated that they would like to make greater use of such facilities in the future. Specifically in relation to facilities that could be provided at Hanging Rock to encourage use, the survey found the following:

-) Of the 31% of respondents who wanted indoor pools, 13% wanted leisure water, 13% wanted a warm water program pool and 3% wanted a competition pool.
-) Of the 17% of respondents who wanted quality arts programs, 5% wanted art exhibitions, 4% wanted performing arts and 3% wanted music.

2012 – Community Research Report

To inform Council's long term resourcing strategy planning, a survey of residents and non-resident ratepayers was undertaken.

One of the questions asked was how important is it that a Regional Aquatic Centre is built in the next 10 years. 61% of residents and 52% of non-residents indicated that it was very important to at least somewhat important. For residents, the highest proportion of respondents (24%) indicated that it was very important.

Respondents were also asked how important is it that a Regional Performing Arts Centre is built in the next 10 years. 55% of residents and 51% of non-residents indicated that it was very important to at least somewhat important. For residents, 14% indicated that it was very important.

2016 – Community Strategic Plan Review

During the review of the Eurobodalla Community Strategic Plan in 2016, a number of submissions from the community raised the need for indoor aquatic facilities and arts and performance venues in Eurobodalla. Some submissions specifically referred to the potential for the Mackay Park Precinct in Batemans Bay to provide facilities that meet the needs of the community in an iconic building that will impress visitors. A number of submissions identified the aging of the population and the need for development and places to cater for older people.

2016 and 2017 – Batemans Bay Vision Engagement

In late 2016 and early 2017, Council undertook some community engagement on a future vision for Batemans Bay. In discussions with land owners and the broader community, an indoor aquatic facility was identified as the most important need for the town's future. A cultural centre was also identified as an important facility for the future.

2016 and 2017 – Community Engagement on Preferred Uses for Mackay Park Precinct

Following the purchase of the old Batemans Bay Bowling Club site in 2016, Council asked the community for their ideas for the future use of the precinct.

An 'aquatic centre' and 'hydrotherapy facility' received the most number of submissions. There were a smaller number of submissions suggesting performing arts facilities be provided on the site,

however as a number of these submissions were from community groups with multiple members, it ranked highly as a desired use.

2016 – Establishment of Mackay Park Sunset Committee

Late in 2016, Council established the Batemans Bay Mackay Park Precinct Sunset Committee so that community representatives could be involved in helping us plan the project and oversee the community engagement. The committee included representatives from community groups including Batemans Bay Indoor Aquatic Centre, Batemans Bay Chamber of Commerce, PerfEx, Batemans Bay U3A, and South Coast Pastel Society. Following an Expression of Interest process to select committee members, Council accepted the nominations from every organisation that applied to be represented on the Committee and every person who nominated as a general community representative.

2017 and 2018 – Community Information Sessions, Group Meetings and Information Kiosks

Prior to endorsing a concept option for the purpose of seeking grant funding, Council held two community information sessions in Batemans Bay in August 2017.

At the request of various community groups, including the Batemans Bay Swim Club, the Batemans Bay Indoor Aquatic Centre Committee and PerfEx, Council attended a number of meetings to provide updates on the project and to hear the groups' views.

In February 2018, Council held three information kiosks in Batemans Bay to provide an update to community members on the progress of the project.

Attachment 2: Why has Council not included a new 50m pool?

The business case prepared by Otium outlines that including a 50m pool in the concept plan, in place of the 25m pool, would cost approximately \$6.5m more than the concept with the 25m option. This estimate was provided to Otium by Turner and Townsend, the same quantity surveying firm who costed the concept plan. This additional amount was based on the need for:

-) a larger building footprint to accommodate a 50m pool and comply with relevant pool standards, such as for adequate circulation space
-) increasing the length of the pool to 51.5m to accommodate a moveable boom that would enable the pool to be divided into two 25m pools as required
-) the installation of the moveable boom
-) additional excavation, pool design and pool construction costs
-) additional contingencies, fees and charges (as a percentage of the increased capital construction cost).

The business case also outlines that including a 50m pool in the plan, in place of the 25m pool, would cost in the order of \$2.6m to \$3.05m over ten years more to operate. This is based on the need for:

-) increased wages for an additional pool attendant to meet safety regulations
-) additional costs of chemicals, cleaning, materials and maintenance
-) additional energy costs
-) additional water costs.

By way of comparison, the indicative costs of including a 50m pool in the proposed redevelopment of the Bomaderry pool in the Shoalhaven Local Government Area, provided to Council by the Shoalhaven Aquatics Centre Manager is an additional \$7m construction cost and an additional \$250,000 in annual operating costs (or an additional \$2.5m over ten years).

Further, the recently completed Business Case for the proposed Rosebud Aquatic Centre in the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, indicated that the preliminary cost estimate for an indoor 50m pool was approximately \$7.5m more to construct than an indoor 25m pool. In terms of operating costs, the indoor 50m pool was estimated to cost \$100,000 more per year than a 25m pool, or an additional \$1m over ten years (excluding interest and depreciation).

Why can't the existing 50m pool be retained?

The existing pool is aging and does not meet current standards for public pools in relation to water filtration, competitions or disability access. If we were to keep the pool, it would need to be substantially reconstructed to comply with current standards. The cost of doing so would result in the need to decide which of the other components of the facility are not built. I do not consider this to be the best outcome for the community, compared to the opportunity to build a brand new, modern, state of the art facility.

More detail about the condition of the existing 50m pool, outlining why it is not suitable for retention, is provided below:

-) the existing pool is 49.99m in length by 13.41m wide, providing only six 2.2m wide lanes - the desired outcome is a minimum of eight by 2.5m competition standard lanes
-) the existing pool does not have an accessible ramp for people with a disability, which is an essential feature in any new aquatic centre

-) the existing turnover rates for the water filtration are below current requirements for outdoor pools (the standard for indoor swimming pools is even higher) meaning the entire water management system would need to be replaced
-) the position of the existing pool on the site, and the height of the pool deck above the current pool entrance (which is not conducive to best practice accessibility and surveillance) would overly constrain the optimum design of any new facility for Mackay Park
-) the existing pool and associated underground pipework and filtration systems is now more than 50 years old and in declining condition
-) the existing pool has experienced past failures (including one in 2012 which resulted in the loss of about 50,000L per day) and has experienced on-going pipe failures since
-) the structural strength of the existing pool is questionable given the known loss of sand under the pool structure and the surrounding concourse area (associated with past water losses and the age of the structure).

To achieve a fantastic integrated new centre for our community, with an affordable on-going cost, by far the best option is to remove the existing pool structure and start with a clean sheet of paper.

Affordability is not the only reason why a 50m pool is not proposed in the new centre. Evidence from the use of Eurobodalla's existing pools, survey results demonstrating a low demand for lap swimming compared to other water spaces, advice received from operators of other aquatic facilities and the expert advice of our consultants all tell us that 50m pools, particularly outdoor ones, are the least used pools when there are alternative indoor options. Importantly, for most lap swimmers, a 50m pool may be desirable, but is not essential.

Some members of the community have raised concern that removing the 50m pool will result in less water space and therefore more competition for water space by different users. On the contrary, the concept plan endorsed by council almost doubles the available water space from approximately 670m² (the current 50m pool) to approximately 1200m². Within this total area is a dedicated lap swimming pool, along with a separate dedicated warm water therapy pool, a leisure and learn to swim pool, a splash pad and waterslide. This results in a significant increase in the capacity for lap swimming, as the competition for lap swimming pool space from other users is reduced, if not removed.

Attachment 3: What has Council learnt from visiting other Aquatic Facilities?

On Sunday 3 December 2017, Councillors and Council staff visited the Ulladulla Leisure Centre and spoke to the centre's Manager, who provided the following advice:

-) If starting from scratch today, they would not recommend building a 50 metre pool.
-) 50 metre pool is predominantly only used by a few lap swimmers and swim club during summer.
-) Coach uses the 25 metre pool in winter
-) Confirmed the need for a large occasional child care space to support patrons or the gym, programs and pool.
-) Would build a bigger health and fitness area, as this use provides a good income.

On the day we visited, the weather was warm. There was approximately 40 - 50 people using the indoor pools and 2 people in the outdoor 50 metre pool.

On Monday 4 December 2017, Councillors and Council staff visited the Sutherland Leisure Centre. The centre's Manager provided the following advice:

-) Would not recommend building a 50 metre indoor pool again. Existing indoor 50 metre pool has never been used in 50 metre configuration. Half is used for Learn to Swim and half for lap swimming.
-) To the managers knowledge, they have never had any 50 metre lane ropes.
-) It is difficult to program various activities in the one large body of water. They ideally need different pools with temperatures suitable for different activities.
-) Eurobodalla Shire Council's plans are definitely moving in the right direction.
-) Health and fitness area makes the money.

The day we visited was cool. There was 120 - 150 people using the indoor pools and 1 person in the outdoor 50 metre pool.

The comparatively infrequent use of the 50m pools in the above examples, that are to a degree mirrored in the usage statistics for Eurobodalla's existing pools, reinforces Council's decision to endorse a concept plan with an indoor 25m lap pool as a component.

This is also mirrored in the usage data for the six pools in the Bega Valley Shire, two of which are outdoor 50m pools. Sapphire Aquatic Centre is an indoor aquatic facility comprising 25m x 6 lane heated pool, heated program pool, children's leisure water area, café/ kiosk, and small gym. It is the only heated, indoor pool in the Shire and the only pool open all year round. The Aquatic Facilities Review for Bega Valley Shire noted that for the 2015/16 season, over the period during which all six Council pools were open, Sapphire Aquatic Centre accounted for over half (50.3%) of the combined total patronage of all six pools in the Shire. While the Sapphire Aquatic Centre also had the highest operating cost of all six pools, the high level of patronage meant that it had the lowest subsidy per user visit of all six pools.

What has Council learnt from visiting other Arts Facilities?

Also on 4 December 2017, Council visited the Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre. The Manager of the Performing Arts Centre provided the following advice:

-) The Sutherland Performing Arts Centre has 880 seats and has a high operating cost due to air conditioning, staffing, etc. The Shire's arts centre at Engadine, that has 330 seats, has a much higher use year round.

-) Most new venues being built in Australia have multiple smaller performance spaces or spaces that are flexible for a range of performances and audience sizes.
-) Need to have a main stage and a separate rehearsal space (that can also be used for smaller local performances).
-) Quality of sound and lighting is critically important.
-) Important that the entry is well designed with high quality of cafes/bars.
-) Important to include high quality fixtures and fittings throughout.

The Manager of the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery provided the following advice:

-) Benefit of outdoor space and gardens as part of facility.
-) Benefit of associated café.
-) Inclusive design, encouraging community use of facility.
-) Well-designed and well-used gallery space.