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E.3 MIRBOO NORTH AND KORUMBURRA POOL MASTER PLAN

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT

DEVELOPMENT OF MASTER PLANS FOR THE MIRBOO NORTH AND KORUMBURRA SWIMMING POOLS

THE STRATEGIC MASTER PLANS

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THE STRATEGIC MASTER PLANS

1. Introduction

The Brief for the present study states that “the purpose is to develop master plans and indicative costs for the renovation of Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools”. Further, the master plans are intended to inform Council’s future capital investment in the two facilities.

A Council report, “Strategic Direction for Aquatic Facilities in South Gippsland”, was adopted by Council in February 2012. Following a significant community consultation program the final document determined that the Council (subject to trigger points) would maintain its operational, maintenance and capital investment in all Council outdoor pools across the Shire.

To guide future investment in the outdoor pools, the February 2012 report also determined that master plans were to be developed for all outdoor pools. Due to community interest, current attendance numbers and asset condition, Council agreed that the Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools should be given the highest priority for master plan preparation. This report, which is divided into two volumes, presents in Volume 1 (the companion to this volume) the findings of the research into aquatic provision trends, community needs and aspirations for the pools, benchmark comparisons of the performance of redeveloped pools in other Councils and a technical assessment of the existing Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools. Volume 2 (the present volume) of the report presents strategic plans to guide the future redevelopment of the two venues including costed and prioritised recommendations for action at the pools.

2. The Design Briefs

2.1 Introduction

This Volume presents a design brief for the redevelopment of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools. The intent of the design brief is first, to establish a philosophical or policy basis for any changes that might occur and second, to provide a specific set of research-based recommended actions. It then draws on the material reported in Volume 1 to set out a rationale for change and the recommended scope of that change at each venue.

Establishing the philosophical/policy basis is important in that it ensures that the values and aspirations of the Shire Council and the local communities are reflected in the recommendations that are made for each venue, while the research-based recommendations ensure that the specific proposals for action are based on sound professional evidence.

The philosophical basis of the design brief has been derived from a review of the South Gippsland Shire Council’s mission statement; the Council’s Municipal Strategic Statement; Council’s Community Directions Statement, and Council’s Annual Plan for 2011-12. These documents provide an understanding of the aspirations of the Shire and its community and a number of statements of the Council’s priority directions for action and as such, provide a sound basis for a set of design principles and recommended actions.

Further, the philosophical basis of the design brief has been guided by the review of trends in leisure provision, prepared as part of the present study, and the review of initiatives at a number of other rural and regional outdoor pool venues in Victoria that were used as benchmarks for comparison with each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North swimming pools.

The specific set of recommended actions that has been prepared also reflect the findings of the research undertaken as part of the present study, these being:

1. The technical assessment of the condition of the existing pool assets
2. The on-ground implications of the trends in leisure provision that were reviewed as part of the present study
3. The assessment of community views and needs, and
4. The benchmarking of initiatives by Victorian Councils.

A summary of the findings of each section of this research (presented in full in Volume 1 of this report), is provided in later paragraphs.

2.2 The Philosophical/Policy Basis

The South Gippsland Shire **Council mission** statement provides a sound initial basis for the types of actions that might be taken with regard to each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools (and other pools in the Shire). The mission is:

To effectively plan and provide for the social, built, economic and natural environments that ensure the future wellbeing of South Gippsland communities

Annual Report 2011-12, p. 3.

The mission statement indicates that a redevelopment of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools can contribute to enhancing one or more of the social, built, economic and natural environments of each community. If a new or redeveloped venue can contribute to achieving all of the key elements of the mission statement it will be more appropriate than actions that only advance one or several of the key elements.

From a *social* perspective, examples of how new or redeveloped venues would contribute to achieving the Council mission include them being designed, programmed and marketed in order to:

- Provide new, better or different opportunities for broad social interaction and activities in the community and for specific targeted groups such as, in particular, young people, the aged, isolated members of the community, single parents, lone householders
- Help build social interaction between and social capital amongst community members
- Help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the community
- Attract all members of the community and allow them to feel that there is something of interest and valuable available to them
- Provide opportunities for community members to develop and build skills and personal capacities as both users and staff which then have benefits beyond their use of the value, and
- Provide opportunities that enhanced the health of the community.

From a *built facility* perspective, redeveloped venues in each of Korumburra and Mirboo North would contribute to achieving the Council mission if they:

- Helped to protect and preserve a valuable community asset
- Added to the aesthetic quality of the built environment
- Created community spaces that were accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and
- Were well designed, of a high standard and safe for all users.

From an *economic* perspective, new or redeveloped swimming pools would contribute to achieving the Council mission if they:

- Created new jobs or at least ensured the retention of existing jobs in the community
- Had a realistic capital cost and did not put undue pressure on Council budgets
- Were able to be operated in a way that minimised the need for Council support
- Were able to be priced in a way that did not exclude any particular groups or individuals in the community
- Contributed to the economic wellbeing of the community by attracting visitors, enhancing community health through the programs and activities that were offered and through the goods and services purchased to run it, and

- Reduced the need for residents to travel outside the town to access recreation, health and wellbeing programs and services.

Finally, from an *environmental* perspective, redeveloped aquatic venues in each of Korumburra and Mirboo North would contribute to achieving the Council mission if they:

- Reduced the cost, time and fuel needed for residents to travel elsewhere to access recreation, health and wellbeing programs and services
- Were of a design that minimised the use of energy or which used renewable energy sources
- Were of a design that optimised the level of use per square metre of building, and
- Were able to recycle energy, water and other resources.

Redeveloped Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools should aspire to achieve each of the above outcomes plus others that might be identified and added to the list. As such, in the planning of any new initiatives that are undertaken as a consequence of this report, **it is recommended that** the above listing be reviewed and refined and that key performance measures are developed for each item so as to measure the actual contribution that is made and to provide factual evidence in support for funding applications for assistance grants if the initiatives are staged.

The direction given by Council's mission statement is endorsed by the Municipal Strategic Statement and the **Council Plan 2010-2014**.

The Council Plan establishes 5 key directions for action by the Council and defines a series of actions that will further action on them. They are:

1. A vibrant, engaged community
2. A sustainable environment
3. A strong economy
4. Appropriate infrastructure, and
5. A leading organisation.

Items 1. to 4. echo the Council mission statement and thus do not presently require further elaboration. However, the statement "A leading organisation" indicates a desire by Council to play an important role in the community (and beyond) in setting the agenda for action and demonstrating leadership through its actions. As such, this indicates a need for Council to be a major partner in any initiatives to establish a redeveloped swimming venue in each of Korumburra and Mirboo North. It has signalled an intention to play this role in the commissioning of the present report and in setting aside resources for action on the recommendations of the report over the coming years.

More specifically, the **Annual Plan 2011-12** (this being the latest year available on line), which is a reflection of the Council Plan in so far as it applied to 2011-12, listed 8 specific areas of activity which, while not focused on either of the Korumburra or Mirboo North Swimming Pools (or any other Shire pools), give direction and clarity to the types of initiatives Council had determined to pursue that year. These areas (with the relevant section of the Annual Plan in brackets), were:

- Community partnerships (1.1.1)
- Community engagement and planning (1.1.2)
- Active lifestyles (1.2.1)
- Social equity (1.1.3)
- Economic investment... which, with specific reference to Mirboo North refers to "prepare and promote the township to potential business investors and new residents" (3.1.3 , p. 60)
- Tourism (3.1.4)
- Accessibility networks (3.3.1), and

- Direction setting (5.1.1)

As noted, none of the actions proposed in each of these areas for 2011-12 specifically referred to either of the Korumburra or Mirboo North Swimming Pools. However, it is evident from the foregoing discussion of the Council mission statement and the Council Plan 2010-2014, that the redevelopment of both pools could readily be framed in such a manner as to contribute in a very positive and measureable manner to each activity area.

Further to the Council mission and the Council Plan 2010-2014, South Gippsland Shire Council has also prepared and issued a **Community Directions Statement**. This states that the Council will:

- Broadly engage with the community in setting its future direction
- Allow for a coordinated and integrated approach to community development and community infrastructure provision
- Genuinely address the challenges and opportunities facing the community and develops strategies that reflect community priorities, and
- Strengthen social networks and community engagement and resilience.

These statements indicate a strong intention by Council to:

- Have a substantial and continuing program of community engagement in decisions on future development and actions
- Seek to ensure that initiatives that focus on community development and community infrastructure reflect community priorities, and
- Initiatives that strengthen social networks and community engagement and resilience will be given priority.

Finally, South Gippsland Shire Council has a range of other policies, direction statements, funding priorities and reports that highlight special populations that live in or visit the Shire that help indicate some of the directions that should be highlighted in any redeveloped pool for Korumburra and Mirboo North. These documents are not reviewed as their specific details do not recommend pool initiatives. However, their subject matter does give a clear indication of the nature of a number of issues of concerns to Council. They include the South Gippsland Shire Active Aging Plan 2012-2016; the Shire's Youth Council; Council's commitment to encouraging and supporting volunteerism; support initiatives for community groups; tourism, and employment and economic development. These special interest areas again echo the Council mission statement and all could be furthered through an appropriate program of action at a redeveloped Korumburra Swimming Pool or a new or redeveloped Mirboo North Swimming Pool.

In summary, a range of Council policies and related documents provide a strong direction for any redeveloped aquatic venue in Korumburra or Mirboo North. The key elements of this entail developing facilities, programs and services that:

- Provide a greater diversity of social opportunities in the town and which strengthen social development and cohesion across the whole community *but particularly for key target groups*
- Protect and strengthen the heritage of the town and also make a clear statement about the quality and future of the community
- Make wise, efficient and effective use of financial resources while also contributing to economic development, and
- Minimise the impact on the natural environment through the use of alternate energy sources, recycling and the use of environmentally-sensitive design processes.

2.3 The Technical Assessment of the Pool Assets

An assessment of the technical condition of each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools has been undertaken by an aquatic engineer and a separate report has been prepared for each pool. The key findings of each report in terms of strategic directions are summarised below.

Korumburra:

The technical assessment of the Korumburra Swimming Pool assets concluded that overall, the venue is attractive, in generally good condition and has little by way of structural redevelopment needs. It was noted that apart from the appearance and (dis) functional layout of the entrance area, the centre was attractive and generally well-maintained although showing the signs of its age in some areas.

It was noted that the toddler's pool features tiling that is "unique and of high quality" and which "should be preserved as part of the heritage of the site. The tiles are installed in a way that depicts a basket weave pattern and it is of very pleasing appearance" which has not been "seen in the past 40 years nor have we seen it so well laid and detailed".

Issues of concern identified by the engineering assessment tend to almost all be shorter term maintenance/ enhancement focused. They included:

- Precast wet deck slabs on both the main pool and toddler's pool should be replaced as they have deteriorated and become quite rough on the surface in some cases and they appear to have dropped from their original position
- Surface mounted pipework could be removed by some work under the concourses at the appropriate time
- The pool water was of excellent appearance and it is a credit to the pool operators. There is no doubt that the system is being used to the maximum it can deliver although it is also true however, that the good appearance of the water is aided by a relatively low bathing load
- Unless there was a large increase in the bathing load, the large capital investment that would be incurred in replacing the filtration system with pressure sand filters is not warranted at this time though it may be needed in the longer term. When this is done, the plant room should also be rebuilt to provide compliant spaces around the plant items.
- The water flow distribution valve and the coupled diversion valves in the filtered water line of the filtration system should be upgraded
- Occupational health and safety regulations mean that changes need to be made to the way in which dry chemicals are received on site and then moved to their storage positions while other aspects of chemical storage and management also warrant revision, and
- The turnover rate of water through the treatment plant is around half of what it should be but good plant management and low bather loads mean that this is not a problem at present.

In overview, the technical assessment has found the Korumburra Swimming Pool to be in very good condition and to have no major immediate or longer term strategic action needs. Continued high maintenance and operational standards will ensure retention of good water qualities and little need for major works. Hence, the monies available for pool can be largely devoted to enhancing and diversifying the other components of the venue.

Mirboo North:

The technical assessment of the existing Mirboo North Swimming Pool assets has concluded that the existing assets have reached the end of their effective life and need to be replaced. The technical assessment has also indicated that the Mirboo North Swimming Pool only continues to operate as a result of the high annual maintenance inputs and the comparatively short annual operating season. The report suggests that if the pool was required to operate all year, it would fail physically within a very short period of time. If scouring beneath the pool continues after heavy rain, it is also probable that the pool tank will one day break in half.

A full report on the assessment prepared by David Powick and Associates, a division of Brown Smart Consulting, has been provided to Council as part of Volume 1, the research findings. The key strategic concerns noted by the report are:

- The presence of the creek flowing under the pool and the fact that the site was once a dam is a cause for concern from a structural standpoint
- Tiling generally is old and in very poor condition throughout all three pools

- The condition of the pool tanks is of major concern as there is obvious evidence of structural instability and ongoing movement. The general trend with the pools is for the outside edges along the line of the creek flow to settle causing a widening crack in the pool centre line
- There is obvious evidence of water leaking from the pool structures above concourse and it would not be unreasonable therefore to say that the same or even a worse condition would exist below the concourse paving
- The pool design generates unsafe conditions the most notable being the presence of one deep end corner of the pool which could, if comparing it with the RLSSA guidelines, be considered unsafe. The rapid drop into deep water from a surrounding depth of 1.5 metres is inadequately marked and to someone new to the pool, quite unexpected
- In the learner's pool, there are signs of water leakage above concourse level and this would therefore be leaking back and down below the concourse as well
- The intermediate and toddler pool tiling is in poor condition and there is evidence of ongoing structure movement where the individual sections of the pool are moving in relation to each
- While previous tests have suggested that the pipe work is sound, the amount of water leaking from the facilities suggests that a combination of pipe work leaks and tile and pool tank cracking is causing the leakage. Hence, proper sealing and replacement tiling of the pools is unlikely to resolve leakage
- The water pumping and treatment capacity of the plant is approximately half of that required although this is probably offset by a light bathing load. The lack of thrust blocks allows the pipes to disconnect from the pool tanks if they become subject to displacement through ground movement or are pressure tested
- The outdated condition of the service buildings means that their replacement rather than upgrading would be more effective and economical.

Further initial assessments by David Powick and Associates/Brown Consulting have indicated that there would almost certainly be a need to provide some form of large box culvert under the pools to let the creek go through, and that as a consequence, the pools would be elevated, partly on piers and partly on the box culvert. This would lift the concourses approximately 2 metres above the present level, with these being suspended between pools and back to solid ground along the side with imported fill required to restore landscape.

In addition, David Powick and Associates determined that it would be necessary to provide some form of swale or open drain around the pools to handle storm surcharge in the event of full or partial blockage of the box culvert from debris against the protective grating that would be needed to exclude people and animals.

Brown Consulting have indicated that it would be very hard to accurately estimate the cost of such works but in broad terms it was concluded that this preparatory work could cost in excess of \$3m. but that this cannot be further resolved unless a preliminary design is undertaken to allow the potential costs be more accurately assessed. This is *before* the construction of new or replacement pools.

Overall, the technical report concluded that spending more money on the venue, perhaps even on minor repair items, would be wasteful. The report stated:

“The pool is in a delightful setting but the site is structurally unsatisfactory. The ongoing deterioration of the pool structures is of concern and we would warn against spending large sums on cosmetic improvements to the pools unless major structural stabilisation was carried out on them and the creek diversion was better managed.

We note that the cost of doing this structural work is high and most likely not justified.

There may be a basis to contemplate constructing new pools on the side of the slope to get away from the creek but the steepness of the slope initiates structural costs and would make access within the layout difficult.

... the amenities are poor and parking is worse. Also, the location of the site renders it unsuitable for use on total fire ban days.

We left the site disappointed because it is in an attractive setting and we would have liked to recommend retaining it but the structural issues will most likely cause the cost of retention and upgrading to be not viable as making the site sound and improving the diversion of the creek would cost more than developing a complete new facility on a more suitable site.

While we recognise the history of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool, the reality is that the site is unsuitable for reinforced concrete pools. In addition, a lack of reasonable parking facilities and very poor access for people with disabilities leads us to say that we see no long term future for this facility. It would be unwise and impractical to invest large sums of money repairing the pools as that money would be wasted unless the site instability issues were addressed”.

2.4 The Leisure Involvement and Provision Trends

The leisure involvement and provision trends discussed in Chapter 3 of Volume 1 of this report highlighted a number of key trends that should be reflected in any pool redevelopment works in Korumburra or Mirboo North. Key amongst these trends were:

- Changed leisure interests and activities by Australians. Unless redeveloped provision in Korumburra and Mirboo North reflects the changed leisure interest of Australians, an increasingly marginal group of people will use the facilities while the majority of the community will not benefit from the investment
- Quality and safety must be substantially improved to attract use
- All year use must be provided for wherever possible
- Single-purpose provision must be avoided and co-location of a range of related facilities, programs and services should be pursued as a means of saving on the duplication of infrastructure, achieving economies of scale, encouraging “cross-pollination” of recreation, health and wellbeing activities, and raising the awareness of the benefits of aquatics
- People should not have to make a conscious decision to visit the community pool: rather, it should be something they pass by on a daily basis and which they can use –or at least use the affiliated facilities and services- for a wide variety of activities and programs
- Aquatics provision must be provided as part of a community facilities, programs and services *hub*, not as a stand-alone, single-purpose venue. As with modern shopping centres, a diversity of offerings and comparative products and pricing should be used to attract visits. Thus, it may be that Council and privately-operated services are provided together, each with its own market “edge” so as to complement rather than compete with the other
- Pursuit of partnerships. Council and the community should not provide facilities, programs or services when there are others willing and able to do so, and to do it more effectively
- Programming and service must be at the core of what is offered, with managers focusing on identifying and providing programs that are targeted at key groups in the community rather than ensuring they provide a well-maintained physical facility
- Long hours of opening. No business can effectively service the needs of the community if it is not available for most of the time. Rather, the hours and months of opening must be long, with if at all possible, provision being made on an all-year basis
- Cold water pools should be avoided for all but the early morning “ice breakers”. For many in the community they create *dis*benefits rather than benefits while the majority of the community will avoid them. Similarly, cold foyers, toilets and especially change rooms deter use, and

- Social settings are critical. If users cannot socialise, or if the community cannot use a venue as a social meeting point, many will not visit.

None of the responses to these changes needs to occur quickly or at once. In fact, change as evolution and through a process of learning, improvement and facilities consolidation is far more effective than a reflex response to a short-term fad -that all too often soon falls by the wayside when its weaknesses are realised. Rather, as old facilities decline, replacement should pursue co-location opportunities. Similarly, when *other* new initiatives are considered for the town, the wasteful past model of stand-alone provision should be rejected and, at the very least, an assessment should be made of the potentials and benefits that could flow from co-location and sharing.

It is not difficult to imagine the benefits of seniors, scouts or a doctor's practice co-located with a pool: in Mildura, the library and pool share a common venue; in West Tamar, Tasmania, the local medical practice and pharmacy share space with the community centre. In Brimbank City Council, doctors and leisure centre managers work together with clients to develop referral and fitness programs for their shared clients.

2.5 The Community Consultations

As detailed in Chapter 4 of Volume 1 of this report, the community consultations identified a wide-ranging mix of views regarding the future of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools. These are summarised below.

Korumburra:

The following is a summary of the key issues identified through the community consultations in Korumburra:

- Undertake works to replace existing user support facilities with new, modern equipment, including renovation of the toilet/change facilities, heated showers, provision of pool deck showers, lockers, improved accessibility and disability access within buildings, repainting etc
- Restructure internal areas of the buildings to free up space for eg: multi-purpose activities, programs, social activities/events, fitness gym
- Formally integrate the indoor pool into the complex
- Upgrade the condition of the pool (tiles, guttering, rails) and the solar heating
- Restructure the entrance precinct to achieve vehicle and pedestrian separation, improved access, improved visual presentation, and improved parking and access for people with disabilities
- Restructure the front entrance to the venue to provide an attractive, enclosed, integrated entrance and management area, indoor/outdoor cafe facilities and social spaces
- Extend the pool grounds to enable provision of a range of outdoor social and low-impact sporting activities including more shade, seating, barbecues, volleyball, table tennis etc. Undertake longer term restructuring of the adjoining park to permit a permanent extension
- Define different user and activity zones in the pool grounds
- Provide an attractive, modern water play area with appropriate shade, seating and support facilities, parents' space, sand pit
- Upgrade and improve shade and weather shelters for casual and formal user groups (schools, clubs etc) and provide more seating, tables
- Redevelop (and consider extending) the upstairs club room (and provide a lift and toilets) to support a wider mix of programmed and social uses, and
- Review strategies for reducing noise and traffic impacts on surrounding residents.

A range of important management and programming initiatives were also recommended through the consultations and these are listed in Chapter 4 (Volume 1). The restructuring proposals above have been designed to allow for action on these.

Overall, the consultations identified quite a high level of satisfaction with the Korumburra Swimming Pool but a low level of satisfaction with the services infrastructure, the

management and programming. Action on these latter items will be essential if the full gains of the redevelopment are to be achieved. One particular item that warrants stressing is action to incorporate the operation and programming of the small indoor pool into the operations of the overall centre. Combined with indoor social and dry programming spaces, such an initiative would radically transform the contribution that the overall venue makes to community life and community health and wellbeing on an all-year basis.

Mirboo North:

The issues identified through the community consultations in Mirboo North identified a wide-ranging mix of views regarding the future of the pool. These are summarised below:

- Undertake a wide array of actions to enhance the existing services and infrastructure including upgrading the toilet/change facilities; improving user areas with more tables, seats, shade; repairing access ladders into the pool; repainting the buildings and repairing roofs; upgrade car parking; upgrading internals paths and rails; reduce the shade over the toddlers' pool but provide more shade elsewhere (including for pool staff), and higher maintenance of the grounds and removal of snakes, spiders etc
- Retain the venue as is but repair and upgrade the pools; repair in-pool tiles and cracks; provide lane ropes, flags and starting blocks for carnivals; upgrade the water treatment plant to cope with water volume that needs to be treated;
- Replace the existing pools with new facilities but otherwise retain the venue as is
- Add a range of additional facilities that augment the existing resources. These included aquatic and non-aquatic facilities such as a variety of water play features such as water slides, spas, saunas, water play, and non-aquatic sports and social facilities including a cafe, beach volleyball, basketball, a sand pit
- Retain the venue but initiate action to heat the pools, enclose the main pool to make it an all year venue or to add a new indoor pool, while also adding a range of other non-aquatic facilities such as social areas, a fitness gym, activity areas/meeting rooms, and small commercial facilities eg: cafe, small laundromat
- Take action on management issues such as hours and season of opening, programming and events, food quality and fees for use.

With regard to programming, there were numerous calls for the venue to offer a wide range of programs, with these designed to cater for young children, teenagers, families and in particular, health and wellbeing programs for the aged.

What is significant about the Mirboo North consultation findings is that apart from the small number of people who raised the issue of replacing the pools (as in the second dot point above), there was little if any recognition, awareness or acknowledgement of the dire condition of the assets, despite the previous assessments which have been carried out. Rather, there appeared to be a belief that if Council put in sufficient resources to repair the pools, they would eventually be brought up to a condition where the venue could go back to doing what it used to do and would once again attract substantial levels of use from across the community. However, changes in the make-up of the community, a more educated and sophisticated community, a dramatic increase in the leisure resources available elsewhere, and the changing leisure interests of the community mean that in its current form, the Mirboo North Swimming Pool *cannot ever do what it needs to do* for a modern community. Simply repairing the pool *as is* or replacing like with like will not resolve this issue. Certainly, the pool attracts high numbers of users on a few special and very hot days each summer: but along with all other outdoor, cold water pools, it no longer attracts users in the tens of thousands. This is because all those who previously relied on the pool for cheap, daily, social activities and entertainment, now have dozens of other things to pursue, and essentially no provision is made for these at outdoor pools. The list of ideas for new facilities and activities identified in particular, by Mirboo North students, endorses this view. Further, families are smaller, the community is wealthier and mobility is far higher. The pool no longer meets the needs of many in the community because it *no longer does what it used to do*.

Further to the above, for the growing hundreds in the community who are in their 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and 100s, for those who have disabilities, for those who are living in the community instead of in institutions and for those who benefit from daily exercise and need carer management, an outdoor cold water pool simply *cannot ever do what it needs to do*. For these people, a pool needs to provide opportunities for warm water therapy; to have hoist and ramp access; to have warm, welcoming change rooms, and to have easy vehicle or flat pathway access. A cold water outdoor pool in an attractive social setting is excellent for the young and the fit. But it is of little value and, in fact, *very often bad for very* young children, the aged, the frail and those with disabilities. Unfortunately, however, the demographic evidence suggests that Mirboo North and its surrounding district is unlikely to have a sufficiently large population to generate the use levels that would make such provision operationally viable, even if the *capital* cost could be covered.

Further to the above, the limited evidence that exists suggests that traditional outdoor cold water pools (and possibly even indoor pools) have little attraction to or relevance to the many non-Anglo Saxon, non-Australian born members of our communities. While there are few such residents in Mirboo North, provision of facilities and programs that essentially exclude them will not build a creative, cooperative, happy and healthy community.

The technical assessment of the venue (as summarised in section 2.3 above) has made it clear that it will never be possible to repair the pool to its original condition. If the venue is to effectively meet community needs, significant changes will therefore need to be made.

None of this is to deny that it would be beneficial for many members of the community and for students, competitive swimmers, healthy lap swimmers, fitness supporters and schools to have an outdoor pool. As such, retention of such a pool is warranted although it should, ideally, be heated.

Yet a standard heated outdoor lap pool does not meet the requirements of the more vulnerable groups noted previously: very young children, those learning to swim, the aged, the frail, those with disabilities and potentially, non-Anglo Saxon minorities in the community. These groups need a very different type of pool *and other non-pool resources*. They need very different and far more specialised support facilities: far warmer water; water of various depths (not just that suitable for swimming laps or competing); they need ramps; hoists; special change rooms (with tables, room for carers, lockers, showers); special vehicle access and after-program social areas. They need program rooms, social areas and other types of recreation opportunities that do not rely on them either wanting to swim or being able to swim. And perhaps more than anything else, *they need attractive, interesting programs* that encourage use so that the benefits that are on offer are achieved. Elements of this mix of provision –and in particular, the heated program/health pool-- has now been planned as an extension to Splash, the indoor venue in Leongatha. As such, it is unlikely that an indoor program pool could be justified in Mirboo North, although dry program, social and activity spaces certainly could be. That said, it will be critical for Council to develop a transport strategy that ensures easy access to the upgraded venue if it is to effectively service key needs across the whole Shire.

The changed circumstances and community needs means that what is eventually provided in Mirboo North is likely to be quite different to what is presently offered. It also means that if what is presently available is retained and repairs are continued to keep it operational, it will go on using funds that could be more effectively applied elsewhere and the venue will not meet many of the needs that something different could meet. Similarly, if the existing pool is simply replaced by a modern, quality version of the old pool, maintenance costs will fall dramatically, the attractive setting will be retained but yet again, largely the same markets will continue to be served.

In a sense then, the extremely poor condition of the existing facilities offers the opportunity to make a significant change and to achieve a set of facilities, programs and services that are better, more appropriate, and more effective and that will enhance the quality of life in the Mirboo North community for many years to come.

A new approach to what is provided could see a new “aquatics plus” venue change the role of aquatic facilities in the town and see the venue act as a medium for meeting wider community planning objectives. This could be achieved through either of a change to the existing venue and its components or by developing a totally new facility elsewhere in the town. This latter option is far preferable given the projected \$3m. plus cost of stabilising the existing site (as discussed in section 2.3 above) and could occur somewhere central where it was seen as

“logical” to co-locate with other existing but quite different community facilities and services in order to create a “community activities hub”.

2.6 Benchmarking

Baw Baw and Wellington Shire Councils were chosen for benchmarking purposes as each of the Shires has undertaken a capital works program to provide significant improvements to a number of their outdoor aquatic facilities in recent years. Baw Baw Shire Pools researched included Drouin and Trafalgar Outdoor Pool whilst at Wellington Shire the nominated pools were Maffra and Yarram Outdoor Pools. The key findings of the benchmarking research include:

- The Mirboo North and Korumburra communities use their venues significantly more frequently than those pools researched and the CERM medium. Both pools therefore warrant consideration in terms of redevelopment to continue providing a diverse mix of opportunities for the community
- Potentially significant usage opportunities and outcomes are likely which supports the redevelopment of both pools
- Providing the same mix of elements and opportunities as currently provided will likely have an initial impact on participation but will not provide for the researched needs of the communities long term, and
- The way the facilities are planned, managed, programmed, marketed and delivered will need to be changed in order to meet the community’s needs and aspirations long term.

3. Design Brief Principles

In the light of the foregoing discussion of policy and philosophical issues, trends and the benchmarking of other recent redevelopment initiatives in Victoria, the following principles have been prepared to guide the scope of redeveloped aquatics venues in Korumburra and Mirboo North.

1. *Reflecting community need.* All initiatives should reflect the assessed short and long term needs and aspirations of the Korumburra and Mirboo North communities
2. *Reflecting the current and projected demographics of the service catchment.* Any new or redeveloped aquatic facilities, programs and services in Mirboo North should reflect the short and long term demographic characteristics of the population and the implications of these characteristics to need
The 2011 Census indicated that Mirboo North and the surrounding district had just under 2,300 residents. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the population in Mirboo North is ageing while still retaining a substantial and strong youth and family population. Thus all age groups and people of all abilities need to be catered for. Korumburra is reported to have a similar age structure but is substantially larger, with the town and surrounding district having 4,373 residents at the 2011 census
3. *Ensuring diversity of opportunity.* Provision should ensure that a diversity of facility, program and service opportunities is made available for people of differing ages, abilities, needs, cultural backgrounds and capacities in the two communities and for the opportunities to have leisure, health, wellbeing and social outcomes
4. *Optimising opportunities for co-location and integration with other community- focused facilities and services.* Any redeveloped provision should facilitate the co- location of an array of community, and where appropriate, commercial, facilities, programs and services
5. *Contributing to social development and personal wellbeing* through a range of settings, programs and services
6. *Contributing to the quality of the built environment.* The design of any redeveloped provision should protect quality assets, be appropriate to the character of Korumburra and Mirboo North and contribute to the quality of the built environment

7. *Ensuring access for all.* Any redeveloped provision should be designed, programmed and managed so that it is physically accessible to people of all abilities, so that it offers a diversity of competitive, non-competitive, social, casual and community opportunities for participation by people of all abilities, and so that its pricing structures do not disadvantage any individual or group in the community. Neither venue offers this at present
8. *Ensuring design flexibility.* The design of any redeveloped venue should make provision for future additions to the mix of spaces and facilities
9. *Optimising operational and financial viability.* Any redeveloped provision should offer a mix of facilities, programs and services which are sustainable and which do not put undue pressures on Council's capacity to meet its other commitments across the Shire
10. *Contributing to job creation and economic growth* in South Gippsland Shire. Any new or redeveloped provision should strengthen the economic and social wellbeing of Korumburra, Mirboo North and the South Gippsland Shire, as was achieved through Splash in Leongatha, and
11. *Minimising resource use and environmental impacts.* Any redeveloped provision should use strategies that ensure the use of energy and other resources is minimised, recycling is optimised and environmental impacts are reduced.

It should be noted that a number of the items and issues that have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs regarding the philosophical basis for a design brief and the practical issues to be addressed are beyond the scope of the present study. In particular, management, marketing and programming fall into this category and as such, they have not been addressed in detail in this report. Despite this, they will need to be reviewed and deemed appropriate, revised as part of any development as they are critical to the long term success of any new initiatives. Shortcomings in the manner in which they are currently addressed, particularly, in terms of programming, mean that even the existing facilities are not achieving the optimum possible service delivery to the community. As such, they are reviewed and a number of recommendations are made at the end of this volume.

4. The Recommended Actions, Designs and Costs

In light of the foregoing, the following sections provide a design brief, indicative designs and a costed, prioritised work program for each of the Mirboo North and Korumburra Swimming Pools.

4.1 Korumburra Swimming Pool

4.1.1 Korumburra Design Brief

The mix of initiatives recommended for action at Korumburra Swimming Pool is:

1. Undertake immediate, medium term and long term pool and plant repairs and maintenance works as identified by the technical review to ensure the effective continued operation of the venue
2. Redevelop the interior of the change facilities in the two storey building and install high quality, compact, heated facilities with hot showers and secure spaces to meet the needs of the whole venue. Provide pool deck showers as part of this
3. Integrate the indoor heated pool fully with the facilities and services for the outdoor pool
4. Redevelop the present women's change facilities into a multi-user program room linked to outdoor children's play, water play, shade, seating and table facilities
5. Revise parking and especially disabled parking for the pool
6. Redevelop the entrance to exclude cars, provide safe paths and open up the venue to the street

7. Expand the overall site for programming purposes in the short term and consider the restructuring of surrounding parkland to ensure there is sufficient space to meet expansion needs in the longer term
8. Redevelop the venue entrance by linking the two main buildings with a new enclosed foyer/ management and cafe area, with the cafe serving both into the pool and outdoors of the pool
9. Install permanent shade / weather shelters / noise barriers along the western fence of the pool grounds to provide a protected area for school groups and competitor groups
10. Provide more shade structures, seats, benches and tables throughout the venue
11. Provide designated outdoor areas for social activities and informal sports such as beach volleyball, basketball, table tennis etc
12. Install security lockers at a prominent location for user valuables, and
13. Provide lane rope fixing points for across-pool lanes in the wider section of the pool, and
14. Upgrade the solar heating of the pools.

4.1.2 Korumburra: Design

An overall design concept has been prepared for the Korumburra Swimming Pool that reflects the above design brief. This is shown below.

The key elements of the design are:

1. Linking the two main service buildings with a new undercover cafe area serving both pool users and the wider community
2. Integration of the indoor pool change and service facilities with those for the outdoor pool in the lower floor of the main building
3. Converting the present administration/women's change building into a program room which can still be used as a change facility during carnivals etc
4. Providing user and community access to the indoor pool via a new covered walkway to eliminate pedestrian conflicts with vehicular traffic
5. Provision of a small interactive water play area adjacent to the toddler's pool
6. Provision of permanent undercover viewing areas for carnivals and events, and
7. Extension of the pool grounds into the parklands.

4.1.3 Korumburra: Costed Priorities for Action

A detailed cost chart for the proposed works and other possible initiatives at Korumburra Swimming Pool has been prepared by Plan Cost and has been provided to Council. The Table following has been prepared on the basis of the findings of the research conducted in the course of this study, including the technical review, the Plan Cost costings, and information on Council's budget capacities to prepare a set of recommendations for action at the Korumburra Swimming Pool. These are listed in three development phases, these being:

1. Essential short term works
2. Required medium term actions, and
3. Long term aspirational actions.



Essential Short Term Works:	\$
Undertake pool plant and decking remediation and replacement works as per technical report (Medium, High)	100,000
Undertake change room refurbishment to establish new male, female and access for all change facilities in the area occupied by the male change. Integrate the service facilities for both the indoor and outdoor pools and provide pool deck showers as part of this process	450,000
Revise pedestrian circulation external to buildings to separate pedestrian and road traffic and improve safety	100,000
Install venue entry canopies and an internal covered walkway link to the indoor pool	130,000
Install a non-intrusive public address system	Allow 20,000
Extend the fence on the north-eastern corner of the pool compound for a trail period and provide assisting funds for the implementation of a range of programs during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons. Monitor the outcomes and assess the opportunities for permanent changes and the provision of areas for social activities and informal sports such as beach volleyball, basketball, table tennis etc. As part of these programming initiatives apply and evaluate the impact of 2-3 special "no fee" program days	Allow \$50,000
Provide more shade structures, seats, benches and tables throughout the venue	Allow \$50,000
Total	\$900,000.00
Required Medium Term Actions:	\$
New filtration system, reticulation	650,000
Provision of redeveloped cafe and fitout. Redevelop the venue entrance by linking the two main buildings with a new enclosed foyer/ management and cafe area, with the cafe serving both into the pool and outdoors of the pool	270,000
Refurbish and redevelop the former women's change and upstairs swimming club room as dry program space	160,000
Roofing structures/ weather shelters / noise barriers along the western fence of the pool grounds to provide a protected for outdoor viewing area for school and competitor groups	80,000
Total	1,160,000
Long Term Aspirational Actions:	\$
Landscaping and paving to better integrate pool complex and adjoining parkland	100,000
New ramp to multi-purpose room from parkland level	30,000
Spas/jacuzzi	210,000
Indoor pool refurbishment	450,000
External services incl. rainwater harvesting	30,000
Total Building Cost	820,000

Table 1: Costed priorities for action, Korumburra Swimming Pool

It is stressed that the costs provided in the above table are *net capital costs only* and that the following exclusions will need to be factored in to final development costs. Guidance as to the extent of most of these costs is provided in the Plan Cost document provided to Council:

Exclusions

- Signage

- Preliminaries, fees, disbursements, contingencies
- Cost escalation as a result of staged action
- Rock excavation
- Contaminated materials removal
- IT and Communications
- Additional costs due to Construction Management or Negotiated Contracts
- Furniture, furnishings and equipment
- Car parking upgrading
- Supply Authority charges and infrastructure upgrades
- Design and contract contingencies
- ESD allowances
- GST.

4.2 Mirboo North Swimming Pool

4.2.1 Mirboo North Design Brief

In the light of the research undertaken for the present study, the mix of initiatives recommended for action at Mirboo North Swimming Pool is:

1. Undertake minor remedial /maintenance and safety works at the existing venue as identified by the technical assessment to keep the pool in an operational condition while a replacement strategy is implemented
2. Construct a new outdoor heated 25 metre pool at an alternate site. This would replace the existing main pool. Although it would be ideal if a new pool offered 8 or 10 lanes so that regional short course competitions could be accommodated, the reality of user needs indicate that a facility of no more than 6 lanes (the number of lanes at Korumburra) should be provided. New amenities and services including universal access and support facilities would be provided as part of this element of provision
3. Construct a new cafe capable of serving venue users and members of the general community external to the venue
4. Construct indoor multi-purpose program rooms (at least two, or one with 2-3 operable walls) with club and community group storage and display space. Small kitchenettes would be provided with these spaces OR co-locate the new venue with an existing community asset that provides these resources
5. Construct a small outdoor water play park including small water slides
6. Construct a range of dry outdoor active play and social facilities appropriate to different age groups eg: playgrounds, sandpit, beach volleyball
7. Construct outdoor social, picnic, barbeque facilities and lawn areas
8. Provide shade cover for all fixed outdoor facilities
9. Install high quality access paths appropriate to use by the aged and people with disabilities
10. Provide quality and safe car and bicycle parking, and
11. Provide a variety of other elements to diversify user attractions eg: spas, jacuzzi.

4.2.2 Mirboo North: Design

It was originally intended to prepare several design options for the Mirboo North Swimming Pool with these covering first, the existing pool site, and second, a generic alternate/flat site – which could be built at some other site that is identified in Mirboo North.

However, the negative technical assessment of the existing pool and the assessment of the nature and cost of the works that would be needed to redevelop the existing site before any new facility could be built (ie: upward of \$3 m.), has led to the conclusion that the present site should not be considered for redevelopment. That said, it has also been realised that were that existing site to be restored to a condition capable of accommodating a modern aquatic

facility or were a site up the slope from the existing pool to be excavated to accommodate a new venue, the generic design could be applied to that site just as readily as it could be built elsewhere.

A design that was varied to accommodate the existing pool site or an up-slope site would clearly be a compromise and should therefore, not be considered.

In the light of the above, the proposed generic design is shown below. It shows:

1. An outdoor 25 metre 6 lane pool for laps, competition, training, coaching and learn to swim
2. A small water play pool
3. Outdoor social areas for play, sand pit, beach volleyball, basketball etc
4. Outdoor social areas for barbeques etc
5. A small cafe serving both users and the wider community, and
6. Two multi-purpose rooms (the need for which would be dependent on whether co-location with other facilities was pursued).

The layout has been designed to allow for the later addition of other public, not-for-profit or commercial facilities as part of the project.

4.2.3 Mirboo North: Costed Priorities for Action

A detailed cost chart for the proposed works for a generic Mirboo North Swimming Pool has been prepared by Plan Cost and has been provided to Council. The Table following has been prepared on the basis of the findings of the research conducted in the course of this study, and the Plan Cost costings, to prepare a set of recommendations for action re a new aquatics and community venue in Mirboo North. As with the Korumburra Swimming Pool, these are listed in three development phases, these being:

1. Essential short term works
2. Required medium term actions, and
3. Long term aspirational actions.

As for Korumburra, the costs provided above are net capital costs only. Hence, the following exclusions will need to be factored into final development costs. Guidance as to the extent of most of these costs is provided in the Plan Cost document provided to Council:

Exclusions

- Site establishment costs
- Signage
- Preliminaries, fees, disbursements, contingencies
- Cost escalation as a result of staged action
- Rock excavation
- Asbestos removal
- IT and Communications
- Additional costs due to Construction Management or Negotiated Contracts
- Furniture, furnishings and equipment
- Cafe fitout
- Car parking upgrading
- Supply Authority charges and infrastructure upgrades
- Design and contract contingencies
- ESD allowances
- GST

The table indicates that the total “core” net capital cost of the “essential short term works” is above Council’s indicated current capital cost allocation of \$1.95 m.). However, unless the indicated items are provided, the development will not be functional. As such Council will need to review its funding schedules or initiate action on one or more of the additional funding sources discussed in section 5 of this report.

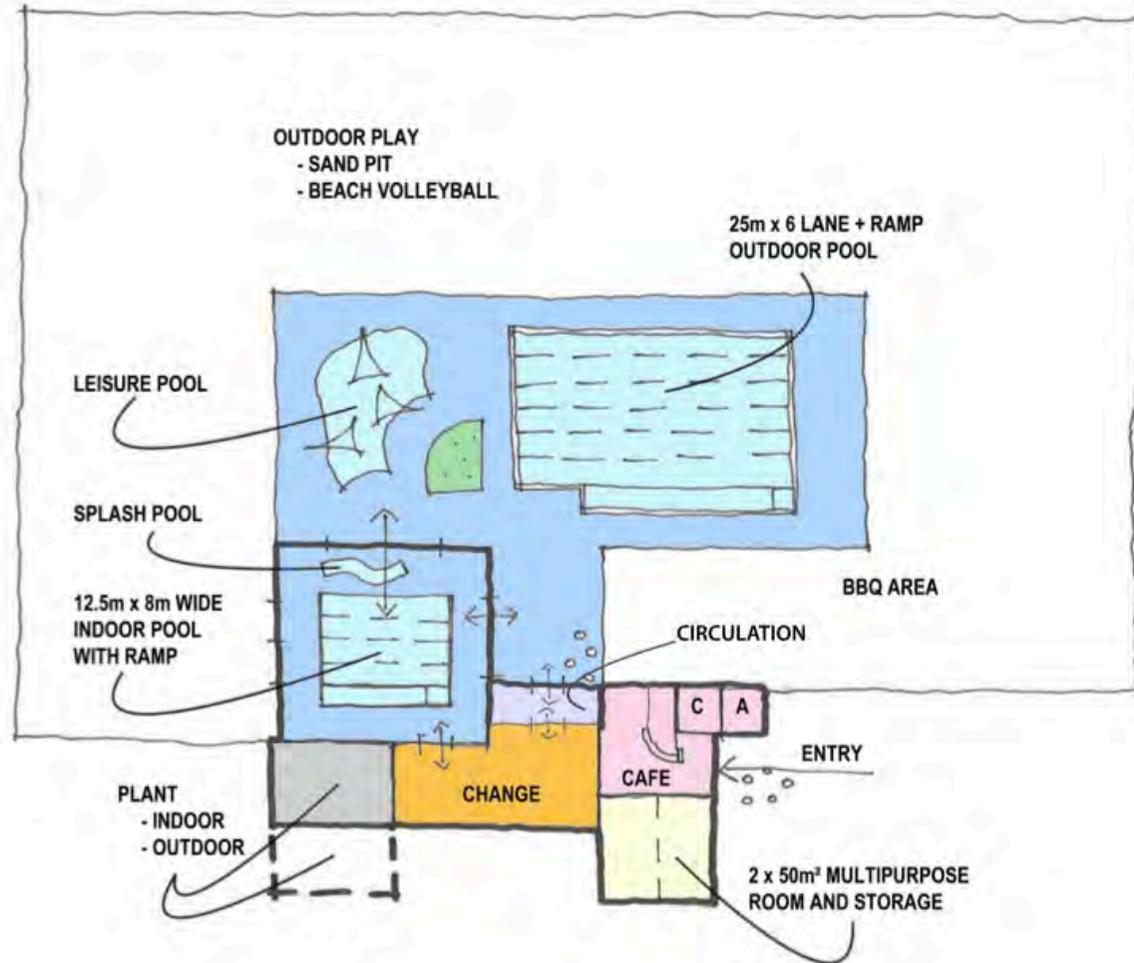
Essential Short Term Works:	\$
Undertake short term plant repairs and replacement works as detailed in the technical assessment report	9,000
Construct a new outdoor pool of 25 m. x 6 lanes	1,500,000
Provide new change rooms and toilets	420,000
Cafe, administration, foyer, cafe fitout (total area 70 sq. m.)	210,000
Plant rooms	110,000
Car parking: site specific	
Total	2,249,000
Required Medium Term Actions:	\$
Provide an outdoor leisure pool	500,000
Provide dry program multi-purpose rooms & storage OR integrate/co-locate with existing similar facilities	230,000
Entry canopies and covered walkways	35,000
Outdoor play, landscaping, paving	500,000
External services incl. rainwater harvesting	300,000
Total	1,565,000
Long Term Aspirational Actions:	\$
Spas/jacuzzi	210,000
Total	210,000

Table 2: Costed priorities for action, Mirboo North Swimming Pool

4.2.4 Siting Considerations in Mirboo North

Determination of a final site for the redevelopment / upgrading or replacement of the existing Mirboo North Swimming Pool is beyond the scope of the present report. However, a number of possible sites are listed below, together with comment on their attributes. The existing site has been included in the listing but if this site was to be used, the first program of works would have to encompass the removal of the existing pool, site excavation and stabilisation, installation of a full underground drainage system, and completion of rock fill. Given the assessed cost of these works at \$3 m. plus, **it is recommended that** this course of action is not pursued. Other sites may also warrant consideration.

The brief analysis of optional Mirboo North sites clearly favours a town centre location and this is far superior if new or redevelopment program was to take a community development and wellbeing focus. The recreation reserve location would generate a number of disbenefits as would a school location.



Possible Site	Attributes	Shortcomings
Present location	Retains existing venue, site size and attractive setting qualities	This would require removal of the existing pool, excavation of the site and underground culvert drainage before a new pool could be built. Further excavations would be needed to provide flat land for dry facilities and parking. The positioning of existing facilities would compromise new designs
Present general location but moving pool(s) uphill from the present drainage line, either within the existing grounds and/or onto the road, car park and fire brigade training track area	Retains access to present attractive site which is well known by the community OR Allows a fresh start at a new location and avoids very costly replacement of assets on a difficult site	Existing pool would be abandoned and perhaps, drained and/or filled to be used for some other purpose Site uphill from existing pool and the entrance/ change facilities would need excavation to create a level site of 5-6,000 sq. m. for new pools, other facilities and car parking Entrance, change and other amenities would need to be rebuilt
Parkland in the centre of town, in association with existing and future community facilities	A central, flat site with good access and reduced construction costs Has a range of existing facilities and community uses to which a new pool could link In keeping with modern community hub and co-location trends	Would take up some parkland May require use of parkland for some parking Parking may contribute to town centre traffic congestion
Sports reserve	Comparatively flat land Links possible with other sporting facilities	Not well located re town centre Safety issues re road and pedestrian access Very limited synergies between field sports and aquatic/ community hubs. Sport connection will deter a number of user categories Not in keeping with provision trends Limited parking capacity
Primary/Secondary school	Large user market on site	May not be sufficient space at an accessible location Non-Council land owner Potential traffic and parking issues Position on main road at entry to town centre could generate safety and traffic issues Security issue re school assets Less accessible to all non-student users

Table 3: Siting options assessment, Mirboo North

It is acknowledged that further sites may exist that warrant evaluation and that a further analysis of costs and planning issues would need to be undertaken before a final decision was made on this issue. However, from an overall perspective, it would appear that the town centre location would be more cost effective and achieve more in terms of community health, support, and development as well as a range of broader Council initiatives from a planning and quality of life perspective.

Using another location for a new pool does not mean that the existing site needs to be lost. While the existing pools were safe and still able to be used, the venue could continue to be

used and other stages of the recommended actions would be initiated elsewhere. However, once a replacement pool was built or once the existing pools had to be closed or abandoned, the facilities could perhaps be used as another form of skate park or the site could be developed as a day camp for education programs; a camp site for hikers and cycling groups; a native plant garden and fernery; as a community gardens; as a men's shed; as an outdoor art show/sculpture park and arboretum, or for a wide range of other community activities that could be researched with the community. Any of these options would ensure that the site heritage would be retained even if the uses changed. That said, Council may well determine that the site should be sold to help fund the replacement facilities.

In the light of the above **it is recommended that** Council initiates a program of research to identify a site for a new swimming pool venue in Mirboo North with sites being assessed in terms of ownership, size, degree of flatness, co-location and co-development opportunities and proximity to the centre of the town.

5. Funding Sources and Strategies

Funds are available from a number of sources to help fund the redevelopment of the swimming pools in Korumburra and Mirboo North. These are:

1. South Gippsland Shire Council
2. Victorian State government
3. Federal government
4. Benevolent trusts
5. Community clubs and groups
6. The general community.

Whatever is raised from other sources, **Council** will always be seen as a major if not *the* major funding source for the redevelopment of the two pools. This is because they are Council-owned assets, because Council has acknowledged its commitment to and responsibility for the facilities through its past and on going funding support. Further, Council's policy document, "Strategic Direction for Aquatic Facilities in South Gippsland", (adopted February 2012), states that "the Council (subject to trigger points) would maintain its operational, maintenance and capital investment in all Council outdoor pools across the Shire".

As a means of reducing the impact on all ratepayers, a number of Councils have used differential rating to raise additional income from those sections of the overall community that would benefit most from the projects. This may well warrant consideration as research conducted by the authors on past projects suggests that quite substantial amounts could be generated.

Council can also pursue substantial funding assistance through the **State government** and this can come from a mix of sources depending on the mix of what is provided for provision. The most obvious of the State government sources is the Community Facility Funding Program of the Department of Planning and Community Development. The main funding categories are detailed in a dedicated government document, *2013/2014 Community Facility Funding Program Application Guidelines*, that can be accessed at http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/111194/7078-DPCD-Sport-and-Recreation_Brochure-WEB2.pdf

The funding categories are:

1. *Better Pools* (applying to "aquatic leisure centres") that allocates up to \$3 m. for a project. For South Gippsland Shire, the funding would be allocated on a \$1: \$1 ratio. While this is better than the \$1:\$3 ratio that applies to metropolitan Councils, it is discriminatory as the lower ratio does not adequately reflect the reduced funding capacity of rural Councils. The assessment criteria for this funding category would make it very difficult for Council to win a grant if it was do no more than replace the existing facilities at either pool (see section 6.3 of the government document, "Better Pools and Major Facilities Assessment Criteria")

2. *Major facilities* (which are multi-user sporting venues that do not include pools) that can allocate up to \$650,000 for a project. Again, government funds must be matched on a \$1: \$1 ratio
3. *Seasonal pools*. This grant category has the objective of encouraging “local government’s ability to renew and modernise small aquatic leisure facilities in small regional and rural towns...where access to indoor aquatic centres is significantly limited”, and to provide “a greater range of aquatic leisure opportunities, greater sustainability and accessibility” (Guidelines, p. 15) which can allocate up to \$200,000 for a project on a \$2: \$1 ratio in favour of rural Councils, with consideration being given to Councils claiming as much as 25 percent of the total costs as in-kind expenses, provided they underwrite that contribution. It may well be possible for community groups in Korumburra and Mirboo North to make a substantial in-kind contribution
4. *Minor facilities*: this funding category predominantly supports the acquisition of support equipment, support spaces (eg: small meeting rooms) or the upgrading of non-compliant facilities. It has a maximum allocation of \$100,000 “in exceptional circumstances”. For rural Councils, the grant is made on a \$2:\$1 local ratio and again, up to 25 percent of the cost can be through in-kind contributions.

There is also a number of other State government grants and support services relating to community development, tourism, welfare, health, disability and indigenous services and these should be pursued once firm decisions are made as to the scope and components of any redevelopment.

One key source of funding for rural and regional Councils is the Regional Growth Fund of Regional Development Victoria. This is distributing \$ 1 billion across the State over an 8 year period. The agency website reports that South Gippsland Shire has been allocated \$2.5 m. from this fund although it does not indicate over what period or whether further allocations will be forthcoming. The Regional Growth Fund Application Guidelines available at

http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/67740/RGF_APPGUIDES_LGIP_D4.pdf

provide details as to the process of applying for these grants.

At the time of preparing this report the Federal government also operated a regional development funding program that warrants reviewing. South Gippsland Shire Council has already made applications to this program and could well seek funding assistance from it for the two projects that are the subject of this report.

In terms of wider Federal funding opportunities, a detailed web site listing federal government grants can be viewed at <http://grants.myregion.gov.au> This should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that potential sources of assistance are not overlooked.

There are hundreds of **benevolent trusts** in Australia and these warrant consideration as a source for financial assistance. Although no such trusts have been identified that serve the whole South Gippsland Shire or that serve the Korumburra district, the Mirboo North community has the advantage of having its own trust, the Mirboo North and District Community Foundation. There are also many other trusts that make grants for specific needs groups and projects across the whole State and these should be explored. These can be accessed through www.philanthropy.org.au

Since its formation in January 2010, the Mirboo North and District Community Foundation has committed \$216,000 to community grants and bushfire appeal funds. It warrants noting that the grants cover ongoing programs, special one-off events, and the purchase of equipment as well as capital works. Further, it would appear that the largest grant made over the initial two years was a sum of \$20,000 and the Foundation has made it clear that it sees a key responsibility being to grow its capital and support capacity and to not use its capital reserves. To achieve this, the Foundation has established the principle that it will only distribute what it earns beyond the annual CPI in any one year. As such, it cannot be expected that it would be able to fund a major component of the capital cost of a pool redevelopment.

While it is improbable that *any* benevolent trust would fund a major proportion of the redevelopment initiatives at either pool, if the beneficiaries are youth at risk, disadvantaged families, scouts/guides, education groups etc the funding opportunities are far greater.

In general, benevolent trusts favour funding the *last* step of a project rather than the *first* stages. In other words, they prefer to see their contributions *making things happen on the ground*, rather than adding to the resource pool that will eventually let a project commence. This has important implications for when trusts are approached and what for.

Community fundraising can be an even more important source of fundraising. However, the traditional “chook raffles” raise little and can actually cost more to run than they raise. They also tend to engender a feeling on the part of those buying tickets that they have “made a contribution” and as a consequence, repeat approaches for support attract less support. By comparison, the raffling of historic cars, homes renovated by local service clubs, and the use of fallow farmland (owned in one northern Victorian instance by an aging farmer) to raise and sell a crop, can raise substantial amounts. All have been used successfully in Australia.

Even more successful are community giving schemes. Under this approach, a community personality is invited to lead the fundraising effort through an incorporated not-for-profit association. That person uses his/her standing to invite say, 1, 5 or 10 others to pledge say, \$1,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000 a year (or \$20, \$100, or \$200) a week for 3 years to the project. In turn, these people ask others to pledge \$100, \$500, or \$1,000 a year over the same period. This process is continued as far as possible, so that eventually all community members are approached to become involved -even if some people can only pledge \$1 a week. One dollar a week still raises \$156 over three years -far more than the value of raffle tickets that could be sold to one person. Using this process, some \$660,000 was raised in Ararat, Victoria, in 6 weeks in the early 1990s while in the same period, Echuca, Victoria, residents raised \$1.3 m. toward a new indoor pool in 15 months.

An alternate or additional strategy that has also proven successful is the use of “gift catalogues”, as is often used for wedding presents. With this approach, a list of facility or equipment needs and their costs is published and residents, businesses, community groups with a specific service charter and other supporters are asked to either purchase or contribute to the purchase of the items. This strategy encouraged one resident in central Victoria to write a cheque for \$20,000 to ensure that a warm water program pool could be completed in her home town. A variant on this is to ask people to bequeath part of their estate to the development, although this of course, may take some time to come to fruition and these bequests might be more effectively directed to a body such as the Mirboo North and District Community Foundation.

A final fundraising strategy is to work with community service groups. These groups regularly raise money for special projects and if some of these can be elements of a pool redevelopment the effort will be well worthwhile. As indicated in Chapter 4 of Volume 1, the Korumburra Community Development and Action Inc. indicated a willingness to use its resources to bring together a number of other groups to assist with fundraising and other initiatives toward the redevelopment of the Korumburra Swimming Pool.

Each of the funding options outlined above should be evaluated to identify the best mix for the Forbes community. No one should be selected ahead of others as a mix can be used.

In the light of the above, **it is recommended that** Council commences a process to identify and initiate the most effective program of fundraising to assist with paying for a new pool complex in Mirboo North.

6. Management & Programming

A review of the management of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools was not a requirement of the present study. However, it is evident from a review of the general operation of the centres that the approach presently used at both venues is not delivering the optimal outcomes for the community. This is because the management of both has a focus on maintaining the effective operation of the assets, and not on delivering activities, programs and benefits to the community. This is not to deny that sound asset management is not important to success: it is. But having a sound functioning set of pool facilities and surrounds is only the *means* to the recreational end. A successful venue must also have a sound set of products and programs. As such, it is critical to the long term success and viability of both pools that the management changes from its current essentially passive engagement with the community to a far more proactive program-focused approach. Identifying such program opportunities was a requirement of the present study.

The attraction of a strong programming focus is that it can be short or long term, targeted at a myriad of individuals and groups in the community, it can be cheap or costly, and it can be “switched on” or “switched off” depending on demand. Bigger aquatic and leisure venues generally have permanent program staff, as is the case at Splash in Leongatha. However, this need not be the case at Korumburra or Mirboo North (at least initially), as *specialist sessional programmers can be shared across a number of venues and between Council and private providers.*

The community and stakeholder consultations reported in Chapter 4 (Volume 1) identified a wide range of program-focused activities that could or should be provided at one or both pools (and others in the Shire). Provision of some of these could be commenced immediately, using the existing resources: for instance, the lawn areas of both venues (and especially at Mirboo North) could be used for boot camp programs, after-school activities, sports team training and the like. The upstairs room at Korumburra and the permanent shelter area at Mirboo North could support drop-in activities for a range of groups. Both venues could serve as the base and meeting place for walking groups, mother’s clubs, cooking and photography activities and many more. In other instances, however, initiating programs will need the provision of new equipment and in some cases, new physical facilities.

Following is a list of programming suggestions drawn from the consultations reported in Chapter 4 of Volume 1.

“Special Olympics” activities for people with disabilities

Bocce

Movies

Social aquatic and non-aquatic sports (which can be run on an inter-town basis over a series of weeks in summer)

Water education and water safety certificates, lifesaving courses for teenagers

Water play

Beach volleyball

Entertainment

Movie nights

Tourist attractions: especially for walkers, cyclists

Birthday parties

Aquarobics

Personal fitness and training courses

Table tennis

Live music with local musicians

Social activities and “social clubs”/drop in activities for children, teens, parents, older adults

Cooking programs/events

Children’s activities: ball games, face painting, treasure hunts

Family activities at an indoor heated pool

At present (March 2013) it is not possible to say whether all of these and other programming suggestions should be provided or whether all would be successful, as it may be some years before some of the facilities are available to accommodate them. However, all should be reviewed and evaluated.

In the shorter term, Council should consider revising the pool management agreements at both venues for the 2013/14 season and require a greater programming effort—even if it has to provide a budget allowance to facilitate this. This would be a good start to a more proactive use of the resources for the benefit of the community.

In the light of the foregoing, **it is recommended that** Council Provides assisting funds for the implementation of a range of programs during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons, with consideration being given to running these on a cyclical basis across all outdoor pools. Monitor the outcomes. Assess the opportunities for provision of areas for social activities and informal

sports such as beach volleyball, basketball, table tennis etc. As part of these programming initiatives apply and evaluate the impact of 2-3 special “no fee” program days.

DRAFT

DEVELOPMENT OF MASTER PLANS FOR THE MIRBOO NORTH AND KORUMBURRA SWIMMING POOLS

RESEARCH FINDINGS

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Purpose and Scope

The Brief for the present study states that “the purpose is to develop master plans and indicative costs for the renovation of Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools”. Further, the master plans are intended to inform Council’s future capital investment in the two facilities.

A Council report, “Strategic Direction for Aquatic Facilities in South Gippsland”, was adopted by Council in February 2012. Following a significant community consultation program the final document determined that the Council (subject to trigger points) would maintain its operational, maintenance and capital investment in all Council outdoor pools across the Shire.

To guide future investment in the outdoor pools, the February 2012 report also determined that master plans were to be developed for all outdoor pools. Due to community interest, current attendance numbers and asset condition, Council agreed that the Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools should be given the highest priority for master plan preparation. This report, which is divided into two volumes, presents in Volume 1 (the present volume) the findings of the research into aquatic provision trends, community needs and aspirations for the pools, benchmark comparisons of the performance of redeveloped pools in other Councils and a technical assessment of the existing Mirboo North and Korumburra Outdoor Swimming Pools. Volume 2 of the report presents strategic plans to guide the future redevelopment of the two venues including costed and prioritised recommendations for action at the pools.

Council’s Brief for the master planning studies for the two pools indicated that the following research was to be undertaken and outcomes produced:

1. A detailed analysis of each site, of the existing facilities and of the condition of the asset components
2. Identification of the community benefits gained from the provision of outdoor aquatic facilities
3. Identification of all issues for the development of each site
4. Details on the community vision and aspiration for each venue
5. Identification of funding opportunities and the potential levels of available funding for development of each venue and the implications of this to the scale of development at each venue
6. Concept plans detailing the achievable development of each venue or alternate sites
7. Details of the estimated costs to upgrade any existing infrastructure and/or the construction of any proposed new assets
8. A review of the existing maintenance expenditure and estimate future maintenance and the lifecycle costs on any proposed new and existing infrastructure
9. A prioritised, costed program of improvements to the venues and existing facilities to achieve the concept plan vision
10. Identify the programs and activities to be accommodated in the proposed improvements, and
11. Identify the likely benefits to the community for the improved facility in particular increased participation opportunities.

With regard to items 1. and 8., a technical assessment of the swimming pools and associated plant has been prepared as a separate report. However, the key findings are summarised

and presented in this report. For item 10., the *types* of programs that should be considered for provision are listed although work will need to be undertaken by the management of each venue once the proposed facilities are available to determine what specific programs might be offered.

1.2 The Community Benefits & Participation Opportunities Offered by Aquatic Facilities

There is a growing body of research and anecdotal evidence that demonstrates the substantial and wide-ranging **benefits** that flow from the provision and use of aquatic facilities

1. The benefits fall into four categories: personal, social/community, economic and environmental. The social/community, economic and environmental benefits accrue *to the whole community* as well as to those who participate. The range of benefits is defined below:

Personal benefits include participants being healthier, happier and having the capacity to gain self-esteem, recognition and respect

Social / community benefits include enhanced community wellbeing, reduced vandalism (often simply because people are otherwise occupied), reduced health expenses and a sense of community achievement

Economic benefits include reduced levels of work absenteeism and sick days due to higher community health levels, job promotions (and salary increases) due to being fitter and more effective at work, direct job creation and the flow-on effect through the other family members of employees, expenditures incurred in the purchase of goods and services, and improved property values and local rates/taxes.

Where aquatics venues are linked or co-located with other community or commercial facilities services, there can also be substantial cost savings through the sharing of utilities and services such as water, power, sewer connections and parking as well as greater levels of user spending as they buy more goods and services, and

Environmental benefits as a result of the efficient use of space (as compared, for example, with football ovals), the capacity for high levels of use, long hours of operation, recycling of water and energy, and, if the aquatic venue is indoors and/or open all year, optimal use of the investment that has been made.

Some of the other beneficial attributes of the provision of aquatic facilities include:

- Low injury rates when compared with nearly all other sports. Research by the University of Southern Queensland has shown that injury rates amongst swimmers and walkers are as low as 2 percent per annum whereas amongst field sport participants they are as high as 50 percent per annum. Many sports people, in fact, use aquatics programs to overcome the injuries incurred in pursuing other sports
- User capacities. People can use pools alone, in small groups, in large groups and for social or competitive activities. This is not possible with many other recreational activities
- People use pools across all age groups. The average age of pool users is in the late 30s, far higher than for many other recreational activities where peak participation ages are often as low as 12 or 15 years. For many recreational activities, and particularly sports, participation ceases in the early 30s.

1 For a broad review of the benefits of recreation see the following: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001: The Social Impact of Sport and Physical Recreation. An Annotated Bibliography, National Centre for Cultural and Recreation Statistics; Canadian Parks/Recreation Association, 1997: The Benefits Catalogue, Canadian Parks/Recreation Association, Gloucester, Ontario; Driver, and B. L., Brown, Perry J., Peterson, George L., 1991: Benefits of Leisure, Venture Publishing, State College, Pennsylvania. An important recent Australian study assesses the health-related benefits of people using aquatic leisure centres. See Howat, G., Alikaris, J., March, H. and Howat, P., 2012: "Health-related benefits: their influence on loyalty and physical activity participation in Australian public aquatic centres", International Journal of Sports Management and Marketing, Vol. 12, Nos. ½, pp. 73-92

In summary, aquatics provision offers many benefits to both participants and the wider community in which they are provided. While it is acknowledged that other sporting and recreation activities also provide benefits to users, few provide as broad a set of benefits, few provide such significant health benefits, few are as efficient in their use of resources as indoor aquatic venues and few have such low *disbenefits*.

It must also be acknowledged however, that the benefits offered by aquatic venues multiple significantly when they are indoors and can operate all year through provision of a range of pool types and when they co-locate with a mix of other social, community and commercial facilities, programs and services. As such, every opportunity should be taken to seek this outcome rather than an aquatics-only outcome.

An aquatic leisure venue that offers a variety of water features can clearly offer a more diverse array of **participation opportunities** *provided they are effectively programmed and marketed*. Research by the authors of this report has shown that since the new “wave” of post-Melbourne Olympics pools in the 1960s, the number of different bodies of water at aquatic centres has increased by an average of one per decade. Thus, while the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools have only two pools, the most recent venues have 7 or 8, with each one dedicated to serving a specific range of market needs. Each different pool generally has different depths, dimensions and water temperatures.

The different bodies of water include:

- Traditional lap pools (in 25 and 50 metre configurations and in both indoor and outdoor forms)
- Hydrotherapy pools
- Spas
- Wave pools
- Water slides
- “Wild or Rapid rivers” and “lazy rivers”
- Jet thrust pools
- Beach entry pools for toddlers
- Lagoons (eg: as in Cairns, Brisbane, Townsville)
- Water play pools and pads (with these being both indoor and outdoor at the one venue)
- Learn to swim pools
- Plunge pools
- Diving pools, and
- Deep water pools for SCUBA training, water polo.

As each different body of water is provided, so a more “diverse array of participation opportunities” is provided.

With only two pools each and with both essentially being cold water and outdoors, it is obvious that the Mirboo North and Korumburra Swimming Pools will not be able to reach a very diverse market. Any additions would change this.

In addition to multiple pools, modern aquatic leisure centres also have a growing diversity of associated facilities. These also bring a greater diversity of user opportunities and users into the venues. These wider opportunities have been known to include:

- Dry fitness gyms (with these increasingly being market-targeted eg: women only, body building)
- Multi-purpose program rooms with storage and kitchenettes so as to support a very wide range of user club bookings, staff programs, education activities and the like
- Creches and child care
- Cafes and other social areas
- Sports club rooms and equipment stores
- Sports courts and other dedicated rooms (eg: for basketball, table tennis, squash, gymnastics)

- Restaurants
- Conference/training spaces
- Not-for-profit (Council) and commercial retail outlets
- Special health service providers: physiotherapists, masseurs, chiroprodists
- Doctors
- Pharmacies
- Libraries
- Classrooms for TAFEs, schools, universities
- Youth drop-in centres
- Internet cafes
- Party rooms
- Hairdresser's salons
- After-school study centres
- Community gardens
- Tennis and other sporting clubs
- Neighbourhood houses
- Accommodation for visiting trainees, and
- Over-night "community camp" facilities.

There will almost certainly be many more examples that can be added to this list and every one will bring new and different people to a venue. As noted later, provided development flexibility is retained (in so much as the designs permit other built facilities to be added at later dates), these additions can occur as opportunities arise, as old venues elsewhere reach the end of their life or as commercial, community, agency and other professionals realise the benefits of co-location. All will diversify the opportunities available, add to economies of scale, reduce the duplication of infrastructure, reduce the capacity of a small number of users to come to "own" the venue and work to exclude others (as all too often happens with too many "community" facilities and halls), and raise the awareness of what is offered and the contribution it can make to community wellbeing. It is stressed however, that having the facilities alone is insufficient: programming and marketing must occur to ensure that attractive opportunities are offered to the community.

Finally it warrants noting that action on none of these ideas has been pursued at either of the Korumburra or Mirboo North Swimming Pools although a number of opportunities were identified through the community consultations program.

1.3 Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the objectives and scope of the present study and provided an overview of both the benefits of aquatics provision and the strategies that are increasingly being used to ensure that the array of participation opportunities aquatic venues offer is diversified.

The benefits review has demonstrated that leisure facilities can bring wide ranging positive outcomes to a community and that aquatic leisure facilities in particular, can bring those benefits to a wider cross-section of community than many other forms of recreational provision. Importantly, aquatic leisure venues are now being seen as venues for achieving health outcomes, community building outcomes and social outcomes as much as recreational outcomes.

The review of strategies for diversifying participation opportunities indicates that the provision of both a greater diversity of water bodies and of a wide range of non-aquatic facilities provides a capacity for a greater array of activities to be offered to the community as the specialised needs of individuals and target groups are able to be better met. However, programming and marketing were seen to be critical to ensuring that any new or additional facilities that are provided are used by the community.

THE VENUE ASSETS

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter of the report provides a description and assessment of the assets at each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools.

2.2 Korumburra Swimming Pool

The Korumburra Swimming Pool is typical of the 1960s era of pool construction following Australia's successes in aquatics at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. The venue is dominated by the 50 metre 5 lane main pool, the imposing two-storey amenities and club building, and shaded sloping lawns and scattered trees. The overall venue is shown in the accompanying aerial photograph.

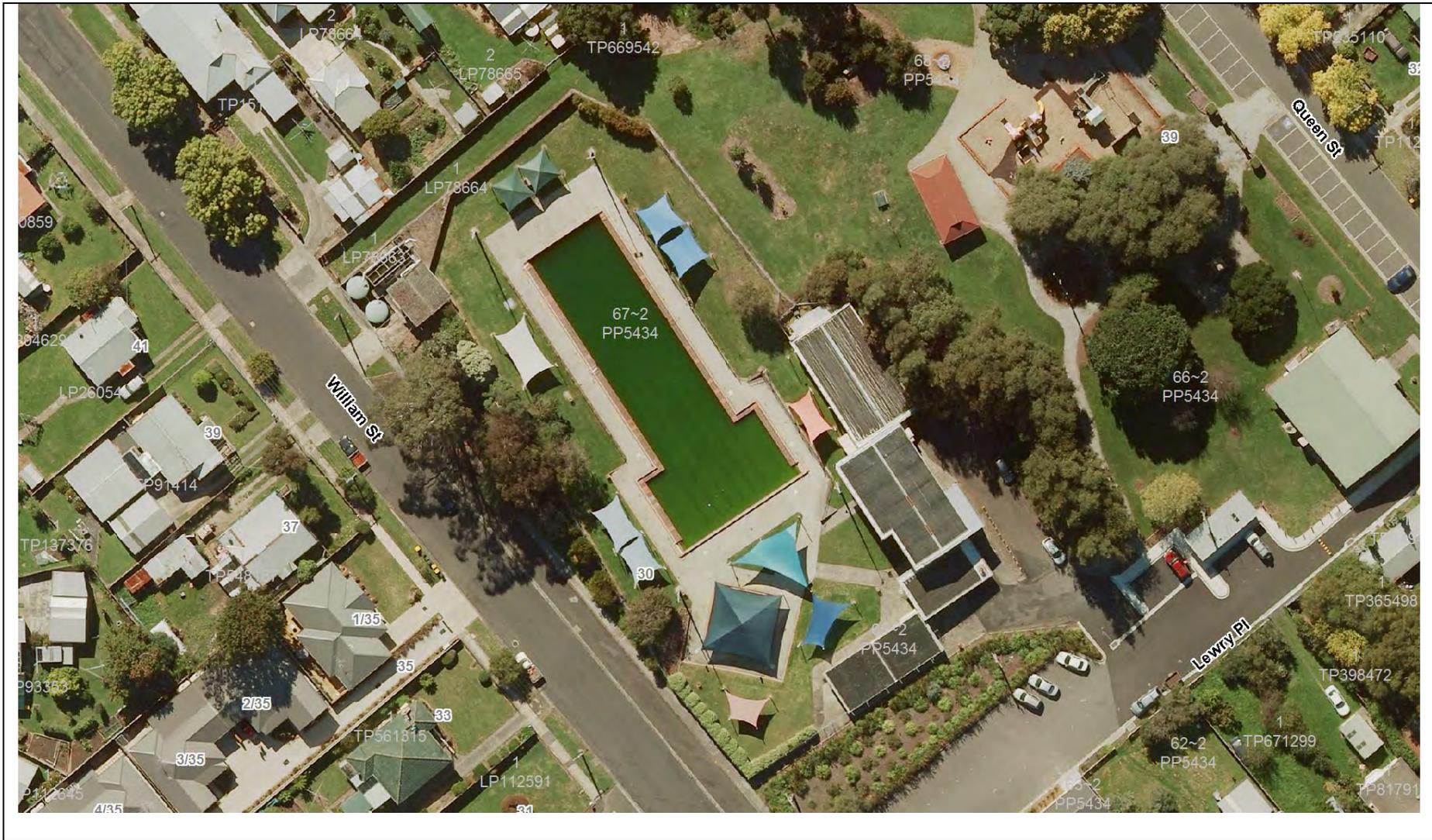
More specifically, the Swimming Pool occupies a site of approximately 5,000 square metres (0.5 ha.), being around 49 metres wide and 102 metres long. This is very small for a venue that functions as a regional venue because it has the only 50 metre pool in the Shire and in the surrounding region. The small site size constrains the capacity of the venue to support a wider mix of uses. The venue is surrounded by residential development on three sides and by a Council park on the fourth. This needs to be addressed.

The venue has the following facilities:

- 50 metre solar heated outdoor pool with a "T" at the shallow end of around 11.5 metres (as part of the 50 metre length) and 21 metres wide
- Square toddler pool of approximately 10 metres by 10 metres
- Administration/First Aid building
- Swimming Club facilities: upstairs room of approximately 14 by 8 metres (plus a full length 2.5 metre wide balcony), a 3.5 m. by 4.5 m. kitchen, foyer area and store area. The room lacks a toilet, heating, cooling or access other than by stairs. The room has a view over the main pool
- Male/female toilet/change areas
- Pump/filtration building
- Sodium Hypo dosing system
- Solar pool heating system
- Lawn areas with shade structures and shade trees
- Seating, and
- Entry concourse area.

In addition to the above, the site contains a small, indoor heated program pool of 8 by 15 metres and 3 lanes, with steps and a hoist, which was funded and built by the Korumburra Swimming Club and which is fully managed by that Club. Council has indicated that consideration of issues relating to this pool is beyond the scope of the present study. However, five quite important points need to be noted in this context:

1. As the Swimming Club indoor pool is on Council land, Council is the ultimate owner of the asset and would be liable if there were injuries, disputes or other problems associated with the facility
2. Vehicular access to the indoor pool (and on occasions to the front of the main pool) generates a significant safety issues for pedestrians accessing both this and the main pool
3. The linked use of change facilities in the main pool building is unsatisfactory from an access, safety and space use perspective and these issues need to be resolved



Korumburra Swimming Pool (aerial dated 2008)

4. The community consultations identified an important level of demand for wider community access to the facility. This would be of substantial value to the Korumburra community if it could be achieved and would contribute to greatly enhancing the mix and diversity of opportunities that the overall complex could provide, and
5. The Swimming Club has proven to be good operators of the indoor pool asset and may well be able to extend that capacity to the whole venue once the amenities and services are upgraded and more effectively integrated.

The outdoor venue and its facilities is directly managed by a Section 86 Committee, which is fully funded by Council. Lifeguards are provided by the YMCA to supervise the facility on behalf of the Committee. Council has noted "the commitment of the volunteer Committee to take such an active role in the operation of the facility has resulted in significant savings for Council and reinvestment into improvements in the facilities".

With regard to the indoor pool, Swimming Club members have indicated that

"The committee hire the pool out on a half hourly basis to two swim schools businesses, primary schools, private families, swimming club & also operate a rehabilitation & self help group 3 times a week for 2 hour sessions. The pool is actually almost fully used every week day, closed Saturdays and half used on a Sunday due to back washing & cleaning. Apart from school holidays there is very little time available on a weekly basis".

While the overall Swimming Pool venue is sound and well-maintained, the following points warrant attention and action:

- The appearance of the overall site, and particularly of the buildings, is dated and the building assets need work to modernise and update them
- The mix of facilities on offer is narrow and also dated
- The toilet/change facilities discourage use (and most probably do not need to be of the same size to meet modern user needs), and need to be of a far higher standard, have guaranteed hot water, disabled and family change facilities, and appropriate ramps
- The mix of aquatic facilities appears unchanged since the date of original construction and this works to discourage use
- Apart from the lawn areas, there are no facilities that support non-aquatic uses and this again discourages use
- There is insufficient provision of seating, tables and shade throughout the grounds
- There is a near-total absence of fixed shelter for larger school and club events
- Apart from school and club activities, there is very little programming of the venue, which stands in strong contrast to all indoor aquatic leisure venues where almost every component is programmed on an hour-by-hour basis, and
- The indoor pool cannot be treated as if it does not exist on the site. It needs to be more effectively integrated with the rest of the buildings. It would seem that it is very well maintained and that it attracts a significant level of use. However, more could be made of it if it was managed as an integral part of an overall complex and if the remainder of the venue was managed and programmed to the same degree.

A separate report, *Audit Report. Korumburra Aquatic Engineering Evaluation* (Brown Smart Consulting, Feb. 2013) has been prepared and provided to Council with regard to the technical assessment of the aquatic facilities. While a number of improvements, repairs and longer term actions are recommended, this report paints the assets in a good light and complements the standard of maintenance. There are essentially no engineering issues of a major strategic nature with most of the recommendations being regular and/or ongoing maintenance items or actions that ensure compliance with present day regulations and thereby reduce the change of liability. The recommended works, indicative costs and priorities for action are reported in the following chart. In the chart, "High" priority items

should be done now; “Medium” items should be addressed in the next year or two, and “Long term” items means that they most probably need to be addressed within 5 years. That said, and as is reiterated below, the age of the Korumburra Swimming Pool means that monitoring may indicate that some items might need to be addressed sooner while the date for action on others could well be pushed back by quite a few years.

Task	Action Needed	Priority	Reason for Action	Budget
1	Complete replacement of precast wet deck slabs to both pools including review and upgrade of slab supports	High	Present slabs have deteriorated and are unsightly and unsafe	\$30,000
2	Review and upgrade depth and warning signage to comply with RLSSA guidelines	High	Safety issue – Compliance required	\$4,000
3	Make plant room bird proof and clean plant room thoroughly	High	OH&S issue – workplace safety	\$1,000
4	Provide handrail to small steps in lower plant room	High	OH&S issue – workplace safety	\$800
5	Alter Hypo tank to meet current regulations – bunding, pipe connections	High	OH&S issue – workplace safety	\$6,000
6	Construct suitable Hypo delivery bund	High	Public safety, ecological issue if Chlorine spill occurs	\$30,000 *
7	ALTERNATIVE TO ITEMS 5 & 6 ABOVE –Install Prominent ProCal dry Chlorine feeder in place of Hypo system.	Alternative	Less OH&S issues, no bulk liquid deliveries	\$18,000
8	Improve handling of bulk dry goods in lower plant room	High	OH&S issue – workplace safety	\$5,000
9	Service flow control valve in filtration pipework	Medium	Required for continued function	\$6,000
10	Replace/service coupled valve in plant room	Medium	Required for continued function	\$2,500
11	Remove redundant equipment	Medium	Tidy workplace	\$500
12	New Circulation pump	Medium	Improved performance, prevention of rust coating on pool interior tiles (not easily removed if left too long)	\$6,500
13	Remove rust staining off toddler’s pool tiles	Medium	Coupled with point 12 above	\$500
14	Sundry repairs to pool tiling to repair and or replace damaged and loose tiles	Medium	Safety plus preventive maintenance	\$2,000
15	Improve access around pump and valves on west side of plant room	Medium	Workplace safety	\$1,500
16	Service the chemistry control system and replace sample electrodes if necessary	Medium	Improved water quality management	\$2,500
17	Relocate PPE to non-corrosive cupboard in new position	Medium	PPE presently in unsatisfactory position	\$600
18	New filtration system	Long term	Increase T/O rates, enhanced operation	\$400,000
19	New reticulation pipework to pools	Long term	Necessary to allow item 18 above to operate satisfactorily	\$250,000

With regard to the requirement of the study Brief that existing **maintenance expenditures** are reviewed, the presently-available data only provides one lump sum for the entire year/season. While this allows an assessment of the total expenditure, even this is limited as it does not indicate what is and what is not covered, this excluding any evaluation of distribution of the allocations. Information for each specific category of expenditure going back 5 years would be needed for a more informed evaluation to be carried out.

Life cycle costing is intended to review the capital cost of each plant/pool item and divide it over the anticipated life to give an annual cost to own it and also to give remaining life and replacement cost.

Part of the lifecycle cost of key items has been covered by the table above. However, providing maintenance cost expectations is difficult with ageing facilities as it cannot be readily determined when something is going to fail. Nor is it possible to project what resources the Council will have available to spend each year.

What tends to occur in Councils the size of South Gippsland is that regular monitoring is used to check when replacements are likely to be needed and past maintenance data and budgets are used to provide an indication of likely capital replacement needs. Thus, works are driven by necessity and generally do not involve planning beyond counting up the average previous costs, together with the trend being used to partially to predict the future. In the case of Korumburra Swimming Pool, the average maintenance cost over the period 2005/06 to 2011/12 was \$16,970. However, this is somewhat misleading as the annual figures ranged from a low of \$1,980 in 2006/07 to a high of \$42,053 in 2011/12. More importantly, there has been a strong upward trend with the average for the first three of these years being \$5,862 while that for the most recent three years was \$31,334. Whether the far higher recent expenditures reflect more failures, better monitoring and pre-emptive action or a greater level of available resources is not known to the authors of this report, but will be better understood by Council officers. In the light of this, it is recommended that around \$30,000 to \$40,000 be budgeted annual to cover lifecycle replacement costs at the pool. The total expenditure for the 7 years was \$118,792.

In overview, the Korumburra Swimming Pool is a classic example of the post-Melbourne Olympics pool-building boom² and appears little changed since then. Because of the quality of construction and because of what has been clearly a high standard of care and maintenance, there is little by way of strategic action that is needed with regard to the pools or the pool plant. However, a range of initiatives is needed over the coming years to ensure that the quality standards do not fall away and to ensure better compliance with changed regulations and specifications.

With regard to the other assets of the venue, all the buildings appear quite sound but they are “tired” and in need of renovation and redevelopment. This will make them more serviceable, more attractive and more capable of supporting a far wider range of uses. The same applies to the pool grounds. These are small, tight and lacking in user amenities and attractions.

Significant action is needed on parking, the separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Finally, while there has been an apparent tendency on the part of Council to ignore the small indoor pool and this could bring substantial legal liabilities. This pool is in fact, one of the key strengths and opportunities of the venue. As such it should be fully integrated into it so that it can be effectively and more broadly programmed and used by the Korumburra community.

2.3 Mirboo North Swimming Pool

The Mirboo North Swimming Pool is in a very attractive location on Baths Road around 1 kilometre by road from the centre of Mirboo North. The venue occupies a site of approximately 97 by 105 metres or 10,185 square metres, (1.2 ha.). This is twice the area of the Korumburra Swimming Pool. The venue is shown in the following aerial photograph.

The site straddles the valley of a local stream and is surrounded by mature native forest. The pools sit in the base of the valley and lawned areas on both sides afford attractive views across the whole venue. There is further parkland to the immediate east of the pool through

² Many of these pools are still known as “War Memorial” pools as they were partially funded by a State government grant scheme designed to fund war memorials. The scheme was modified to include pools as funding recipients



Mirboo North Swimming Pool (aerial photograph dated 2008)

to Baths Road. Pool committee members report large numbers of visitors coming to the pool from surrounding districts and the Latrobe Valley because of the attractive setting.

The Mirboo North Swimming Pool has the following facilities:

- 25 metre by 20 metre pool with depths ranging from 1.1 metre to 3.0 metres
- 10 metre by 15 metre pool with depths ranging from 0.5 metres to 0.9 metres
- 10 metre by 10 metre toddler's pool with depths from 0.12 metres to 0.36 metres
- Administration/First Aid building
- Male/female toilet/change area
- Pump/filtration building
- Sodium hypo dosing chlorination system
- Solar heating
- Barbeques
- Shade facilities
- Small storage shed
- Extensive lawn areas, and
- Mature native trees.

There is also informal parking within the pool grounds on the western side of the valley. This has been closed due to people entered via that parking and not paying.

Parking at the main pool entrance is accessed via a sealed road from Baths Road.

The pool has been operated for many seasons by a Council-appointed contractor. In addition to the pool manager, there is a Council-appointed Section 86 pool committee which is responsible for liaison with the pool management and which auspices three days of programs at the venue each year.

While the Mirboo North Swimming Pool venue is in a very attractive setting, the venue faces a variety of minor and major issues that must be assessed and resolved as part of forming a plan for action for the future. These are:

1. There are major structural problems with the pools because of their age and their position on top of the creek that flows through the valley in the middle of the venue (see further discussion following)
2. The open areas inside the venue are quite steep and there are insufficient appropriate paths ways to allow people to get around the site
3. The toilet, change and management facilities are dated, in poor condition and in need replaced
4. A number of tall trees on the site have been removed due to branch fall dangers to users and more need attention
5. The site is prone to snakes and spiders because of its proximity to the adjoining forest and damp, waterway conditions
6. The site is fire-prone due to its proximity to the adjoining forest
7. Only two of the four barbeques work
8. The mix of facilities is quite narrow and most of what is provided cannot meet the needs of many in the community or few non-aquatic interests. Thus, even if the pool issues were overcome, many other factors would continue to work against the venue
9. The road into the venue is very narrow and unlit
10. There is no formal parking at the entrance to the pool
11. There are no barriers between the entrance road and the pool buildings. The road extends unimpeded into the pool entry such that anyone exiting from the entry building could be struck by a car or a car that took the turning circle at the end of the entry road too quickly could crash into the pool entry area
12. There are no footpaths to the pool site and the path that extends northward from the town centre down Baths Road as far as Allen Street is very steep. This would be unsafe for anyone in a wheelchair, with a pram/pusher, and

13. The parkland between the pool enclosure and Baths Road is steep and uneven and would need considerable work and excavation of it was to be used in association with any pool development works. It is reported that this area might also contain rare orchids.

As at Korumburra, a separate report, *Audit Report. Mirboo North Aquatic Engineering Evaluation* (Brown Smart Consulting, Feb. 2013) has been prepared and provided to Council with regard to the technical assessment of the aquatic facilities. Although the report recommended a number of immediate and short term improvements and repairs, it concluded that:

- “The reality is that the site is unsuitable for reinforced concrete pools”
- The pool assets are “structurally unsatisfactory”
- “The ongoing deterioration of the pool structures is of (such) concern” that “we would warn against spending large sums on cosmetic improvements to the pool unless major structural stabilisation was carried out on them and the creek diversion was better managed”
- “The amenities are poor and the parking worse”
- “The location of the site renders it unsuitable for use on total fire ban days”
- While “there may be a basis to contemplate constructing new pools on the side of the slope to get away from the creek...the steepness of the slope initiates structural costs and would access within the layout difficult”, and
- Despite the attractive setting and the historic significance of the site, “the structural issues will most likely cause the cost of retention and upgrading to be not viable as making the site sound and improving the diversion of the creek would cost more than developing a completely new facility on a more suitable site”.

Further initial assessments by David Powick and Associates/Brown Consulting have indicated that there would almost certainly be a need to provide some form of large box culvert under the pools to let the creek go through, and that as a consequence, the pools would be elevated, partly on piers and partly on the box culvert. This would lift the concourses approximately 2 metres above the present level, with these being suspended between pools and back to solid ground along the side with imported fill required to restore landscape.

In addition, it would be necessary to provide some form of swale or open drain around the pools to handle storm surcharge in the event of full or partial blockage of the box culvert from debris against the protective grating that would be needed to exclude people and animals.

Brown Consulting have indicated that it would be very hard to accurately estimate the cost of such works but in broad terms it was concluded that this preparatory work could cost in excess of \$3m but that this cannot be further resolved unless a preliminary design is undertaken to allow the potential costs be more accurately assessed. This is *before* the construction of new or replacement pools.

The immediate and short term works recommended for the Mirboo North Swimming Pool by the technical report are:

Task	Action Needed	Priority	Reason for Action	Budget
1	Rails to steps in intermediate pool	High	Safety issue	\$2,000
2	Patch up tiling that has sharp edges	High	Safety	\$1,000
3	Audit for signage by RLSSA	Medium	Safety and compliance with regulations and therefore risk mitigation	\$500
4	Review solar heating and <i>if operational</i> repair as needed	Medium	Enhanced user experience	To be confirmed: allow \$5,000
5	Mark plant room pipework for purpose and direction	Medium	Ease of operation and reduced possibility of operational error and liability	\$500

As noted for Korumburra Swimming Pool, the requirement of the study Brief that existing **maintenance expenditures** be reviewed, the presently-available data only provides one lump sum for the entire year/ season. While this allows an assessment of the total expenditure, even this is limited as it does not indicate what is and what is not covered, this excluding any evaluation of distribution of the allocations. Information for each specific category of expenditure going back 5 years would be needed for a more informed evaluation to be carried out.

Life cycle costing is intended to review the capital cost of each plant/pool item and divide it over the anticipated life to give an annual cost to own it and also to give remaining life and replacement cost.

As at Korumburra, part of the **lifecycle cost** of key items has been covered by the table above. However, providing maintenance cost expectations is difficult with ageing facilities as it cannot be readily determined when something is going to fail. Nor is it possible to project what resources the Council will have available to spend each year. The fact that it has been determined that Council should replace the venue with a new modern facility also renders this analysis of little value at Mirboo North.

Of interest is the fact that the Mirboo North maintenance expenditures over the years for which data has been provided are significantly higher than at the Korumburra Swimming Pool. Thus, the average maintenance cost over the period 2005/06 to 2011/12 was \$56,198, versus \$16,970 at Korumburra. As with Korumburra Swimming Pool, the annual figures ranged widely with a low of \$27,000 in 2008/09 to a high of \$119,443 in 2009/10. Again as in Korumburra, there has been a strong upward trend with the average for the first three of the years for which data was provided (2005/06 – 2007/08) being \$44,333 while that for the most recent three years was \$77,795. The total for the 7 year period was a very high \$393,384, over three times the amount spent on Korumburra Swimming Pool. With interest, this could cover the cost of building a totally new pool and support facilities in less than 10 years.

Whether the far higher recent expenditures reflect more failures, better monitoring and pre-emptive action, better recording of cost data (it being noted that the figures for the first 4 years at Mirboo North are all exactly on values of \$1000), or a greater level of available resources is not known to the authors of this report, but will be better understood by Council officers. In the light of this, it is recommended that around \$60,000 to \$80,000 be budgeted annual to cover lifecycle replacement costs over the short term if the venue is to be kept operational while new works are initiated.

In overview, it is undeniable that the Mirboo North Swimming Pool occupies a site that is very attractive and that a wealth of historic significance to the local and district community. However, these attributes hide an even greater number of problems, which, it would appear, are close to insurmountable unless major expenditures are incurred. The scale of these costs would most probably be beyond the financial capacity of Council and the community and are addressed in later chapters. In essence however, they suggest that the most appropriate course of action to take with regard to the Mirboo North Swimming Pool is to decommission it and use the site for other community purposes while developing new facilities on either the adjoining (but problematic land) or elsewhere in the town. The strategies for action that warrant consideration are discussed in later chapters in this report.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview and evaluation of the assets of each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools and provide evidence of the benefits that flow from aquatics provision and the ways in which the redevelopment of aquatics venues can diversify the leisure, health and community development opportunities available in the community.

In terms of the core focus of this study, the review and analysis of the assets of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools has found that the Korumburra venue is generally sound but warrants a range of actions to ensure its continued high standards of maintenance and its safe use *and* to update, modernise, and diversify it. By comparison, while it has now served the community for more than 100 years, the Mirboo North venue has been found to face a wide range of major intractable problems which mean that it would be most probably be more productive and effective from both a resource use and community opportunities perspective to commence the development of a new venue.

From this analysis the report turns to review a further set of important factors that need evaluation as part of Council's considerations re the redevelopment of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools, these being recent trends in wider leisure services and facilities provision.

TRENDS IN RECREATION & AQUATICS PROVISION

3.1 Introduction

As the last sections of the previous chapter indicated, Australian leisure and *aquatic facilities are rather different to what they used to be*. Most significantly, the range of options available to the community as a whole has diversified significantly.

In addition to the traditional outdoor pools, such as those in Korumburra and Mirboo North, many communities now have access to indoor *and* outdoor pools, to lap pools, spa pools, very hot and very *cold* pools, and they even have pools that *aren't* pools, rather, being “splash pads” with sprinklers, tipping buckets, and water cannon; or gentle rivulets where mums and kids can sit and cool their feet. A number of larger centres have full medical-standard hydrotherapy pools, as is presently being planned for Splash in Leongatha. Many venues also have a even more diverse array of non-aquatic facilities: fitness clubs, cafes, meeting rooms, social spaces, party rooms and suites for physios, sports halls for sports such as basketball, netball, table tennis and volleyball; gymnastics centres; hairdressers, and rooms for other extra-medical professionals.

This chapter looks at some of the reasons for the change from the more traditional models of provision and assesses the implications to future provision in Korumburra and Mirboo North.

3.2 The Social and Community Drivers of Changing Leisure Provision

The changes that have been seen in modern aquatic and sporting venues reflect the fact that traditional pools can no longer meet the needs of the majority of the Australian population. And so what is offered has been changed.

Many factors have changed the leisure interests, patterns and needs of Australians. These include higher educational standards, the greater affluence of the country and of most families, the ageing of the community, population growth, the greater cultural diversity of the population, changing work and holiday patterns, a drive for greater returns on investment and financial viability. Each of these “drivers” has led to changes in the leisure, recreation, sporting and aquatic provision for and interests of Australians (as well, of course, to changes in housing, family make-up, transport forms and efficiencies, food styles, clothing etc, many of which also impact on leisure interests and behaviour).

Some of the key trends that will need considering in the context of redeveloping each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools are outlined below. It is important to understand both the present expression of these trends and how they may move in the future because what is provided at the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools will need to have the capacity to meet needs for many years to come or to be changed and moulded so that it meets needs. These will be evaluated as part of the present study when determining the most effective course of action to recommend.

3.3 The Trends

3.3.1 Quality and Safety

As with all things in a modern, educated community, there are now far greater expectations of quality at aquatic centres: in the pools, in the environs, and in the support services. The safety of users is also seen as paramount.

3.3.2 All Year Use

Gaining the optimal benefits of aquatic programs means that regularity of use is important. When a pool is closed for much of the year, many of the benefits that have been gained are lost and have to be regained the next year. Thus, venues that are open all year deliver far better benefits to the community.

Further, venues that are open all year retain their users. Otherwise, people are forced to find alternate activities when the venues are closed or when the weather is bad (and leads to

them closing) and many do not return. Even indoor pools that are forced to close for renovations have trouble regaining the markets they once served.

In southern Australia, virtually all pools that are open all year are indoor pools while *we have not been able to identify any new, stand-alone outdoor-only pools that have been constructed in Victoria for many years.*

As well as offering all year access, indoor pools can offer access at any time regardless of the weather and can offer programs for long periods of the day. This allows them to more effectively serve the widest cross section of the population.

3.3.3 Co-location, Consolidation and Sharing

Bringing a range of different uses and users together at one site enables significant cost savings to be achieved and leads to “cross-pollination” of activities and use wherein visitors coming to use one facility component start using others. Co-location also allows a more integrated professional approach to management, maintenance and programming. Facilities are used to their optimum and a wider clientele is attracted. This enhances financial and operational viability.

In this context, a worthwhile principle to follow is that when consideration is being given to any new Council (or possibly even, commercial) provision that will serve the community, the capacity of the aquatic venue to accommodate it should be assessed. The corollary of this is that designs and sites must ensure that room is left for later additions. The lack of such space at Korumburra Swimming Pool will constrain the opportunities that can be pursued there until the issue is resolved.

Consolidation can occur along with *co-location* or it can be a follow-on from it. Consolidation entails progressively eliminating single, stand-alone community club and group facilities as they age and need renewal. This brings multiple user groups into an integrated venue as a means of offering them a better home and of further strengthening the integrated venue. Examples from around Australia include scout “halls” provided as part of community centres, a historical society in a neighbourhood centre, a U3A program run from a senior citizen’s centre and an indoor sports stadium, health pool and aquatic centre developed in association with a local secondary college.

3.3.4 Partnerships

Local government has realised that it is not, and does not need to be the only provider of leisure and sporting opportunities. While it has long worked with other community groups, it is only recently that wider opportunities have been pursued: with schools, with private and not-for-profit bodies, and with commercial agencies, government services such as CentreLink, medically-based health and fitness providers, and others. Some become development partners, others permanent tenants and others seasonal or sessional users.

Partnerships are invaluable in that they can attract investment that might not otherwise have occurred anywhere, they allow the provision of facilities and services that a Council could perhaps be very unlikely to provide, and they bring different members of a community into a venue.

3.3.5 Long Hours of Opening

Work hours, educational hours, work structures and holiday breaks have changed dramatically over the past 20-30 years. Many people can no longer take part in weekend recreation activities because of work or family commitments. Instead, they compete or recreate on weekday evenings so they can work or be with their families on weekends.

Recreation venues need to match those of the community they seek to attract as those that are not available when most of their potential users are available, will never attract all the people who would like to use them or effectively meet community needs. In a similar context, venues hours must match the travel needs of users. One Korumburra student complained that the pool did not open until 40 or more minutes after the bus into town arrived. In another community, a swimmer who wanted to use the pool before work, found that the cafe did not open until well after he needed to be on his way. He did not go back.

3.3.6 Programs and Services

Like any recreation facility, a swimming pool is only a *means* to a recreation and leisure outcome. Thus, pool managers should deliver a safe, functioning venue *as a starting point* and then *put a very strong emphasis on delivering quality programs and services*.

Programs should be relevant and attractive to people of different ages, different abilities and different cultural backgrounds. Managers should take the view that many non-users are *not* people who do not want to use a pool but rather, *people who the pool offers nothing to*.

Today, pools and their facilities should be important social and community hubs and should seek to build social capital through attractive programs that engage and enthuse the community. Activities do not need to be confined to the pool (as cooler weather often restricts this) *or to the pool compound*.

It has already been noted that neither of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools have a daily or weekly program of activities and events. Yet Splash in Leongatha does and every private fitness venue in the Shire does. If a movie theatre did not advertise the films it was going to show, when they were on and who was in them, but waited for people to turn up and take “pot luck”, no one would go.

3.3.7 A Mix of Provision

As was noted in the last paragraphs of the previous chapter, modern aquatic centres offer a mix of pool types, sizes, depths and water temperatures in order to meet a diversity of needs across the widest reach of an increasingly-diverse community.

People from all age groups can benefit from the use of aquatic facilities: to learn to swim, to compete, to exercise, to overcome disabilities and injuries and to be social and enjoy oneself. It has also been recognised that unless the pools and other aquatic facilities are suitable to different use needs, different abilities and different age groups, they will not be able to meet everyone’s needs.

3.3.8 Heating

All pools support better use if they are heated. For competitive lap swimmers, a temperature of 26° C is good. For learners and older people, the temperature needs to be 28° C or 29° C. However, exercise and wellbeing programs for the aged and frail and for people with disabilities and water play facilities for toddlers and small children require far warmer water, with 33° C or 34° C being more common. In spa resorts, the mineral waters are often as hot as 44° C. It is well known that temperatures that are either too hot or too cold can be very bad for many users.

Clearly, a venue with only one or two water bodies that are at a low temperature will not have the capacity to meet the expectations or needs of most of the community. In some instances, a “middle” or average temperature has been shown to meet no one’s needs –and so few people visit. Providing water at a range of temperatures requires a range of different pools or water bodies.

3.4 Conclusions

The above information suggests that most South Gippsland Shire pools have fallen behind on many modern trends and are thus of interest to fewer and fewer people. The Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools fall into this category. Yet, *action on a number of the trends is possible at the existing venues* but unless it is taken, the pools will continue to fall behind in their value to the community.

That said, it is acknowledged that the Shire is not able to offer the *optimum* mix of different pool types, or at different temperatures at every location. However, *without* huge costs it can offer a greater diversity than it does at present. Selecting the ideal mix is significantly assisted by identifying community needs and aspirations. This is the subject matter of the next Chapter.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS FOR THE KORUMBURRA AND MIRBOO NORTH SWIMMING POOLS

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents and evaluates the findings of a program of consultations with key stakeholders and community members regarding redevelopment opportunities and priorities for each of the Korumburra and Mirboo North Swimming Pools.

4.2 Needs and Aspirations for Korumburra Swimming Pool

4.2.1 Introduction

A range of individuals and organisations has been consulted as part of the analysis of issues and needs with regard to Korumburra Swimming Pool. These are reported below. It is stressed that the views detailed in the following paragraphs are those of the people who were interviewed or who prepared submissions. They are not endorsed by the authors of this report or South Gippsland Shire Council or its staff.

Following the presentation of the consultations information, a summary is provided of the main items that have been identified and a draft statement of the possible future implications to facilities, programs and services is provided.

4.2.2 Council Staff

The following issues were raised by South Gippsland Shire Council staff:

- The Korumburra Swimming Pool is managed by a Section 86 Council Committee. The Committee contracts the YMCA to provide staffing.
- The pool is “stress free”, has good tiles (though there is some drumming in places). It has an aged but effective plant room (considered to be too old to retrofit), a sound tank, good pump maintenance, and the fresh water return pipe was recently replaced. The pool would “benefit from wet decks if suitable”
- The Section 86 Pool Committee does most of the maintenance work and only calls on Council if necessary. It does a good job in maintaining and managing the pool but does not do any marketing or promotion
- The pool buildings are sound but old and need modernisation. Change room roofs need attention
- Solar heating needs replacing
- There is no disability access into the pool
- There is no apparent programming of the pool
- The pool is not compliant in terms of issues such as access to the venue and action to resolve these in a series of steps is needed
- The Swimming Club has a site lease on the land occupied by the small pool (adjoining the outdoor pool and using remodelled change rooms) and has built and operates the small pool
- Consideration may warrant being given to filling the deep end of the pool previously used in association with the diving board, which has been removed
- There is little apparent community interest in the pool as it is not seen as being under threat
- Along with Mirboo North, Korumburra has the highest proportion of 0-14 year olds and teenagers in the Shire and the schools are strong. Both communities also have aged care facilities and a growing aged population

- The population of Korumburra is substantial (around 4,500) though it is a less communicative community. There is no “core” organising group in the community
- There are a lot of meeting places and there is a strong preference for each organisation to have its own venue with this tending to work against sharing
- A lot of development is occurring in Korumburra, with retail and service initiatives being to the fore. This is partially a response to an overflow from Melbourne’s south-east. The town is not a regional service centre like Leongatha but rather, an emerging dormitory town. The growth means the schools are healthy but that play groups are over-crowded
- There is significant social disadvantage in Korumburra with public housing, a food bank, lack of public transport, though the “average” figures are inflated by the presence of nursing homes

4.2.3 Carinya Lodge Hostel

Staff at Carinya Lodge Hostel indicated that most clients are 90 years plus and are considered too old and frail to use a pool. Staff run internal exercise programs.

4.2.4 Hillside Lodge

At Hillside Lodge, clients are generally in their 80s and receive physiotherapy services through the Gippsland Southern Health Service.

4.2.5 Alchera House Nursing Home

At this centre, the clients are aged residents needing high care levels and aquatics is “not relevant” to meeting their needs”. If the Korumburra Swimming Pool was to be used, access would be needed via hoist or ramps.

4.2.6 Milpara Community House

The Community House coordinator indicated that it might be possible to use the upstairs club room for program activities as a means of broadening the reach of the House. However, a lift would be needed for some users or another alternate room would need to be available if someone with a disability could not get up the stairs. These shortfalls clearly restrict use to able-bodied people at present.

4.2.7 Korumburra Community Access Centre

Staff indicated that this is a drop-in and activities centre for elderly residents and has no programs or activities to do with the Korumburra Swimming Pool and would be unlikely to do so.

4.2.8 Gippsland Southern Health Service, physiotherapist, Ms Mandy Fletcher

The Health Service only uses the small indoor pool at Korumburra Swimming Pool as the water in the outdoor pool, *as with the indoor pool at Leongatha Splash*, is too cold for health program use. The lack of hoists also reduces access to the outdoor pool.

The indoor heated pool on a weekly or more frequent basis and has been used “for years”. Two staff take two classes for an hourly session with these having from 4-10 and 6-14 participants respectively. The staff encourage other independent use of the pool for health programs where access can be gained.

The indoor pool is considered to be “excellent” as it has the correct temperature and depth and a hoist. It thus permits programs that could otherwise not be offered. The venue was seen as being very busy because of its popularity but the desired access time was achieved.

Improvements were seen to be essential in the following areas:

- Uneven pathway access to the building
- Improved drop-off for some clients near entry
- Inadequate parking for people using the aquatic health programs
- Poor doorway access into the building
- Too many changes of levels and lips, ledges and steps inside the building when all the flooring should be flat, and
- Change rooms require upgrading as they are hard to access and pokey.

4.2.9 Korumburra Primary School

Korumburra Primary School organised both a meeting with a small group of students and discussions with senior staff and the specialist sports teacher. The findings are reported below.

Students

Pool Use:

Of the 5 students in the meeting, all reported using the Korumburra Swimming Pool. The reasons for use were:

- Swim Club membership:
 - Coaching
 - Learn to swim program
 - Competition
- After school activities:
 - Cooling off with friends and/or after school
- School
 - Swimming program
 - Swim sports
 - Training for sports
 - Water safety programs

Asked if they used any other pools, the students stated that “occasionally” or “irregularly” (with cousins) went to Splash in Korumburra and that they also went to Casey RACE (Casey Recreation and Aquatic Centre”), a major indoor aquatic venue in Cranbourne for outings.

Ideas for Improving Korumburra Swimming Pool:

The students listed the following ideas as ways of improving the attractions at Korumburra Swimming Pool:

- Water slide
- Diving board
- Showers, toilets
 - Upgrade
 - Users have to pay for hot water
 - The showers do not always work
 - The showers need to hot always
 - Fix up the tiles
 - Fix the solar heating
- Provide more seats with shade over them
- Provide more shade/different as well as sails
- Provide pool equipment: at present, big kids dominate activities and there is a need to divide the areas by
- Provide inflatables

- Sell equipment at the kiosk eg: goggles
- Open earlier in the day and later in evening. eg. 7 am -10 pm
- Develop a gym upstairs in association with the indoor pool

Staff:

Primary School staff indicated that the junior grades use the indoor pool while grades 4 to 6 use the outdoor pool. Further, it was noted that Korumburra Swimming Pool is the only 50 metre pool in the region and thus is very important from a school sports perspective as it provides the only high level competition facility. For instance, the nearest formal athletics track is on Moe.

School staff raised the following needs:

- There is a need for more tables in the pool grounds
- The change facilities should be upgraded and in fact, the overall buildings need an upgrade
- The kiosk is “not ideal” and is not secure
- The entrance area needs to be upgraded and made more open
- The pool surrounds are attractive but are inadequate for large groups
- The pool gutters need repairs and the drainage gutters are broken. There are loose bricks the need fixing
- Fixing points should be provide for cross-pool lane ropes during school sports. This is particularly so in the wider pool section at the shallow end as it provides shorter length laps for younger swimmers in shallower water
- Permanent undercover areas are needed for wet weather, especially when school events are on. The shade cloth is not adequate in poor weather, which is common
- Provide picnic tables
- The school would like to run early morning pre-school training but no staffing is available. The school felt that if it’s staff ran such a program, others would follow
- There is a need for more things for children to do at the pool
- More programming of activities is needed
- Provide inflatables
- Extend the opening hours. The pool used to open in the morning that allowed far wider and more flexible programming for both schools and the community
- Clarity the hours of opening and be less rigid about them
- Set up a personal training and swim program
- There is too much of a management focus on income generation vs goodwill. Staff are often “grumpy” and will, for instance, make people who have forgotten their membership card pay an entry fee, and
- Consider the use of volunteers to run the kiosk as a means of freeing up professional time for more important and creative tasks.

4.2.10 Korumburra High School

A discussion session was held with 9 senior school students and one teacher.

Of the 9 students, 6 reported using the pool. The activities pursued there and the reasons for the use are listed below:

- Social activities:
 - The pool is easy to get to
 - The pool is local
 - There is little else to do

- School programs:
 - Sport
 - Intra-school
 - Inter-school sports
- Swim Club
 - Learn to swim program
 - Use of the indoor pool
 - Swimming laps.

Those students who did not use the pool gave the following reasons:

- I use the beach instead
- Used when young but are not interested now
- I live out of town of town thus it is not accessible and use Poowong pool is one is used
- Have a pool at home pool.

The students reported the use of several other pools, these including Casey RACE, especially for the slide and Splash laps, parties, and sports recovery programs.

The following ideas for were proposed for consideration at Korumburra so as to enhance the attraction to teenagers:

- Floaties
- Water slide
- Volleyball
- Beach
- Basketball
- Facilities upgrade
 - Toilets (including more)
 - Change areas: water pools on the floor of the ladies change area
 - Security for ladies change
 - Make more inviting
 - Entrance upgrade
 - Indoor café as it is too far back to the town centre; trinket shop as part of café
 - A place for young people to 'hang'
 - Provide a pizza oven
- Repaint the buildings to make them a more attractive colour
- Provide social activities
- Provide parents' space
- More garden areas
- Improve the access down the pathway to the pool
- Provide lockers to secure belongings
- Lengthen the times of opening
- Extend the season
- Co-ordinate opening times with bus timetables so users from out of town do not have to wait around for the pool to open
- Improve the food at the kiosk
- Provide a BBQ
- Provide more benches
- Provide outside showers: this is easier than building more inside the change rooms

- Ensure the showers have hot water
- Provide live music programs and engage local musicians
- Better integrate the indoor and outdoor pools
- Provide a baby pool
- Provide a water play area
- Run in-pool movies
- Offer team games, especially for 13-14 year-olds
- Provide underwater hockey
- Provide a sand pit
- Provide a small playground
- Make more use of the park next door and link the Park with the pool for games
- Provide a fitness gym
- Provide personal fitness and training courses
- Improve advertising eg: use a Facebook page to promote/inform
- Provide table tennis
- Provide more tables under shade
- Encourage community helpers for pool maintenance and providing a barbeque
- Introduce night opening
- Run a program for water safety certificates
- Provide exercise weights as at Splash but make them different to Splash, and
- Run birthday parties.

4.2.11 Korumburra Swimming Pool Committee

The Korumburra Swimming Pool Committee of Management raised the following points:

- The pool is the only 50 m. pool in the region and thus has a wide catchment. School sports and swim lessons generate major use
- The pool plant is old and dated but works well. Water quality is high
- The pool surrounds could be improved and it may be appropriate to wet-deck the pool
- There is a lack of things to do at the pool: consider water play, wet areas, family orientation, barbeques, events/activities, large screen TV, half court, beach volleyball, entertainment, movie nights, programs in upstairs room
- Water education programs are needed
- Users report going to birthday parties at Casey Fields (ie: Casey RACE): these should be run at the Korumburra Swimming Pool
- Marketing the pool to Inverloch, Port Welshpool and Wilson's Promontory communities and visitors could be positive as they have no equivalent facilities in that region and are known to use the pool
- The upstairs room has no toilets, poor acoustics and no lift, and as such does not attract much use. The room was predominantly used by the swim club as a venue for fundraising programs and activities but this does not occur to any extent now. There is not a need in the town for meeting rooms so extensive redevelopment may not be warranted
- In the downstairs area, the reception desk is hidden; there is a need to develop an entrance foyer with a link to the kiosk. The venue needs to be made more "open" and attractive to the community. The entrance should be opened up and painting of some areas would help. Internal spaces may warrant gutting and restoring

- Consideration needs to be given to a solar upgrade
- Improved parking is needed
- Better links need to be developed to the Korumburra shops/town centre
- The present management approach to the small pool (ie: controlled by the Swimming Club) makes it very difficult if not impossible for general members of the community to make use of it
- There is no disability access into the outdoor pool, and
- Signage to the pool on the corner of Commercial Street & Radovick Street.

4.2.12 Korumburra Swimming Pool User Survey

A survey of users of Korumburra Swimming Pool was conducted over the December 2012-February 2013 period and the work of the Pool Committee and others in carrying out the interviews is greatly appreciated. A total of 54 useable surveys was completed.

The survey collected data on who the users were, who they visited to pool with, how often they visited and what activities they undertook at the pool. Interviewees were also asked where they lived and importantly, what improvements they would like to see made to the venue. The findings are summarised below:

- All but 5 of the users were female
- 44 of the 54 users visited with children, only 2 people visited alone and the remainder visited as members of a family group
- The most common frequency of visiting was several times a week, followed by several times a season and weekly. Only one interviewee said that they went every day
- In order of importance, the most popular reasons for visiting Korumburra Swimming Pool were "children's outings" (34 of 54), social activities (18), to cool down on a hot day (17), for lessons (12), to swim laps (8), and spectating (7)
- Some 41 of the 54 interviewees lived in Korumburra while others came from Loch (4), Leongatha (2), and Nyora (2), with one each from Inverloch, Kongwak, Corinella and Arawata.

The small user sample means that the responses most probably do not accurately reflect the true nature of the Korumburra pool users. That said, the results *suggest* that women with children use the pool far more than men and that social activities as opposed to swimming laps, training or competition are amongst the most popular uses. The heavy bias toward local users can be partially explained by the fact that a number of other Shire and regional towns have their own outdoor pools, although the user origins do not seem to reflect the fact that the pool attracts regional school and swimming competitions.

Perhaps the most useful results from the user survey are the suggested improvements to the pool. These have been grouped into three categories -new facilities, support services and activities for users:

Facilities

- Roped off area in big pool for junior users
- Family change rooms
- More balls/play equipment
- Barbeques
- Hot water in showers
- Waterslide
- More shade/shade sails
- More seating around pool
- More trees
- Water play fountain
- Play area/playground, and

Join the pool area with the nearby park to create a kids play area.

Services

Warning system for misbehaving children (3 strikes and you are banned)

More staff for canteen

Music that's not too loud

Improve change/toilet area

Update and maintain pool surface/tiles

More lap swimming times

Lockers

Roof over pool, and

Solar heating.

Activities

Staff-organised games

Volleyball

Theme nights

Family barbeque nights

Outdoor movie nights

Live music

Fun days, and

Games nights.

It is evident from the suggestions that most of the users who were surveyed would like to see improvements to the existing facilities rather than totally new facilities –although the diving board, water slide and pool roof would be very expensive. Unfortunately, the pool is too shallow to accommodate diving boards, the water slide would be very expensive and it is unlikely that the pool would be able to continue to operate without major water treatment upgrades if it was enclosed as the sun plays an important role in keeping the water clean at present.

That said, many of the services suggestions could and will need to be acted on over the coming years while most of the programming proposals could be implemented immediately.

These suggested improvements have been considered as part of the recommendations for action proposed later in this report.

4.2.13 Korumburra Community Development and Action Inc.

Members of Korumburra Community Development and Action Inc. identified several options for action at the pool as a means of diversifying what it offered and strengthening its use.

These were:

- Run a range of “special Olympics” activities for people with disabilities
- Install removable fencing between the pool grounds and the park so the two can be linked during special events and so the pool grounds can be expanded
- Provide a drop-in cafe
- Provide ten pin bowling, and
- Provide for bocce.

There is unlikely to be sufficient space for a ten pin bowling venue in association with the pool. However, each of the other proposals has considerable merit.

4.2.14 Submissions

Three submissions were received from Korumburra residents and a fourth was submitted by a local medical practice. These are summarised below. Again, the views expressed are those

of the people named, not the authors of this report, South Gippsland Shire Council or Council officers. Any response from the authors of this report is provided in italics.

Ms Janine Egan:

Ms Egan wrote noting that she was a mother of a 7 and 10 year old and currently users of the outdoor pool in Korumburra. She stated:

This is a fantastic pool with great lawn areas and shade structures, we are extremely lucky to have this facility

I believe the pool would benefit greatly by providing a more interactive space for the small children. Some pools have a section with water fountains and spray jets etc. all within a section of safe shallow water

The change rooms are dated

The sale of good coffee would be lovely, and

My main concern is that all works done to the pool are sustainable and that they do not put the future of the pool at risk. This is one of very few facilities provided for children of all ages within the community and it is vital that we maintain it. Council must maintain infrastructure to all towns within its boundaries, not all children have access to transport to drive to the pool in Leongatha or to the beach.

Ms Cate Minchin:

Ms Minchin wrote stating that her family currently live in Korumburra and use the Korumburra Swimming Pool. She stated that her "family of 6, believe the pool is great for everyone in Korumburra as it gives the kids a chance to enjoy the summer".

With regard to improvements, Ms Minchin argued that "The place is definitely in need of a brighten up though, maybe a little bit more greenery, and the building is horrid looking".

Further, she suggested that a Family day pass might be an option with it being a little bit cheaper for the whole family to go for one day. Another suggestion was that a lifesaving course could be run for teenagers at a minimal price.

Ms Minchin concluded that it was important to "let the team know just how much the pool is needed in a country town".

Ms Catherine Swart and Mr Richard Swart:

Mr and Ms Swart wrote expressing concern about noise levels at the Korumburra Swimming Pool due to its location in the middle of a residential area. They noted that the noise occurs every day of the week during holidays and during the week when there are school programs and events at the pool.

As such, the Swarts indicated their objection to further development of the pool and suggested that a new venue be built in association with other sporting facilities, citing Casey RACE as being well-located due to its proximity to sports fields, a library and a bowling alley.

A Korumburra Medical Practice:

Doctors, staff and patients of the practice indicated that one of the main things people would like to see is an increase in community swimming time at the indoor heated pool wherein the pool is open for people who would just like to go and swim laps or swim with their children.

It was argued that it would be invaluable if doctors could recommend, for example, that patients swim once a week etc. It was also suggested that structured programs with good advertising to the community and providers would make an important contribution to community health.

Korumburra Resident

A resident of King Street, Korumburra, made contact regarding the noise from the pool, especially during carnivals. It was indicated that the resident had been in touch with Council to no avail and that she and neighbours were planning to go to the EPA to demand change unless something was done about the noise levels.

It was suggested that shrubs, sound barriers and buildings be used to reduce the noise levels and that the pool public address system be reviewed and volumes turned down.

An inspection of the sound system indicated that it is an old style of system and that all speakers are mounted in high poles. A modern system with more speakers at lower volumes and at lower heights might readily resolve this problem.

4.2.15 Some Issues for Comment: Korumburra

Comment is warranted regarding several issues, the first being the **Swimming Club pool**. While Council has indicated that consideration of this facility is beyond the scope of the present study, it is on Council land so it is legally owned by Council. The facility has a number of shortcomings that constitute a risk and it would be Council that would be found liable were action to ever be taken on these. Further, although Council or the pool committee have nothing to do with its operation, its use of space in the main pool building compromises the full effective use of that building and the need to get vehicles to the entrance of the pool raises risk issues for outdoor pool users as there is no separation of vehicles and pedestrians. (Similarly, pool staff and pool committee members should not be permitted to drive or park vehicles in the vicinity of the pool entrances). As such, it is recommended that at the very least Council reviews and revises vehicular access and parking associated with the facility, internal building access and space use and chemicals and plant management.

A review of the **venue management** is beyond the scope of the present study. Yet there is scope for improvement in terms of opening hours, community relations and most critically, programming. No public asset should be managed these days by simply using an *asset management-only* approach --wherein a quality facility is provided but users are expected to create their own leisure activities. Rather, a major effort needs to be put into indentifying market segments and developing and advertising a regular set of programs and activities that meet their needs. One interesting point in this context is that many if not the majority of the programming suggestions are non-aquatic. In other words, the community sees the venue as a community leisure centre that contains a pool but which can be used for many other activities. Management needs to respond to this perception in an appropriate manner.

With regard to **the pool site**, it is evident that its size and location presently restrict the activities and programs that can be offered and that it will severely restrict future expansion and hence, viability. Starting again at another site would be very expensive which developing a different eg: indoor facility elsewhere, would not only cost a lot but mean a loss of management and programming synergies. Initially, the pool grounds could be expanded into the adjoining park over summer but in the longer term, restructuring of the uses of the park and the acquisition of other property may need to be considered.

Finally, with regard to **priorities for action**, it is essential that action is initiated in each of the areas listed above: the upgrading and expanding of infrastructure, provision of new user support facilities, and the development of a strong programming focus. Without the first, the venue will progressively deteriorate and will not be able to provide a safe user environment. Without the second and third, use of the venue will progressively fall and the number of people and the cross-section of the community served will continue to fall as incomes will decline and costs rise.

Modern leisure services are based around quality facilities, diversity of opportunity and attractive, diverse programming. At present, the Korumburra Swimming Pool cannot be said to have any of these. The mix of infrastructure works that has been identified is not extensive and need not be very expensive. The same applies to the mix of new support facilities and services that has been identified. Programs can be initiated quickly and often, very cheaply. They can also generate significant levels of income that can help to offset costs elsewhere.

It is thus proposed that all three sets of initiatives be adopted for action and that planning, design and costings are being prepared for infrastructure and new support facilities and services, action is taken within the existing mix of resources to begin development of a set of targeted programs that will attract differing groups within the community and allow the venue to make a far greater contribution to community life than it does at present. Once the new and upgraded facilities become available, programming initiatives can be further developed and expanded even more broadly. The provisional priorities are reported in the Table below.

4.2.16 Summary of Needs and Issues and Action Implications: Korumburra

The foregoing material has identified a range of issues in association with the Korumburra Swimming Pool that warrant attention. Overall, the consultations input was very positive about the complex and particularly, about the outdoor pool and the indoor Swimming Club heated pool. However, three sets of deficiencies have emerged: the upgrading and expanding of infrastructure, provision of new user support facilities, and the development of a strong programming focus. These are summarised in Table 4.1 and need to be addressed.

The initiatives identified through the consultations echo a number of the items identified through the engineering assessment of the pool although in general, they warrant separate attention to the recommendations of that section of the report.

Overall, the vast majority of the proposals for action warrant serious consideration. Significantly, there was widespread recognition of the quality of the pool and its surrounds and as a result, the majority of the initiatives that were identified would not require major capital investment. Some of the support facilities and services initiatives and most of the programs would be of very low cost compared with major capital works. A number could be dealt with by community service and support groups, with Korumburra Community Development and Action Inc. in particular indicating that it could marshal a number of groups to work together in assisting in upgrading and new service works.

Few of the suggested initiatives could be rejected outright. Those which would require a quite substantial investment and which, therefore, may not be able to be pursued were:

- Providing diving boards. The pool is no longer of sufficient depth of have diving boards installed and their provision would raise major occupational health and safety, risk management and insurance issues. Other ways of entertaining young people would need to be considered instead, and
- Lift to the upstairs room. Reports that Korumburra has a considerable number of halls and meeting spaces suggest there is not an urgent need to install a lift as other spaces may be available. Further, program spaces might be developed at ground level using other sections of the buildings.

Infrastructure	Support Facilities & Services	Programming
Solar heating needs upgraded	The venue needs to be developed to make it attractive as a meeting place for various social groups, especially young people	The venue as a whole needs to be programmed in keeping with the needs of current and <i>other potential user groups</i>
Disability access to the pool is required	Provide more shaded tables	Acknowledge the regional role of the 50 m. pool and protect and promote this
Upgrade toilet, change and shower facilities (especially security in women's change) and added to	Provide more shaded seats	Opening hours and season should be extended
Pool deck showers	More user-focused equipment is needed: inflatables, beach volleyball, fitness gym in upstairs room, basketball ring, beach	With Melbourne-focused new residents moving in, a higher, metropolitan standard of facility is needed and programs must reflect the urban experience. The fact that residents travel to Casey RACE in Cranbourne for parties and activities gives a guide to the mix of opportunities needed
Quality rails, hoists, paths, ramps, toilets etc need to be provided and existing facilities be made compliant	Develop different zones of the pool grounds to service different user groups eg: children, youth, young mothers, older ages	Outside program providers could diversify their offerings by working through the pool <i>and</i> offer activities to pool users
Pool tiles and guttering need upgrading	Upgrade the kiosk setting and broaden the food, food quality and other items on sale	Program and promote the upstairs room
Hot water needs to be consistently available	Heated showers need to be provided at no charge	
Additional showers should be provided and can be provided on the pool deck	Provide lane rope fixing points for across-pool lanes in the wider section of the pool	
A lift would be needed if some groups in the community were to use the upstairs room at the pool	Make the venue more attractive with a revised entry, seating, repainting etc	
Assess the provision of upstairs toilets, cooling/heating and acoustics improvements	Signage to pool	

Table 4.1 : Summary of consultation needs, Korumburra Swimming Pool (continues next page)

Infrastructure	Support Facilities & Services	Programming
<p>The doorway entrance to the indoor pool, uniform floor levels and wider access corridors and cubicles are needed to effectively service the indoor pool</p> <p>The drop-off area for those using the indoor pool is inadequate in terms of being level, sufficient space and paths</p> <p>There is inadequate parking, especially for people with disabilities</p> <p>Provide a fixed weather shelter area for school and other large user groups</p> <p>Revise reception positioning, redevelop entrance area and link to kiosk</p> <p>Consideration should be given to provision of a diving board</p> <p>A quality cafe is needed with this selling other products as well</p> <p>Extend the lawn areas into the parkland, at least over summer</p> <p>Provide water play opportunities</p> <p>Provide a parents' space</p> <p>Provide more garden areas to soften the venue's appearance</p> <p>Provide a sand pit</p> <p>Provide table tennis</p> <p>Provide security lockers</p> <p>Provide more benches</p> <p>Provide barbeques</p> <p>Provide small spa pools, jacuzzis etc</p>	<p>Use plantings, screens, built structures and replacement of existing sound system with a modern system to reduce noise levels and impacts on surrounding residents during events and carnivals</p>	<p>Run recreational and educational programs (to improve community skills) for different user groups at different times of the day and week</p> <p>Extend the hours of opening into early morning and evenings and extend the season; introduce night openings</p> <p>Coordinate opening hours with bus timetables</p> <p>Introduce a family day pass</p> <p>Wider community access to the indoor pool is needed</p> <p>Management to take a more client-focused approach vs asset management and income generation</p> <p>Provide personal trainers and fitness programs</p> <p>Encourage informal use and visits by young people through social programs</p> <p>Consider the use of volunteers to run the kiosk so professionals can provide better aquatic services</p> <p>Run live music programs</p> <p>Run movies</p> <p>Improve advertising, set up Facebook to promote the pool</p> <p>Provide for early-morning training and lap swimming</p> <p>Provide more children's programs and activities</p>

Table 4.1 continued: Summary of consultation needs, Korumburra Swimming Pool

The provisional priorities for action at Korumburra Swimming Pool are listed in Table 4.2. Many of the needs listed eg: signage, cannot be considered as “strategic”: however, many are important to the viability of the pool and it is recommended that Council officers and management committees review the findings of these consultations and seek to address the “non-strategic” findings as well as the key strategic items.

4.3 Mirboo North Swimming Pool

4.3.1 Introduction

A range of individuals and organisations have been consulted as part of the analysis of issues and needs with regard to Mirboo North Swimming Pool. These are reported below. In keeping with the previous sections, it is stressed that the views detailed in the following paragraphs are those who were interviewed and do not represent the views of either the authors of this report or South Gippsland Shire Council.

Following the presentation of the consultations information, a summary is provided of the main items which have been identified and a draft statement of the possible future implications to facilities, programs and services is provided.

1. Infrastructure Priorities	Support Facilities & Services Priorities	3. Programming
<p>1.1 Undertake short term remedial maintenance and plants works on the pools and make provision for medium and longer term works</p> <p>1.2 Gut the existing change facilities in the two storey building and install high quality, compact, heated facilities with hot showers and secure spaces to meet the needs of women, men and users of the indoor heated pool. Provide additional pool deck showers.</p> <p>1.2 As part of 1.1, redevelop the present women's change facilities into a multi-user program room linked to outdoor play, water play, shade, seating and table facilities</p> <p>1.3 Review and revise parking and especially disabled parking for the pool</p> <p>1.4 Expand the site into the adjoining park for programming in the short term and consider the restructuring of surrounding land uses in the longer term</p>	<p>2.1 Redevelop the site entrance to exclude cars, provide safe paths and open up the venue to the street</p> <p>2.2 Redevelop the venue entrance by linking the two main buildings with a new enclosed foyer/ management and cafe area, with the cafe serving both into the pool and outdoors of the pool</p> <p>2.3 Install permanent shade / weather shelters / noise barriers along the western fence of the pool grounds to provide a protected area for school groups and competitor groups</p> <p>2.4 Provide more shade structures, seats, benches and tables throughout the venue</p> <p>2.5 Acquire a range of equipment and facilities such as beach volleyball, barbeques and table tennis, that will attract use and diversity the uses that can be made of the venue</p> <p>2.6 Install security lockers at a prominent location for user valuables</p> <p>2.7 Provide lane rope fixing points for across-pool lanes in the wider section of the pool</p> <p>2.8 Consider small spa and jacuzzi pools to diversify use</p>	<p>3.1 Initiate a range of social, fitness, recreational and educational programs that initially target young people and are expanded as specific needs are identified. Ensure that programs are timetabled to minimise conflicts between users and competing activities such as football and netball</p> <p>3.2 Develop fitness and aquatic <i>training</i> programs and activities</p> <p>3.3 Invite other groups, agencies and commercial providers to use space at the pool for their programs and to offer programs to pool users</p> <p>3.4 Review and if deemed possible, revise and extend the hours and season of opening of the pool with particular attention being given to earlier opening and later closing</p> <p>3.5 Liaise with the Korumburra Swimming Club re making provision for wider community access to the indoor heated pool and also run a wider range of health and fitness-related programs in that pool</p> <p>3.6 Expand the marketing and promotion of the venue to the Korumburra and surrounding communities, including coastal communities over summer</p>

Table 4.2: Provisional priorities for action, Korumburra Swimming Pool

4.3.2 Council Staff

The following issues were raised with regard to Mirboo North Swimming Pool by South Gippsland Shire Council staff:

- Mirboo North Swimming Pool is very old. The pool is in a poorly-drained valley and suffers from under-scouring and movement. Pool tank integrity is poor. The pool plant is sound and is gravity fed. There are significant continuing operational problems and costs
- The pool is “problematic”. It leaks from numerous points including from behind tiles (many pop off and have voids behind), through the shell (via major cracks), below scum gutters, along seals. The tiles have tended to be “battered on” rather than rendered
- Expansion joints in the pool were sealed with Veritex but ground water came up through wide gaps when the joints were opened
- There is mud to 2 m. below the concourses and scouring of large pits due to failure of drains to divert most sub-surface water. Any holes that are dug eg: in concourses, fill quickly with water
- The pool plant is good and sand filter was relined in 2012. Water is collected downstream from the pool for recycling

- The service buildings have structural defects with floors having been poured between footings. However, concrete tests show the concrete is “okay”
- The topography and setting are attractive but make access difficult and poor
- The road to the pool is partially unmade and there are no footpaths
- The pool is around 1 km. out of the town centre
- The pool has no ramps, hoists, steps, handrails or fully accessible toilets
- The pool is managed by a Section 86 Council Committee that employs a private contractor as manager on a (new) 2 year contract at a cost of \$70-80,000 pa.
- The community is well-educated, active, “thinking” and “vocal”.
- Mirboo North has good access to and links with the Latrobe Valley (20-30 mins drive to both Morwell and Leongatha). This makes provision of an indoor pool unnecessary (which is not a community demand). There is a lot of travel to the Latrobe due to work and university
- While individual families are not very wealthy, the community is wealthy as it has a large Trust fund of several million dollars raised when a nursing home was sold. The pool group want this invested in a replacement pool. The Trust, however, takes a district interest and would not want to use up capital in supporting the pool. Around \$100,000 is available pa. and much of this goes back into the community eg: newspaper \$40,000 pa. In addition, the community bank raises \$60,000 pa. for the community
- Mirboo North and Korumburra have the highest proportion of 0-14 year olds and teenagers in the Shire and the schools are strong. Both communities also have aged care facilities and a growing aged population
- The Mirboo North community is preparing a community plan; the schools have a strong community service focus and the recreation reserve has a master plan. There are strong sports participation levels in the community. The town has a good program of events including festivals, music and movies
- The key questions that warrant asking in Mirboo North are “What is needed through the pool?”, and “Is the location appropriate?” Optional locations might include at the school, in Boromi Park (town centre) or at the recreation reserve (though the latter is not felt to be a good model), and
- Give consideration to co-locational with a wellness services to bring things together. There is empty flat (ish) land near the pool.

4.3.3 Mirboo North Consultative Committee

The Consultative committee for the present pool study raised the following points:

- The Mirboo North Swimming Pool should be a year round venue but “not like Splash” in Leongatha
- The pool development plan should link to the town’s community plan. This advocates provision of social opportunities for young people and activities and opportunities that will improve health outcomes. The closure of the Grainstore youth outreach has left a gap in provision of support programs
- A redeveloped pool should have a social role, contribute to community health and wellness, accommodate learn to swim and competition use and have a family focus. At present, young children have to go out of town for learn to swim programs as the pool is not warm enough. This reduces the number who do learn, costs money and takes attention away from the Mirboo North Swimming Pool
- In terms of an objective for the redevelopment of the pool, the committee has stated that it “wants to serve the whole community”

It was noted that activities such as pilates and yoga tended to be run from people’s homes so that provision of facilities for these and other similar activities may not be needed

Other outcomes sought by the committee were meeting educational needs, programs, local-level competition opportunities and social opportunities

- Consideration should be given to salt chlorination of the pool water
- Disability access must be provided, along with support facilities for people with a handicap
- Consider the provision of camping facilities on the land adjacent to the pool
- Warm water exercise opportunities are needed at different times of the day for different groups in the community; use could be for rehabilitation, sports injuries, aquarobics
- A lot of paramedic services are delivered in the town and these could also make use of a warm water pool
- Multi-purpose activity spaces should also be provided although there are already a lot of built facilities and meeting spaces in the town already
- All year kids drop in opportunities are needed
- Lap swimming opportunities need to be improved, especially for early morning swimmers
- The pool lacks lane ropes, flags and starting blocks for carnivals
- Change, toilet and shower facilities need to be upgraded
- Leaks in the pool tank need to be repaired
- Consider provision of a heated, covered pool in order to extend the season
- At least one of the toddler pools should be heated
- Consideration needs to be given to the issue of whether the pool is in the right place. It is a great location *provided it is suitable to continue in this location from an infrastructure viewpoint* and this will depend on the engineer's opinion. A major issue is whether the site is suitable and whether the land, infrastructure and regulatory requirements are suitable for or can accommodate growth over the next 10 to 40 years
- The history of the pool should not be ignored and the committee would definitely prefer it see the present pool and/or site retained. However, so if another site had to be selected, it might be that the current site could be turned into some other type of attraction e.g. lake, pond, park, camping area, cottage accommodation, youth camp etc. It is probable that the committee and others "will resist an initial change, but if we get the opportunity for much improved facilities, we will recover from our shock, particularly the future generations".
- A variety of components could be provided but only some will be feasible for a town of Mirboo North's size. A staged program of provision will most probably be needed, and
- Some committee members "favour the idea of a "hub" for health and wellbeing" to serve as wide a market as possible". However, a major issue in Mirboo North is the fragmentation of facilities. The concept of "hubs" would bring significant social & economic benefits, but there is uncertainty re the community's acceptance of the concept. Some commercial provision could be included eg: a small laundromat

There is a need for a "hasten slowly" approach to change and for an in depth information/ education approach to any change and a change in the mix of provision and location. Once the long term direction is decided, and provided the pool can stay in its current location in the meantime, it may be possible to develop something entirely new and then things like fitness, water aerobics, coaching lessons, café etc, can follow.

With regard to the "town's community plan" noted in the second dot point above, two community consultations were run by the community in August 2012 to identify issues and needs. The full list of issues identified in the first meeting is provided in the box (following). This represents the views of around 80 meeting attendees (approx 10 percent of the town population), as well as the outcome of 40 online and hardcopy surveys and input from 100

senior students. Depending on the approach taken, items that have the potential to be addressed in association with a pool redevelopment have been highlighted in blue.

At the second meeting, 40 attendees agreed on the following as the top five priorities:

1. A health & wellbeing centre
2. An energy hub
3. Transport
4. Traffic and pedestrian access, and
5. Recreation Reserve entrance.

The first of these priorities could be addressed through a pool redevelopment project if a broad enough perspective was taken.

Of the items recorded by the community forums, the only one which would appear to be financially and operationally improbable is the ice rink. The cost of building and running such facilities is very high, while the market needed to sustain them is unlikely to be available in the Mirboo North catchment. This is unfortunate as the waste heat from creating ice can provide major savings in energy costs for a pool.

55 COMMUNITY PLANNING IDEAS FOR MIRBOO NORTH

*Ideas which were suggested multiple times (i.e. by more than one person, in some cases by many people)

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1. *Health and wellbeing centre/primary/allied health/health promotion/mental health/integrated/community management/maternal and child health/youth/traditional and alternative health modalities
2. *Children's hub maternal health / childcare / kinder as one facility
3. *Youth engagement services, programs and activities, eg at pool, snooker club in partnership, BMX track, food bank
4. *Local health workshops, classes and activities/ exercise groups
5. Young mothers' support group
6. Fluoridation of water
7. Improved transport for access to out of town services
8. Youth centre funding renewal/extension
9. Services for elderly, especially home maintenance

ARTS AND CULTURE

1. *Community art gallery/multi-purpose studio and display space/art workshops
2. *Performing arts venue/well-equipped all-weather surface/sound shell in Baromi Park/performing arts as viable alternative to sport for children
3. Sister township project
4. Greater use of shire hall, eg dance evenings
5. Lyric Theatre visits/more support for Arty Gras and Art Show/film festival/other local events/forums and guest speaker events

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. *Additional resources at MN Primary and Secondary Schools including nurse/social worker/psychologist/chaplain. Extend links across ages and services
2. *Broaden access to and assistance for external educational opportunities and resources, especially tertiary education, traineeships, vocational education
3. *School gymnasium upgrade for student and community use, drop in centre
4. *Accessible neighbourhood house, expand adult education, tourist and community information, University of 3rd Age, computer training
5. *Enlarge library/community hub/upgrade or replace kindergarten
6. Establish community garden as a community and school resource for links to involvement, healthy eating etc
7. Broaden secondary curriculum

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. *MN energy hub to promote sustainable energy use/ renewable power for whole community/ green flag system/green town/transition town/wind towers/purchase bulk electricity/SLOC approach
2. *Impact of mining/preserve our environment incl. farming/keep out mining sponsorship
3. *Develop Baths Road Reserve - more tourist friendly, signage, clean up fire training area and other fire hazards

4. *Provide natural gas to MN
5. Assistance to farmers to plant out unproductive farmland

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY ASSETS

1. *Traffic and pedestrian management/truck parking-day and overnight/bus stop shelters/electronic speed lights outside schools/flashing 40 kph signs/50kmph speed limit in town centre
2. *Roads, drainage, footpaths, signage and street lighting (specific places identified)/street art and sculpture/beautify town entrances
3. *Main street cleanliness/weeds/flower boxes/anti-litter campaign/vacant sites /landscaping
4. *More police presence, especially at key times
5. *Transport: youth shuttle bus for Friday and Saturday nights/availability of community bus, need volunteer resource/better public transport, after school, weekends/school bus to include Yinnar/access to services
6. *More residential development/public housing/co-op/attract residents in 20-40 age group/independent living units for senior citizens
7. *Tourist mapping/promotion of events and services/new residents welcome pack/
8. *Upgrade community notice board
9. Hitching rails and horse troughs in town
10. Somewhere to legally ride motorbikes
11. Grant-makers network to maximize opportunities in town and build capacity
12. Local emergency preparedness groups and bushfire community shelters
13. Comprehensive and professional, funded website/ online guide to all community groups and events
14. Better communication and coordination between community groups

SPORT AND RECREATION

1. *Vehicle and pedestrian access to W J Tuck Reserve, including scout hall and rail trail/underpass from Baromi Park to Reserve
2. *Swimming pool planning - ensure improvements/sustainability/disabled access/longer season/diving pool and slide/better use of adjoining land
3. *Baromi Park Master Plan/development/skatebowl lighting/activities for kids/surrounding footpaths/walking track linking with rail trail/outdoor undercover venue/sound shell/return Strzelecki monument light/all-weather facilities for community events/facilities for young children and parents brought together/live performance area/half court for basketball/toilets at other end of park/planting-landscaping/outdoor exercise equipment
4. *Better access to rail trail/signage/safety/advertising/extend to Yinnar and Hazelwood Pondage/install toilets and water tanks/bike hire
5. *Tuck Reserve improvements: lighting for bottom oval/leveling top oval/better facilities for both male and female/soccer club change rooms and shelter
6. *Encourage greater community use of Grainstore
7. Community support for golf club/track improvements
8. Promotion as a sporty town/encourage new sports events eg fun run, skate comps
9. Ice skating rink
10. Pony club assets more available to adult riders

LOCAL ECONOMY

1. *Caravan and camping park/RV parking
2. *Promote town/tourism: coordinated marketing
3. *More light industry/encourage employment and business, eg local food-producers co-op including retail outlet; public laundromat; taxi license; beer garden next to brewery; good restaurant open at night; cinema in a hall; another garage and fuel station - more competitive fuel prices; another butcher's shop
4. Creation of Strzelecki Trail of sites, cafes, businesses, views, accommodation etc
5. Business incubator/ facilitator
6. Encourage Council to outsource new infrastructure in Mirboo North
7. NBN optical fibre or wireless using Dickies Hill
8. A potato festival

4.3.4 Mirboo North Swimming Pool Users Survey

As at Korumburra Swimming Pool, a user survey was conducted over the December 2012 – February 2013 period. The efforts of the Pool Advisory Committee and Swimming Pool Committee in conducting the interviews are commended. Some 300 surveys were completed although 9 had to be discarded due to a lack of information on them. The size of the sample makes it possible to draw firm conclusions as to the views of the users from the results. These are summarised below.

The Users and Use Patterns

- Some 69.6 percent of users were females compared with only 30.4 percent who were male
- The largest group of users were adults with children (47.8%), with 80 percent of the adults being women; adults with family groups were the next largest user group (25.9% of all users), and again, women outnumbered men in visiting with these groups (by a 2 to 1 ratio)
- Visits by teens were very low, accounting for only 11.5 percent of the total while young adults accounted for 10.4 percent of visits. There was generally an equal balance between males and females in these age groups
- The most common visit frequency was “a few times a season” (54.8%) while visiting several times a week (19.6%), daily (9.6%) and weekly (9%) were the next most common visit rates
- The most commonly cited reason for visiting the pool was for a children’s outing (49.3%). This was followed by cooling down on a hot day (41%) and for a social activity (35%)
- Specific aquatic activities attracted a very small proportion of users with 13 percent visiting to swim laps, 2 percent visiting for lessons, 5 percent visiting for carnivals, 4 percent visiting to use Nessie and the same percentage combined for swim lessons and swim club activities
- Other activities that attracted small percentages of users were sunbathing and spectating (6 percent each).

User Origins

With regard to where users came from to use the Mirboo North Swimming Pool, the survey results found that unlike Korumburra Swimming Pool, users came from many localities. In fact, some 52 different places were cited with a number of the visits being made by visitors from the Latrobe Valley, metro Melbourne and even interstate. The most origins source of visitors were:

Mirboo North	44.5%
Other South Gippsland district towns	8.8%
Boolarra	6.6%
District coastal towns	6.3%
Melbourne suburbs	6.0%
Traralgon	5.7%
Morwell	5.4%
Other Latrobe Valley	4.7%, and
Interstate	1.0%.

Improvements Sought

Asked what they would like to see added or improved at the Mirboo North Swimming Pool, those who were interviewed identified a wide list of actions. These are divided according to new facilities, upgraded facilities and services, and activities below:

New Facilities

Diving board	6
Café	3
Water slide	3
Barbeques with shelters	2
Heated in winter	2
Solar heat	1
More tables and chairs	1
Play equipment	1

Drinking fountain	1
Basketball ring	1
Family change rooms	1
Lockers/more storage	1
<u>Upgraded Facilities and Support Services</u>	
Improve change rooms/toilets	26
More shade/shade sails over pool	21
Warmer baby pool/Half shade	9
Fix broken tiles	4
More parking/open up top parking	4
Improve disability access, no steps	3
Permanent disabled toilets and parking	3
More trees	3
Improve car parking area	3
Heated pool	3
More flexible lap lane hours	3
Longer hours	2
Allow smoking	2
More working barbeques	2
Upgrade entrance facilities	2
Warmer kids pool	2
Shallow baby pool with slide	1
More bins	1
Lap lane	1
Remove high raised splash deck	1
Concrete top (around pool) slippery - fix	1
Revamp toddler pool - less slippery	1
Coffee machine	1
Too slippery	1
Use better ground material for concourse	1
Lift up shade over toddler pool	1
Paint concrete entry	1
Family pass	1
Lower cost	1
Radio	1
Make easier to supervise children	1
Lose the radio	1
Hot food and sandwiches	1
Season ticket holders	1
Eradicate bees	1
Concession prices	1
Open more mornings	1
Open back gate for larger groups	1
<u>Activities</u>	
Aquarobics	2
After dusk events	1
Kids activities	1.

It is evident from the list that despite its popularity with them, users saw the opportunity to make many additions and improvements to the Mirboo North Swimming Pool. Of the new provision proposals, many were non-aquatics while others had a strong water play and activities focus –as opposed to swimming or competition. The majority of the new facility proposals could be achieved quite easily although a diving board would not be possible in the existing pool (due to water depth safety regulations) while a water slide would be very expensive to both build and operate. Heating the pool for winter use could almost certainly not be achieved without replacing the water treatment equipment and all the pipe works and it is improbable that this would attract strong or additional use (given the present low use over summer) or that new use levels would be sufficient to warrant this action.

Many of the upgraded facilities would be costly but these would need to be provided in the shorter or longer term if the venue was to continue to meet community needs eg: improved

change rooms/toilets, disability toilets and parking, fixing broken tiles, reducing slippery areas. Others of the suggestions would enhance the user experience and almost certainly attract more use eg: repaired barbeques, better shade, seating, tables.

Of the suggested new *activities*, aquarobics would not really be practical given the present water temperatures but after dusk events and children's activities could be provided immediately.

User Survey Overview

Overall, the Mirboo North Swimming Pool user survey has identified a wealth of information. It has found that:

- What the pool offers would seem to be far less attractive to males than females --or that women take greater responsibility for children's recreation activities
- The pool does not attract high levels of frequent visits: the venue functions more as a place for a special day out rather than a regular use destination
- Most visits are family outings rather than swimming-focused activities
- Most visits are made by parents with children while the lowest rates of visits are made by teens, young adults and children who visit alone
- The venue attracts people from across a wide area, with this reaching well beyond the Shire and into the Latrobe Valley, regional coastal towns and to tourists from Melbourne and interstate
- Even though most do not go to swim, the setting and water are obviously strong attractions, and
- Users would like to see a wide range of new provision and improvements to the venue with most of the suggestions focused on either adding more water and social-play facilities and repairing the existing venue rather than providing something that was radically different or new. The fact that users identified so much that needed adding and fixing may help to explain why the pool does not attract a wider cross section of the community or greater numbers of users.

Several further comments are warranted on the survey findings. First, the low *frequency* of use is a concern and suggests that visits are more "one off" special activities and that the pool does not attract a regular pattern of attendance, leaving users (especially children and teenagers) with a need to find others things to do. Second, the information suggests that very few older adults used the pool, and third, although serving regional markets is good from one perspective, this is not a strong argument for keeping the pool as it is. Serving the needs of *other* communities does not mean that benefits flow to the Mirboo North community. The income generated by regional visits is unlikely to offset the cost providing the venue for them.

The users survey findings will be reviewed in later chapters of this report to assist in the formulation of the design brief for an upgraded or new swimming venue in Mirboo North.

4.3.5 Mirboo North Primary School

Two meetings were held with students and teachers at Mirboo North Primary School. The first included grades 3 and 4 students and the second, grades 5 and 6 students. The findings are recorded below.

Grades 3 and 4 students and teachers:

Virtually all the grades 3 and 4 students in the meeting indicated that they used Mirboo North Swimming Pool. The activities the venue was used for were:

- Swim club carnivals
- Keeping cool/cooling off
- Social activities and fun
- Learn to swim
- Because its cheap vs. Leongatha Splash
- For fundraising activities

- To meet friends, and
- Play.

Those who rarely or did not use the pool indicated that this was because they lived out of town (and were closer to other pools), because they were new to the area, and because they had a home pool.

Asked what needed fixing or improving at the pool, the students listed the following:

- Gates as they are rusty
- Fences
- Toilets- these are old and “stinky”
- Starting blocks
- Water temperature in the beginners’ pool
- Lights in the toilets
- The big pool is too cold
- Protection from snakes, spiders
- More parking -use the “top” land to the rear of the pool
- Cheaper entry fees
- Steps inside the pool grounds
- Tiles in pool
- Barbeque maintenance
- Ground cover under trees –often rough and prickly, and
- Very deep end of the pool is too deep.

Asked what could be added to the pool, the students listed the following:

- Water play equipment
- Swinging ropes
- A flying fox
- Water play
- Spas
- Water slide
- Hot tubs
- Sauna
- Gym
- Table tennis
- More tables on lawns
- More shade
- More seats
- Floating seats in pool
- Diving boards
- Basketball courts
- Healthier food and a more diverse mix
- Watch tower
- Swings
- Playground
- Cinema
- Café
- Wave pool and boogie boards
- Opening/closing roof

- Surf rider
- Drawing room, reading room/lounge
- Paddling boats
- Harder “Nessie”
- Recliners
- Games room
- Bird baths
- More land to fit all of the above in.

In terms of the location of an upgraded pool, all students supported the existing site, with the good access, closeness to town, views, space, birds, and trees being cited as reasons for preferring it.

Grades 5 and 6 students and teachers:

The majority of the grades 5 and 6 students used Mirboo North Swimming Pool. The activities the venue was used for were:

- Schools sports and learn to swim
- Swim coaching
- Cooling off on hot days
- Social activities and fun
- Learn to swim
- Movie nights
- For fun, especially using the inflatables
- Meeting friends and new people, and
- Play.

Those who did not use the pool indicated that they lived out of town and/or had a home pool.

A number of students visited other pools, the most common (and the reasons for the visit) being: Leongatha (quality of change facilities, family activities); Morwell (team activity); Casey RACE (birthday parties, holiday activities), and Warragul (visiting friends).

Asked what items they would like to see fixed at Mirboo North Swimming Pool, the years 5 and 6 students listed the following:

- Bees in the lawns
- Toilets, showers
 - They are old
 - They need lights
 - Doors need locks
- Pool tiles
 - Cracks
- Opening hours need to be longer
- Repainting
- Better filtration of water – leaves
- Ladders into the pool
- Concourse is slippery when wet
- Canteen food
 - Lollies
 - Better variety, and
 - Cheaper.

The following ideas for new provision were cited:

- Heating of the pool
- Waterslide
- Splash/wave pool
- Warmer kids pool – fix
- Inflatables, bouncers, pool toys
- Diving board
- Spa, sauna
- Obstacles for bigger kids
- More welcoming signs
- Open the back car park (*although this creates supervision and fee-collecting issues*)
- More shade
- Fix the road to the pool
- No fee for carers
- Rapid river, flow rider as at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre
- More pools
- Provide both indoor and outdoor pools
- More programs
- Longer opening times
- Sign/billboard/calendar of events
- Free entry
- Provide a pet pool
- Playground
- Flying fox
- Volleyball
- Sandpit
- Basketball
- Gym
- Indoor/outdoor leisure/games room
- 4D cinema, and
- Expanded land for activities.

One student called for the pool to be kept as an outdoors not indoors facility. Another indicated that there was no reason to close the pool on wet days.

4.3.6 Mirboo North Secondary College

A group of ten students and one teacher attended a meeting at the secondary college. Only around half of the group used the Mirboo North Swimming Pool, this being for swimming, to meet friends, to cool off, to have family barbeques, for school sports, and for younger members of the group, school learn to swim lessons.

The reasons for non-use of the pool given by those who did not visit it were that it was too cold, it was not relevant to their interests and that they visited friends with pools.

Other pools that were visited by the secondary school students were:

- Thorpdale –closer, free
- Morwell –warmer, family activities
- Churchill –closer and indoors.

Asked what needs fixing at Mirboo North Swimming Pool, the students listed the following:

- Change rooms: they are unattractive

- Toilets – in poor condition and very tight
- Showers – outdated
- Better heating of the pool, and
- Better barbeques.

In terms of adding new facilities, the students listed the following:

- More seats
- More shade
- A diving board
- Volleyball
- Drop in facilities
- Water slide, and
- Parent's area for socialising, coffee etc.

4.3.7 Mirboo North Lions Club

Lions Club members contribute to the operation of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool by taking responsibility for lawn mowing and pool cleaning and along with the CFA, for Mirboo Idol and Film nights.

The members indicated that the Mirboo North Swimming Pool “out-performs” Splash in Leongatha, that it attracts high levels of use by the local schools and that it is secure and safe. The Club stressed the importance of the pool to local children who have limited alternate recreational outlets in the town. It is one of the few opportunities that can generally be accessed every day over the summer holidays.

The Lions Club stressed that the pool setting and good outlook were important to the success of the pool and its ability to attract large numbers of users from the Latrobe Valley.

The Lions Club identified the following needs:

- Improved shade
- Barbeque repairs
- Extended opening hours with earlier opening and extended evenings
- Parking upgrade (the rear car park having been closed due to access abuse and non-payment)
- Improved pathways and rails, and
- Improved drinking taps.

It was maintained that a great deal more input from local businesses could be achieved if this resource was tapped.

4.3.8 Mirboo North Swimming Pool Management

The management of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool reported that at its busiest, the pool attracts of the order of 600 users. During the Great Victorian Bike Ride, of the order of 800 users can be expected. There is significant use for school and swim club carnivals.

In terms of upgrading needs the following issues were raised:

- Family change rooms and disability change room as one
- Shade for users and the trees are thinning and need further maintenance
- Increased shade for staff when on duty
- A reduction in the extent of shade over the play pool: the pool water stays very cold and deters use
- Replacement of the static play pool with water play
- Repairs to all barbeques
- Repairs to building roofing, and
- Repairs to or replacement of the PA system

- A number of trees have fallen and while others have been removed, there is an ongoing risk to users from those that remain
- The venue is a continuing site of high risk during bushfires.

The following additional items were identified as being needed:

- Lockers
- Family change facility
- More storage space
- Lane rope tie down points
- Anchors for pool flags
- Provision of a party area
- Modernisation of the toilet/change facilities: improved taps, mirrors.
- Disabled access
- Redevelopment of parking at the front of the building to eliminate traffic/pedestrian dangers, including consideration of use of the former fire brigade training track area (though there are possible rare native orchids).

4.3.9 Mirboo North and District Community Foundation

The Mirboo North District Community Foundation was founded in 2010 with a vision of enhancing the social and economic strength of the community, encouraging philanthropy and growing its legacy through good stewardship and effective partnerships. In pursuit of this vision, the Foundation makes grants across a wide range of organisations and for a wide range of purposes. It also encourages contributions from others, bequests and self-help.

The Foundation's Executive Director, Derrick Ehmke, noted that it had a focus on youth, health and wellbeing and that it was developing a reserve fund for strategic projects over the coming years. It noted however, that it did not want to be seen as an agency on which new initiatives depended but rather as one that facilitated and support action.

Given this perspective, it is improbable that the Foundation would be willing or able to fund a major proportion of any new pool development in Mirboo North as some residents might hope. However, it could well fund elements of a development that achieved innovative, clear and measurable outcomes.

4.3.10 Summary of Mirboo North Consultations

The consultations with clubs, groups and students in Mirboo North have identified a range of views regarding the future of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool. There is no doubt that the pool is well-used, particularly by parents with young children and that it is regarded highly by a significant number of people. However, regular high levels of use was not common and a range of other venues was also used. Amongst older students, a number of other pools were used and use rates dropped off.

Across all respondents, most of the issues identified regarded *improvements* to the existing facilities or new provision initiatives. These are summarised in Table 4.3 but are not listed in any order of priority.

In overview, action on the initiatives identified would create a very different venue to that which presently exists. All existing assets would be repaired and there would be a more diverse mix of indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities, focused in particular, on aquatic and *non*-aquatic play, sports and social activities. Full disability access and support services would be provided.

It should be noted however, that the issues and needs identified by the community have generally overlooked the condition of the pools themselves or the underlying ground conditions. As such, no high cost or long term development/provision actions should be initiated on the basis of the consultations input until the course of action to take on the pools themselves is resolved.

1. Upgrading the Existing Assets	2. New Provision Initiatives	3. Management/ Programming
<p>1.1 Remove some shade from the toddler's pool to allow it to warm up more</p> <p>1.2 Upgrade toilet/change facilities</p> <p>1.3 Repair and upgrade the barbeques</p> <p>1.4 Repair in-pool tiles, cracks</p> <p>1.5 Upgrade the lawn areas around the pool</p> <p>1.6 Improve user areas with more tables, seats, shade</p> <p>1.7 Repair access ladders into the pool</p> <p>1.8 Repaint the buildings</p> <p>1.9 Upgrade car parking and reopen the rear car park</p> <p>1.10 Repair the road into the pool</p> <p>1.11 Reduce the extent of the shade over the toddler's pool</p> <p>1.12 Repair and upgrade internal paths and rails</p> <p>1.13 Upgrade water treatment plant to cope with water volume</p> <p>1.14 Repair building roofs</p> <p>1.15 Ensure full disability access and support services</p> <p>1.16 Upgrade entrance facilities</p>	<p>2.1 Create a year-round venue</p> <p>2.2 Heat the pool</p> <p>2.3 Provide facilities that contribute to community health and wellness, accommodate learn to swim and competition use and have a family focus</p> <p>2.4 Ensure that a redeveloped/modernised venue can serve the whole community</p> <p>2.5 Provide facilities and programs that will meet educational needs, health programs, local-level competition opportunities and social opportunities</p> <p>2.6 Provide non-aquatic multi-purpose activity spaces and areas for an all-year kids drop in program</p> <p>2.7 Undertake initiatives that further the issues and priorities identified in the Community Plan consultation workshops of August 2012, especially a health and wellbeing centre</p> <p>2.8 Provide facilities for a range of other aquatic uses eg: spa, sauna, water play (in place of toddlers pool), water slides</p> <p>2.9 Provide facilities for a range of non- aquatic uses eg: flying fox, gym, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, playground, sandpit, indoor games area</p> <p>2.10 Provide a cafe</p> <p>2.11 Provide both an indoor and outdoor pool</p> <p>2.12 Provide more pools</p> <p>2.13 Provide more shade stations for duty staff</p> <p>2.14 Provide more storage areas</p> <p>2.15 Provide lockers</p> <p>2.16 Provide lane ropes, flags and starting blocks for carnivals</p> <p>2.17 Consider some needed commercial facilities eg: a small laundromat</p>	<p>3.1 Provide lap swimming for early morning swimmers</p> <p>3.2 Review/reduce entry fees or provide free entry, memberships, seasonal passes</p> <p>3.3 Take action to reduce snakes, spiders</p> <p>3.4 Improve the quality and range of kiosk food</p> <p>3.5 Introduce longer opening hours</p> <p>3.6 Develop and publicize a calendar of activities and events at the pool</p>

Table 4.3: Summary of Mirboo North Swimming Pool improvement needs

As at Korumburra, any of the needs listed in relation to the Mirboo North Swimming Pool cannot be considered as "strategic": however, many are important to the viability of the pool and it is recommended that Council officers and management committees review the findings of these consultations and seek to address the "non-strategic" findings as well as the key strategic items.

BENCHMARKING

5.1 Introduction

Providing sport and leisure experiences and opportunities to create healthier communities is one of the service objectives of South Gippsland Shire Council and indeed, of many Councils across Australia. From a simple walk in the park to more competitive sports, participation in sport and leisure activities and pursuits contribute to building communities in a positive way. These experiences allow people to interact and bond with each other socially and generally in a non-threatening way. Council provides aquatic facilities for the communities in both Korumburra and Mirboo North in order to achieve this objective.

This chapter is part of the study requirement and reviews events associated with the management and operation of the aquatic facilities in other Shires to gain an understanding of what benefits have arisen as a result of recent facility redevelopments or improvements. Baw Baw and Wellington Shire Councils were chosen for benchmarking purposes as each of these has undertaken a capital works program to provide significant improvements to a number of their outdoor aquatic facilities in recent years. In Baw Baw Shire, the pools researched included the Drouin and Trafalgar Outdoor Pools whilst at Wellington Shire the nominated pools were Maffra and Yarram Outdoor Pools. The samples were chosen to reflect similar facilities, operations and catchments so as to draw comparisons.

Each Council was asked a series of questions relating to the benefits derived from the capital improvements made. The following commentary provides the response and findings of the benchmarking research based on officer feedback.

5.2 Baw Baw Shire Council

The following comments and feedback was received from Baw Baw Shire Council ³.

Topic	Drouin Pool	Trafalgar Pool
Management	YMCA	YMCA
Estimated local population	10,003 (2011 Census)	3,977 (2011 Census)
Operating Season/ Times	Open from 1 December until 31 March Monday to Friday 3pm-7pm. Weekends, school and public holidays 1pm-7pm Lap Swimming 6.30am-7.30am, Monday, Wednesday, Friday-regardless of weather. (light dependent) Outdoor pools open when the temperature is forecast for 25 degrees or more	Open from 1 December to the Labour Day long weekend in mid-March. Monday to Friday 3pm-7pm. Weekends, school and public holidays 1pm-7pm Outdoor pools open when the temperature is forecast for 25 degrees or more
Venue Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 metre (6 lane) outdoor solar heated main pool • Toddler pool with beach entry and water feature • Amenities block including change/ kiosk/ first aid/ office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 metre (6 lane) outdoor solar heated main pool • Toddler pool with beach entry and water feature • Amenities block including change/ kiosk/ first aid

Table 5.1: Baw Baw Shire outdoor pool information

³ Contact Gabrielle McBain, Recreation Co-ordinator, Baw Baw Shire Council

Topic	Drouin Pool	Trafalgar Pool																
What facilities were enhanced/added/when and why?	<p>2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New concourse • Completely refurbished main pool including new wet deck • Completely refurbished toddlers pool including new wet deck, beach entry, water features and shade • Solar heating • Refurbished amenities building <p>Pool was out dated, at end of life and non-compliant (OH&S).</p>	<p>2010/2011 & 2011/2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New concourse • Demolition of old toddler pool and construction of new toddler pool with water features and new shade sails. • Main pool- interior painting including new lane markers, new tiles, new filtered water line, refurbished handrails, ladders, new lane rope anchor points • All new pipe work to main & toddler's pool, new backwash holding tank, filters, pump, automatic chemical control system, chlorine storage etc. • Solar heating <p>Pool was out dated, at end of life and non-compliant (OH&S).</p>																
What was the cost of the improvements?	\$1.13 million	\$760,000																
What outcomes were achieved as a result?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved compliance • Increase in attendance data • Better quality facility for community • Easier to manage/ maintain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved compliance • Increase in attendance data • Better quality facility for community • Easier to manage/ maintain 																
Were any partnerships developed or are they planned? Why?	The project was jointly funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development, Bendigo Bank and Baw Baw Shire Council.	The project was jointly funded by the Australian Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (Round 2) \$270,000 & the Baw Baw Shire Council \$490,000.																
Were non-aquatic facilities added or provided or are they planned, if so why?	No- summer pool only. Drouin has Bellbird Park Indoor Stadium.	No- summer pool only.																
What managerial changes were made (eg: programming, pricing, staffing). Why? What outcomes were achieved?	Nil. Council has been providing free casual entry to the pool since 2008/09 as a trial in order to encourage greater use. Council is reviewing for the 2013/14 season.	Nil. Council has been providing free casual entry to the pool since 2008/09 as a trial in order to encourage greater use. . Council is reviewing for 2013/14																
What are the attendance/usage changes?	<table> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2009/10</td> <td>10,584</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010/11</td> <td>9,150 (-13%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>8,880 (-3%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Visits	2009/10	10,584	2010/11	9,150 (-13%)	2011/12	8,880 (-3%)	<table> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2009/10</td> <td>4,695</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010/11</td> <td>3,418 (-27%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>7,354 (+115%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Visits	2009/10	4,695	2010/11	3,418 (-27%)	2011/12	7,354 (+115%)
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What financial efficiencies or outcomes have been achieved as a result?.	Obtaining grant funding maximised Council's investment. Obviously when pools are at the end of their life, they start costing a lot of money in repairs etc.	Obtaining grant funding maximised Council's investment. When pools are at the end of their life, they start costing a lot of money in repairs etc. The contract included a 12 month defect liability period, ensuring any operational issues were dealt with.																
Other comments and/or outcomes?	Drouin Pool's 2009/2010 season resulted in the largest attendance on record.	Trafalgar Pool attendances saw a 115% increase in 2011/2012 following the major refurbishment. Significant positive feedback has been received about the facility.																

Table 5.1 (continued): Baw Baw Shire outdoor pool performance information

5.2.1 Baw Baw Free Swims Program

The following comments on the Free Swim programs were provided by Baw Baw Council:

- The Baw Baw Shire provides free of charge access to all summer pools (Drouin, Neerim South, Trafalgar and Thorpdale outdoor pools and the Rawson Indoor Pool). This initiative commenced from the 2008/2009 season and has continued to be supported by Council ever since due to the demonstrated community benefits
- An evaluation of the Free Swims program during the 2008/09 season was undertaken with support from Monash University Gippsland. Over 300 surveys were collected through face to face interviews and individual submissions. The research indicated overwhelming support for the program. As a result of the free swims, 61 percent of patrons said they were more likely to visit a pool in the future
- Table 5.2 provides the attendances for all outdoor pools in Baw Baw over the last five seasons. In the 2008/09 season, an overall increase in participation of over 46 percent was recorded across all summer pools. This was the single largest percentage increase since data had been recorded and turned around a declining trend in participation. Numbers peaked in 2009/10 at 28,558 attendees across all outdoor pools with decreases over the last two seasons, with the exception of Trafalgar. Attendances continue to remain well above pre free swim levels.

Pool Venue	2007/08*	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Drouin	1,145	6,598	10,584	9,150	8,880
Trafalgar	2,361	3,053	4,695	3,418	7,354
Neerim South	2,069	3,239	4,772	3,303	3,173
Thorpdale	398	1,632	1,772	1,638	973
Rawson	5,289	5,437	6,735	6,728	6,459
Warragul	2,355	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Total	13,617	19,959	28,558	24,237	26,839

Table 5.2: Attendances for all outdoor pools in Baw Baw over the last five seasons (2008/09 marked the introduction of free swims)

- The Free Swims program has been an excellent public relations initiative for Baw Baw Shire, attracting positive media attention, supportive responses from many health and recreation organisations and culminated in the 2009 Sport and Recreation Victoria Research award
- The Free Swim Program is estimated to cost Council \$50,000 per annum. This is based on the contractors' anticipated income through admission fees during the contracted period
- The community impact has resulted in increased patronage across all pools, reduced barriers to participation and access as well as promoting and facilitating healthier lifestyles
- The free swims help to reduce health inequalities amongst the community. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA data, Baw Baw Shire has growing pockets of disadvantaged families and individuals across the municipality
- More families attending pools which increases supervision and assists with behavioural issues
- The program is consistent with other free recreation facilities eg: walking tracks, playgrounds, sporting fields, courts, etc
- The Free Swims Program assists with the achievement of the key strategic objective as set out in the Council Plan 2011-2015: *Vibrant Community*

Living - Equitable access to a range of services that support community wellness.

- The free swims program also meets the key principles of the Baw Baw Shire Recreation Strategy Plan 2005-2015 and Health and Wellbeing Plan. Key principles include:
 - Develop an active and healthy community by encouraging widespread participation in recreational activities within the Shire
 - Maximise the utilisation of facilities by encouraging practical multi-functional use of recreational and sporting facilities, and
 - Minimise the costs of participation in recreational activities, particularly for children, families, and the disadvantaged, through Council coordination and cost effective asset management practices.

Table 5.3 provides a catchment multiple comparison for Mirboo North, Korumburra, Drouin and Trafalgar.

The catchment multiple is established by dividing the estimated number of the local population by the number of attendances. The table indicates that Mirboo North and Korumburra communities use their local aquatic facilities more than Drouin, Trafalgar or the University of South Australia “CERM” © average ⁴. Mirboo North Outdoor Pool attracts the highest catchment multiple of 5.6 whilst the Korumburra Outdoor Pool attracts a catchment multiple of 3.2. In contrast Trafalgar and Drouin attracts a catchment multiple of 1.8 and 0.9 respectively. The CERM© catchment multiple medium is 2.1 and is based on input from 118 other outdoor pools around Australia.

	2011/12
Mirboo Nth attendances	12,401
Est local population (2011 Census)	2,214
Catchment multiple	5.6
Korumburra attendances	13,269
Est local population (2011 Census)	4,153
Catchment multiple	3.2
Drouin attendances	8,880
Est local population (2011 Census)	10,003
Catchment multiple	0.9
Trafalgar attendances	7,354
Est local population (2011 Census)	3,977
Catchment multiple	1.8
CERM® Catchment Multiple	2.1

Table 5.3: “Catchment multiples” comparison (see text for explanation)

5.2.2 Commentary

The following comments and points can be made from the analysis of the information provided by the Baw Baw Shire:

- Drouin Pool increased attendances in 2009/10 after refurbishment but these declined by 13 percent in 2010/11 and by a further 3 percent in the 2011/12 season. This indicates that there was a spike in attendances after

⁴ The CERM© Performance Indicators are the property of The Centre for Environmental and Recreation Management (CERM), University of South Australia. These performance indicators measure the efficiency of leisure facilities and the quality of services and compare the results with similar centres across Australia. ***It should be noted that the CERM performance indicators are a broad guide only and access, LGA policies, physical barriers, local demographics and local needs are not considered when comparisons are made to other like centres.***

refurbishment. Experience suggests that this occurs in most redevelopments or new builds due to community interest in new or perceived new facilities. This suggests that after the initial 'honeymoon' period, attendances tend to decline as those who do not swim regularly do not take up repeat or ongoing use

- Trafalgar Outdoor pool has had an increase in attendances of 115 percent from 2010/11 to 2011/12 after redevelopment. Council suggests that this is largely driven by the upgrade of the facilities given that there has been no change in the way it is managed. Council also recognises that seasonal weather patterns will have some effect on usage. Attendance data for 2012/13 are presently not available although Council believes attendances for Trafalgar will be similar to 2011/12 when the season concludes
- No financial operational data was made available due to a potential conflict of interest. Baw Baw Shire Council has been providing free entry for casual use for a five year period (including 2012/13) so financial data cannot be used for benchmarking purposes because of different fee policies, and
- Baw Baw Shire Council has deliberately operated its outdoor pools over the last five years on the basis of meeting its stated corporate objectives. The estimated financial impost was waived in order to do so.

Whilst the above information provides raw data in terms of increased use when redevelopment occurs, there are also a number of factors that need to be considered as part of any overall strategy. These include but are not limited to:

- Communities needs and aspirations and differences in these between communities or changes over time
- Ensuring equitable access
- Increased service initiatives
- Programming offerings, scheduling and opportunities, and
- Business, marketing and promotional plans and initiatives.

5.3 Wellington Shire Council

At the time of writing, no data had been provided by Wellington Shire Council due to staff resources and other internal pressures. This information will be forwarded to South Gippsland Shire Council if it becomes available.

5.4 Implications and Other Benchmarking Issues

The benchmarking review raises a number of implications and issues for both the Mirboo North and Korumburra Pools that warrant considering when developing master plans for both sites.

The extent to which public facilities, programs and services are successful depends almost entirely on the way in which they are managed, programmed and serviced. Facilities which rely on the community knowing how and when to use them, rarely achieve the outcomes which they could with good management, marketing, programming and performance monitoring. A facility is simply one of the means to the delivery of a mix of beneficial experiences. Delivering these outcomes in an optimal manner requires far more than just the "delivery" of a building.

The key elements to successful community aquatic leisure management are:

1. A clear statement of the aim of the provision
2. A clear set of management objectives which will guide decision making for all management elements
3. An appropriate management structure or model to deliver the above aim and objectives

4. A set of programs which reflect the researched needs and nature of the community and their aspirations –in keeping with the overall goal of Council
5. A team of appropriately skilled staff with the ability to continually grow and change the services offered to meet the needs of the community
6. A strategy for marketing the programs and services offered
7. A strategy for scheduling use
8. A strategy for maintaining and where appropriate, improving the condition of assets, and
9. A strategy for monitoring the outcomes and performance of the venue or venues, the staff, the programs and the services.

Councils and/or aquatic facility managers that operate with no regard to the above elements, rarely meet the needs of the broad community in an effective manner. Addressing the key elements of successful management should thus be a key task at an early point in the development and management of any community leisure venue. Although the South Gippsland Shire's aquatic leisure venues are established, the above elements are still critical in terms of ensuring Council, through management are focused and delivering programs and services that continually meet the needs of the community both in the immediate and long term.

The benchmarking research indicates that there are significant opportunities and potential outcomes which justify the redevelopment of both venues. Based on the above findings, redeveloping both outdoor aquatic facilities will almost certainly generate more use at least for the first season. However, without addressing the mix of program and use opportunities –with this being based on research into community needs-- it is unlikely to have any long term effect on participation rates or broader use. Unless there are changes to the mix of program and use opportunities, Council is simply providing the same experience and opportunities that are currently offered but in better conditions. The research conducted already suggests that the community are looking for a far more diverse range of opportunities in order to meet its needs.