SGS Economics & Planning

WINGECARRIBEE AQUATIC SERVICES DELIVERY REVIEW

FINAL REPORT
AUGUST 2020

Prepared for
Wingecarribee Shire Council

Independent insight.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) Aquatic Services Delivery Review

The WSC has announced that a review of aquatic services delivery in the Shire will be undertaken. This is part of the Council's response to the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* initiative. SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd (SGS) has been commissioned to provide an evidence-based plan to guide WSC decision-making in relation to its swimming pools over the next 10-15 years.

Current facilities

WSC currently owns four pools. There are other privately-owned pools in the Council area that also provide for some public access.

Bowral Swimming Centre

The Bowral Swimming Centre is currently the largest facility. It opened in 1971 and operates seasonally from October to March. The Centre includes:

- 50m outdoor heated pool (6 lanes)
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Kiosk, picnic facilities.

Mittagong Pool

The Mittagong Pool is located in a natural bush setting in the creek bed of the Nattai River. This location has been used for swimming and water-based activities for around a century, with major development of additional facilities first occurring in 1959.

The Mittagong Swimming Centre is typically open from October to March. During the 2014-15 pool season it was closed for refurbishment, as well as a portion of the 2015-16 season, with the Centre re-opening in January 2016.

In the 2016-17, 2017-18 and half of the 2018-19 pool seasons, the pool was closed due to flood damage. The Mittagong Swimming Centre re-opened in October 2019, however after only two weeks closed again, due to a liner failing in the balance tank. The pool didn't re-open until the 14 December 2019. This has resulted in the pool being closed for a substantial time of the reporting period that this report covers.

Facilities at the pool included:

- 50m outdoor heated pool (6 lanes)
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Kiosk, picnic facilities.

Bundanoon Swimming Centre

The Bundanoon Pool was built with funds donated by the community and other benefactors. It opened in 1960. The pool was also originally managed by volunteers, but was later gifted to the Council. It is open seasonally from November to March but is generally open for fewer hours than Bowral. Facilities include:

- 25m outdoor 4-lane heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Kiosk and change rooms.

Moss Vale Aquatic Centre

The current Moss Vale Aquatic Centre was built on the site of a former outdoor pool, at a cost of $8.4 million. It opened in November 2013. It is much newer than the other WSC aquatic facilities and is co-located with a gym. It is the only pool owned by the WSC that is enclosed and available for year-round use. The day-to-day management of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre and the gym has been outsourced. Facilities include:

- Indoor 25m pool
- 15m program pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Health club (gym), creche, meeting room, café.

Recent initiatives

The Bundanoon Community Association, a local community group, has been seeking support from the Wingecarribee Shire Council for a retractable roof that can enclose the Bundanoon Pool and extend its use to 12 months of the year.

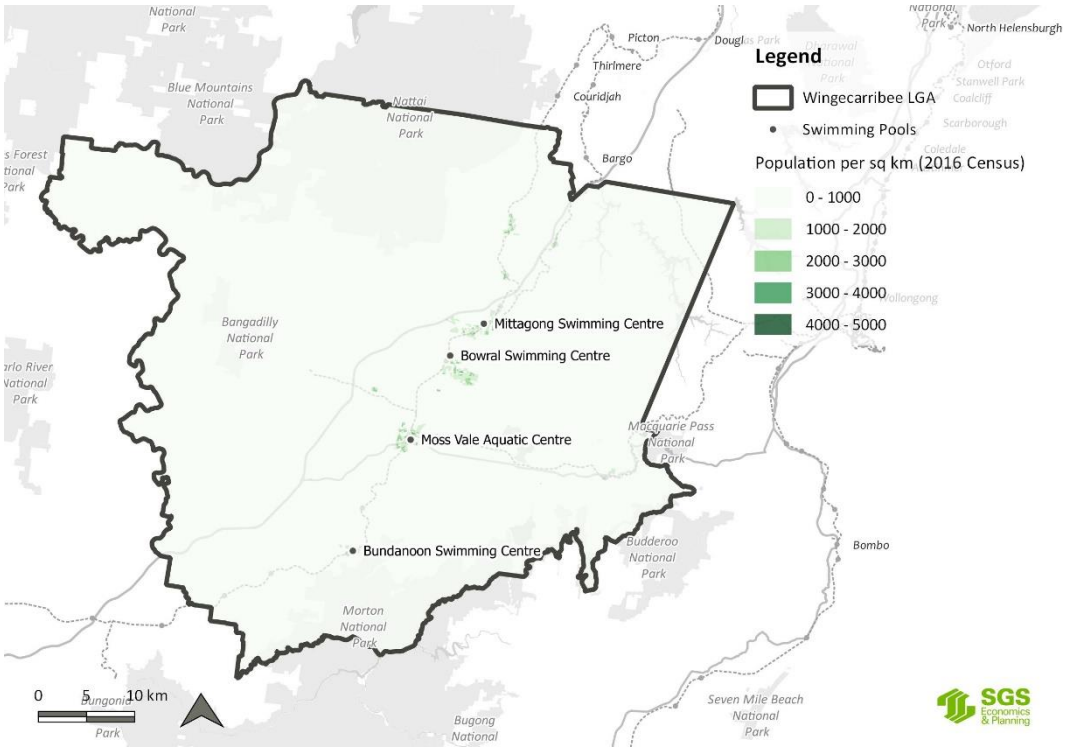
The Robertson District Swimming Pool Association had raised funds for a four lane, above ground, 25 metre, heated pool. This project was expected to cost around $1 million with some of the funding being sourced through ClubGRANTS and the National Stronger Regions Fund[1]. In May 2018, the building structure being constructed to cover the Robertson community pool collapsed.[2] In June 2020, it was reported that the project had been shelved due to rising costs associated with the building collapse and investigation.[3]

Location of WSC Pools

The figure below shows the location of the four Council-owned swimming pools in the Wingecarribee LGA, and the population density around each.

[1] Southern Highland News, 2 June 2017.
[2] Southern Highland News 20 May 2018. 'Robertson Aquatic Shed Collapses'
[3] Meyers J, 16 June 2020. 'Legal procedures for compensation, rising costs prompting shelving of Robertson Aquatic Centre, Southern Highland News.

SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

WSC is located within a relatively easy 30 to 60 minute drive to beaches on the South Coast of NSW. It also includes a number of freshwater lakes and streams.

Distance between pools relative to other LGAs

In comparison to other comparable LGAs, the aquatic facilities within WSC are relatively close. In particular, the Mittagong and Bowral Swimming Centres are located within 5.5 kilometres of each other. The table below shows the distance in kilometres between pools in the Shire.

DISTANCE IN KILOMETRES BETWEEN AQUATIC CENTRES WITHIN THE WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE

Wingecaribee Shire	Mittagong Swimming Centre	Bowral Swimming Centre	Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	Bundanoon Swimming Centre
Mittagong Swimming Centre	-	5.5	16.1	38.2
Bowral Swimming Centre	5.5	-	10.7	27.6
Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	16.1	10.8	-	16.2
Bundanoon Swimming Centre	38.3	26.6	16.2	-

Privately owned pools

Some WSC residents can access privately-owned pools, including indoor pools that are open year-round. Some retirement villages also provide pools for use by their residents.

The Frensham Pool is one pool that is currently used for swimming lessons and for water polo training. WSC residents also previously had some access to the pool at Solar Springs Health Resort, but this facility has recently been sold and is being redeveloped as a boutique hotel. The Jan Dee Swim School pool closed in late 2017, and this site is also being redeveloped.

Reliance by WSC residents on access to privately-owned pools cannot be guaranteed, and the costs of membership arrangements may also be restrictive, but it is still appropriate to consider these privately-owned pools as part of planning for aquatic facilities across the LGA.

Infrastructure Funding

The WSC's Financial Statements estimate the 10 year Capital Replacement Value of all four pools as $3.44 million and the 10 year Maintenance Value as $1.69 million.

The estimated annual cost for replacement is $344,331 and for maintenance $169,585.

Based on the available funds to undertake replacement and maintenance the estimated annual funding gap for all facilities is $164,331 for replacement and $149,58 for maintenance. Indicating a significant and growing shortfall in budgets for replacement and maintenance.

Previous WSC Aquatic Facilities Strategy (2012)

The 2012 Strategy was prepared to guide WSC decision-making and to develop an integrated strategic approach to planning for the future of public aquatic facilities across the Shire. It was intended that the strategy be reviewed annually.

Findings included that:

- The Mittagong, Bowral and Bundanoon pools were all over 40 years old, and required substantial capital funding over the next seventeen years to meet compliance and community needs and expectations.

A key objective of the strategy was to enhance and improve current facilities, and to upgrade water treatment and filtration plants and associated infrastructure, in order to comply with Department of Health guidelines.

At the time that the 2012 Strategy was released, Council had already decided to replace the outdoor pool at Moss Vale with a new indoor facility, with work on this commencing in July 2012.

The Mittagong aquatic facility was identified as the next centre for a major upgrade, due to its high patronage, age and structural problems. The subsequent flooding and major damage to the Mittagong Pool focussed the attention of Council on the risks associated with the location of this pool, and the need to rebuild the facility in a way or location that would minimise the level of damage that might occur from future floods.

Demand for Aquatic Facilities and Services

Demographic characteristics and projections

The Wingecarribee Shire Council area had a population of 48,998 at the 2016 Census, an increase of around 3,400 people from the 2011 Census population.[4] The LGA had a 12.7% increase in population between 2006 and 2016.

The population of the LGA is projected to increase by around further 2,500 people between 2016 and 2041, to a population of around 51,500. By this time, 42% of the population (around 21,400 people) are expected to be aged 65 years or older (up from 32% in 2016). Over this time an additional 3,100 dwellings will be needed, which will likely be concentrated around the main centres of Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale. As such these areas are likely to see the largest increases in demand for aquatic facilities.

Given the projected increase in the population aged over 65, there is likely to be a particular increase in the demand for water-based exercise classes and rehabilitation, as well as swimming for general fitness and recreation by this age group. There is likely to be increased demand for use of heated indoor aquatic facilities that can be easily accessed by older people and people with disabilities. Given that many of those in older age groups will also be retired from the workforce, they are likely to have more time for pool-based exercise and social activities.

Participation in swimming and associated activities

Swimming remains one of the most popular forms of physical activity undertaken by Australians, for both adults and children. Swimming is ranked 4th in terms of participation, undertaken by 15.7% of adults in 2019, behind only walking (43.2%), fitness/gym activities (36.6%), and athletics (including jogging and running, 16.4%). Swimming is also the most popular organised sporting activity for children (both girls and boys), with over 30% engaging in organised swimming activities outside of school hours. Many more children also participate in swimming as an informal recreation activity.

Pool admissions and subsidies

The table below shows the number of visits to each of the WSC pools in 2018-19, operating deficits and subsidies per visit. Additional information, including information for earlier years, is included in Section 6.1 of this document.

It should be noted that during the 2019/20 pool season there was a major plant failure at the Mittagong Pool resulting in its closure from October to December 2019. In addition, bushfires impacted both the northern and southern villages during the 2019/20 season and may have resulted in lower attendance due to air pollution. The Bowral pool also closed one week early due to COVID-19 government restrictions.

WSC SWIMMING POOL VISITS AND SUBSIDIES, 2018-19

Pool	No. of Admissions	Operating Deficit - Actual	Subsidy per visit
Bowral (outdoor)	38,464	$314,893	$8.19
Bundanoon (outdoor)	5,788	$143,486	$24.79
Moss Vale (indoor)	188,918	$1,364,433	$7.22
Mittagong (outdoor)	16,437	$454,423	$27.65
All WSC Pools	**249,607**	**$2,277,235**	**$9.12**
All WSC Pools (excluding Mittagong)	**233,167**	**$1,822,812**	**$7.82**

[4] ABS 2016 Census Quickstats, http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA18350?opendocument

Source: Wingcarribee Shire Council data.

WSC SWIMMING POOL VISITS AND SUBSIDIES, 2019-20

Pool	No. of Admissions	Operating Deficit - Actual	Subsidy per visit
Bowral (outdoor)	32,128	$349,137	$10.87
Bundanoon (outdoor)	4,179	$179,247	$42.89
Moss Vale (indoor)[5]	149,273	$1,535,363	$10.29
Mittagong (outdoor)	15,510	$538,878	$34.74
All WSC Pools	**201,090**	**$2,602,625**	**$12.94**
All WSC Pools (excluding Mittagong)	**188,392**	**$2,041,744**	**$10.84**

Source: Wingcarribee Shire Council data.

Issues for consideration

Comparative subsidies

The subsidies provided by WSC for the provision of aquatic services are not unusual. Most councils subsidise public swimming pool operational and maintenance costs. Councils also generally rely on grants from other levels of government and on other sources of income for swimming pool capital replacement costs, refurbishments or new developments.

- On a stand-alone basis none of the Councils included in a recent survey by the Victorian Auditor-General owned aquatic facilities that were fully financially self-sustaining over the longer term.

Public aquatic industry service providers have provided information and statistics to the Customer Experience Research Metrics and Performance Indicators (CERM PI) Benchmarking project at the University of South Australia since 1992. This has led to the development of operational benchmarks for aquatic centres of different sizes and for those serving different populations. The CERM performance indicator for operational subsidies for outdoor pools in regional centres with a population catchment of up to 10,000 is around $6 per visit. The CERM performance indicator for the operational subsidies for indoor pools such as the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is $0.60 per visit.

These CERM benchmarks suggest that the subsidies per visit to pools in WSC are higher than the industry norm. However, it is also relevant that these CERM performance indicators were derived from information provided for 48 aquatic centres across Australia with indoor pools only, and 39 aquatic facilities with outdoor pools only. It is likely that many of the smaller and more highly subsidised pools have not been included in the CERM performance indicator calculations.

The information on operational subsidies is also likely to include varying provisions for pool maintenance.

Many Councils in regional and rural areas provide subsidies significantly greater than those provided by WSC to ensure that pools can continue to operate.

As well as aquatic facilities, local governments also subsidise a range of other community facilities, including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, cultural facilities and libraries. All these facilities are judged as adding value to the lives of constituents, although not all facilities will be used by all constituents.

[5] The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre was not operating during the 4th quarter of 2019-20

Benchmarks and guidelines for aquatic facility provision

Comparative rates of provision (which are derived from existing rates of facility provision in similar areas) are often used as a starting point to assess the adequacy of current facilities or to assess the need for new facilities. However, there is no universally accepted set of comparative rates of provision for community facilities and services.

Planning for community and sporting infrastructure also needs to reflect not just comparative rates of provision or benchmarks, but also the socio-demographic and geographic circumstances of the catchment population. There are different considerations for inner city areas, greenfield growth developments, rural residential, regional and rural areas. In regional areas the relative isolation of settlements and the distances people might have to travel will be a key determinant of what facilities might be required.

Most standards and guidelines have been developed to meet infrastructure needs in rapidly expanding urban environments. For example, the benchmark or standard identified for an indoor aquatic/fitness centre in *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas, (*Growth Areas Authority)[6], is one centre for every 40,000 to 50,000 people.

For outdoor pools, the following standards have previously been identified for urban areas:

- For a population of 150,000 – one FINA competition-standard 50m pool
- For a population of 75,000 – one 25m or 50m pool for recreational, club, water polo, diving and competitive swimming
- For a population of 30,000 – one 25m leisure pool.

Across the state of Victoria in 2016, there was an average of one council pool for each population of 21,300, with the number of Council pools per head of population being higher in regional areas than in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The information included in this report on aquatic facilities provided by councils in other regional areas of NSW, demonstrates that WSC is not alone in having a relatively high number of Council-owned aquatic facilities per head of population. In the WSC area, there is around one facility for every 12,000 residents.

Aquatic Facility Market Segments and Trends

The users of aquatic facilities in Australia can roughly be categorised into four market segments:

- Recreation and leisure
- Fitness and training
- Education, and
- Therapy.

Recent trends in aquatic facility development have been for larger multi-use combined indoor and outdoor facilities, that cater for all of the market segments identified above.

There has also been a recent trend to include a range of complementary facilities and services in association with swimming pools. These can include:

- Gyms and other land-based fitness activities
- Health and therapeutic service facilities such as massage therapists
- Sports-associated retail
- A range of café and other food and drink services, and
- Childcare.

[6] Prepared by Australian Social & Recreation Research in April 2008, with funding provided by the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development.

These ancillary services and facilities can help to attract additional patrons to the facility, and cross-subsidise administrative and operational costs. Aquatic facilities that include a range of services and spaces also increase their attractiveness as social hubs.

Feedback from consultations on WSC aquatic facilities and services

The views of WSC pool users and residents were sought through contact via emails and telephone conversations. In addition, analysis of the information provided as part of Council's annual survey of individual pools users was also undertaken.

The organisations and individuals contacted included representatives of swimming groups, swim schools, community groups and businesses. All schools in the area were also invited to provide comments on current facilities and services and suggestions for improvements.

The results from these consultations were generally consistent with findings from other local government areas, that is, local communities generally place a high social value on the availability of aquatic facilities. Community members are likely to want a swimming pool to be available even if they do not use it.

People living in different parts of the WSC local government area were all likely to support the maintenance and improvement of the pool closest to where they lived.

Further investigation regarding the feelings of the wider community would be beneficial to ensure that Council understands the wants and needs of the whole community.

Findings, Options and Draft Recommendations

In developing a strategy for aquatic facilities in an area, there is a need to consider the size and diverse circumstances of the catchment population, and their different needs. It is also highly desirable to provide for flexibility to respond to changing needs.

Increase in overall demand

As noted above, the population of the LGA is expected to increase by 2,500 people to around 51,500 by 2041. Most of the growth in this period is projected to be in age groups above 65, and is likely to be concentrated around the LGA's main centres (Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale).

Improvements to current facilities would also likely lead to an increase in the number of visits to aquatic facilities. The replacement of the outdoor Moss Vale pool with an indoor aquatic facility increased attendance tenfold from an average of around 15,000 per year for the 5 years up to 2011-12, to over 150,000 in more recent years. While this partly reflects the year round and longer daily operating hours of the new Moss Vale aquatic facility, it is likely that this new facility is also encouraging new participants, as well has more frequent visits by previous swimmers.

The development of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is also largely assumed to be responsible for a more than doubling of the number of visits to aquatic facilities across the whole WSC over the past 10 years. This far outpaced the growth in population in the WSC, which was 12.7% between 2006 and 2016.

The future of each of the current pools

As is clear from the feedback from the consultations undertaken, from the annual surveys of pool users and from the broad directions identified in the 2012 Strategy, each of the four WSC pools is highly valued by local users, some of whom will have different needs and preferences. Specific comments in relation to each of the pools are as follows.

Moss Vale Aquatic Centre

This pool opened in 2013 and is clearly meeting the need for an indoor pool that is open all year round. It is also providing for some residents who would not use the other pools and is encouraging new customers to participate in health and fitness activities.

OPTIONS FOR MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE

MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Maintain current facilities.	▪ It would be useful to continue to monitor use of this facility, any changes to the profile of users and feedback from users.
Option 2: Investigate demand for and feasibility of expanding existing facilities	▪ Investigate potential for expansion and the extent of demand for existing and/or additional facilities at this site

When considering expenditure priorities, SGS suggests a "business as usual" approach for the Moss Vale facility in the short-to-medium term. This will need to include regular maintenance and responding to asset repair priorities.

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[7] indicated that the following matters required urgent attention:

- Filters and tanks require confined space signage
- Potable supply water reduction pressure zone device (RPZ) doesn't have service history tag
- Street service entry gate doesn't have Hazchem signage
- Ozone alarm sensor require calibration
- Dry chemicals stored on pallets on the plant floor required physical barriers to separate chemicals.

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for MVAC would cost an estimated $4,500 or less.

Given the increased population anticipated in the LGA over the next 20 years, and the significant increase in those aged 65 and over, it would be useful to assess the capacity of the current Moss Vale Pool to cater for this increased demand. It would also be useful to gather more comprehensive information on current users of the Moss Vale Pool, particularly on those who are travelling from outside Moss Vale to attend this facility (see recommendations in 'Next Steps' in section 6.5 of this report.

Mittagong Pool

Feedback from the consultations indicated that this pool was highly valued for its ambience, and as a place for social and recreational activities. It has also previously been used for school swimming events and for water polo.

However, the location of this pool in a river bed has meant that it has been vulnerable to flood damage. As a result of the most recent flooding, in 2016, the floors of both the 50 metre pool and the Learn-to-Swim Pool sustained severe damage. The Pool's plant room was also flooded, and valuable equipment was destroyed.

The Mittagong Pool has now been repaired and was reopened in December 2019.

[7] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

SGS notes that climate change projections indicate that extreme rainfall occurrences could increase in the near and far future across much of NSW, including the South East and Tablelands region.

OPTIONS FOR MITTAGONG POOL

MITTAGONG POOL	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Avoid any other major expenditure[8] for at least 10 years or until high priority maintenance or the next major flood occurs.	▪ Scope for increased use of the pool site not actively considered.
Option 2: Undertake targeted consultation and develop a long-term plan for the site taking into account flooding risks and financial implications. Assess potential interest in activities, such as climbing walls and volleyball courts that could attract people to use this site at the time of year when it is not used for water-based activities.	▪ It would be beneficial to discuss with the community the likely risks associated with future flooding and potential financial implications, so that informed decisions can be made about future replacement of pool facilities (beyond what is included in the current contract). ▪ Consultations may lead to the identification of options for use of the site that are less likely to be impacted by flooding. ▪ May also identify opportunities for better all-year-round use of the site.

SGS recommends that further consultation with the WSC community should take place, and a long term plan for the Mittagong Pool be prepared, taking into account financial implications and risks associated with development on the current site.

If the new replacement facilities are impacted by flooding in the next 10 years, with impacts as significant as those that occurred in 2016, SGS suggests that consideration be given to replacing the 50 metre pool with water park and recreation activities that may be less impacted by flooding.

It would also be useful to gauge potential interest in activities that could attract people to use this site at the time of year when it is not used for water-based activities. Facilities that may be used year-round, such as climbing walls or volleyball courts could be considered to increase use of the site. Consideration would have to be given as to whether shading of the site would make it unattractive for outdoor activities during the cooler months of the year.

Alternatively, consideration could be given to an indoor facility at another location in the northern end of the Shire. This could include complementary facilities such as a gym and/or outdoor facilities or a hydrotherapy pool, to cater for the changing needs and demographics of the community.

Bowral Swimming Centre

The Bowral Swimming Centre includes a six-lane 50 metre pool that is suitable for school carnivals, squad training, as well as for other fitness and recreation uses, however the current pool is ageing. For school carnivals and competition swimming, it is also preferable to have a 50m pool with 8-10 lanes. An 8-10 lane pool provides the opportunity to allocate use of some lanes for squad training[9] or similar, while still allowing use of the 50m pool by others. allowing 2 lanes for recreation and 2 for lap swimming.

The Bowral facility also includes smaller pools and outdoor space for general relaxation and cooling off on hot days. Challenges for the Bowral facilities include meeting health and water quality requirements, as the general infrastructure and amenities are outdated and in need of major refurbishment. Currently all four pools at the centre operate on the same water

[8] It should be noted that the Building Condition Report has found that the Mittagong Swimming Centre Plant Room concrete structure has a limited life and was assessed to be in poor condition.
[9] Currently squad training is limited to 2 lanes during peak times from 6-9am and 3.30-6pm.

treatment plan, which means that the water turn-over time for the pools is greater than the maximum recommended by NSW Health.[10] The continuation of current "patch up" maintenance arrangements has risks, and is not generally considered to be cost effective.

It is estimated that the cost to build three new water treatment plants to service each pool would require an investment of at least $2.5 million plus GST.[11] The 10 year Capital Replacement Value for the Bowral Swimming Centre is $962,500 and the 10 year Maintenance Value is $448,200.

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[12] indicated that the following matters required urgent attention:

- Chlorine truck bulk delivery area doesn't conform to the current standard
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require overflow and vent pipes
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks transfer points need to conform to current standard
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require identification signage
- All filters, tanks and valve pits require confined space signage

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for Bowral Pool would cost an estimated $36,000 or less.

OPTIONS FOR BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE

BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Business as Usual - Maintain Bowral Pool and associated facilities to ensure health, safety and access arrangements continue as at present but are not improved.	▪ This would be the least costly option in the short term. This option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the pool at short notice. ▪ Current pool filtration arrangements mean that contamination of water in one pool requires the closure of all pools. Current pool is not a year-round facility and does not meet contemporary standards for disability access. ▪ Renewal and maintenance costs as identified in the 2019 Condition audit are significantly more than what is budgeted for this centre.
Option 2: Undertake more detailed assessment of options to redevelop the current site by replacing all current pools and on-site facilities with a new outdoor 50m pool (min 8 lanes) and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale. The indoor facility to be open year-round.	▪ This would become the major aquatic complex for the WSC. It could meet the needs of a range of users and would be conveniently located close to the areas where population is currently concentrated and population growth is occurring. ▪ This redevelopment would likely mean that for at least one summer swimming season, the Bowral Pool would not be available and would reduce swimming opportunities in the district during the construction period.
Option 3: Identify a new site in the northern area of WSC for a new facility similar to that proposed in Option 2. Once the new facility is completed, sell the current site to partially offset the cost of the new development.	▪ Similar advantages to Option 2. Would rely on identification and purchase of a suitable site. ▪ Development on a new site could take place prior to closure of the current site, which would ensure continued access to swimming facilities during the summer season.

If the Bowral swimming centre is to remain in its current location, SGS suggests that more detailed work be commissioned to assess options for major renewal of the facilities on this

[10] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bowral Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council, pg.11.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

site. This should include consideration of a range of options including replacement of all the current facilities with an outdoor 50 metre pool with 8-10 lanes plus an indoor facility, similar to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre.

Consideration should also be given to the use of this site for complementary all-year-round recreation facilities. Facilities open all year round would enable the population around Bowral, including the increasing number of older people, to maintain or improve their fitness and physical and mental well-being. As has been demonstrated, the opening of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre significantly increased overall participation in swimming and related activities.

Another option to be assessed would be whether there is a suitable alternative site for a new indoor/outdoor pool complex in the north of the Shire with the potential to integrate complementary facilities such as gymnasium, library, community centre, allied health professionals, specialised pools (i.e.hydrotherapy), wet play park, regional playground and/or childcare facilities.

Development of a new aquatic facility, including a new 50 metre pool, on another site would allow for continued operation of the current Bowral Pool while the new facility was being constructed. Once development on the new site had been completed, the current site could be sold, to partially offset the costs incurred.

The consideration of options should take into account recurrent as well as up-front costs and subsidy implications.

Bundanoon Pool

Bundanoon Pool is the smallest of the current pools and serves a relatively small catchment population. As shown by the information on admission numbers and subsidies, this pool also has the highest subsidy per visit.

The current pool opening hours are also limited, which reduces some of the administrative costs (such as for lifeguards), but also reduces the opportunity to offset fixed costs such as cyclical maintenance.

As noted above, the Bundanoon Community Association has been seeking support from the Wingecarribee Shire Council for a retractable roof that can enclose the Bundanoon Pool and extend its use to 12 months of the year. However investment in a retractable roof may not be advisable given that there are significant and more pressing issues associated with the pool coming to the end of life, with expansion joints coming to the end of their useful life, drumming and deterioration of the tile bed and grouting, unlined return gutters creating soiling, UV damage to the lining and pool plant components requiring immediate replacement.[13]

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[14] highlighted the following significant issues with the pool:

a) Expansion Joints throughout the pools are coming to the end of their useful life and are showing signs of deterioration.

b) Tiles throughout all pools show signs of drumming and deterioration on the tile bed. From inspection it was noted that the tile and bedding in areas has come away from the concrete structure creating a void.

c) Grout on tile bed is wearing away, it is recommended that all tiling areas are replaced and re-grouted to re-establish the integrity of the tiles.

d) Soiled water return gutters – concrete gutters are raw exposed concrete which is allowing chlorides and other organic matter to seep through the concrete and become embedded internally. It is recommended that the gutters be lined to prevent any further exposure to build up.

e) Being an outdoor pool (exposed to natural UV) they need to be repainted frequently to maintain not only the aesthetic appeal but also protect the concrete from chlorides and organics from finding their way into the concrete structure.

The Audit also indicated that the following matters required immediate attention:

- All filters and tanks require confined space signage
- Acid and chlorine dosing injection hose has not been installed into a protective carrier pipe
- Chlorine truck bulk delivery areas do not conform to current standards
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require overflow and vent pipes
- Chlorine bulk storage transfer point does not conform to best practice.

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for Bundanoon Pool would cost an estimated $31,600 or less.

In addition, there are significant maintenance issues associated with the pool condition include the need to replace grouting, pool tiles, lining of water return gutters and repainting.

[13] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bundanoon Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

[14] Ibid.

BUNDANOON POOL	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Maintain current Bundanoon Pool and associated facilities to ensure health, safety and access arrangements are maintained as at present, but not improved. Maintain current opening hours.	▪ This option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the pool at short notice. ▪ Current pool is not a year-round facility and does not meet contemporary standards for disability access.
Option 2: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Allow adults-only access when the pool is not supervised during the current swimming season, subject to implementation of swipe card and risk management arrangements similar to those used by the Snowy Valleys Council.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Would allow assessment of potential for increased use of the pool by adults if opening hours were extended. This could be used to inform decision making about future improvements to the pool.
Option 3: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Identify and test options for subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by residents of the Bundanoon area, when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with Bundanoon Pool equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Monitoring use of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by Bundanoon residents could be used to indicate potential increased use of the Bundanoon Pool, if improvements were made and opening hours extended.
Option 4: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Construct a retractable roof as proposed by the Bundanoon Community Association and extend opening hours so that the pool is available year round.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with Bundanoon Pool equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Unless unsupervised access was introduced (see Option 2), increased opening hours and usage would be unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to offset additional costs incurred for lifeguards, heating, etc. It is likely that the average subsidy for each visit to the Bundanoon pool would increase. ▪ There are substantial condition and maintenance issues that should be responded to prior to any investment in a retractable roof.
Option 5: Consider replacement options as the Bundanoon pool structure is reaching the end of its life.	▪ The current pool and facilities are old with significant costs associated with refurbishment or replacement. ▪ Redevelopment of the former pool at Moss Vale to an indoor facility has substantially increased the number of visits to the pool, including visits from residents of Bundanoon. ▪ The current and projected population of Bundanoon is still significantly less than for Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale, with relatively high recurrent subsidies needed if the pool was retained and major investment in refurbishment and upgrading required. ▪ May need to consider other options including consolidating facilities in an area accessible to Bundanoon residents.

Options suggested for consideration include consideration of replacement options by WSC given that there is a need for a major upgrade to the existing pool structure and amenities. Similar to the Bowral Swimming Centre, the proposal would need to consider recurrent as well as capital costs for the facility upgrade. SGS suggests that if this proposal is to be justified, an overall reduction in the subsidy per visit would need to be achieved.

Consideration could also be given to the relative costs and options for subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by residents of the Bundanoon area, when the Bundanoon Pool is closed. In addition, consideration could also be given to allowing restricted access to the Bundanoon pool when pool staff are not in attendance, similar to arrangements at Tumut. This consideration would need to include a risk assessment and could initially be approved for a limited period and subject to review.

Summary of Options for Overall Strategy

OPTIONS FOR LGA

OPTIONS	COMMENTS
Option 1: Maintain aquatic facilities at a minimum standard to meet health & safety requirements.	▪ This would be the least costly option in the short term. However this option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the Bowral, Bundanoon or Mittagong pools at short notice. ▪ Bowral and Bundanoon Pools are ageing, and do not meet current standards for change rooms, pool filtration systems and disability access. Short term "fixes" are not generally providing cost effective longer-term solutions.
Option 2 (Recommended Option): Undertake further consultations as input to the development of a long term plan for the Mittagong Pool site. Maintain current facilities at Moss Vale. Undertake more detailed assessment of options to replace current facilities at the Bowral Pool with a new outdoor 50m pool and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale. This could be on the current site at Bowral or a new site in the same area. Maintain aquatic facilities in Bundanoon at a minimum standard to meet health & safety requirements in the short-to-medium term. Assess the potential for increased use of the Bundanoon pool if opening hours were extended. This could include testing an option for adults-only swipe card access to the pool when the pool is not supervised, and assessing the impact of subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.	▪ Redevelopment or replacement of the Bowral Pool to provide for a 50m outdoor pool and indoor facility similar to Moss Vale, would provide a major aquatic complex that would meet the needs of a range of users, and would be conveniently located to the areas where population is currently concentrated and population growth is occurring. ▪ Assessing the potential for increased use of the Bundanoon Pool could inform decision making about future improvements to the pool.
Option 3: Maintain current facilities at Moss Vale and Mittagong. Undertake more detailed assessment of options to replace current facilities at the Bowral Pool with a new outdoor 50m pool and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale. This could be on the current site at Bowral or a new site in the same area (as for Option 2, above). Consider replacement options as the Bundanoon pool structure is reaching the end of its life.	▪ The current pools and facilities at Bowral and Bundanoon are old and in need of major refurbishment or redevelopment. ▪ Redevelopment or replacement of the Bowral Pool to provide for a 50m outdoor pool and indoor facility similar to Moss Vale, would provide a major aquatic complex that would meet the needs of a range of users. ▪ The current and projected population of Bundanoon is still significantly less than for Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale, with relatively high recurrent subsidies needed if the pool was retained with major replacement or refurbishment required. ▪ May need to consider other options including consolidating facilities in an area accessible to Bundanoon residents.

Summary of Recommendations

For the **Moss Vale Aquatic Centre**, SGS recommends a "business as usual" approach in the short-to-medium term, capacity of this facility could be potentially expanded to meet

increased demand in future years. There will continue to be maintenance costs associated with this, but to a lesser extent than older facilities.

For the **Mittagong Pool,** SGS recommends that further consultation with the WSC community should take place, and a long term plan for the Mittagong Pool be prepared, taking into account financial implications and risks associated with development on the current site.

If the new replacement facilities are impacted by flooding again in the next 10 years, with impacts as significant as those that occurred in 2016, SGS suggests that consideration be given to replacing the 50 metre pool with water park and recreation activities that may be less impacted by flooding.

For the **Bowral Swimming Centre**, SGS recommends that more detailed work be commissioned to assess options for major renewal of the facilities on this site, or on an alternate site in the northern areas of WSC. This should include consideration of a range of options including replacement of all the current facilities with an outdoor 50 metre pool plus an indoor facility similar to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre.

For the **Bundanoon Pool**, SGS recommends that options for further consideration take into account the need to reduce the current subsidy per visit for use of the pool. Assessment of the proposal for a retractable roof could also include provision for a major upgrade to the existing pool structure and amenities, but would need to consider the issue of reduced usage of indoor aquatic facilities in other locations

To assess the potential for increased usage, consideration could also be given to trialling restricted access to the Bundanoon pool by adults only, when pool staff are not in attendance, and assessing the impact of subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.

Next Steps

SGS recommends that the findings and recommendations in this draft report be subject to further consideration by Council representatives, and that this report then be released for further public consultation.

1. CONTEXT

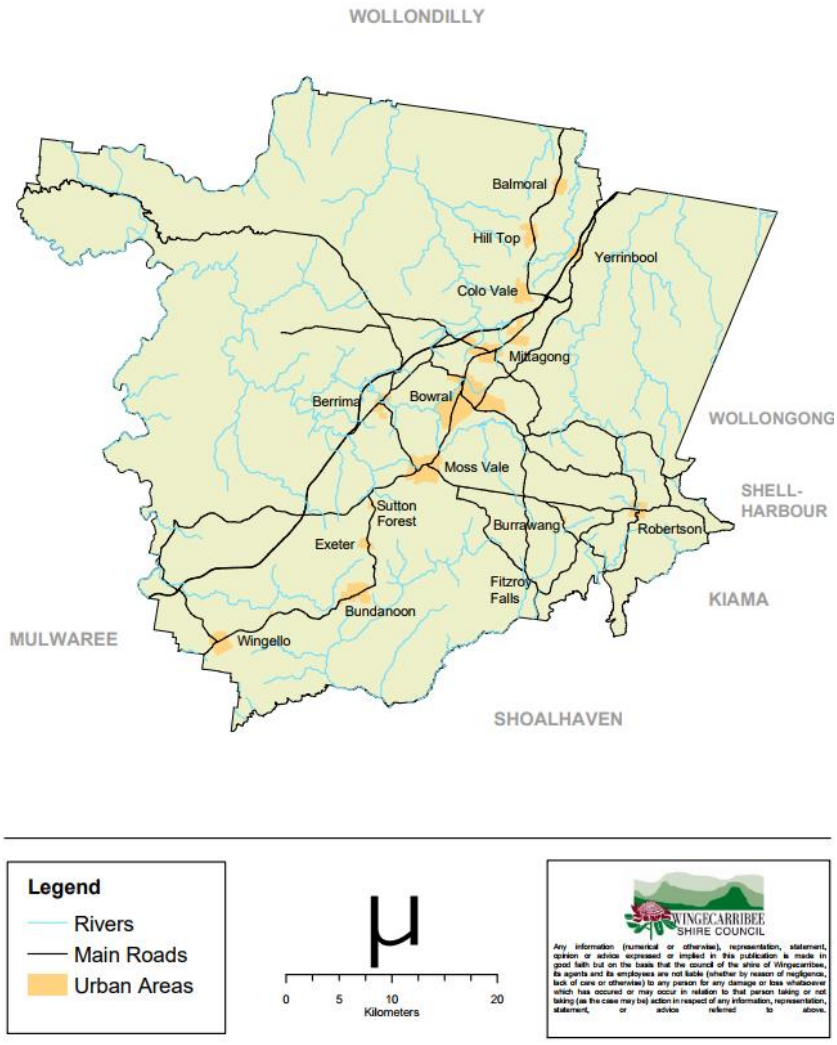
This section outlines the geographic, demographic and economic characteristics of the Wingecarribee LGA, along with general trends in sport and swimming participation.

1.1 Geographic, demographic and economic characteristics

Geographic characteristics

The Wingecarribee Shire Council has an area of around 2,700 square kilometres. Figure 1 shows a map of Wingecarribee including main roads, rivers, urban areas and surrounding areas.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council.

The Wingecarribee LGA is located within a relatively easy 30 to 60 minute drive to beaches on the South Coast of NSW. It also includes a number of freshwater lakes and streams.

Almost 38% (over 103,000 hectares) of the LGA is either national parks or nature reserves. Most of the Shire is within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

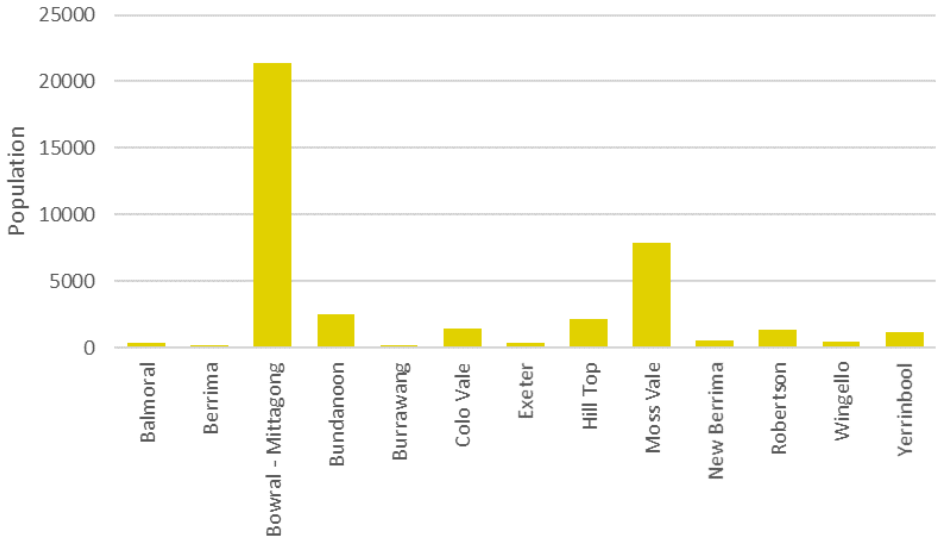
Demographic characteristics

Population and growth

The Wingecarribee Shire Council area included a population of 48,998 at the 2016 Census, an increase of around 3,400 people from the 2011 Census population.[15] The LGA has seen continued growth in the past 10 years, with a 12.7% increase in population between 2006 and 2016.

Much of the LGA's population is concentrated in the Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale areas, as shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION BY URBAN CENTRE/LOCALITY, WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: ABS 2016 Census.

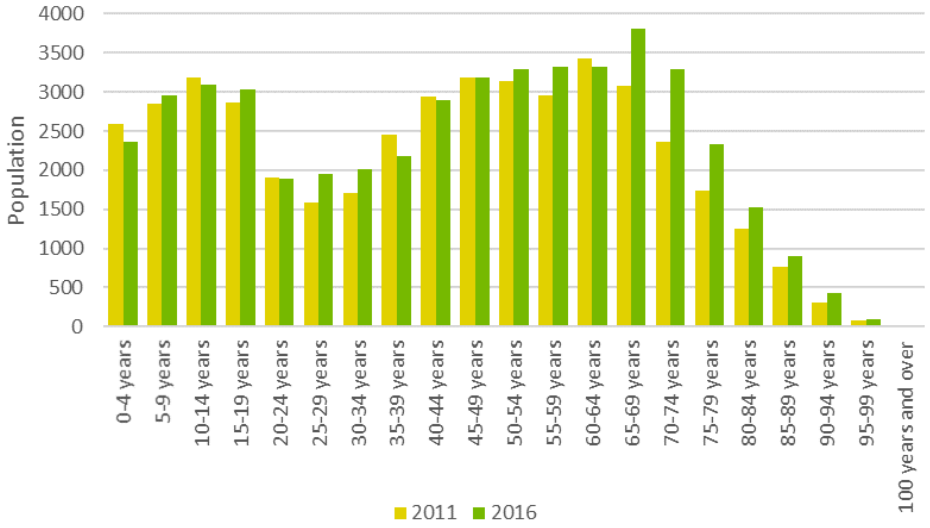
Age profile

The LGA has a large proportion of children and people aged between 40 and 75, and relatively few young adults. There is a relatively large cohort of people in older age groups. There was a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over between 2011 and 2016, with the proportion of people aged over 65 in the LGA increasing from around 22% in 2011 to 26% (around 12,400) in 2016.

Figure 3 below shows the age profile for the LGA by 5-year age groups in 2011 and 2016.

[15] ABS 2016 Census Quickstats, http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA18350?opendocument

FIGURE 3: AGE PROFILE, WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE LGA, 2011 AND 2016 CENSUSES



Source: ABS 2011 and 2016 Censuses.

The population of the LGA is expected to increase by around 4,000 people in the next 20 years to 51,800 in 2036. Most of the growth in this period is projected to be in age groups above 65. By 2036 this age group is expected to make up around 35% of the population, with 18,200 residents aged 65 and over in 2036.[16]

Socio-economic profile

Incomes in Wingecarribee are generally higher than other parts of regional NSW, but are slightly lower than for the whole country, and considerably lower than in Sydney. Mortgage repayments in the LGA are generally slightly higher than for Australia and higher than regional NSW but lower than in Sydney.

Wingecarribee has a much higher proportion of people with a tertiary level qualification than regional NSW as a whole, although the proportion is lower than for Sydney and Australia.

The proportion of people in full-time employment in the LGA is similar to the rest of regional NSW and to Australia overall, but slightly lower than the proportion in the Sydney metropolitan area. In contrast, Wingecarribee has a much lower rate of unemployment compared to regional NSW, Sydney and Australia overall.

In terms of cultural diversity and migration, the population of the Wingecarribee LGA, includes a much smaller proportion of people born overseas than Sydney and Australia, but has a similar profile to all of regional NSW.[17]

Economic context

Residents of Wingecarribee Shire benefit from the economic opportunities arising from their proximity to Sydney. Almost 16% of the resident workforce in Wingecarribee commute to Sydney for work.[18]

The area also has a strong agricultural base, and good transport links to Sydney, Canberra and the South Coast of NSW.

[16] NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2017, *2016 NSW Population and Household Projections*, 2016 NSW projection data by LGA, http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Demography/Population-projections
[17] ABS 2016 Census.
[18] NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2017, *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036*, July 2017, page 66, http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/South-East-and-Tablelands/Plan

Tourism is also an important industry. Wingecarribee hosts an average of 1.3 million visitors each year, staying 925,000 nights and spending around $220 million.[19]

1.2 Sports and swimming participation

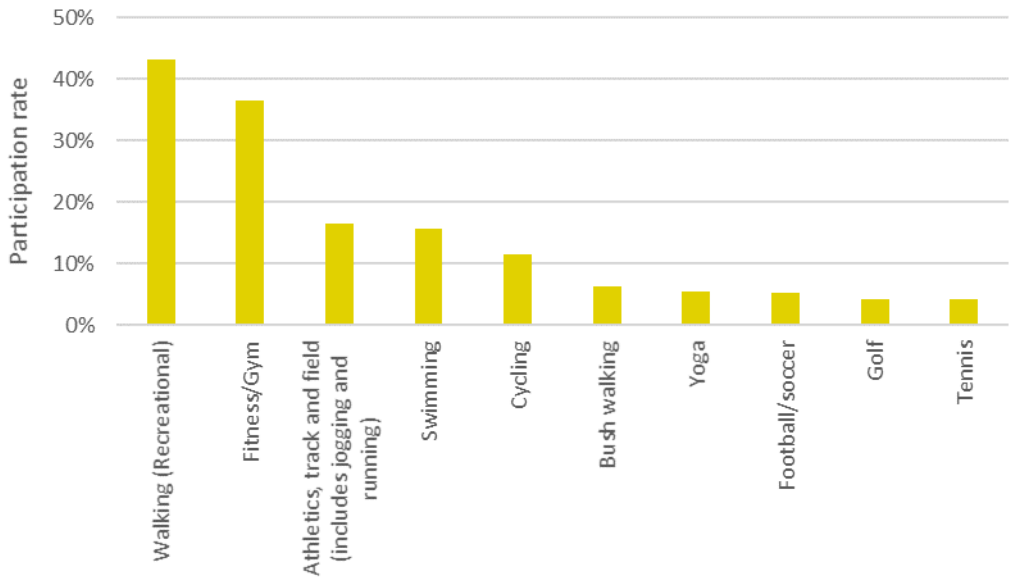
Participation in general

The majority of Australians (87%) aged 15 and over are involved in some form of sport or physical activity at least once a year, and 69% of children participate in some form of organised activity outside of school hours. Sport-related activities are more popular among younger people, while non-sport related physical activities become more important as people age.[20]

Participation in swimming

Swimming remains one of the most popular forms of physical activity undertaken by Australians, for both adults and children. Swimming is ranked 4th in terms of participation, undertaken by 15.7% of adults in 2019, behind only walking (43.2%), fitness/gym activities (36.6%), and athletics (including jogging and running, 16.4%). This is illustrated in Figure 4 below.

FIGURE 4: TOP 10 SPORTS FOR ADULTS BY PARTICIPATION RATE, 2016-17, AUSTRALIA

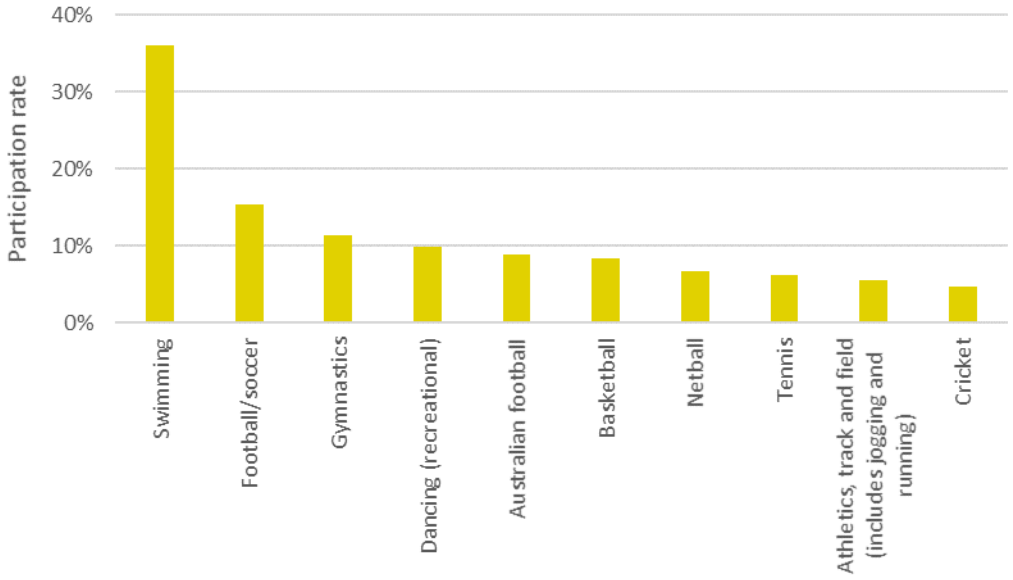


Source: Australian Sports Commission, 2020.[21]

Swimming is also the most popular organised sporting activity for children, with around 36% engaging in swimming, as shown below in Figure 5 below. This high rate reflects the number of children who participate in learn-to-swim, stroke improvement and water safety activities, as well as competitive swimming and beach competitions. These activities are undertaken in additional to recreational swimming.

[19] NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2017, *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036*, page 66.
[20] Australian Sports Commission, 2017, *AusPlay National data tables – July 2016 to June 2017*, https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/smi/ausplay/results/national
[21] SportAus, 2020, AusPlay National Results, released 30 April 2020, https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/smi/ausplay/results/national

FIGURE 5: TOP 10 ORGANISED SPORTS FOR CHILDREN BY PARTICIPATION RATE, 2016-17, AUSTRALIA



Source: Australian Sports Commission, 2020.

Participation in NSW

Participation patterns in the State of NSW are similar to those at the national level. Swimming is ranked third in the State for participation among adults, with a slightly higher rate of participation than at the national level (19% in 2019). Swimming is also the most popular form of organised sporting activity among children in NSW, with a higher participation rate (41.8%) compared to the national rate.[22]

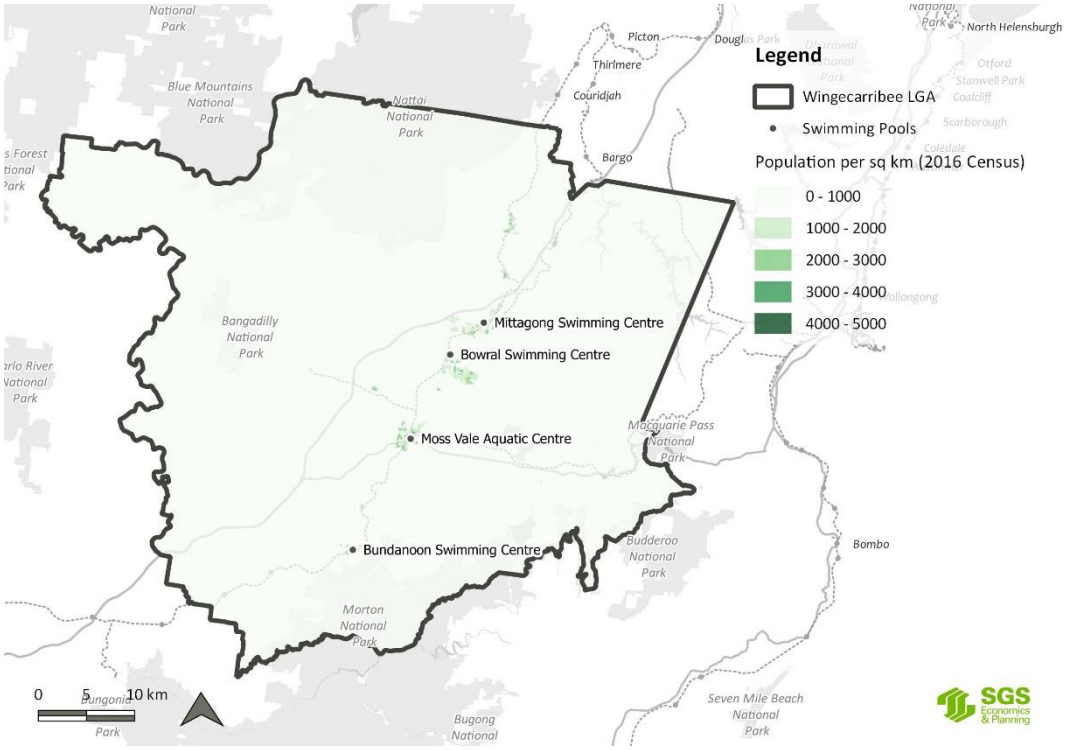
[22] SportAus, 2020, AusPlay State/Territory Results, released 30 April 2020, https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/smi/ausplay/results/state

2. WSC POOLS, USAGE AND 2012 STRATEGY

This section includes descriptive information on pools in the Wingecarribee Shire Council area, with a focus on the pools owned by Council, and the usage of these pools. This section also summarises the WSC Aquatic Facilities Strategy, released in 2012, and relevant changes since that time.

Figure 6 shows the location of the four Council-owned swimming pools in the Wingecarribee LGA, and the population density around each. Features and information on the usage of each pool is discussed below.

FIGURE 6: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

2.1 Bowral Swimming Centre

Facilities

- 50m outdoor heated pool (6 lanes)
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool
- Kiosk, picnic facilities

The Bowral Swimming Centre was officially opened in 1971.

Seasonality

The Bowral Swimming Centre is open seasonally from October to March.

Opening hours

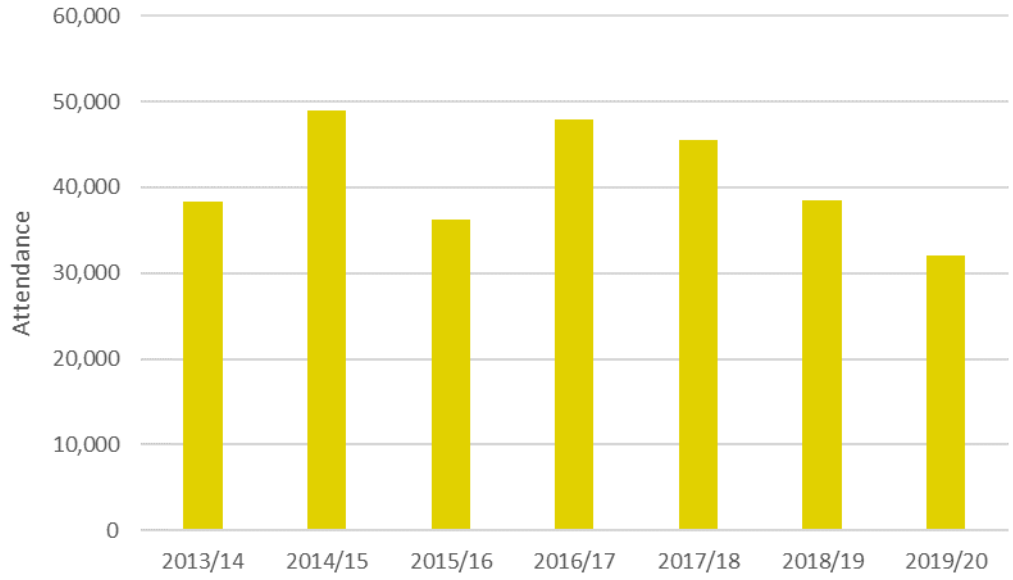
TABLE 1: BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE OPENING TIMES (2017-18)

Day	Opening times
Monday	6am – 6pm
Tuesday	6am – 6pm
Wednesday	6am – 6pm
Thursday	6am – 6pm
Friday	6am – 6pm
Saturday	8.30am – 6pm
Sunday	9.30am – 6pm
Public holidays	10am – 5pm
Christmas Day	Closed

Pool usage

Figure 7 shows the number of visits to the Bowral Swimming Centre in recent years. As discussed further below, the higher use of this pool in 2014/15 and 2016/17 may have been as a result of the closure of the Mittagong Pool at this time. The 2018-19 and 2019-20 years show declining numbers in attendance, with 2019-20 having only 32,128 admissions.[23] Reduced attendance in the past year may be partially attributable to bushfires impacting the Wingecarribee district, contributing to reduced air quality for outdoor sports, including swimming at outdoor pools.

FIGURE 7: BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE ATTENDANCE BY YEAR



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, 2017.

[23] The Bowral Swimming Centre did need to close one week early due to COVID-19, however it also opened one week earlier than usual due to the plant failure at Mittagong.

For the years from 2007/8 to 2011/12, visitor numbers varied from around 18,000 to 33,000 each year.

User Groups

User groups include:

- Southern Highlands Junior Water Polo
- Council Learn to Swim classes
- Schools, and
- Swimming/squad lessons
- Triathlon Club.

Population catchment

Figure 8 below shows the relative population densities of the areas around the Bowral Swimming Centre in 2016. Most surrounding areas have densities of under 1,000 people per square kilometre, though there are some sections with up to 3,000 people per square kilometre. The Centre is relatively close to the Bowral railway station and to a couple of bus stops.

FIGURE 8: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

2.2 Mittagong Swimming Centre

Facilities

- 50m outdoor heated pool (6 lanes)
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Kiosk, picnic facilities.

The Mittagong Pool is located in a natural bush setting in the creek bed of the Nattai River. This location has been used for swimming and water-based activities for around a century, with major development of swimming facilities first occurring in 1959.

Seasonality

The Mittagong Swimming Centre is typically open from October to March. During the 2014-15 pool season it was closed for refurbishment, as well as a portion of the 2015-16 season. In the 2016-17, 2017-18 and half of the 2018-19 pool seasons the pool was closed due to flood damage. These flood events caused significant damage, resulting in the closure of the pool and associated facilities.

The Mittagong Swimming Centre re-opened in October 2019, however after only two weeks the centre closed again, due to a liner failing in the balance tank. The pool didn't re-open until the 14 December 2019.

In addition, as an outdoor pool there would have been some impact on attendance due to bushfires and related air pollution in the Wingecarribee district during December 2019 and January 2020.

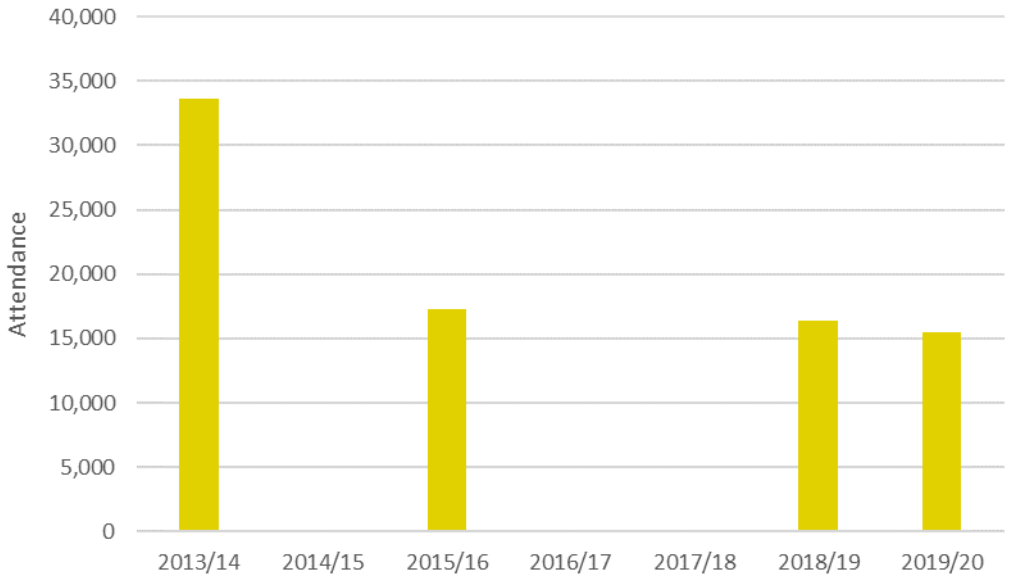
Opening hours

TABLE 2: MITTAGONG SWIMMING CENTRE OPENING TIMES (HISTORICAL)

Day	Opening times
Monday	6am – 9am 2pm – 6pm
Tuesday	6am – 9am 2pm – 6pm
Wednesday	6am – 9am 2pm – 6pm
Thursday	6am – 9am 2pm – 6pm
Friday	6am – 9am 2pm – 6pm
Saturday	8.30am – 6pm
Sunday	9.30am – 6pm
Public holidays	10am -5pm

Pool usage

FIGURE 9: MITTAGONG SWIMMING CENTRE ATTENDANCE BY YEAR



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, 2020.

*Note: Centre was closed for refurbishment in 2014-15, closed due to flooding in 2016-17 and 2017-18, and only opened for 12 weeks in 2015-16 season. A leak in 2019-20 also closed the pool for a substantial period.

For the years from 2007/8 to 2011/12, visitor numbers varied from around 30,000 to 40,000 each year. The number of admissions for 2018/19 to 2019/20 was around 15-16,000, with the pool closed from October to December 2019 due to plant failure.

User groups

- Mittagong Swimming Club[24]
- Southern Highlands Junior Water Polo.[25]

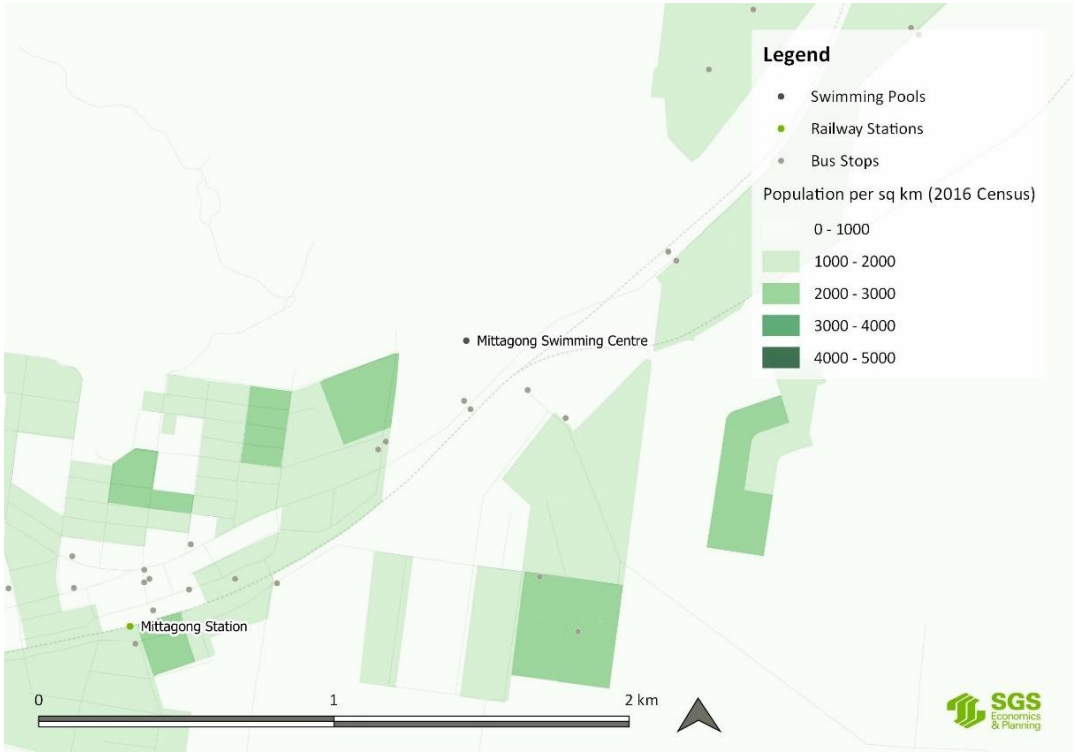
Population catchment

Figure 10 shows the population per square kilometre around the Mittagong Swimming Centre. The Centre is close to some bus stops, and relatively close to the train station, but is immediately surrounded by areas with generally lower population densities, including other recreation and sporting facilities.

[24] In 2019/2020 - Mittagong Swimming Club did not do their squad program at Mittagong rather choose to use Frensham

[25] Southern Highlands Water Polo - Junior comp ran on Tuesday evenings for approx 2.5 hours however they did not bring their full junior comp or their senior comp back to the pool and they remained at Frensham indoor pool. The pool depths of the refurbished pool were completed due to Water Polo's use/comments (30m at 1.8m to FINA standards) however their use since the refurb has been minimal.

FIGURE 10: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND MITTAGONG SWIMMING CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Mittagong Pool Major Damage and Repairs

As noted above, the Mittagong Pool has had to be closed for repairs for extended periods including for refurbishment and to repair flood damage. .

As a result of the most recent flooding, the floors of both the 50 metre pool and the Learn-to-Swim Pool sustained severe damage. The Pool's plant room was also flooded, and valuable equipment was destroyed. The pool has since been repaired and was open for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 season, however, was forced to close from October to December 2019 due to plant failure.

2.3 Bundanoon Swimming Centre

The Bundanoon Pool was built with funds donated by the community and other benefactors. It opened in 1960. The pool was also originally managed by volunteers, but was later gifted to the Council.

Facilities

- 25m outdoor 4-lane heated pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Kiosk and change rooms.

Seasonality

The Bundanoon Swimming Centre is open seasonally from mid November to March (generally a 16 week season).

Opening hours

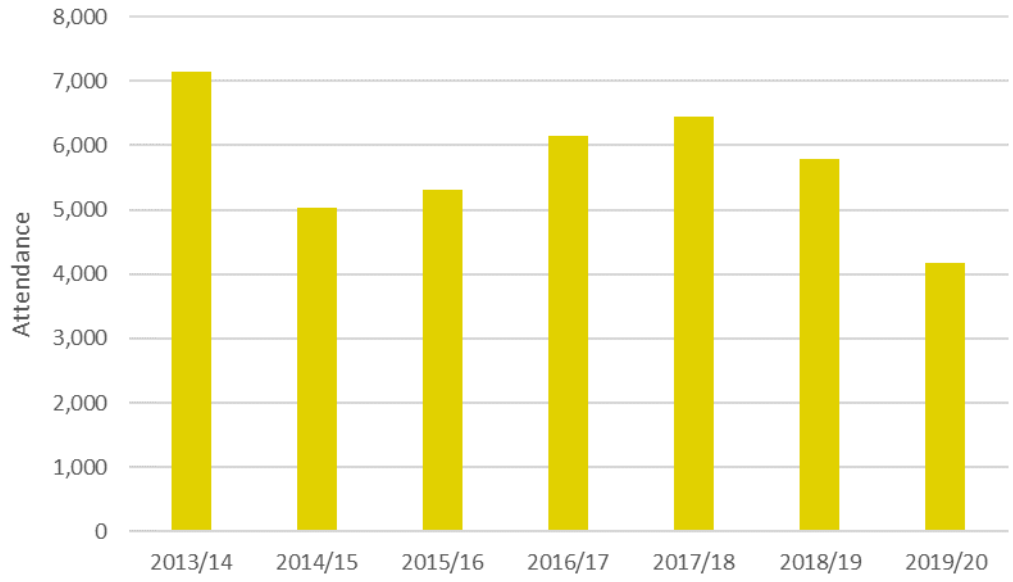
TABLE 3: BUNDANOON SWIMMING CENTRE OPENING TIMES (2017-18)

Day	Opening times
Monday	6am – 8am 3pm – 6pm
Tuesday	3pm – 6pm
Wednesday	6am – 8am 3pm – 6pm
Thursday	3pm – 6pm
Friday	3pm – 6pm
Saturday	10am – 5pm
Sunday	10am – 5pm
Public holidays	10am – 5pm
Christmas and Boxing Day	Closed

Bundanoon has extended opening hours in school holiday periods, and is closed on inclement weather days or when the temperature is below 18 degrees.

Pool usage

FIGURE 11: BUNDANOON SWIMMING CENTRE ATTENDANCE BY YEAR



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, 2020.

For the years from 2007/8 to 2011/12, visitor numbers varied from around 5,300 to 7,600 each year. Similarly, from 2013/14 to 2016/17 attendance fluctuated from a low of 5,000 to a high of just over 7,000. More recent years have shown a decline to 5,788 in 2018-19 and 4,179 in 2019-20, with external impacts such as bushfires potentially contributing to this latest year's decline in numbers.

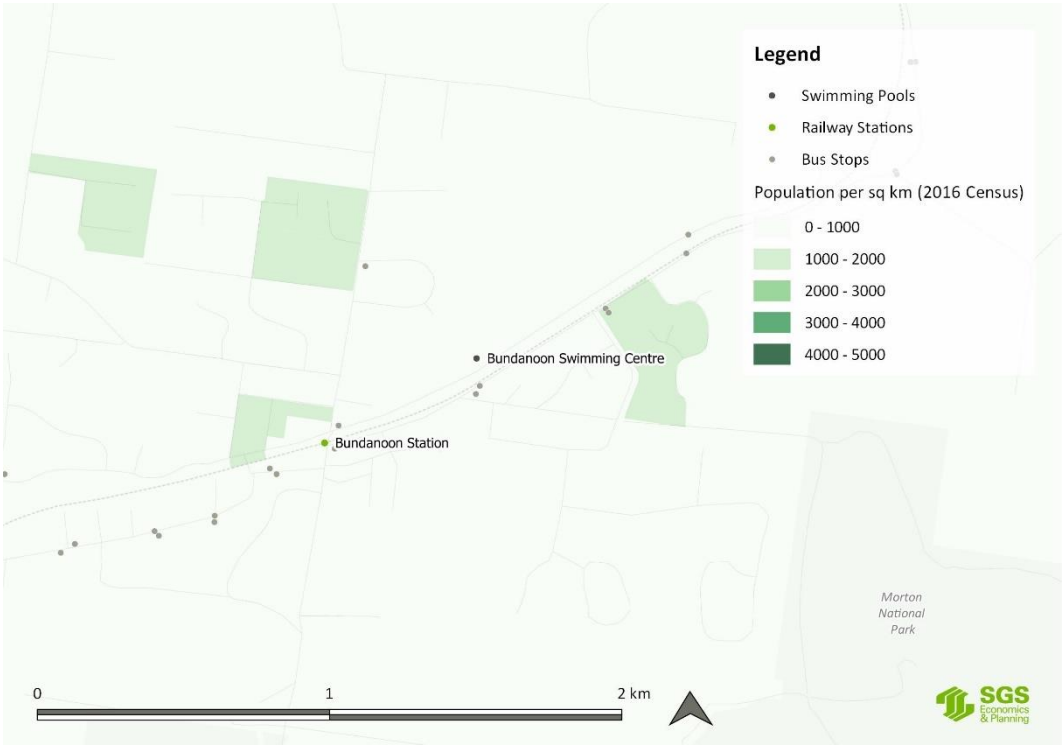
User groups

- Bundanoon Swimming Club

Population catchment

Figure 12 shows the population densities around the Bundanoon Swimming Centre. This shows that the population around the facility is more dispersed than the other swimming pools in the LGA, reflective of Bundanoon's smaller overall population. The Bundanoon pool is located adjacent to other recreation and sporting facilities.

FIGURE 12: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND BUNDANOON SWIMMING CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Bundanoon community proposal for retractable roof for pool

The Bundanoon Community Association, a local community group, has been seeking support from the Wingecarribee Shire Council for a retractable roof that can enclose the Bundanoon Pool and extend its use to 12 months of the year. A submission has been prepared seeking:

- Council's agreement to formally consider the proposal
- Agreement to allow the Bundanoon Community Association to apply for community grants, and
- Seed funding from Council to employ a consultant to prepare relevant supporting documentation.[26]

[26] Bundanoon Community Pool Proposal.

2.4 Moss Vale Aquatic Centre

The current Moss Vale aquatic centre was built on the site of a former outdoor pool, at a cost of $8.4 million. It opened in November 2013.

Facilities

- Indoor 25m pool
- 15m program pool
- Baby/toddler pool, and
- Health club (gym), creche, meeting room, café.

Seasonality

The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is open year round.

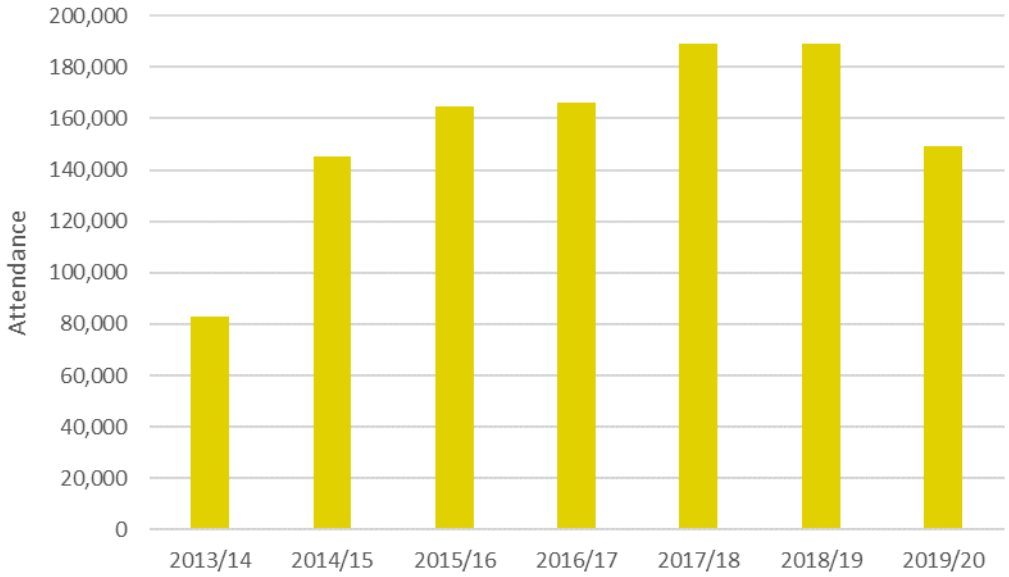
Opening hours

TABLE 4: MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE OPENING TIMES (2017-18)

Day	Opening times[27]
Monday	6am – 9pm
Tuesday	6am – 9pm
Wednesday	6am – 9pm
Thursday	6am – 9pm
Friday	6am – 9pm
Saturday	8am – 6pm
Sunday	9am – 6pm

Pool usage

FIGURE 13: MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE ATTENDANCE BY YEAR



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council Annual Report 2015/16 and 2016/17, and data provided by Council.
*Note: Centre was only open for part of the season in 2013-14, resulting in lower attendance numbers.

[27] Pool closes at 8pm and the gym at 9pm on weekdays.

Attendance has increased significantly since the opening of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre in 2013, with more recent years showing the number of admissions as almost 189,000 in 2018-19 and 149,000 in 2019-20. The aquatic centre was not operating during the 4th quarter of 2019-20 due to COVID-19 government restrictions, which would have impacted these most recent attendance figures.

User groups

- Learn to Swim
- Rainbow Club[28]
- Squad training, and
- Moss Vale Swim Club.

Population catchment

Figure 14 shows the population per square kilometre around the Moss Vale pool. The facility is relatively close to the train station and within walking distance of a bus stop. It is close to some areas of comparatively higher population density. It has a larger population within 2 kilometres than the other pools.

FIGURE 14: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

The number of annual visits to the Moss Vale pool has increased around tenfold since the opening of the new indoor facility. Even allowing for the year round opening of the pool, and longer hours, this is a very substantial increase.

[28] Social swimming for children with a disability.

2.5 Proposed Robertson Aquatic Centre

The Robertson District Swimming Pool Association, a not-for-profit organisation, had raised funds for a four lane, above ground, 25 metre, heated and covered pool. This project was expected to cost around $1 million with some of the funding being sourced through ClubGRANTS and the National Stronger Regions Fund[29].

A development application for the aquatic centre was submitted and approved in 2017, and construction had commenced. However in May 2018, the building structure being constructed to cover the Robertson community pool collapsed.[30] In June 2020, it was reported that the project had been shelved due to rising costs associated with the building collapse and investigation.[31]

2.6 WSC Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2012-2030

This Strategy was released in 2012, to guide WSC decision-making and to develop an integrated strategic approach to planning for the future of public aquatic facilities across the Shire. It was intended that the strategy be reviewed annually, to ensure that it would continue to respond to funding opportunities and industry trends and to meet community needs.

Key findings in 2012 included that:

- All pools ran at an operational loss, with combined losses being in excess of $650,000 each year, and
- All pools were over 40 years old, and required substantial capital funding over the next seventeen years to meet compliance and community needs and expectations.

A key objective for pool infrastructure was to enhance and improve current facilities and to upgrade water treatment and filtration plants and associated infrastructure, in order to comply with Department of Health guidelines.

At the time that the 2012 Strategy was released, Council had already decided to replace the outdoor pool at Moss Vale with a new indoor facility, with work on this commencing in July 2012.

The Mittagong Centre was identified as the next centre for a major upgrade, due to its high patronage, age and structural problems. Refurbishments were also planned for the Bowral and Bundanoon Swimming Centres.

- The Bowral Pool had “ageing infrastructure” that required “significant refurbishment to meet modern requirements,” with the pool having had only minor repairs over the previous decade. Refurbishment requirements included major modifications to the pools to improve water turnover, water depth requirements and access for people with disabilities. There was also a need for renewal and supplementation of water filtration systems, plant rooms and water heaters, change rooms, kiosk amenities and entrance areas.
- The Bundanoon Pool was also in need of improvements to the pool edging, renewal of filtration systems, plant rooms, water heaters and pool amenities.

The impact of flooding and need for substantial repairs to the Mittagong Pool has focussed attention on the risks associated with the location of this pool, and the need to rebuild the facility in a way that would minimise the level of damage that might occur from future floods.

[29] Southern Highland News, 2 June 2017.
[30] Southern Highland News 20 May 2018. ‘Robertson Aquatic Shed Collapses’.
[31] Southern Highland News, 16 June 2020. ‘Legal procedures for compensation, rising costs prompting shelving of Robertson Aquatic Centre’.

2.7 Trends in the use of WSC Pools

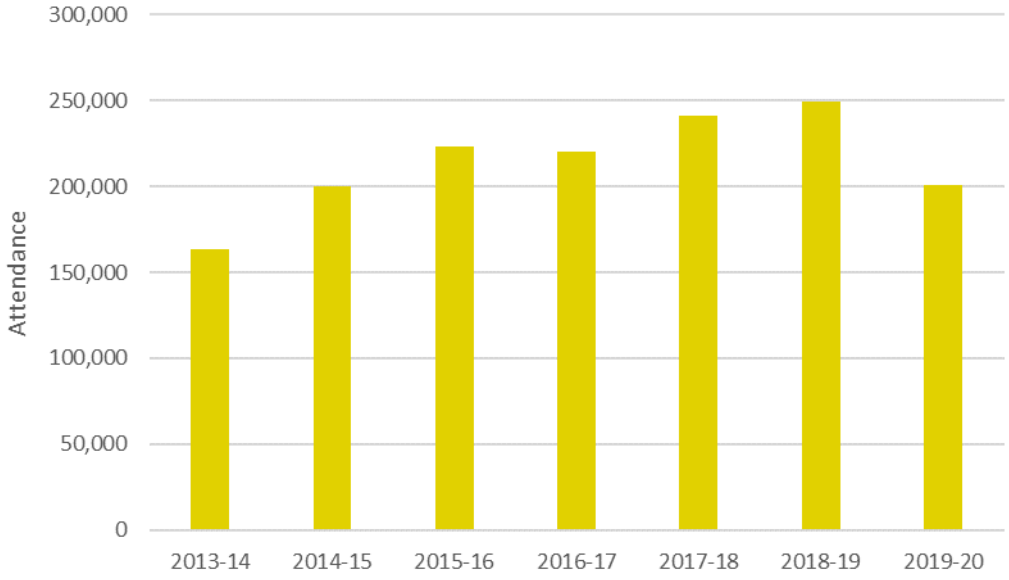
Table 5 below shows the overall attendance figures for the WSC pools from 2013-14 to 2019-20, which is also illustrated in Figure 15.

TABLE 5: WSC SWIMMING POOL ATTENDANCE 2013-14 TO 2019-20

Pool	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Bowral	39,200	50,090	36,341	47,965	45,543	38,464	32,128
Bundanoon	7,200	5,150	5,314	6,146	6,450	5,788	4,179
Mittagong	34,150	Nil	17,287	Nil	Nil	16,437	15,510
Moss Vale (indoor)	82,757	145,126	164,584	166,144	189,255	188,918	152,085
All WSC Pools	**163,307**	**200,366**	**223,526**	**220,255**	**241,248**	**249,604**	**203,902**

Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, Annual Report 2016-17 and 2018-19 and data provided by Council.

FIGURE 15: TOTAL POOL ATTENDANCE, 2013-14 TO 2019-20



Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, Annual Report 2016-17 and 2018-19 and data provided by Council.

The Mittagong Pool was closed for refurbishment during the 2014-15 season, as well as a portion of the 2015-16 season. The new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre opened part way through the 2013-14 year with attendance numbers reflecting this.

Attendance figures for earlier years are shown in Table 6. The information included in this table for the Moss Vale Pool is for the outdoor pool which has subsequently been replaced by the new Aquatic Centre.

TABLE 6: WSC SWIMMING POOL ATTENDANCE 2007-08 TO 2011-12

Pool	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Bowral	18,028	31,898	29,327	33,084	25,108
Bundanoon	6,666	7,527	7,583	6,199	5,328
Mittagong	30,280	39,954	38,278	37,440	31,309
Moss Vale (outdoor)	9,981	18,070	17,113	15,500	12,869
All WSC Pools	**64,955**	**97,449**	**92,301**	**92,223**	**74,614**

Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council, Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2012 and SGS calculations.

As is clear from the information in the above tables, the development of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre has largely led to a more than doubling of the number of visits to aquatic facilities across the WSC. However it should be noted that these attendance numbers do include the use of gym facilities within the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre, highlighting the importance of complementary facilities in supporting attendance. This has far outpaced the growth in population in the WSC, which was (as noted earlier in this report) 12.7% between 2006 and 2016.

Attendance at the Moss Vale swimming facility has increased tenfold, from an average of around 15,000 per year for the 5 years up to 2011-12, to over 150,000 in more recent years. While this partly reflects the year round and longer daily operating hours of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Facility, it is likely that this new facility is encouraging new participants as well as more frequent visits by previous swimmers.

Survey information which provides information on the profile and preferences of users of the WSC aquatic facilities is discussed further in Section 4 of this report.

3. AQUATIC SERVICE PROVISION – THE BROADER CONTEXT

This section provides broader information on aquatic service policies and provision in NSW, Victoria and local government areas similar to WSC.

The discussion in this section refers to aquatic services in the following areas:

- NSW policies and guidelines
- Aquatic service provision in Victoria including Auditor-General's findings, and
- Other council areas in NSW, including findings from an aquatic services review in the Bega Valley Shire Council.

3.1 Aquatic Service Provision in NSW – General

Relevant NSW Policies and Guidelines

Encouraging participation in sport and recreational activities is a feature of a number of NSW Government policies. One of these is the *NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2013-2018*, which includes a target of increasing participation in sport, recreational, arts and cultural activities by 10% (from 2010 levels) in regional NSW and Sydney.[32] Increasing participation and enhancing opportunities for people to be involved with sport and recreation activities is also one of the key goals under the *NSW* 2021 plan for the State.[33] Similarly, getting communities to be more active, developing sport infrastructure and facilities, and reinvigorating regional sport and recreation in particular, are key focuses of the NSW Government's Sport Budget for 2017-18.[34]

3.2 Aquatic Service Provision in Victoria

Victorian Auditor-General's Report - Local Government Service Delivery: Recreation Facilities

In March 2016, the Victorian Auditor-General released the findings from a Report on aquatic recreation centres (ARCs) delivered by local governments in Victoria.[35]

While the information gathered as part of this review and the insights gained may reflect slightly different climatic conditions, many of the findings are still likely to be relevant to the delivery of similar services in the Wingecarribee Shire Council area.

Key findings from the Victorian Auditor-General's Report

ARCs provide important health, wellbeing and social benefits to the community. They also contribute to local economies, and provide job and income opportunities (page 1).

[32] NSW Ministry of Health, 2013, *NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy*, http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/nsw-healthy-eating-strategy.pdf
[33] NSW Government, 2011, *NSW 2021*, https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/file_manager/NSW2021_WEBVERSION.pdf
[34] NSW Office of Sport, 2017, 'Sport Budget 2017-18,' https://sport.nsw.gov.au/sectordevelopment/sport-budget-2017-18
[35] Victorian Auditor General, 2016, *Local Government Service Delivery: Recreational Facilities*, March 2016, https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/file_uploads/20160323-Rec-Facilities_8Lpv18Cc.pdf.

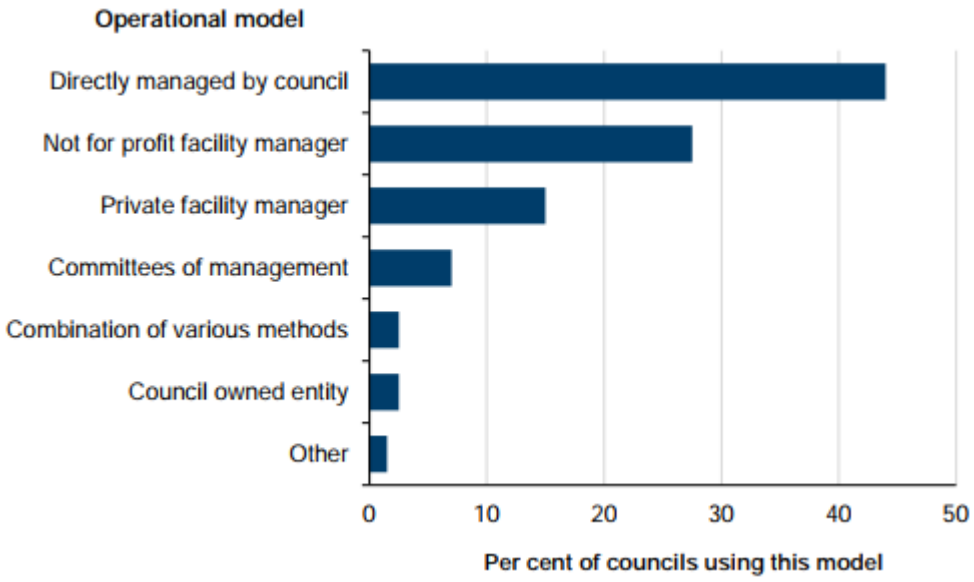
Community satisfaction surveys found that communities place a high social value on the availability of ARCs. Changes to ARCs, like closing down an underutilised facility or changing operational hours, are often high-profile community and political issues. There can be a high level of 'optional demand', that is, communities may want an ARC to be available even though they may not use it (page 2).

- *Despite well planned and extensive community engagement around the strategic direction of ARCs, community opposition to proposed pool closures is often vocal and well organised. Our survey asked councils if there were any bids, proposals or suggestions presented to councils in the past four years to permanently close or downgrade investments in ARCs. Of the 12 councils who answered yes, there were only two cases of permanent closures or reduced investment. The councils identified community and council objections as the key reasons for proposals not being accepted (page xi).*

Councils surveyed by the Victoria Auditor-General generally subsidised ARC operational and maintenance costs (page 21). Councils also generally rely on grants and other sources of income for capital replacement costs, refurbishments or new developments. On a stand-alone basis none of the audited Council's ARCs were fully financially self-sustaining over the longer term. Most councils relied on grants from other levels of government for significant capital expenditure on ARCs (page 25).

The Victorian Auditor-General also assessed a number of different operating models for ARCs, and concluded that there was no superior operating model that would suit the requirements of all councils. In-house management by the council was the most common arrangement, as shown in Figure 16 below.

FIGURE 16: ARC OPERATIONAL MODEL BY TYPE (VICTORIA)



Source: Victorian Auditor-General, 2016.

Broader benefits of ARCs

In April 2014, Aquatics & Recreation Victoria, in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria, commissioned a research project into the social and community benefits of ARCs. The research project found that as well as providing health and fitness benefits, ARCs also provided community development and social inclusion benefits.

The research suggested that users derived an average health benefit worth $48 from a visit to their local ARC. The net economic benefit of each dollar spent in ARCs (not including benefits associated with capital expenditure) was estimated to be $7.60.[36]

3.3 Comparative Aquatic Service Provision – other NSW Council areas

The following LGAs in NSW have been identified as providing relevant information for comparison purposes:

- Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Blue Mountains City Council, and
- Bega Valley Shire Council.

Additional information on aquatic services in the Parkes Shire Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Hilltops Shire Council, Wagga Wagga City Council and Clarence Valley Council is also provided in Appendix 1. More detailed maps of the population catchments around selected swimming pool facilities in these LGAs are also included in Appendix 1.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Population (2016):	29,609
Number of pools:	1 – Goulburn Aquatic and Leisure Centre
Pool season:	25m indoor pool – year round; 50m heated outdoor pool and baby/toddler pool – seasonal (Oct-)

The Goulburn Mulwaree LGA has one Council-run swimming pool facility, servicing a smaller population than Wingecarribee. The Aquatic Centre includes a heated 25 metre indoor pool, a heated outdoor 50 metre pool, and an outdoor baby/toddler pool. The indoor pool is open year round, with the outdoor pools open only during the warmer months.

The Goulburn aquatic facilities are adjacent to parkland, and other sporting and recreation facilities. This provides for the shared use of parking space, as well as the potential for shared use of facilities such as café space and change rooms.

Goulburn Mulwaree's draft Operational Plan for 2017-18 showed the total operating expenditure for the facility as $1,671,054, and the operating income as $550,000. This gives a net cost of service of $1,121,054.[37]

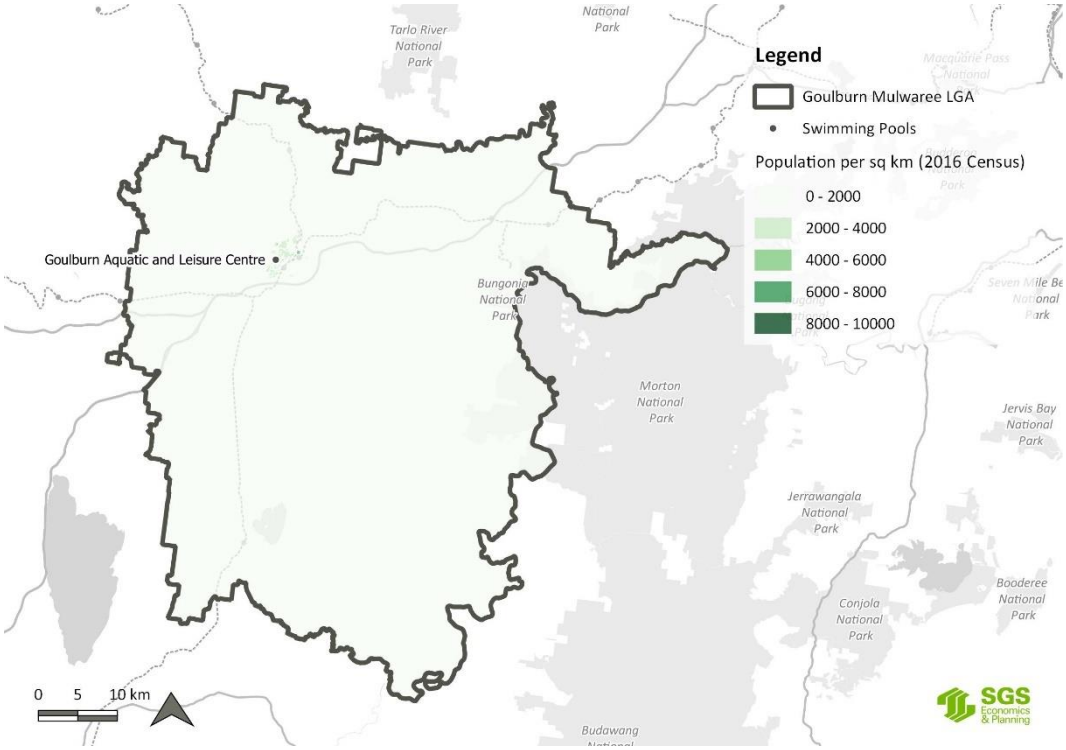
The Goulburn Mulwaree Council is planning a $37 million upgrade of the aquatic centre to include a new 25 metre indoor pool, a leisure pool, new change rooms, a café and a later upgrade of the 50 metre outdoor pool. It is proposed that a hydrotherapy pool, sauna, spa and outdoor play area will be included in stage 1. The new indoor pool is needed as the current indoor pool does not provide enough space to meet demand for all activities. Funding is being sought from NSW Government and other grant programs to supplement Council sources including loans[38].

Figure 17 below shows that there is a concentration of the LGA's population around Goulburn itself, but that the population is otherwise generally quite dispersed. Most areas within the city have an equivalent density of less than 4,000 people per square kilometre, but as the

[36] Victorian Auditor General, 2016, *Local Government Service Delivery: Recreational Facilities*, page 22.
[37] Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 2017, *Operational Plan 2017 – 2018 Appendices*, Appendix A Financial Information, http://yoursay.goulburn.nsw.gov.au/201718-budget-4-year-delivery-program?tool=map
[38] www.goulburnpost.com.au, 18 April 2018.

Aquatic and Leisure Centre is the only facility in the LGA it has a wider catchment to draw on for patronage.

FIGURE 17: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, GOULBURN MULWAREE LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

Population (2016):	56,027
Number of pools:	4 – Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre, Bungendore Swimming Pool, Braidwood Memorial Pool, Captains Flat Pool
Pool season:	**Queanbeyan:** 25m indoor pool – year round; 50m outdoor pool and baby/toddler pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Bungendore:** 25m indoor pool and baby/toddler pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Braidwood:** 18m outdoor heated – seasonal (Oct-Mar) Captains Flat: 22m outdoor pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar)

The Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA has four swimming facilities, located in Queanbeyan, Bungendore, Braidwood and Captains Flat, servicing a larger population than Wingecarribee. The Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre includes an outdoor 50m pool open during the warmer months, and an indoor pool that is open year round. The Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre is located in the 1.3ha Moore Park, which includes BBQs and other recreation facilities.

The former Queanbeyan City Council received $996,000 in fees and charges from the Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre in 2015-16, while the expenses from operations were $1,130,000, equating to a net cost of service of $134,000.[39]

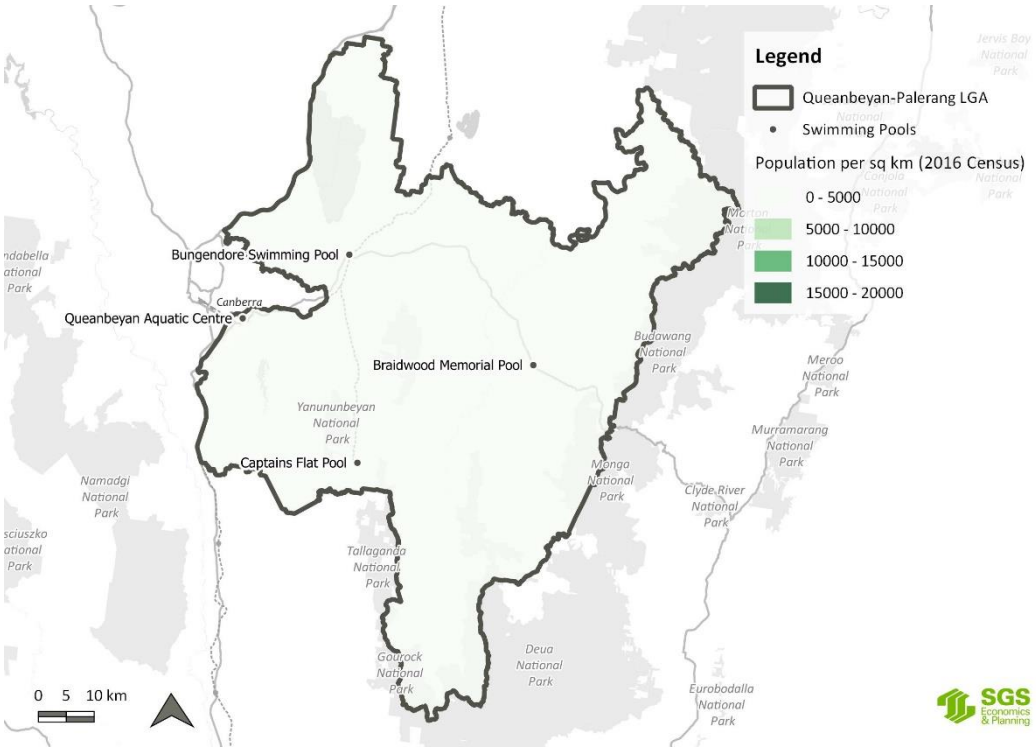
[39] Queanbeyan City Council, 2016, *General Purpose Financial Statements*, 2015-16, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Council/Council-business/Budgets-and-planning#section-3

In 2015-16, the former Palerang Council received $62,000 in income from swimming pool operations (i.e. Bungendore, Braidwood and Captains Flat Pools), while expenses from operations were $324,000, giving a net cost of services of $262,000.[40]

Figure 18 below shows the distribution of population around each of the pools. The population of Queanbeyan was around 38,000 as of the 2016 Census, with additional populations to draw on from surrounding localities such as Googong, which had a population of around 1,500. By comparison, Bungendore, Braidwood and Captains Flat have much smaller populations at around 3,300, 1,200 and 400 respectively.

There is also a privately run swimming pool open to the public at Googong (Club Googong Gym and Pool), which includes a 25 metre indoor pool and an outdoor splash deck.

FIGURE 18: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, QUEANBEYAN-PALERANG LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

[40] Palerang Council, 2016, *General Purpose Financial Statements*, 2015-16, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Council/Council-business/Budgets-and-planning#section-3

Wollondilly Shire Council

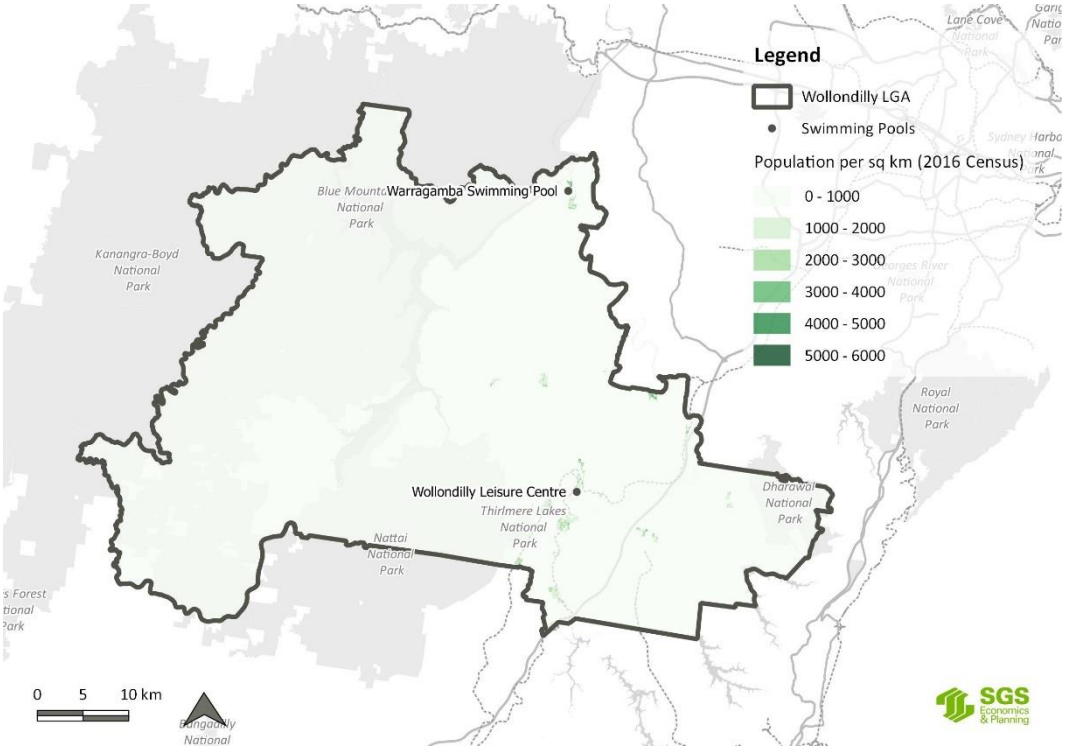
Population (2016):	48,519
Number of pools:	2 – Wollondilly Leisure Centre, Warragamba Pool
Pool season:	**Picton:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Oct-Apr); 25m heated indoor and baby/toddlers pool – year round **Warragamba:** 25m heated outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Sept-Apr)

The Wollondilly Shire LGA has two public swimming facilities, located in Picton and Warragamba, servicing a similar overall population to Wingecarribee. The indoor pool at the Wollondilly Leisure Centre is open year round, while the outdoor pool and the Warragamba facility are open seasonally.

In 2016-17, Council's operational expenses for the swimming pools was $444,000. Income over the period was $23,000, equating to a net cost of $421,000.[41]

Figure 19 shows that the centres are located in the main population centres in the eastern half of the LGA, with the western side largely made up of national parks. The immediate population catchment around the Picton facility is limited by an adjacent industrial area to the south-west. The Picton facility has a population in the immediately adjacent area of around 3,500 to draw on, while the population living close to Warragamba, including Silverdale, is around 4,500.

FIGURE 19: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, WOLLONDILLY SHIRE LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

[41] Wollondilly Shire Council, 2017, *2016/17 Annual Report*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, http://www.wollondilly2033.com.au/assets/pdf/AnnualReport/Annual_report_201617.pdf

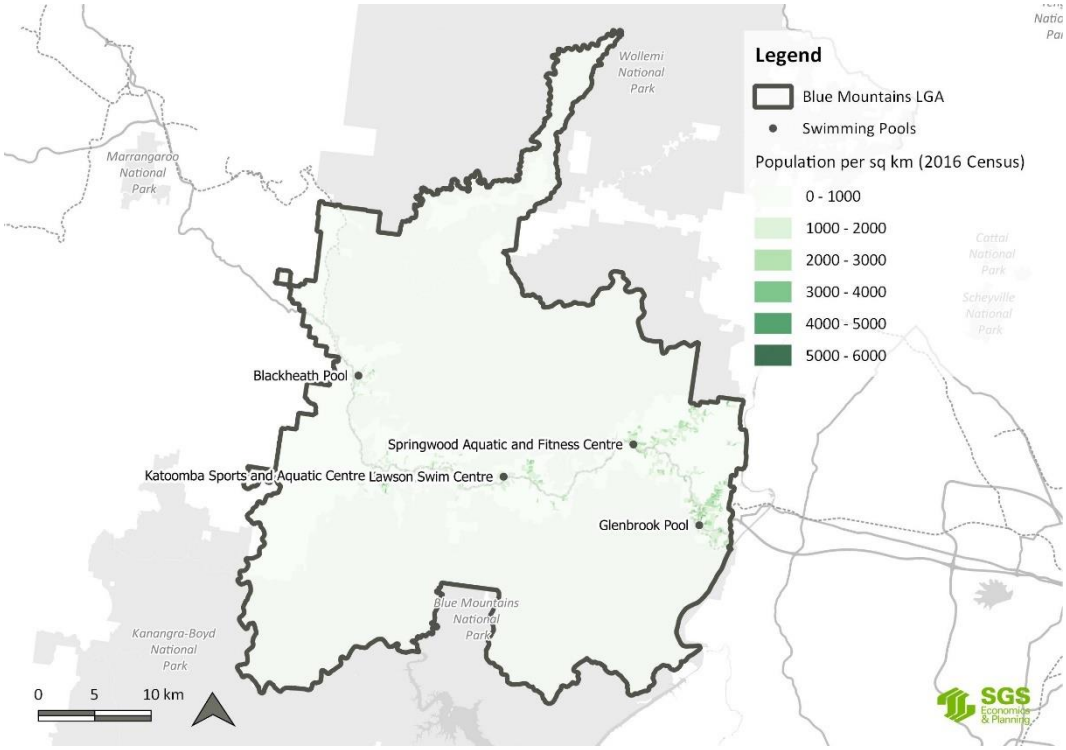
Blue Mountains City Council

Population (2016):	76,904
Number of pools:	5 – Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre, Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Blackheath Pool, Glenbrook Swim Centre, Lawson Swim Centre
Pool season:	**Katoomba:** 25m heated pool – year round; 50m heated outdoor pool – seasonal (Sept-) **Springwood:** 25m heated indoor pool – year round **Blackheath:** 25m outdoor pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) **Glenbrook:** 50m heated indoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – year round **Lawson:** 50m heated outdoor pool – seasonal (Sept-Apr)

The population of the Blue Mountains LGA is significantly higher than Wingecarribee, with access to 5 swimming pool facilities. Three of the pools are open year round. Operational expenses for pools in the LGA totalled $7,082,000 in the 2016-17 year, with income totalling $4,334,000. This equalled a net cost of $2,748,000 for Council.[42] Council has recently released plans to replace the Katoomba outdoor pool with a playground, due to its age and the costs to Council of managing a relatively large number of pools.[43]

Figure 20 shows that the pools are relatively evenly distributed across the LGA in the main population centres, with some higher population densities in Katoomba, Springwood and Glenbrook.

FIGURE 20: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, BLUE MOUNTAINS LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

[42] Blue Mountains City Council, 2017, *Annual Report 2016-2017 Financial Statements*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/integratedplanningandreporting/annualreport/?CFID=dd581f80-9169-4045-a35b-418b4b1b4cb4&CFTOKEN=0

[43] See Lewis, B.C., 2017, 'Katoomba outdoor pool could close,' *Blue Mountain Gazette*, 10 October, http://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/4926019/katoomba-pool-could-close/

Bega Valley Shire Council

Population (2016):	33,253
Number of pools:	6 – Bega Memorial Swimming Pool, Cobargo Pool, Bemboka Pool, Candelo Swimming Pool, Eden Memorial Pool, Sapphire Aquatic Centre (Pambula)
Pool season:	**Bega:** 30m outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Sept-Mar) **Cobargo:** 25m outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Bemboka:** 20m outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Candelo:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Eden:** 50m outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Sapphire Aquatic Centre:** 25m indoor pool and baby/toddler pool – year round

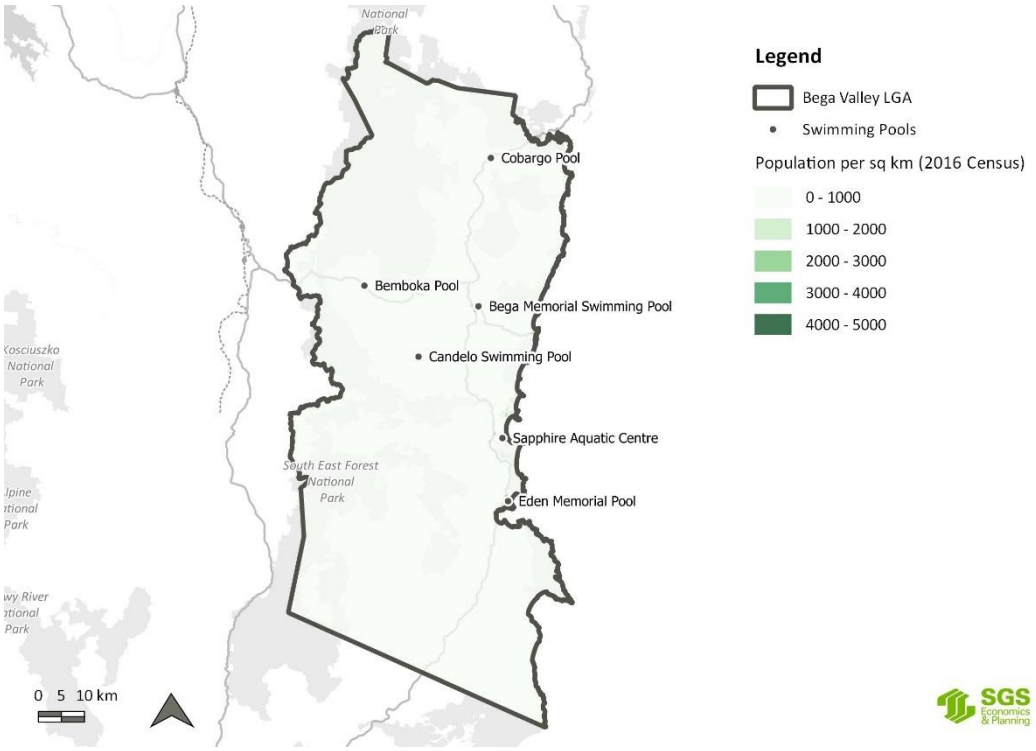
Bega Valley has a relatively large number of swimming pools, given its smaller (permanent) population than Wingecarribee. Only one of the facilities, located in Pambula, is indoor and open year-round.

In 2016-17, Bega Valley's expenses for swimming pool operations were $1,566,000 and income was $723,000, equating to a net cost of $843,000.[44]

Figure 21 below shows that there are higher population concentrations around Bega, Eden, and close to the Sapphire Aquatic Centre, with much lower concentrations around the smaller facilities of Bemboka and Candelo. Bemboka, Candelo, and Cobargo have very small overall populations, at approximately 300, 350, and 400 respectively. This is compared to Bega with over 4,000, Eden with 3,000, and Pambula with 1,500 residents. Like other coastal LGAs, the population in the Bega Valley increases substantially over the summer tourist season.

[44] Bega Valley Shire Council, 2016, *General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2017*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-UMJ-26-01-72

FIGURE 21: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, BEGA VALLEY LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

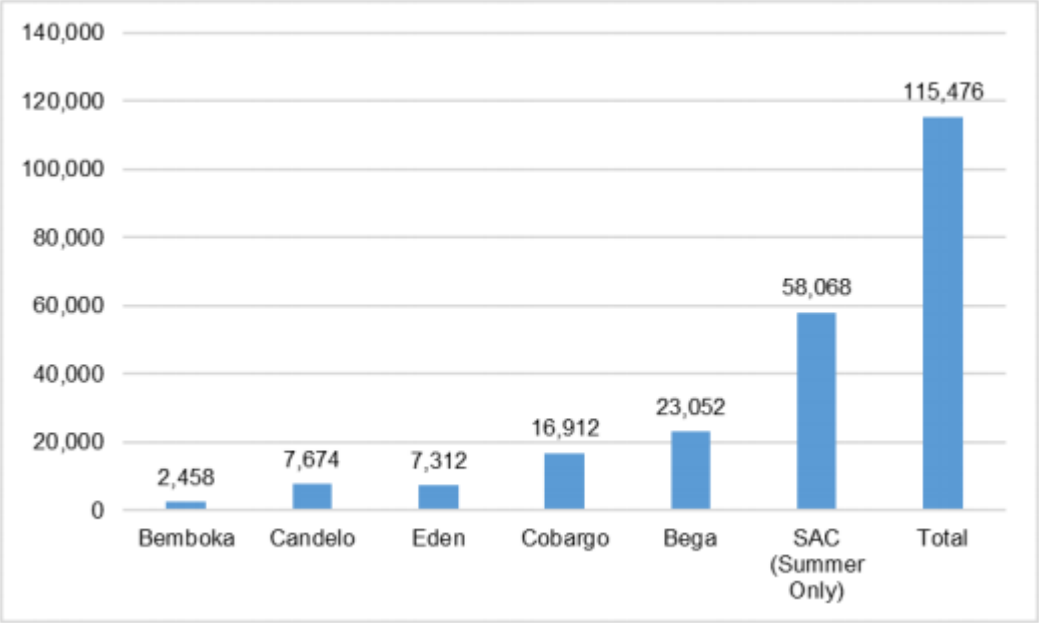
Bega Valley Shire Council Aquatic Facilities Review

A Final Report was released in November 2016.[45]

Visitation for each pool in the LGA in 2015-16 is shown below in Figure 22. For the 2015-16 season when all six Council pools were open, Sapphire Aquatic Centre (SAC) accounted for just over half of the visits to the pools in the Shire area during this period. Three of the six pools (SAC, Bega War Memorial Pool and Cobargo Pool) accounted for 85% of all pool visits. The figures for the SAC are only for the period when all outdoor pools were also open (i.e. the summer season).

[45] Otium Planning Group, 2016, *Bega Valley Shire Council Aquatic Facilities Review*, Draft Report, prepared for Bega Valley Shire Council, November 2016, https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-PTF-14-66-40 .

FIGURE 22: BEGA SHIRE COUNCIL SWIMMING POOL PATRONAGE 2015/16



Source: Otium Planning Group, 2016.

Over the three years 2012-13 to 2014-15, the median council subsidy for each patron visit at outdoor pools varied from $7.14 to $22.89. Further details are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7: BEGA POOLS - MEDIAN SUBSIDY PER VISIT 2012-13 TO 2014-15.

POOL	MEDIAN PATRONAGE	MEDIAN NET COST TO COUNCIL	MEDIAN SUBSIDY PER VISIT	CERM MEDIAN SUBSIDY PER VISIT FOR POOL CATEGORY
Bega War Memorial Pool	25,674	$221,343.00	$8.62	$6.00
Bemboka Pool	3,008	$68,867.00	$22.89	$6.00
Candelo Pool	8,221	$104,354.00	$12.69	$6.00
Cobargo	13,208	$94,292.00	$7.14	$6.00
Eden Memorial Pool	7,253	$125,332.00	$17.28	$6.00
SAC*	106,024 (full year)	$421,546.64	$3.98	$0.60

Source: Otium Planning Group, 2016.
*Note: Figures for SAC represents 2014/15 only as data was incomplete for 2013/14.

At the time of the Review, three of the six pools were managed by Council (SAC, Eden Memorial Pool and Bemboka Pool) and the remaining three were managed by contactors.

The Review Draft Report also noted that most of the pools served a predominantly local catchment, but that the SAC and to a lesser extent Bega and Candelo served broader catchment areas.

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEY INFORMATION

This section discusses the stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of this project, and feedback from stakeholder engagement and surveys of pool users.

4.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders contacted

SGS sought the views of WSC pool users through contact via emails and telephone conversations.

The organisations and individuals contacted included representatives of swimming groups, swim schools, community groups and businesses. All schools in the area were also invited to provide comments on current facilities and services and suggestions for improvements. In addition, the views of WSC employees who had responsibilities for aspects of pool management or for liaising with particular interest groups were also sought.

The results from these consultations were generally consistent with findings from other local government areas, that is, local communities generally place a high social value on the availability of aquatic facilities. Community members are likely to want a swimming pool to be available even if they do not use it.

People living in different parts of the WSC local government area were all likely to support the maintenance and improvement of the pool closest to where they lived.

Further investigation regarding the feelings of the wider community would be beneficial to ensure that Council understands the wants and needs of the whole community, this is identified under 'Next Steps' in Section 6.5 of this report.

4.2 Survey information – surveys of pool users

In addition to the information obtained through the stakeholder discussions, analysis of the information provided to Council through annual surveys of individual pool users was also undertaken.

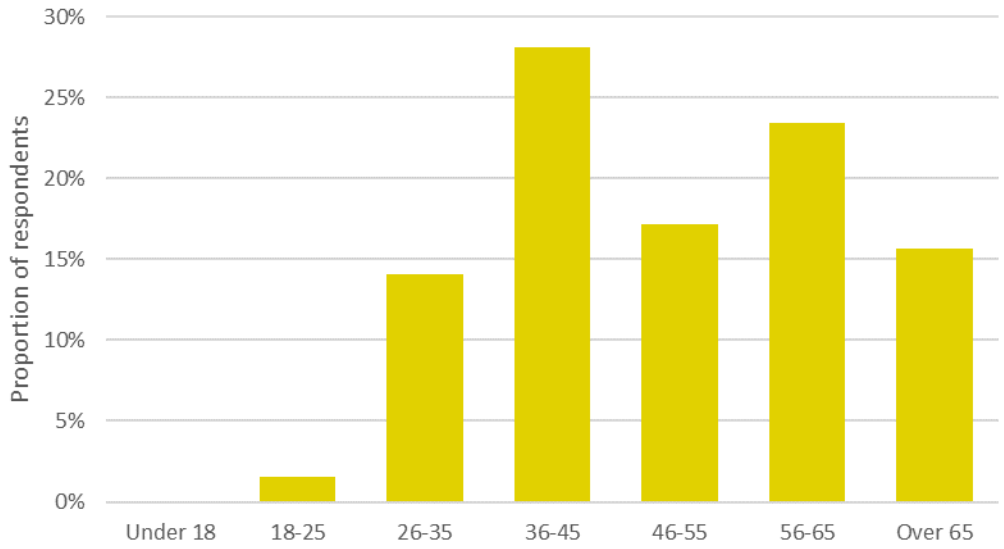
Pool Users – Bowral

In 2017-18, 64 responses to the survey were received from participants who largely used the Bowral Pool.

Of these survey respondents, around 45% lived in Bowral, a further 16% lived in Mittagong., and another 16% lived in areas where the closest pool in 2017-18 was the Bowral Pool. Thus, 77% of those who responded could be seen as living in the Bowral Pool catchment area. Of the survey respondents 8% lived in Moss Vale.

The age distribution of the Bowral Pool survey respondents is shown in Figure 23.

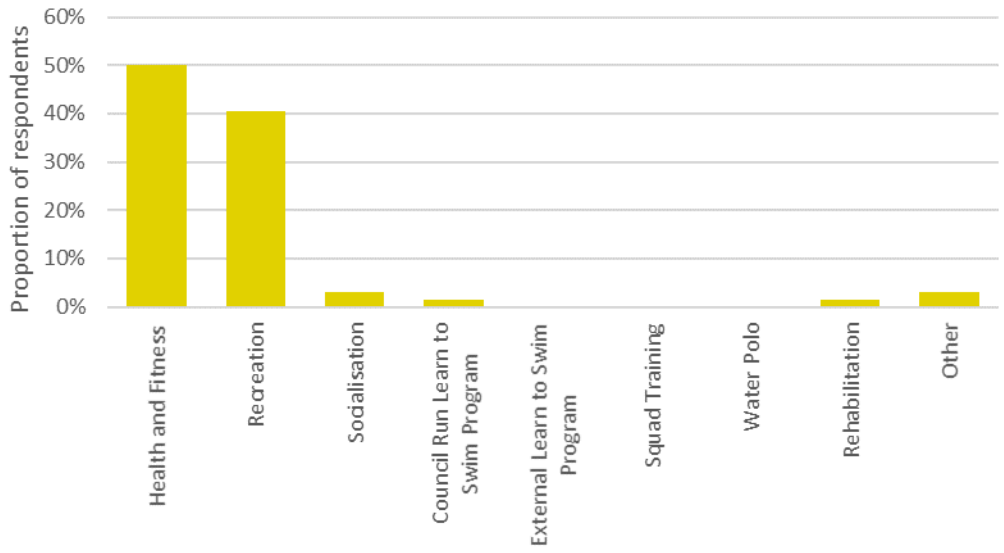
FIGURE 23: AGE PROFILE OF BOWRAL POOL USERS



Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Reasons given for visiting the Bowral Pool are shown in Figure 24 below, with around 50% nominating health and fitness, and 40% nominating recreation as the main reason for visiting the pool.

FIGURE 24: REASONS FOR VISITING BOWRAL POOL

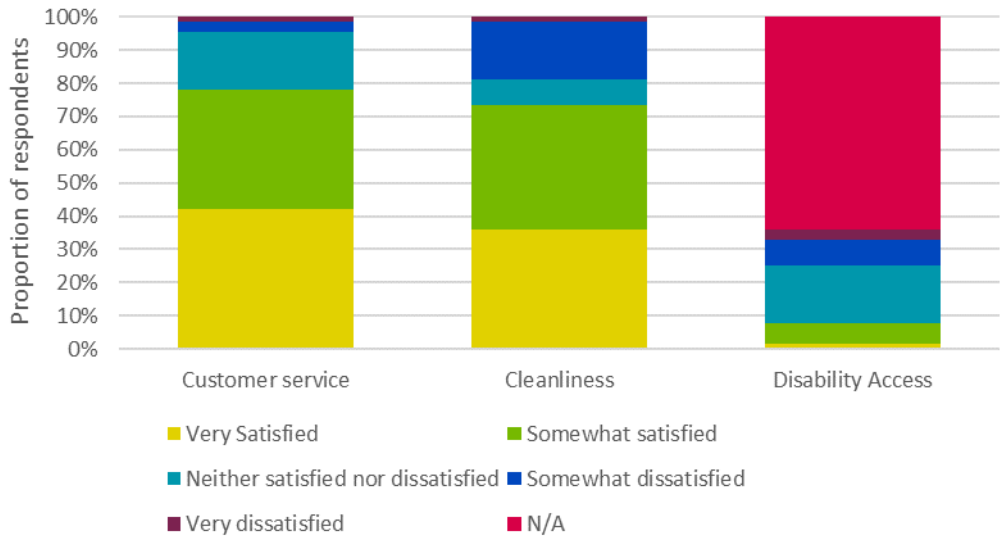


Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Of those responding to the survey, around 28% visited the pool 3 or more times a week (during the season), 34% visited once or twice a week and 37% visited less than once a week.

Customer satisfaction with the Bowral pool is shown in Figure 25 below.

FIGURE 25: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION – BOWRAL POOL



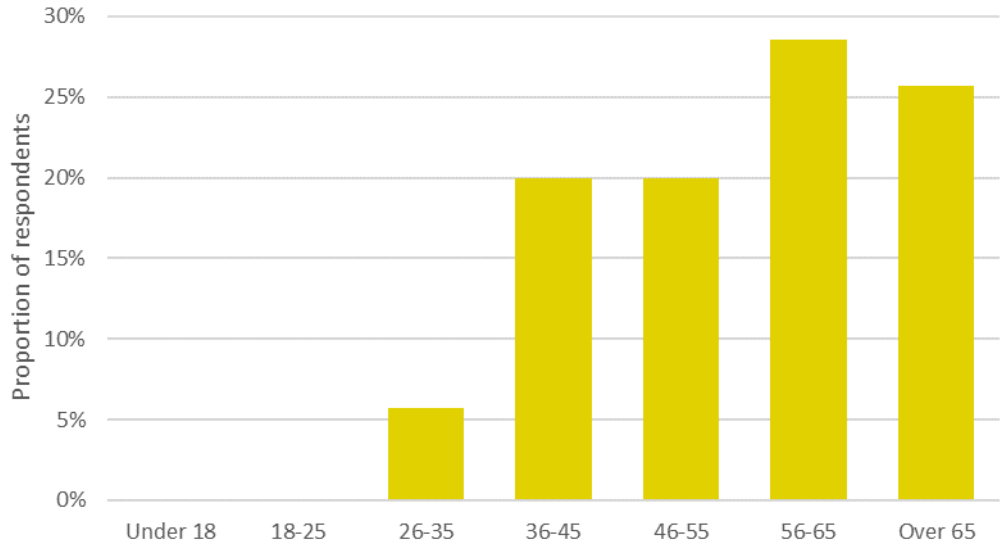
Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Pool Users – Bundanoon

In 2017-18, 35 responses to the survey were received from participants who largely used the **Bundanoon Pool.** Of these survey respondents, 83% lived in Bundanoon.

The age distribution of the Bundanoon Pool survey respondents is shown in Figure 26.

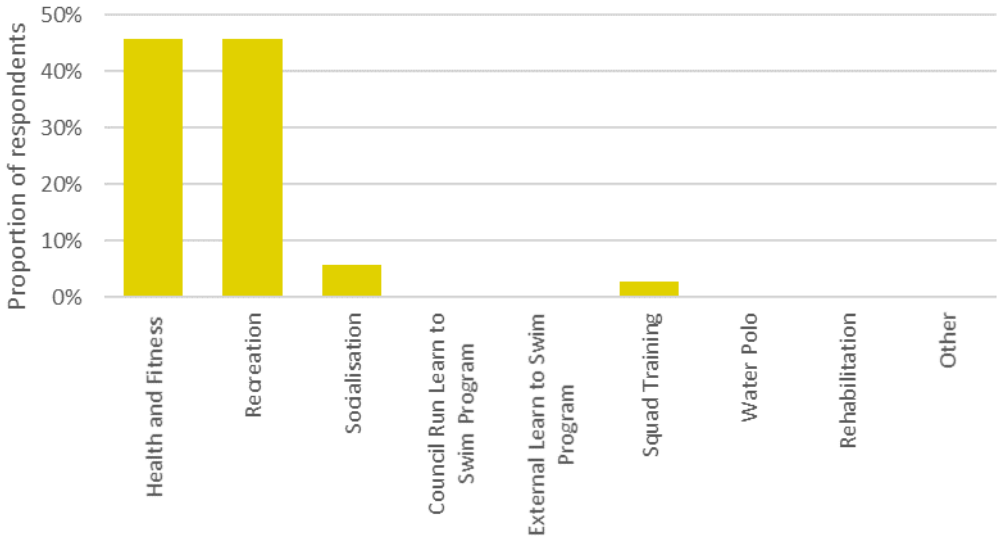
FIGURE 26: AGE PROFILE OF BUNDANOON POOL USERS



Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Reasons given for visiting the Bundanoon Pool is shown in the figure below, with around 46% nominating health and fitness, and 46% also nominating recreation as the main reason for visiting the pool.

FIGURE 27: REASONS FOR VISITING BUNDANOON POOL

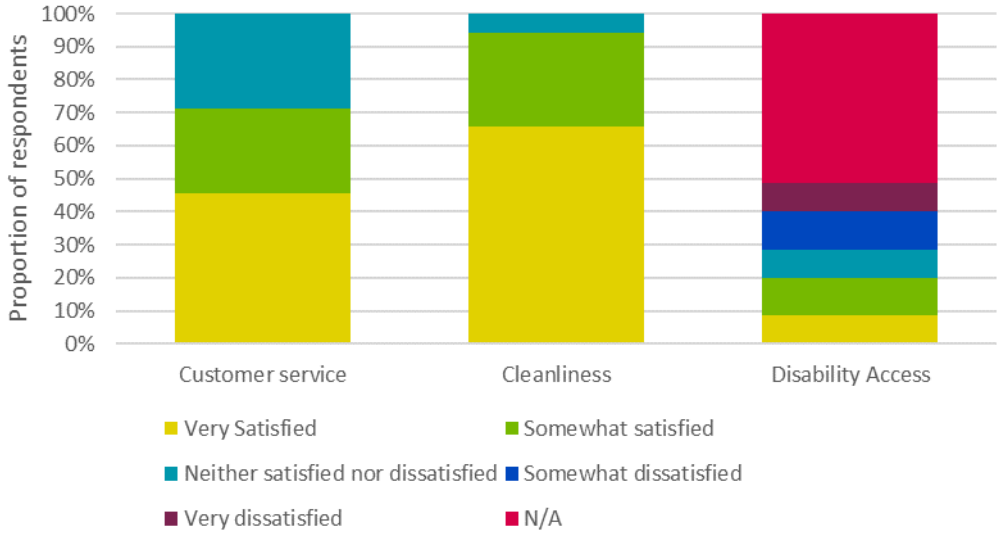


Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Of those responding to the survey, around 11% visited the pool 3 or more times a week (during the season), 37% visited once or twice a week and 51% visited less than once a week.

Customer satisfaction with the Bundanoon pool is shown in Figure 28.

FIGURE 28: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION – BUNDANOON POOL



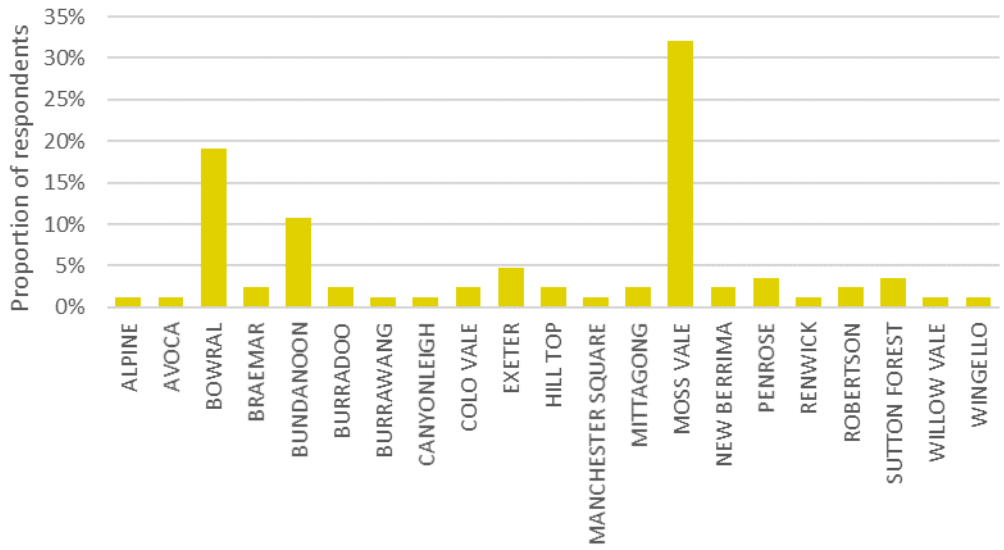
Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Pool Users – Moss Vale

In 2017-18, 84 responses to the survey were received from participants who largely used the Moss Vale Pool.

Of these survey respondents, around 32% lived in Moss Vale, a further 16% lived in Bowral and 11% in Bundanoon. Other respondents were spread across the WSC area, as shown in Figure 29 below.

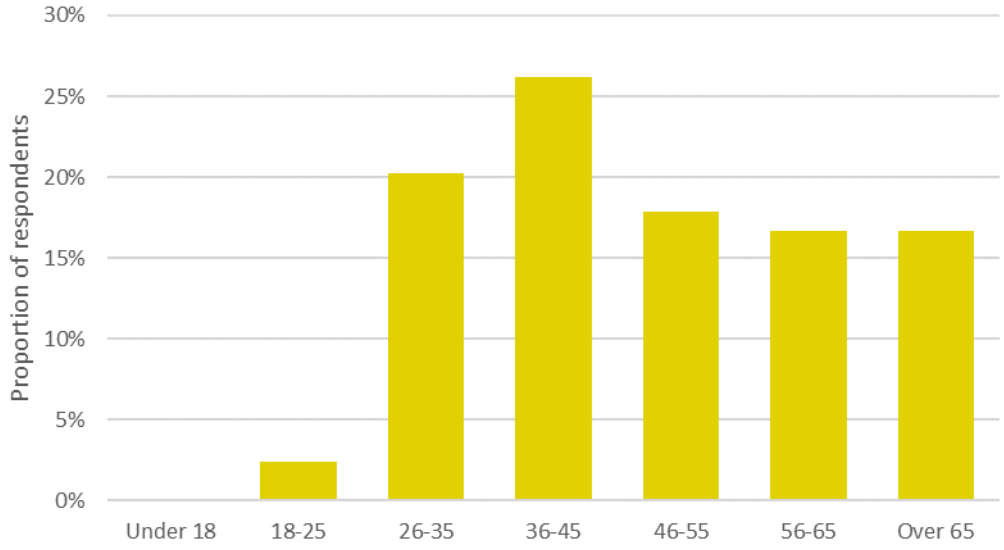
FIGURE 29: DISTRIBUTION OF USERS OF MOSS VALE POOL



Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

The age distribution of the Moss Vale Pool survey respondents is shown in Figure 30.

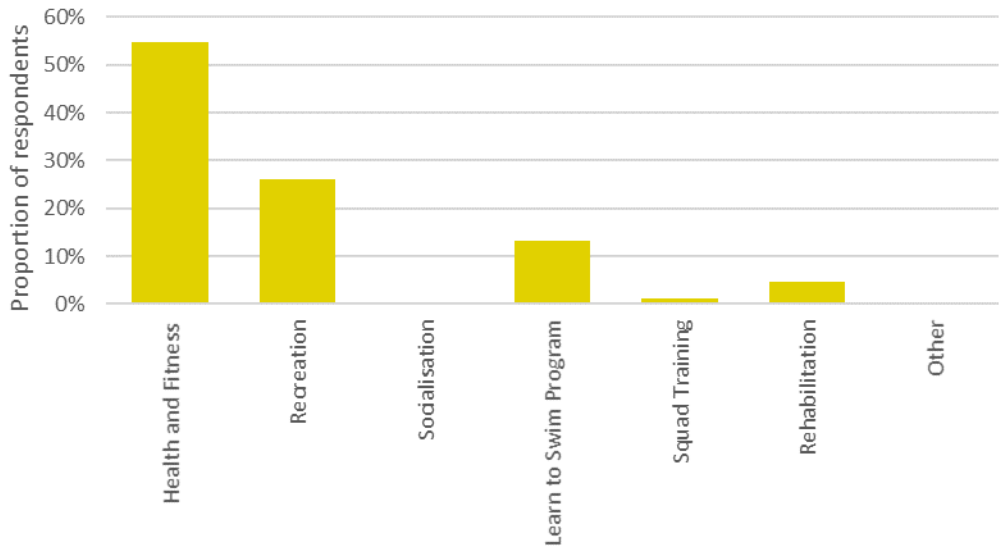
FIGURE 30: AGE PROFILE OF MOSS VALE POOL USERS



Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Reasons given for visiting the Moss Vale Pool are shown in Figure 31 below, with around 55% nominating health and fitness, 26% nominating recreation, 13% nominating learn-to-swim programs and 5% nominating rehabilitation as the main reason for visiting the pool.

FIGURE 31: REASONS FOR VISTING MOSS VALE POOL

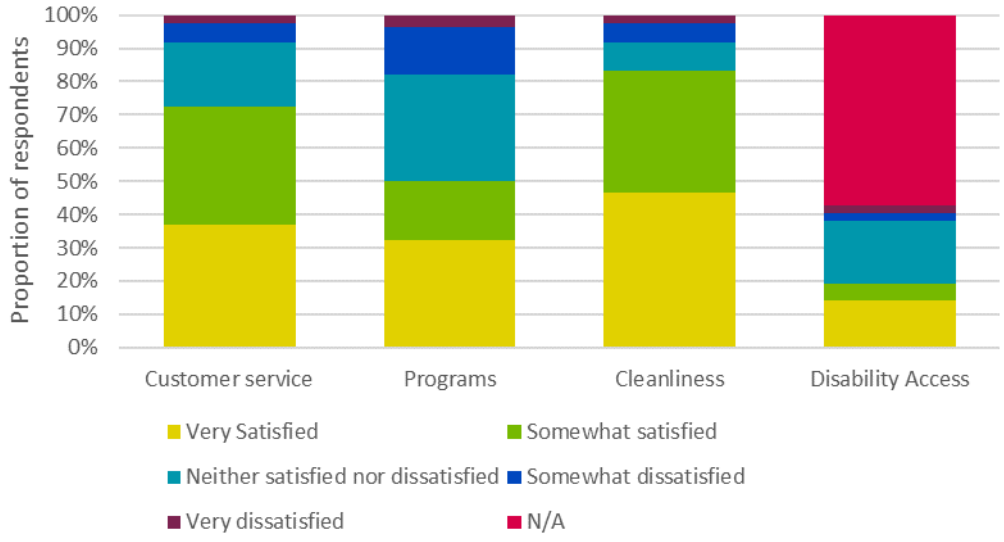


Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Of those responding to the survey, around 29% visited the pool 3 or more times a week, 36% visited once or twice a week and 36% visited less than once a week.

Customer satisfaction with the Moss Vale pool is shown in the following figure.

FIGURE 32: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION – MOSS VALE POOL



Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

Pool Users – Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction as reported in the 2017-18 survey of pool users is shown in Table 8 below. As shown in this table, a significant majority (70-80%) of the users of each of the pools were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the aquatic services delivered.

TABLE 8: OVERALL SATISFACTION (%) - WSC SWIMMING POOLS 2017-18

	Bowral	Bundanoon	Moss Vale
Very satisfied	35.9%	28.6%	33.3%
Somewhat satisfied	43.8%	42.9%	47.6%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	9.4%	17.1%	9.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7.8%	11.4%	7.1%
Very dissatisfied	3.1%	0.0%	2.4%
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: WSC Survey and SGS Economics and Planning.

5. OTHER ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

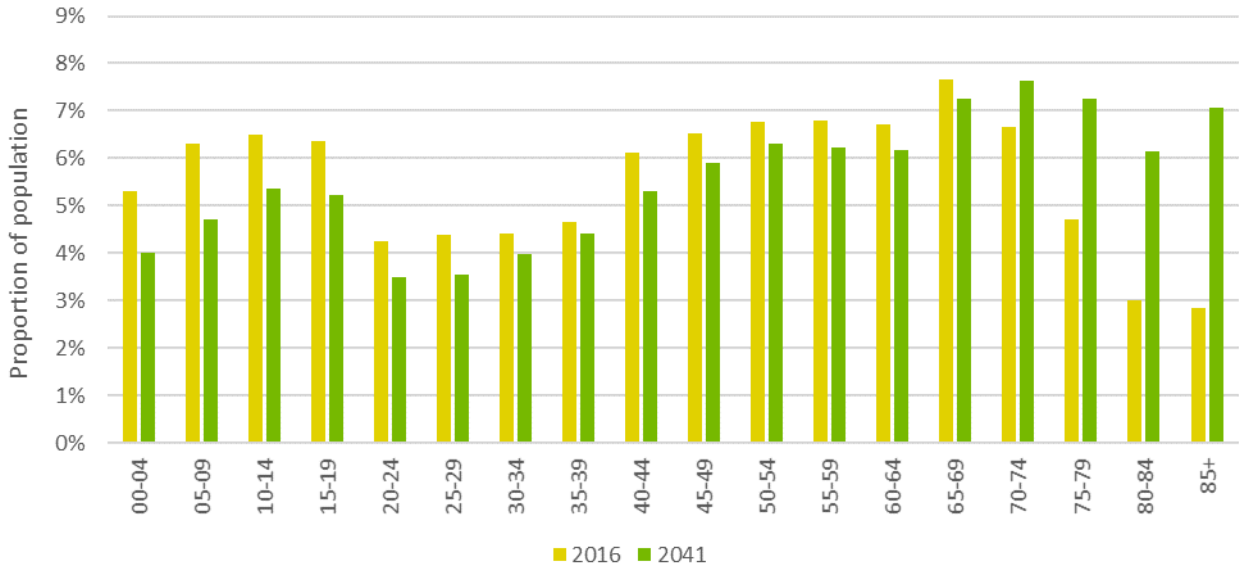
This section discusses other issues to be considered in the decision-making context.

5.1 Future population growth and changes

Population projections

The population of the Wingecarribee Local Government Area is projected to increase by around further 2,500 people between 2016 and 2041, to a population of around 51,500. By this time, 42% of the population (around 21,400 people) are expected to be aged 65 years or older (up from 32% in 2016). Over the same timeframe, the number of children aged 5-19 is projected to decrease slightly from 9,400 in 2016 to 7,900 in 2041. Figure 33 below shows the projected age profile of the LGA in 2041 compared to 2016, reflecting the expected ageing of the population and consequent reduction in the proportion of people in younger age groups.

FIGURE 33: PROJECTED AGE PROFILE, WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE LGA, 2016 TO 2036



Source: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2019.[46]

By 2041, an additional 3,100 dwellings are projected to be required across the LGA.

In planning for aquatic facilities in Wingecarribee, it will be important to take into account the likely increase in demand as a result of population growth, and the changes that will be needed as a result of the distribution, profile and preferences of the future population.

[46] NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2019, *Projections*, Population, Household and Implied Dwelling Projections by LGA (ASGS 2019), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections/Projections

5.2 Aquatic facility market segments and trends

In developing a strategy for aquatic facilities in an area, there is a need to consider the diverse circumstances of the catchment population, and their different needs. The users of aquatic facilities in Australia can roughly be categorised into four market segments.[47]

Recreation and Leisure

This market segment comprises roughly 60-70% of pool users, and is made up of families and friends who visit pools for fun, play and to cool off in hot weather. Visits to pools for recreation and leisure tend to vary with the seasons, particularly if the only pools available are outdoors.

Fitness and Training

This market segment comprises roughly 20-25% of pool users, and is made up of competitive swimmers, members of swimming clubs and people who use swimming to keep fit and as cross training for other sporting activities.

Education

This market segment comprises roughly 10-15% of pool users, and is made up of learn to swim and water safety classes, school training activities and school competitions.

Therapy

This market segment comprises roughly 10-15% of pool users, and includes hydrotherapy, water-based rehabilitation exercises and activities for people with health-related conditions that may restrict their participation in other forms of exercise. Older people are increasingly looking to access swimming pools for therapy and rehabilitation purposes. They are likely to seek year-round access to pools (preferably enclosed), and to require the water temperature to be hotter than is desirable for lap swimming.

Implications for aquatic facility provision

Recent trends in aquatic facility development have been for larger multi-use combined indoor and outdoor facilities, that cater for all of the market segments identified above.

In recent years most of the aquatic facilities developed for public use that have included a 50 metre pool (indoor or outdoor) have been in metropolitan areas, or in significant regional centres with a catchment population of 100,000 plus and no similar facilities.

This contrasted with the trend from the 1960s to the 1990s to build 50 metre pools (often outdoors) to meet competition and training requirements.

Private investment in pools for commercial use has generally been restricted to small-scale specialist facilities for learn-to-swim schools, or for adjunct facilities associated with gyms, hotels, resorts or private schools.

Ancillary Services and Facilities

There has been a recent trend to include a range of complementary facilities and services in association with swimming pools. These can include:

- Gyms and other land-based fitness activities
- Health and therapeutic service facilities such as massage therapists
- Sports-associated retail
- A range of café and other food and drink services, and
- Child care.

[47] SGL, 2011, *Future Improved Aquatic Facility Options Summary Assessment*, prepared for Mansfield Shire Council, April 2011.

These ancillary services and facilities can help to attract additional patrons to the facility, and cross-subsidise administrative and operational costs.

Multiple activity spaces can encourage people of all ages to attend aquatic centres and to move between activities as their interests and needs change over time.[48] Aquatic facilities that include a range of services and spaces also increase their attractiveness as social hubs.

The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is an example of a recently- developed facility that meets the needs of multiple user groups.

5.3 Comparative information on the provision and subsidies for swimming pools

Comparative information on swimming pool provision and subsidies can be obtained from a number of sources.

CERM PI Benchmarks

Public aquatic industry service providers have provided information and statistics to the CERM PI Benchmarking project at the University of South Australia since 1992. This has led to the development of operational benchmarks for aquatic centres of different sizes and for those serving different populations.

Benchmarks are assessed for the medians from all centres for which data is provided. These benchmarks cover three broad groupings. Group 7 aquatic centres are indoor pools. Group 6 centres have both indoor and outdoor pools and Group 5 centres only have outdoor pools. These three aquatic centre groupings are further divided by centre size. Benchmarks are also developed to take into account other characteristics such as location (regional versus capital city) and catchment population.[49]

Figure 34 below shows the variation in median number of visits to swimming pools per year for swimming pools of different sizes and in different groups. The variation in number of visits is likely to reflect not just the different size and characteristics of the pools, but also the pool catchments served by each pool, the hours of operation and the age of the pool.

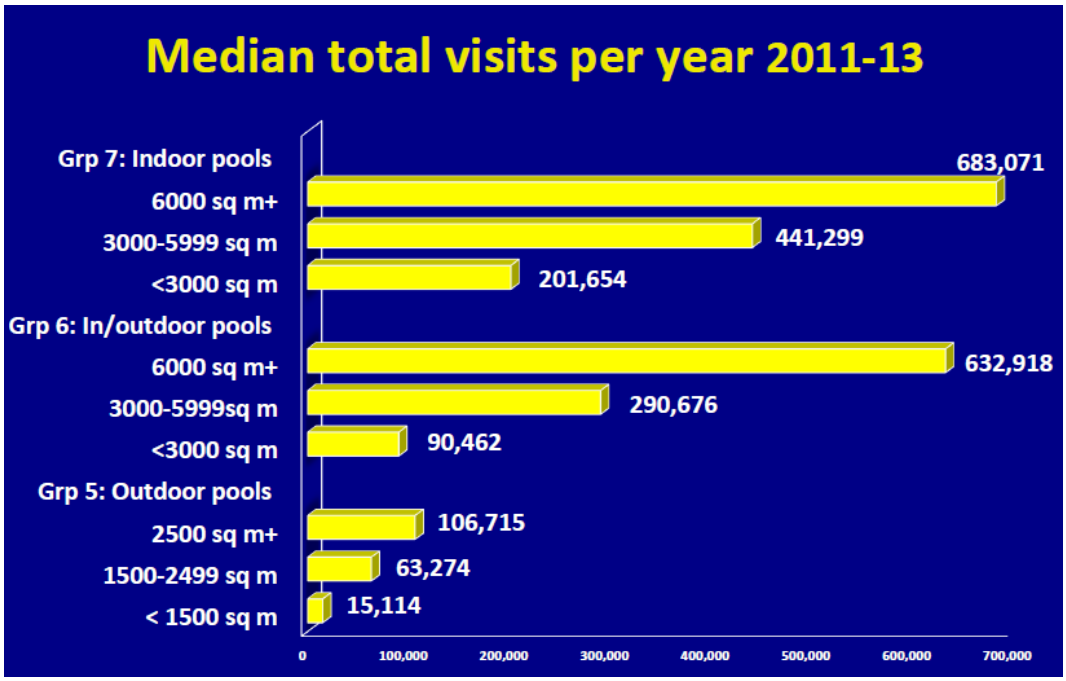
The information is based on data provided over three years from:

- An average of 48 Group 7 centres providing data each year
- An average of 30 Group 6 centres providing data each year, and
- An average of 39 Group 5 centres providing data each year.

[48] SGL, 2011, *Future Improved Aquatic Facility Options Assessment Summary*, Prepared for Mansfield Shire Council, April 2011, http://www.mansfield.vic.gov.au/Libraries/Documents/IN11_7134_Assessment_Summary_April_2011_Final_Report_Prepared_for_Mansfield_Shire_Council_by_Mike_King_SGL_Group.sflb.ashx, page 27.

[49] Howat, 2015, 'CERM PI benchmarks: 25 years of benchmarking for Australian public aquatic centres,' *Aquatic Recreation Australia*, 1(17), 28-29, Leisure Institute of WA, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280495448_CERM_PI_benchmarks_25_years_of_benchmarking_for_Australasian_public_aquatic_centres.

FIGURE 34: MEDIAN VISITS PER YEAR BY SWIMMING POOL GROUP

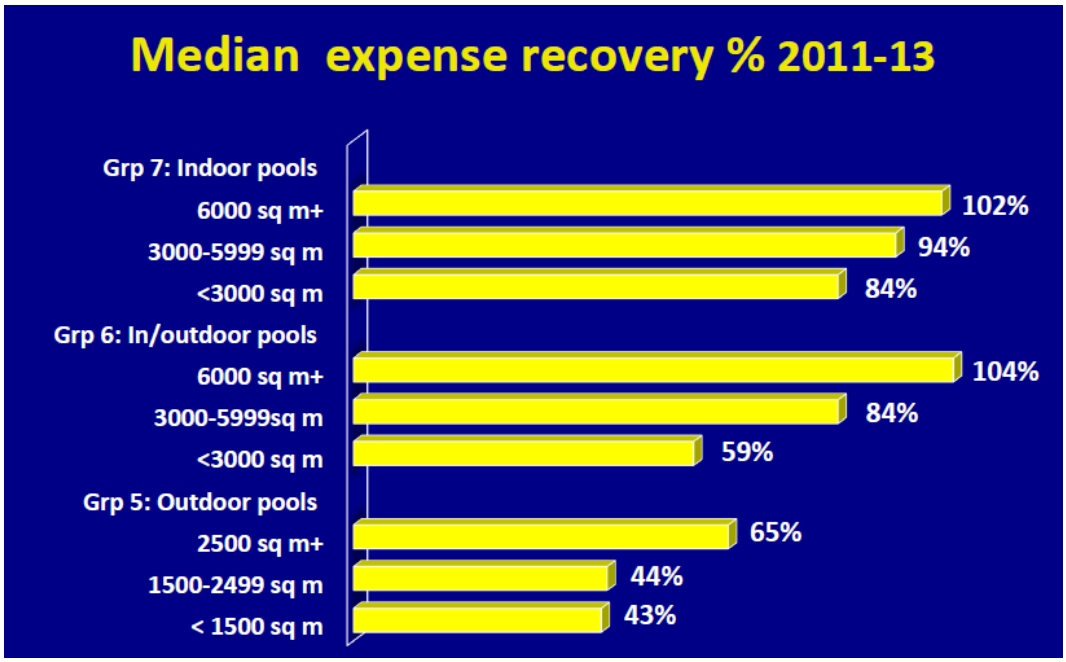


Source: Howat, 2013.[50]

Of the centres providing information 39% were from NSW, 39% from Victoria, 16% from WA and the remaining 6% from other States and Territories.

Figure 35 shows the median expense recovery for swimming pools by group.

FIGURE 35: MEDIAN EXPENSE RECOVERY BY SWIMMING POOL GROUP



Source: Howat, 2013.

Expense recovery is also likely to not only reflect the differences between each pool group, but will again reflect different catchment sizes, operating hours and the age of the pool.

[50] Howat, 2013, 'Benchmarking of Australian Public Aquatic and Recreation Centres', CERM PI Project, University of SA.

As is shown in Figure 34 and Figure 35, the larger pools in Group 7 (Indoor only) and in Group 6 (combined Indoor/Outdoor), are likely to generate the highest number of visits per annum and the highest % of expenses recovered. The median number of visits to Group 7 pools (Outdoor only) was significantly below the median number of visits to pools of equivalent sizes in Group 5 and Group 6. For outdoor pools in Group 5, even the largest pools only recovered a median of 65% of expenses incurred, while the smaller pools in Group 5 recovered a median of 43% of expenses incurred.

Figure 36 compares information for Group 5 Outdoor Pools in regional centres with information for all pools in this category.

FIGURE 36: CATCHMENT POPULATIONS FOR GROUP 5 OUTDOOR POOLS - COMPARISON INFORMATION

Group 5 (outdoor) centres: Catchment population <10k, regional centres

	Group 5 regional centres; CP <10,000 (n=16) 2012-13	Group 5 All centres (n=78) 2012-13
Expense recovery %	32%	50%
Secondary spend per visit	$.98	$.92
Surplus (subsidy) per visit	($6.57)	($4.06)
Total visits per year	10,724	48,460
Catchment population (5km radius)	3,905	17,115
Water usage per visit (litres)	333	142

Source: Howat, 2013.

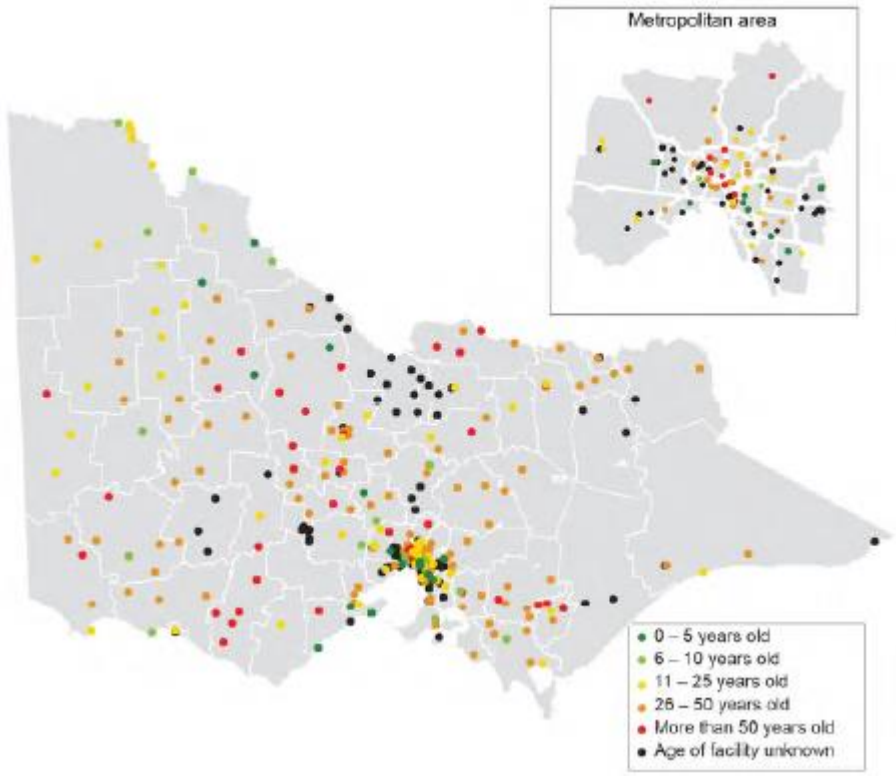
As is clear in Figure 36, Group 5 Outdoor Pools in regional centres generally have significantly smaller populations living within 5 kilometres, a similarly reduced number of visits per year and a lower median proportion of expenses recovered (32% compared to 50%), and higher median subsidies per visit ($6.57 compared to $4.06).

The CERM PI Benchmarks provide useful comparison information, but do not, however, cover all public pools.

Victorian data

While information on all public pools is not readily available for NSW, the Victorian Auditor General (March 2016) identified 329 pools accessible by the public, including 278 Council pools. The location and age of these pools is shown in Figure 37.

FIGURE 37: VICTORIAN SWIMMING POOLS BY LOCATION AND AGE



Source: Victorian Auditor General's Office, based on Sport and Recreation Victoria data.[51]

Given that the population of Victoria was around 5.9 million in 2016, this gave an average of one council pool for each population of 21,300. The number of Council pools per head of population is higher in regional areas than in the Melbourne metropolitan area, reflecting the more dispersed population in regional Victoria.

Figure 37 also shows that many of the Victorian pools are 25 or more years old, and that some are more than 50 years old.

Of the council aquatic facilities identified in Victoria:

- Around 65% were outdoor pools
- Around 73% of aquatic facilities had two or three pools, and
- Only 31% of aquatic facilities open throughout the year.

Relevant information from other studies

A number of the aquatic facility strategies that have been undertaken for regional areas elsewhere in Australia have identified similar issues to those occurring in Wingecarribee. Relevant information in relation to some of these aquatic facility studies is provided in Section 3.3 and in Appendix 1. Additional findings of interest are included below.

The Victorian Auditor-General's 2016 Report (*Local Government Service Delivery: Recreational Facilities*) included a Case Study of the Bendigo City and surrounding areas.

[51] Victorian Auditor General, 2016, *Local Government Service Delivery: Recreational Facilities*.

Case Study – Bendigo City and surrounding areas

The population of the City of Greater Bendigo was around 112,000 in 2016.

There were six pools in Bendigo City, none of which were more than 7 kilometres apart. Greater Bendigo also had six rural pools, which were between 14 and 47 kilometres from Bendigo City. Raywood pool, a rural swimming pool, had relatively low attendance, which meant that Council subsidised visits at a cost of $78 per visit. Across Greater Bendigo as a whole, the Council subsidised each visit at an average of $21, with the subsidy per visit for pools as low as $2.20 for the Bendigo East Swimming Pool.

The case study found that If a rural pool is closed, the lack of public transport means some residents would have difficulty travelling to neighbouring towns to use other pools, and the social benefits of the pool may be lost. While the Raywood ARC is expensive to operate, it may generate higher social benefits because of its isolation. Any decisions relating to its ongoing operation must therefore balance financial considerations with the social benefits it provides.[52]

A study for the **Ararat Rural City**[53] included findings as follows:

- Many of Australia's 50 metre pools were built following the country's successes at the Melbourne Olympics of 1956. Since then, the international aquatics federation, FINA, has instituted 25 metre 'short course' regulations and world championships, and the need for 50 metre pools has become less important.
- Modern aquatic complexes are expected to cater for a range of different market sectors. These include learn-to-swim for children and adults, school programs, remedial health activities, lap swimming, general fitness activities, water exercise for seniors, holiday activities and general recreation. There is often a need to separate different users according to age, gender and cultural sensitivities. Different pool users can also have different requirements for water temperature and depth. There may also be a desire to cater for specialised water sports such as water polo and diving. Traditional pool facilities may not be able to cater effectively for all these user groups.
- Virtually no pool-only developments have occurred in the past two decades due to their assessed poor operational viability. Many pool-only venues which were built in the past have progressively had a mix of other facilities added to them to strengthen their financial viability. New aquatic facilities are now almost universally provided in association with other sporting facilities (such as gyms), allied health services, café/food services and social facilities. New pools also generally include ramp, step and hoist facilities for people with disabilities, family change rooms and provision for child care.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of indoor aquatic facilities throughout Australia over the past two decades.
- Over recent years a number of facilities have also been developed as indoor and outdoor venues. These have taken two main forms: first, provision of both indoor and outdoor pools (or outdoor water features rather than pools) and second, the construction of pools which can be opened up in summer and enclosed in winter.
- The provision of indoor/outdoor venues through the use of removable fabric enclosures has generally been a failure, due to the cost and difficulty of removing the covers, the ease with which covers can be damaged, and because of the generally poor use conditions (noise, humidity and temperatures).
- There is increasing provision of diverse additions to aquatic facilities including water play areas for toddlers, water slides, beach volleyball courts and picnic facilities.

[52] Victorian Auditor General, 2016, *Local Government Service Delivery: Recreational Facilities*, page 21.
[53] HM Leisure Planning Pty Ltd, 2005, *Feasibility Study for Outdoor Swimming and Associated Facilities in the Ararat Township*.

The findings from the study for Ararat were generally consistent with those of a study for Mansfield Shire Council,[54] which included the following:

- The aquatic facility development trend that is most prevalent in Australia is the development of larger multi-use indoor/outdoor facilities. There have been a limited number of 50 metre pools built, and these have generally been in areas with a population of 100,000 plus or in regional areas with no similar facilities.
- To offset the high operating costs of aquatic facilities, the main trend is to develop facilities at high profile locations and as part of a range of activity areas that can share the cost of management and supervision.

Findings from a 2010 Victorian Country Aquatic Facility Survey included that:

- The most successful centres attract 10 to 15 visits per year per head of population, as well as significant numbers of tourists (in tourist destination areas).
- On average the capital cost of indoor aquatic facilities was between $5 million and $7.5 million.
- All aquatic facilities received capital grants ranging from $250,000 to $2.5 million.
- All facilities recorded operating deficits ranging from $160,000 to $440,000 per year. This was approximately double the average current operating deficit for outdoor pools.

Comparative subsidies

As noted above, the CERM performance indicator for operational subsidies for outdoor pools in regional centres with a population catchment of up to 10,000 is around $6 per visit.

In the Bega Valley Shire Council, there were five outdoor pools in this category with operational subsidies varying from around $7 per visit to $23 per visit. Most of these pools catered for catchment populations significantly below 10,000 people.

The CERM performance indicator for the operational subsidies for indoor pools such as the Sapphire Aquatic Centre in the Bega Valley was $0.60 per visit. The actual operating subsidy per visit for to the Sapphire Aquatic Centre was around $4 per visit in 2014-15. The Sapphire Aquatic Centre is similar to the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre.

Benchmarks and guidelines for aquatic facility provision

The comparison of rates of facility provision between areas has been used for many years as a planning tool to help indicate the number of people a facility can serve and the number of facilities which may be required in an area. Guidelines for facility provision can also include:

- standards, which generally imply a “norm”;
- benchmarks which often imply “adequacy”; and/ or
- targets, which can indicate a goal to be achieved.

Comparative rates of provision (which are derived from existing rates of facility provision in similar areas) are often used as a starting point to assess the adequacy of current facilities or to assess the need for new facilities. However, there are no universally accepted benchmarks for community facilities and services.

A hierarchical model of infrastructure provision is also often used. This can include three levels, such as:

- Local area level – usually between 5,000 and 10,000 people
- District level – generally between 20,000 to 30,000 people, but may be up to 50,000
- LGA-wide – or even sub-regional or regional level.[55]

Planning for community and sporting infrastructure needs to reflect not just comparative rates of provision or benchmarks, but also the socio-demographic and geographic

[54] SGL, 2011, *Future Improved Aquatic Facility Options Summary Assessment*, prepared for Mansfield Shire Council, April 2011.
[55] SE Qld Regional Plan 2005-2026, Social Infrastructure Planning, pages 41-42.

circumstances of the catchment population. There are different considerations for inner city areas, greenfield growth developments, rural residential, regional and rural areas. In regional areas the relative isolation of settlements and the distances people will need to travel will be a key determinant of what facilities might be required.[56]

Most standards and guidelines have been developed to meet infrastructure needs in rapidly expanding urban environments. For example, the benchmark or standard identified for an indoor aquatic/fitness centre in *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas,* (Growth Areas Authority), is one centre for every 40,000 to 50,000 people.[57]

For outdoor pools, the following standards have previously been identified for urban areas:

- For a population of 150,000 – one FINA competition standard 50m pool
- For a population of 75,000 – one 25m or 50m pool for recreational, club, water polo, diving and competitive swimming
- For a population of 30,000 – one 25m leisure pool.

However, many community and recreation facilities in regional areas have been built by local communities over time, and use of city-based population standards to assess the need for these facilities may not be appropriate.[58]

There is also a need to consider both the number and quality of facilities that are available.

As noted above, across the state of Victoria in 2016, there was an average of one council pool for each population of 21,300, with the number of Council pools per head of population being higher in regional areas than in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The information included in this report on aquatic facilities provided by councils in other regional areas of NSW, demonstrates that WSC is not alone in having a relatively high number of Council-owned aquatic facilities per head of population. There is around one facility for every 12,000 residents in the WSC area (including the Mittagong Pool). However, it should be noted that in comparison to other regional areas the aquatic facilities in WSA are relatively close, with the closest facilities being only 5.5 kilometres apart. This is closer than many urban areas yet servicing a significantly smaller population.

5.4 Distance between aquatic facilities

As mentioned, the distance between aquatic facilities in WSC is relatively close compared to other regional Councils. The following tables illustrate this by providing the distance in kilometres between aquatic facilities for a range of comparable LGAs, with additional information for other LGAs also provided in Appendix 1.

TABLE 9: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – WINGECARIBEE SHIRE

Wingecaribee Shire	Mittagong Swimming Centre	Bowral Swimming Centre	Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	Bundanoon Swimming Centre
Mittagong Swimming Centre	-	5.5	16.1	38.2
Bowral Swimming Centre	5.5	-	10.7	27.6
Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	16.1	10.8	-	16.2
Bundanoon Swimming Centre	38.3	26.6	16.2	-

[56] https://vpa.gov.au
[57] Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008.
[58] South Gippsland Shire Council, *Strategy and Audit for Social Community Infrastructure, 2014-2029*. Pages 28-32.

TABLE 10: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – QUEANBEYAN-PALERANG

Queanbeyan-Palerang	Bungendore Swimming Pool	Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre	Captains Flat Pool	Braidwood Memorial Pool
Bungendore Swimming Pool	-	26	45	48
Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre	26	-	45	73
Captains Flat Pool	45	45	-	48
Braidwood Memorial Pool	48	73	48	-

TABLE 11: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – BLUE MOUNTAINS

Blue Mountains	Blackheath Pool	Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre	Lawson Swim Centre	Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre	Glenbrook Pool
Blackheath Pool	-	12	26	40	52
Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre	12	-	16	30	42
Lawson Swim Centre	28	16	-	16	28
Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre	40	30	16	-	12
Glenbrook Pool	52	42	28	12	-

TABLE 12: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – BEGA VALLEY

Bega Valley	Cobargo Pool	Bemboka Pool	Bega Memorial Swimming Pool	Candelo Swimming Pool	Sapphire Aquatic Centre	Eden Memorial Pool
Cobargo Pool	-	63	42	64	76	93
Bemboka Pool	63	-	36	24	58	75
Bega Memorial Swimming Pool	42	36	-	24	36	53
Candelo Swimming Pool	64	24	24	-	33	50
Sapphire Aquatic Centre	76	58	36	33	-	21
Eden Memorial Pool	93	75	53	49	21	-

5.5 Climate change

Climate change and implications

Temperatures in the South East and Tablelands Region have been increasing since around 1960. Temperatures are projected to continue to increase by an average of 0.6 degrees Celsius in the near future (2020-2039), and by an average of around 2.0 degrees Celsius in the far future (2060-2079).

The Region on average is projected to experience an additional three hot days (where the maximum is above 35 degrees Celsius) per year in the near future and up to eight additional hot days per year in the far future.[59] This will likely increase the demand for access to aquatic facilities.

Spring rainfall is projected to decrease across the Region, and autumn rainfall is projected to increase. Extreme rainfall occurrences are also projected to increase in the near and far future across much of NSW, including the South East and Tablelands region.[60] The potential increase in extreme rainfall occurrences needs to be taken into account in planning for aquatic facilities, particularly for the Mittagong Pool that is located in a flood prone area.

[59] NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2014, *South East and Tablelands Climate Change* Snapshot, Nov 2014.
[60] NARCliM, 2014, *NARCliM Extreme Precipitation Indices Report*, Technical Note 6, page 3.

6. FINDINGS, OPTIONS, DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This section summarises findings, options, recommendations, and next steps.

6.1 Key findings

WSC currently owns four pools in a relatively small area. Two of the pools (Mittagong and Bowral) are only 5.5 kilometres apart. The Mittagong Pool has been closed over multiple seasons for refurbishment, repairs due to flooding and equipment failure. The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is relatively new. It is the only pool owned by the WSC that is enclosed and available for year-round use.

Swimming remains one of the most popular forms of physical activity undertaken by Australians, for both adults and children. Swimming is ranked 4th in terms of participation, undertaken by 15.7% of adults in 2019, behind only walking (43.2%), fitness/gym activities (36.6%), and athletics (including jogging and running, 16.4%). Swimming is also the most popular organised sporting activity for children (both girls and boys), with around 36% engaging in organised swimming activities, not including recreational swimming.

Community satisfaction surveys have found that communities place a high social value on the availability of aquatic facilities. There can be a high level of 'optional demand', that is, community members may want a swimming pool to be available even though they may not use it.

In April 2014, Aquatics & Recreation Victoria, in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria, commissioned a research project into the social and community benefits of aquatic facilities. The research project found that as well as providing health and fitness benefits, aquatic facilities also provided community development and social benefits. The research suggested that users derived an average health benefit worth $48 from a visit to their local aquatic facility.

Councils generally subsidise public swimming pool operational and maintenance costs. Councils also generally rely on grants from other levels of government and on other sources of income for capital replacement costs, refurbishments or new developments.

- On a stand-alone basis none of the Councils included in a recent survey by the Victorian Auditor-General owned aquatic facilities that were fully financially self-sustaining over the longer term.

It is not unreasonable to expect State and Commonwealth Governments to contribute to the costs associated with the provision and operation of public swimming pools, as many of the health benefits identified are likely to accrue as savings to Commonwealth and State health budgets.

As well as aquatic facilities, local governments also subsidise a range of other community facilities, including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, cultural facilities and libraries. All these facilities are judged as adding value to the lives of constituents, although not all facilities will be used by all constituents.

Recurrent funding and use of WSC pools

Table 13 below illustrates the number of admissions, operating deficit, and effective subsidy per visit for each of the pools since 2014-15. Figure 38 also illustrates the number of admissions across all the pools against the effective subsidy per visit over this time.

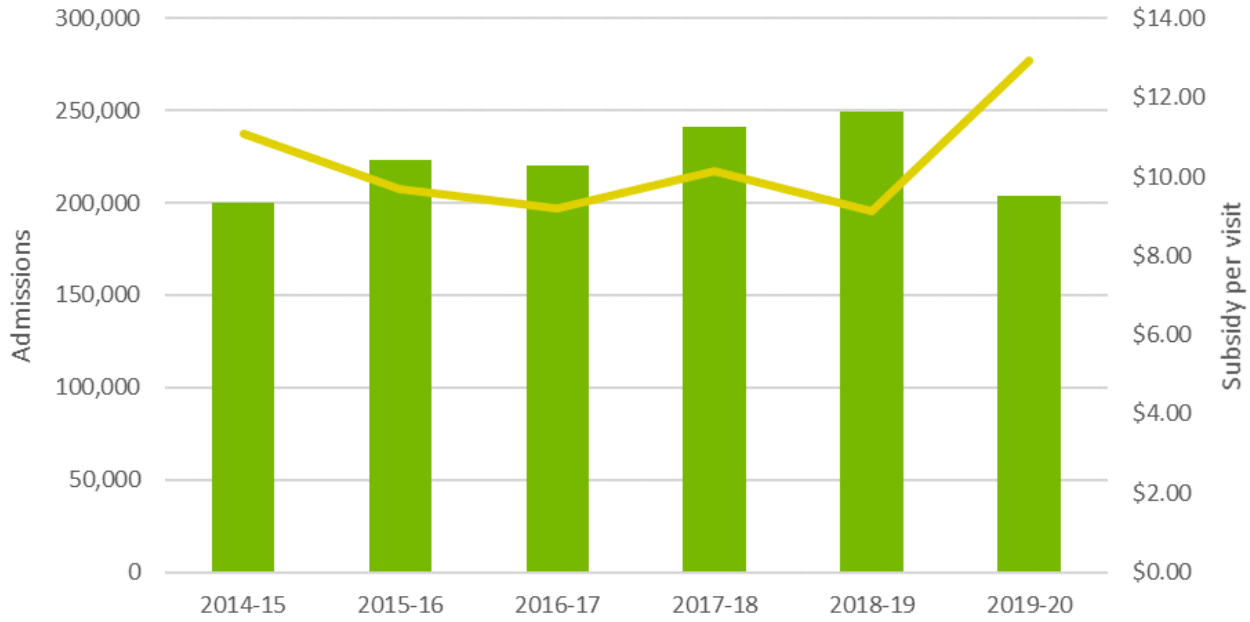
All pools in the Wingecarribee area are subsidised by Council. The subsidies per pool visit in the most recent year vary, from $10.29 for the Moss Vale pool to $40.29 for Mittagong. Across all pools, the subsidy in 2019-20 is $12.94 per visit.

TABLE 13: WSC POOL ADMISSIONS AND SUBSIDIES, 2014-15 TO 2019-20

	Bowral			Mittagong			Bundanoon			Moss Vale			All WSC pools		
	Admissions	Operating deficit	Subsidy per visit	Admissions	Operating deficit	Subsidy per visit	Admissions	Operating deficit	Subsidy per visit	Admissions	Operating deficit	Subsidy per visit	Admissions	Operating deficit	Subsidy per visit
2014-15	50,090	$460,613	$9.20	0	$184,501	N/A	5,150	$182,404	$35.42	145,126	$1,389,629	$9.58	200,366	$2,217,147	$11.07
2015-16	36,341	$434,819	$11.96	17,287	$321,633	$18.61	5,314	$175,042	$32.94	164,584	$1,230,190	$7.47	223,526	$2,161,684	$9.67
2016-17	47,965	$362,938	$7.57	0	$191,521	N/A	6,146	$155,160	$25.25	166,144	$1,314,616	$7.91	220,255	$2,024,235	$9.19
2017-18	45,543	$360,129	$7.91	0	$418,758	N/A	6,450	$154,519	$23.96	189,255	$1,509,882	$7.98	241,248	$2,443,288	$10.13
2018-19	38,461	$314,893	$8.19	16,437	$454,423	$27.65	5,788	$143,486	$24.79	188,918	$1,364,433	$7.22	249,604	$2,277,235	$9.12
2019-20	32,128	$353,809	$11.01	15,510	$624,841	$40.29	4,179	$152,572	$36.51	152,085	$1,535,363	$10.29	203,902	$2,602,625	$12.94

Source: Wingecarribee Shire Council data.

FIGURE 38: ADMISSIONS AND SUBSIDY PER VISIT, ALL WSC POOLS, 2014-15 TO 2019-20



Source: SGS and Wingecarribee Shire Council data.

Comparative subsidies

As noted in Section 5.3, the CERM performance indicator for operational subsidies for outdoor pools in regional centres with a population catchment of up to 10,000 is around $6 per visit.

The CERM performance indicator for the operational subsidies for indoor pools such as the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is $0.60 per visit.

However, it is also relevant that these CERM performance indicators were derived from information provided for 48 aquatic centres across Australia with indoor pools only, and 39 aquatic facilities with outdoor pools only. As noted in Section 5.3, the Victorian Auditor General identified 278 Council-owned pools in Victoria alone. It is likely that many of the smaller and more highly subsidised pools have not been included in the CERM performance indicator calculations.

The information on operational subsidies is also likely to include varying provisions for pool maintenance and depreciation.

Information presented in this report has shown that many Councils in regional and rural areas provide significant subsidies to ensure that pools can continue to operate.

- For example, visits to the Raywood pool, a rural swimming pool in the Bendigo area, were subsidised at a cost of $78 per visit. As noted in Section 5.3, the relevant case study found that if this rural pool was to be closed, the lack of public transport means some residents would have difficulty travelling to neighbouring towns to use other pools, and the social benefits of the pool may be lost. While the Raywood pool is expensive to operate, it may generate higher social benefits because of its relative isolation.

Benchmarks and guidelines for aquatic facility provision

Comparative rates of provision (which are derived from existing rates of facility provision in similar areas) are often used as a starting point to assess the adequacy of current facilities or to assess the need for new facilities. However, there is no universally accepted comparative rates of provision or benchmarks for community facilities and services.

Planning for community and sporting infrastructure also needs to reflect not just comparative rates of provision or benchmarks, but also the socio-demographic and geographic circumstances of the catchment population. There are different considerations for inner city areas, greenfield growth developments, rural residential, regional and rural areas. In regional areas the relative isolation of settlements and the distances people might have to travel will be a key determinant of what facilities might be required.

Most standards and guidelines have been developed to meet infrastructure needs in rapidly expanding urban environments. For example, the benchmark or standard identified for an indoor aquatic/fitness centre in *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas,* (Growth Areas Authority), is one centre for every 40,000 to 50,000 people.

For outdoor pools, the following standards have previously been identified for urban areas:

- For a population of 150,000 – one FINA competition standard 50m pool
- For a population of 75,000 – one 25m or 50m pool for recreational, club, water polo, diving and competitive swimming
- For a population of 30,000 – one 25m leisure pool.

Across the state of Victoria in 2016, there was an average of one council pool for each population of 21,300, with the number of Council pools per head of population being higher in regional areas than in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The information included in this report on aquatic facilities provided by councils in other regional areas of NSW, demonstrates that WSC is not alone in having a relatively high number

of Council-owned aquatic facilities per head of population, with around one facility for every 12,000 residents (including the Mittagong Pool that is currently undergoing major repairs).

Infrastructure Funding

The WSC's Financial Statements estimate the 10 year Capital Replacement Value of all four pools as $3.44 million and the 10 year Maintenance Value as $1.69 million.

The estimated annual cost for replacement is $344,331 and for maintenance $169,585.

Based on the available funds to undertake replacement and maintenance the estimated annual funding gap for all facilities is $164,331 for replacement and $149,58 for maintenance. Indicating a significant and growing shortfall in budgets for replacement and maintenance.

Decisions about improvements to the WSC pools need to take into account the most cost effective way to bring the pools up to a "satisfactory standard", including options for replacement or major upgrading, not just short term "patch up" arrangements.

Aquatic Facility Market Segments and Trends

In developing a strategy for aquatic facilities in an area, there is a need to consider the size and diverse circumstances of the catchment population, and their different needs. It is also highly desirable to provide for flexibility to respond to changing needs.

The users of aquatic facilities in Australia can roughly be categorised into four market segments:

- Recreation and leisure
- Fitness and training
- Education, and
- Therapy

Recent trends in aquatic facility development have been for larger multi-use combined indoor and outdoor facilities, that cater for all of the market segments identified above.

There has also been a recent trend to include a range of complementary facilities and services in association with swimming pools. These can include:

- Gyms and other land-based fitness activities
- Health and therapeutic service facilities such as massage therapists
- Sports-associated retail
- A range of café and other food and drink services
- Childcare.

These ancillary services and facilities can help to attract additional patrons to the facility, and cross-subsidise administrative and operational costs. Aquatic facilities that include a range of services and spaces also increase their attractiveness as social hubs.

While the WSC's 2017-18 survey of pool users covered a relatively small proportion of all visitors to the pools, the information on reasons for pool use roughly covered the same market segments as those identified above.

The survey information indicated a relatively higher use of the outdoor pools for recreation and leisure, while the indoor Moss Vale pool was used more for health and fitness. Survey information from Moss Vale and Bowral pool users indicated that a higher proportion (nearly 30%) visited the pool three or more times a week, compared with 11% for the Bundanoon Pool.

6.2 Demand for aquatic facilities

In developing a strategy for aquatic facilities in an area, there is a need to consider the size and diverse circumstances of the catchment population, and their different needs. It is also highly desirable to provide for flexibility to respond to changing needs.

Increased overall demand

As discussed previously, the replacement of the outdoor Moss Vale pool with an indoor aquatic facility increased attendance tenfold from an average of around 15,000 per year for the 5 years up to 2011-12, to over 150,000 in more recent years. While this partly reflects the year round and longer daily operating hours of the new Moss Vale aquatic facility, it is likely that this new facility is also encouraging new participants as well has more frequent visits by previous swimmers.

The development of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre is also largely assumed to be responsible for a more than doubling of the number of visits to aquatic facilities across the whole WSC. This far outpaced the growth in population in the WSC, which was 12.7% between 2006 and 2016.

At the same time, pool attendance figures for the Bundanoon pool have not changed substantially. Information from the survey of pool users suggested that 83% of respondents using the Bundanoon Pool were residents of Bundanoon. In addition, of those who responded to the survey of Moss Vale pool users, 11% were from Bundanoon, indicating that they were prepared to travel the 32km round trip, taking around 32 minutes in total, to access the indoor aquatic facilities at Moss Vale. It is likely that the residents of Bundanoon who were travelling to Moss Vale would have otherwise not used the outdoor pool at Bundanoon.

Assessing the impact of the new Moss Vale Aquatic facility on use of the Bowral Pool is complicated by the impact of closure of the Mittagong Pool. In the years up to and including 2013-14, the Mittagong Pool attracted from 30,000 – 40,000 attendees each year. In 2014-15 and 2016-17, when the Mittagong Pool was closed for repairs, attendance at the Bowral Pool increased by around 15,000. During the early part of the 2015-16 season, when the Mittagong Pool was open, there were around 17,000 attendees. During this season attendance at the Bowral Pool was reduced by a similar number, but attendance at the Moss Vale Pool continued to increase. It is therefore likely that some people who would have chosen to use the Mittagong Pool if it was available, accessed the Bowral pool instead.

Of those who responded to the survey of Moss Vale pool users, 16% were from Bowral, indicating their preference for the new indoor facilities at Moss Vale over the outdoor facilities at Bowral. In the absence of the indoor facilities at Moss Vale, some of these Bowral residents may have chosen not to use any of the other outdoor facilities, including the facilities at Bowral.

As discussed above, the population of the Wingecarribee LGA is projected to increase by a further 2,500 people between 2016 and 2041, to a population of around 51,500. By this time, 42% of the population (around 21,400 people) are expected to be aged 65 years or older. Over the same timeframe, the number of children aged 5-19 is projected to decrease to around 7,900 in 2041.

On the basis of these projections, there may be an overall increase in demand for aquatic facilities, particularly for use by older people. There is likely to be a significant increase in demand for hydrotherapy and for water-based exercise. An increase in the proportion of the population who are retired from the workforce is likely to increase the demand for daytime use of aquatic facilities on weekdays. As older people are more likely to be living with disabilities, there is also likely to be an increase in demand for suitable pool access and change room arrangements.

At the same time, the number of children in 2041 is projected decrease, from 19% of the population to around 15%. There will still be a continuing (but not increasing) demand for use of outdoor pools for recreation and leisure, and for 50 metre pools for school swimming carnivals and for lap swimming.

As is clear from the feedback from the consultations undertaken, from the annual surveys of pool users and from the broad directions identified in the 2012 Strategy, each of the four WSC pools is highly valued by local users, some of whom will have different needs and preferences.

6.3 Options for each of the pools

Specific comments in relation to each of the pools are as follows.

Moss Vale Aquatic Centre

This pool is relatively new and is clearly meeting a need for an indoor pool that is open all year round. It is also providing for some residents who would not use the other pools and is encouraging new customers to participate in health and fitness activities. BlueFit who manage the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre on behalf of WSC have received Development Application approval to extend the gym space at the centre. However there is now some uncertainty whether this will proceed due to the impacts of COVID-19 on operations.

TABLE 14: OPTIONS FOR MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE

MOSS VALE AQUATIC CENTRE	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Maintain current facilities.	▪ It would be useful to continue to monitor use of this facility, any changes to the profile of users and feedback from users.
Option 2: Investigate demand for and feasibility of expanding existing facilities	▪ Investigate potential for expansion and the extent of demand for existing and/or additional facilities at this site

When considering expenditure priorities, SGS suggests a "business as usual" approach for the Moss Vale facility in the short-to-medium term. This will need to include regular maintenance and responding to asset repair priorities.

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[61] indicated that the following matters required urgent attention:

- Filters and tanks require confined space signage
- Potable supply water reduction pressure zone device (RPZ) doesn't have service history tag
- Street service entry gate doesn't have Hazchem signage
- Ozone alarm sensor require calibration
- Dry chemicals stored on pallets on the plant floor required physical barriers to separate chemicals.

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for MVAC would cost an estimated $4,500 or less.

Given the increased population anticipated in the LGA over the next 20 years, and the significant increase in those aged 65+, it would be useful to assess the capacity of the current Moss Vale Pool to cater for this increased demand. It would also be useful to gather more comprehensive information on current users of the Moss Vale Pool, particularly on those who are travelling from outside Moss Vale to attend this facility.

[61] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Mittagong Pool

Feedback from the consultations indicated that this pool was highly valued for its ambience, and as a place for social and recreational activities. It has also previously been used for school swimming events and for water polo.

However, the location of this pool in a river bed has meant that it has been vulnerable to flood damage. The WSC's *Nattai River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan* (2016) noted that the Nattai River flowed underneath the pool through a culvert with dimensions 2.1m x 1.2m, and that once the capacity of this culvert was reached, the swimming pool would be overtopped. A 20% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event (that is, an event likely to occur once every five years), would result in a peak flow of 50.4 cubic metres of water per second, and a peak flood depth of 1.22 metres at the Mittagong Pool.

This *Nattai River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan* also explored some of the potential benefits, costs and risks associated with the removal of the Mittagong Pool.

As a result of the most recent flooding in 2016, the floors of both the 50 metre pool and the Learn-to-Swim Pool sustained severe damage. The Pool's plant room was also flooded, and valuable equipment was destroyed. These facilities have since been repaired with infrastructure improvements that will make the Mittagong aquatic facility less vulnerable to future flooding. Improvements to the Nattai River culvert are also being made to reduce flood risks.

SGS notes that climate change projections indicate that extreme rainfall occurrences could increase in the near and far future across much of NSW, including the South East and Tablelands region.[62]

TABLE 15: OPTIONS FOR MITTAGONG POOL

MITTAGONG POOL	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Avoid any other major expenditure[63] for at least 10 years or until high priority maintenance or the next major flood occurs.	▪ Scope for increased use of the pool site not actively considered.
Option 2: Undertake targeted consultation and develop a long term plan for the site, taking into account flooding risks and financial implications. Assess potential interest in activities, such as climbing walls and volleyball courts that could attract people to use this site at the time of year when it is not used for water-based activities.	▪ It would be beneficial to discuss with the community the likely risks associated with future flooding and potential financial implications, so that informed decisions can be made about future replacement of pool facilities (beyond what is included in the current contract). ▪ Consultations may lead to the identification of options for use of the site that are less likely to be impacted by flooding. ▪ May also identify opportunities for better all-year-round use of the site.

SGS recommends that further consultation with the WSC community should take place, and a longer term plan for the Mittagong Pool be prepared, taking into account financial implications and risks associated with development on the current site.

If the new replacement facilities are impacted by flooding in the next 10 years, with impacts as significant as those that occurred in 2016, SGS suggests that consideration be given to replacing the 50 metre pool with water park and recreation activities that may be less impacted by flooding.

[62] NARCliM, 2014, *NARCliM Extreme Precipitation Indices Report*, Technical Note 6, page 3.
[63] It should be noted that the Building Condition Report has found that the Mittagong Swimming Centre Plant Room concrete structure has a limited life and was assessed to be in poor condition

It would also be useful to gauge potential interest in activities that could attract people to use this site at the time of year when it is not used for water-based activities. Facilities that may be used year-round, such as climbing walls or volleyball courts could be considered to increase use of the site. Consideration would have to be given as to whether shading of the site would make it unattractive for outdoor activities during the cooler months of the year.

Bowral Swimming Centre

The Bowral Swimming Centre includes a six-lane 50 metre pool that is suitable for school carnivals, squad training, as well as for other fitness and recreation uses, however the current pool is ageing. For school carnivals and competition swimming, it is also preferable to have a 50m pool with 8-10 lanes. An 8-10 lane pool provides the opportunity to allocate use of some lanes for squad training[64] or similar, while still allowing use of the 50m pool by others. allowing 2 lanes for recreation and 2 for lap swimming.

The Bowral facility also includes smaller pools and outdoor space for general relaxation and cooling off on hot days. Challenges for the Bowral facilities include meeting health and water quality requirements, as the general infrastructure and amenities are outdated and in need of major refurbishment. Currently all four pools at the centre operate on the same water treatment plan, which means that the water turn-over time for the pools is greater than the maximum recommended by NSW Health.[65] The continuation of current "patch up" maintenance arrangements has risks, and is not generally considered to be cost effective.

It is estimated that the cost to build three new water treatment plants to service each pool would require an investment of at least $2.5 million plus GST.[66] The 10 year Capital Replacement Value for the Bowral Swimming Centre is $962,500 and the 10 year Maintenance Value is $448,200.

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[67] indicated that the following matters required urgent attention:

- Chlorine truck bulk delivery area doesn't conform to the current standard
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require overflow and vent pipes
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks transfer points need to conform to current standard
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require identification signage
- All filters, tanks and valve pits require confined space signage

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for Bowral Pool would cost an estimated $36,000 or less.

The Bowral Pool facilities are also not generally suitable for people with disabilities, and the change rooms do not meet contemporary design and safety standards.

TABLE 16: OPTIONS FOR BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE

BOWRAL SWIMMING CENTRE	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Business as Usual - Maintain Bowral Pool and associated facilities to ensure health, safety and	▪ This would be the least costly option in the short term. This option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the pool at short notice.

[64] Currently squad training is limited to 2 lanes during peak times from 6-9am and 3.30-6pm.
[65] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bowral Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council, pg.11.
[66] Ibid, pg.11.
[67] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bowral Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

access arrangements continue as at present but are not improved.	▪ Current pool filtration arrangements mean that contamination of water in one pool requires the closure of all pools. Current pool is not a year-round facility and does not meet contemporary standards for disability access. ▪ Renewal and maintenance costs as identified in the 2019 Condition audit are significantly more than what is budgeted for this centre.
Option 2: Undertake more detailed assessment of options to redevelop the current site by replacing all current pools and on-site facilities with a new outdoor 50m pool (min 8 lanes) and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale. The indoor facility to be open year-round.	▪ This would become the major aquatic complex for the WSC. It could meet the needs of a range of users, and would be conveniently located close to the areas where population is currently concentrated and population growth is occurring. ▪ This redevelopment would likely mean that for at least one summer swimming season, the Bowral Pool would not be available and would reduce swimming opportunities in the district during the construction period.
Option 3: Identify a new site in the northern area of WSC for a new facility similar to that proposed in Option 2. Once the new facility is completed, sell the current site to partially offset the cost of the new development.	▪ Similar advantages to Option 2. Would rely on identification and purchase of a suitable site. ▪ Development on a new site could take place prior to closure of the current site, which would ensure continued access to swimming facilities during the summer season.

If the Bowral swimming centre is to remain in its current location, SGS suggests that more detailed work be commissioned to assess options for major renewal of the facilities on this site. This should include consideration of a range of options including replacement of all the current facilities with an outdoor 50 metre pool with 8-10 lanes plus an indoor facility, similar to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre.

Consideration should also be given to the use of this site for complementary all-year-round recreation facilities. Facilities open all year round would enable the population around Bowral, including the increasing number of older people, to maintain or improve their fitness and physical and mental well-being. As has been demonstrated, the opening of the new Moss Vale Aquatic Centre significantly increased overall participation in swimming and related activities.

Consideration of options should also include assessment of the potential likelihood and implications of flooding on the Bowral Pool site, given its proximity to the Mittagong Creek[68].

Another option to be assessed would be whether there is a suitable alternative site for a new indoor/outdoor pool complex in the north of the Shire with the potential to integrate complementary facilities such as gymnasium, library, community centre, allied health professionals, specialised pools (i.e.hydrotherapy), wet play park, regional playground and/or childcare facilities.

Development of a new aquatic facility, including a new 50 metre pool, on a separate site would allow for continued operation of the current Bowral Pool while the new facility was being constructed. Once development on the new site had been completed, the current site could be sold, to partially offset the costs incurred.

The consideration of options should take into account recurrent as well as up-front cost and subsidy implications.

Once options have been assessed, State and/or Commonwealth Government funding could be sought to offset the capital costs incurred.

[68] Bowral Flood Risk Precincts, Bewsher Consulting, 2009.

Bundanoon Pool

Bundanoon Pool is the smallest of the current pools and serves a relatively small catchment population. As shown by the information on admission numbers and subsidies, this pool also has the highest subsidy per visit.

The current pool opening hours are also limited, which reduces some of the administrative costs (such as for lifeguards), but also reduces the opportunity to offset fixed costs such as cyclical maintenance.

As noted above, the Bundanoon Community Association has been seeking support from the Wingecarribee Shire Council for a retractable roof that can enclose the Bundanoon Pool and extend its use to 12 months of the year. However investment in a retractable roof may not be advisable given that there are significant and more pressing issues associated with the pool coming to the end of life, with expansion joints coming to the end of their useful life, drumming and deterioration of the tile bed and grouting, unlined return gutters creating soiling, UV damage to the lining and pool plant components requiring immediate replacement.[69]

A Pool Plant Condition and Maintenance Audit undertaken in October 2019,[70] highlighted the following significant issues with the pool:

a) Expansion Joints throughout the pools are coming to the end of their useful life and are showing signs of deterioration.

b) Tiles throughout all pools show signs of drumming and deterioration on the tile bed. From inspection it was noted that the tile and bedding in areas has come away from the concrete structure creating a void.

c) Grout on tile bed is wearing away, it is recommended that all tiling areas are replaced and re-grouted to re-establish the integrity of the tiles.

d) Soiled water return gutters – concrete gutters are raw exposed concrete which is allowing chlorides and other organic matter to seep through the concrete and become embedded internally. It is recommended that the gutters be lined to prevent any further exposure to build up.

e) Being an outdoor pool (exposed to natural UV) they need to be repainted frequently to maintain not only the aesthetic appeal but also protect the concrete from chlorides and organics from finding their way into the concrete structure.

The Audit also indicated that the following matters required immediate attention:

- All filters and tanks require confined space signage
- Acid and chlorine dosing injection hose has not been installed into a protective carrier pipe
- Chlorine truck bulk delivery areas do not conform to current standards
- Chlorine bulk storage tanks require overflow and vent pipes
- Chlorine bulk storage transfer point does not conform to best practice.

In total, these most urgent actions in response to the maintenance audit for Bundanoon Pool would cost an estimated $31,600 or less.

This cost does not include the more significant issues associated with the pool condition include the need to replace grouting, pool tiles, lining of water return gutters and repainting.

[69] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bundanoon Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

[70] Roejen Engineering + Technical Services, October 2019, Bundanoon Swimming Centre: Pool Plant Condition & Maintenance Audit, for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

TABLE 17: OPTIONS FOR BUNDANOON POOL

BUNDANOON POOL	
Options	**Comments**
Option 1: Business as Usual. Maintain current Bundanoon Pool and associated facilities to ensure health, safety and access arrangements are maintained as at present, but not improved. Maintain current opening hours.	▪ This option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the pool at short notice. ▪ Current pool is not a year-round facility and does not meet contemporary standards for disability access.
Option 2: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Allow adults-only access when the pool is not supervised during the current swimming season, subject to implementation of swipe card and risk management arrangements similar to those used by the Snowy Valleys Council.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Would allow assessment of potential for increased use of the pool by adults if opening hours were extended. This could be used to inform decision making about future improvements to the pool.
Option 3: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Identify and test options for subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by residents of the Bundanoon area, when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with Bundanoon Pool equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Monitoring use of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by Bundanoon residents could be used to indicate potential for increased use of the Bundanoon Pool, if improvements were made and opening hours extended.
Option 4: Maintain current pool and associated facilities, as in Option 1, above. Construct a retractable roof as proposed by the Bundanoon Community Association and extend opening hours so that the pool is available year round.	▪ As for Option 1, this would not address risks associated with Bundanoon Pool equipment failure, limitations of the current pool filtration system and access for people with disabilities. ▪ Unless unsupervised access was introduced (see Option 2), increased opening hours and usage would be unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to offset additional costs incurred for lifeguards, heating, etc. It is likely that the average subsidy for each visit to the Bundanoon pool would increase. ▪ There are substantial condition and maintenance issues that should be responded to prior to any investment in a retractable roof.
Option 5: Consider replacement options as the Bundanoon pool structure is reaching the end of its life.	▪ The current pool and facilities are old with significant costs associated with refurbishment or replacement. ▪ Redevelopment of the pool at Moss Vale to create an indoor facility has substantially increased the number of visits to the pool, including visits from residents of Bundanoon. ▪ The current and projected population of Bundanoon is still significantly less than for Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale, with relatively high recurrent subsidies needed if the pool was retained with major replacement or refurbishment required. ▪ May need to consider other options including consolidating facilities in an area accessible to Bundanoon residents.

Options for consideration include further assessment by WSC of the proposal for a retractable roof, but this also needs to take into account the need for a major upgrade to the existing pool structure and amenities. Similar to the Bowral Swimming Centre, the proposal would need to consider recurrent as well as capital costs for the facility upgrade. SGS recommends that if this proposal is to be justified, an overall reduction in the subsidy per visit would need to be achieved.

Consideration could also be given to the relative costs and options for subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre by residents of the Bundanoon area, when the Bundanoon Pool is closed. In addition, consideration could also be given to allowing restricted access to the Bundanoon pool when pool staff are not in attendance, similar to arrangements at Tumut[71]. This consideration would need to include a risk assessment and could initially be approved for a limited period and subject to review.

In the short term, some administrative efficiencies may be achieved by implementing swipe card access arrangements that would reduce the need for a staff member to process pool entries.

Summary of Options for Overall Strategy

OPTIONS	COMMENTS
Option 1: Maintain aquatic facilities at a minimum standard to meet health & safety requirements.	▪ This would be the least costly option in the short term. This option has risks associated with major, but unforeseen, equipment failure that may make it necessary to close the Bowral, Bundanoon or Mittagong pools at short notice. ▪ Bowral and Bundanoon Pools are ageing, and do not meet current standards for change rooms, pool filtration systems and disability access. Short term "fixes" are not generally providing cost effective longer-term solutions.
Option 2 (Recommended Option): Undertake further targeted consultation as input to the development of a long-term plan for the Mittagong Pool site. Maintain current facilities at Moss Vale. Undertake more detailed assessment of options to replace current facilities at the Bowral Pool with a new outdoor 50m pool and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale, in the northern part of the Shire. Maintain aquatic facilities in Bundanoon at a minimum standard to meet health & safety requirements in the short-to-medium term. Assess the potential for increased use of the Bundanoon pool if opening hours were extended. This could include testing an option for adults-only swipe card access to the pool when the pool is not supervised and assessing the impact of subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.	▪ Redevelopment or replacement of the Bowral Pool to provide for a 50m outdoor pool and indoor facility similar to Moss Vale, would provide a major aquatic complex that would meet the needs of a range of users, and would be conveniently located to the areas where population is currently concentrated and population growth is occurring. ▪ Assessing the potential for increased use of the Bundanoon Pool could inform decision making about future improvements to the pool.
Option 3: Maintain current facilities at Moss Vale and Mittagong. Undertake more detailed assessment of options to replace current facilities at the Bowral Pool with a new outdoor 50m pool and an indoor facility similar to that at Moss Vale, in the northern part of the Shire (as for Option 2, above). Consider replacement options as the Bundanoon pool structure is reaching the end of its life.	▪ The current pools and facilities at Bowral and Bundanoon are old and in need of major refurbishment or redevelopment. ▪ Redevelopment or replacement of the Bowral Pool to provide for a 50m outdoor pool and indoor facility similar to Moss Vale, would provide a major aquatic complex that would meet the needs of a range of users. ▪ The current and projected population of Bundanoon is still significantly less than for Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale, and recurrent subsidies per visit to the pool would still need to be considered and major investment in refurbishment and upgrading required. ▪ May need to consider other options including consolidating facilities in an area accessible to Bundanoon residents.

[71] The Snowy Mountains Council allows restricted access to some Council pools for adults only. Users have to sign an agreement prior to being given a swipe card, which is used for access to the pool(s), and to record attendance.

6.4 Summary of draft recommendations

For the **Moss Vale Aquatic Centre**, SGS recommends a "business as usual" approach in the short-to-medium term, as well as an assessment of the capacity of this facility to meet increased demand in future years.

For the **Mittagong Pool,** SGS recommends that further consultation with the WSC community should take place, and a longer term plan for the Mittagong Pool be prepared, taking into account financial implications and risks associated with development on the current site.

If the new replacement facilities are impacted by flooding in the next 10 years, with impacts as significant as those that occurred in 2016, SGS suggests that consideration be given to replacing the 50 metre pool with water park and recreation activities that may be less impacted by flooding.

For the **Bowral Swimming Centre**, SGS recommends that more detailed work be commissioned to assess options for major renewal of the facilities on this site, or on an alternate site in the northern area of WSC. This should include consideration of a range of options including replacement of all the current facilities with an outdoor 50 metre pool plus an indoor facility similar to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre.

For the **Bundanoon Pool**, SGS recommends that options for further consideration take into account the need to reduce the current subsidy per visit for use of the pool. Assessment of the proposal for a retractable roof should also include provision for a major upgrade to the existing pool structure and amenities.

To assess the potential for increased usage, consideration could also be given to trialling restricted access to the Bundanoon pool by adults only, when pool staff are not in attendance, and assessing the impact of subsidising travel or access to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre when the Bundanoon Pool is closed.

6.5 Next steps

Proposed next steps

SGS recommends that the findings and recommendations in this draft report be subject to further consideration by Council representatives, and that a summary of this report then be released for further public consultation.

It is recommended that further investigation and consultation regarding the feelings of the wider community would be beneficial to ensure that Council understands the wants and needs of the whole community. Providing salient facts to the community would enable the community to respond, based on current information about the costs and opportunities of maintaining current facilities versus providing new facilities in a central accessible location.

It would also be useful to gather more comprehensive information on current users of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre, particularly on those who are travelling from outside Moss Vale to attend this facility and the opportunities for further expansion of these facilities to cater for increased demand.

APPENDIX 1 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MAPS

This Appendix includes additional information on aquatic services in the Parkes Shire Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Hilltops Shire Council, Wagga Wagga City Council and Clarence Valley Council. More detailed maps of the population catchments around selected swimming pool facilities is also included.

Parkes Shire Council

Population (2016):	14,608
Number of pools:	4 – Parkes Aquatic Centre, Peak Hill Memorial Pool, Trundle Swimming Pool, Tullamore Swimming Pool
Pool season:	**Parkes:** 50m heated outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar) **Peak Hill:** 33m outdoor pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) **Trundle:** Outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) **Tullamore:** Outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar)

The Parkes Shire LGA has four pools, catering to a much smaller population than Wingecarribee. This includes a larger facility in Parkes itself and three in smaller townships, all of which are open seasonally. Table 18 shows the distance in kilometres between the aquatic facilities within Parkes Shire, illustrating the significant distances between each pool.

In 2016-17, Council's expenses for swimming pools totalled $1,359,000, while income from operations was $342,000, leaving a net cost of $1,017,000.[72]

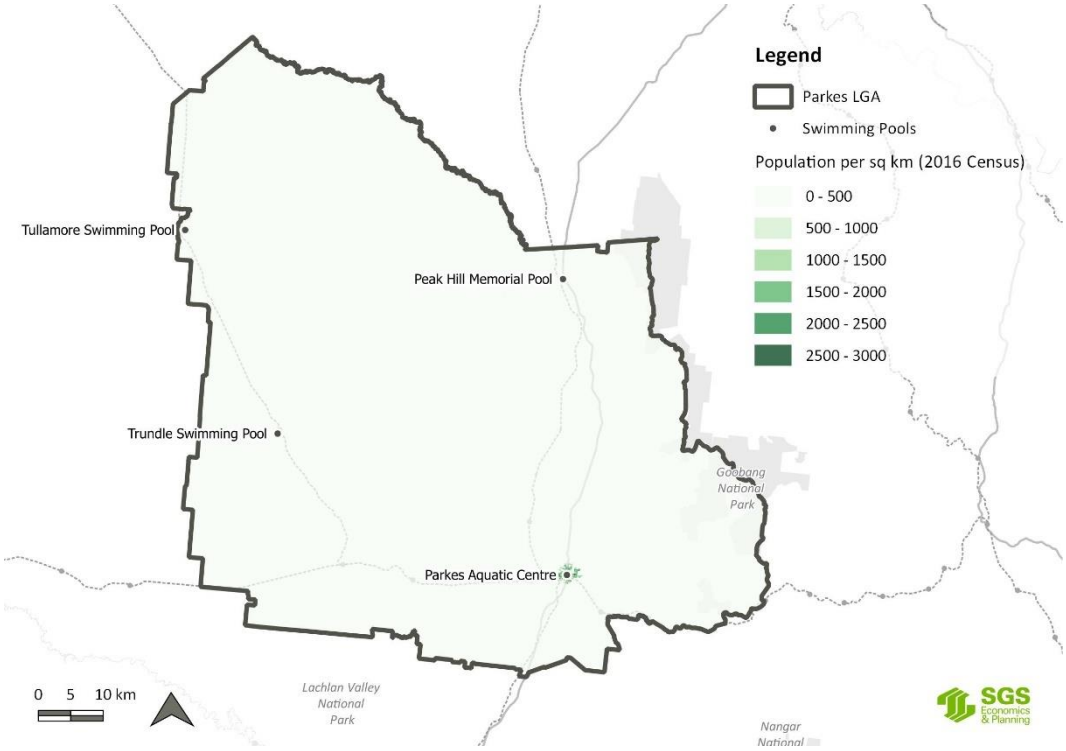
Figure 39 shows that there is a much larger concentration of population around the Parkes pool than those in Peak Hill, Trundle and Tullamore. The population in Parkes itself in 2016 was just under 10,000, while the other localities with pools has much smaller population catchments, at 700, 400, and 200 respectively.

TABLE 18: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – PARKES SHIRE

Parkes Shire	Peak Hill Memorial Pool	Tullamore Swimming Pool	Trundle Swimming Pool	Parkes Aquatic Centre
Peak Hill Memorial Pool	-	82.0	70.3	49.5
Tullamore Swimming Pool	82.0	-	37.1	89.4
Trundle Swimming Pool	70.4	37.1	-	53.2
Parkes Aquatic Centre	49.1	89.5	53.3	-

[72] Parkes Shire Council, 2017, *Special Schedules 2016-17*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/your-council/plans-for-the-future/integrated-planning-reporting/reports/

FIGURE 39: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, PARKES LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

FIGURE 40: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND PARKES AQUATIC CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Eurobodalla Shire Council

Population (2016):	37,232
Number of pools:	3 – Narooma Swimming Centre, Batemans Bay Swimming Centre, Moruya War Memorial Swimming Centre
Pool season:	**Narooma:** 50m indoor pool – year round **Batemans Bay:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Oct-Apr) **Moruya Memorial Swimming Centre:** 25m outdoor pool – seasonal (Oct-Apr)

The Eurobodalla LGA has three swimming pools, servicing a smaller (permanent) population than Wingecarribee of around 37,000. These are located in the main centre of Batemans Bay as well as in Narooma and Moruya. Narooma is the only facility that is open year round. Table 19 shows the distance in kilometres between the aquatic facilities within Eurobodalla Shire, ranging from 27 to 69 kilometres in distance.

In 2016-17, Council's expenses for swimming pool operations was $1,276,000, while income from operations was reported as $2,000, leaving a net cost of $1,274,000.[73] Eurobodalla's pools are managed by private contractors (currently Community Aquatics Pty Ltd), which may account for the low level of revenue that accrues to directly to Council. The value of the current contract for management of the Shire's pools (as of July 2017) for three years is $1,010,724.[74]

Figure 41 below illustrates that the facilities are fairly evenly distributed along the LGA's coastline, with higher concentrations of the population around Batemans Bay than the other two swimming centre locations. Batemans Bay's resident population in 2016 was 11,000, while Narooma's was just 3,000, and Moruya's, around 2,500.

Densities in immediate proximity of the pool facilities are fairly low, however, during the peak summer holiday season the population of Eurobodalla increases significantly with visitors, leading to higher population densities and a larger potential catchment of users.

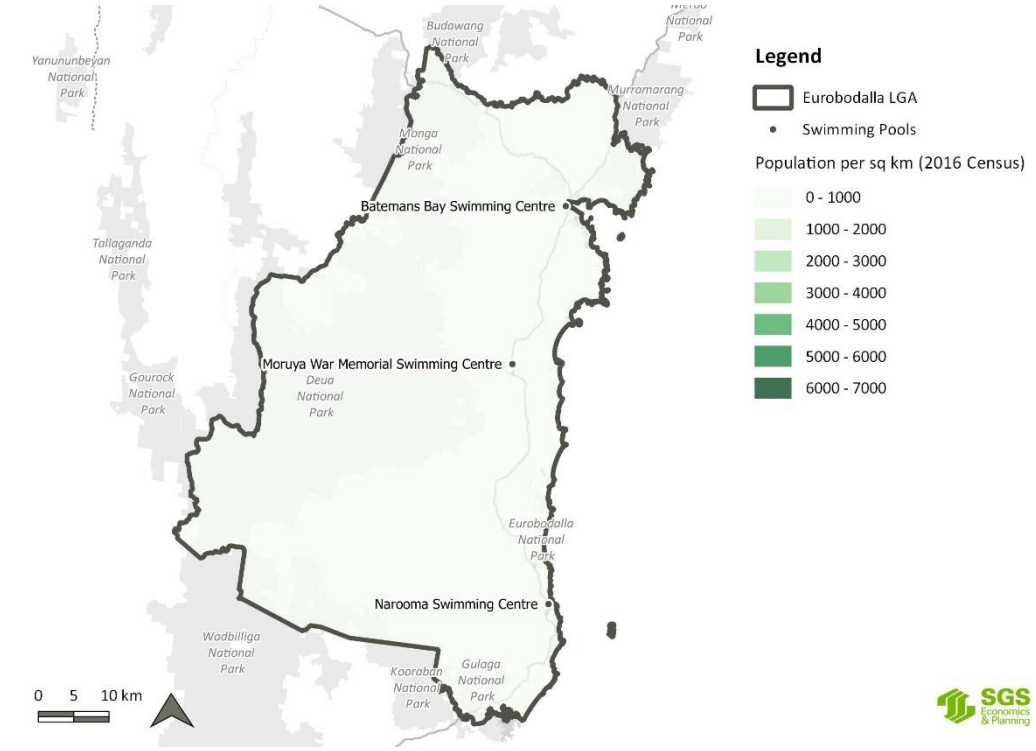
TABLE 19: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – EUROBODALLA SHIRE

Eurobodalla Shire	Batemans Bay Swimming Centre	Moruya Memorial Swimming Centre	Narooma Swimming Centre
Batemans Bay Swimming Centre	-	27	69
Moruya Memorial Swimming Centre	27	-	42
Narooma Swimming Centre	69	42	-

[73] Eurobodalla Shire Council, 2017, *Special Schedules for the year ended 30 June 2017*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/council/financial-information/financial-statements-for-the-year-ended-30-june-2017/Special-Schedules-for-2016-17.pdf.

[74] Eurobodalla Shire Council, 2017, 'Management of Shire Swimming Pools,' http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/council/public-access-to-information/contracts/class-1-contracts/management-of-shire-swimming-pools

FIGURE 41: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, EUROBODALLA LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

FIGURE 42: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND BATEMANS BAY SWIMMING CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Hilltops Council

Population (2016):	18,498
Number of pools:	4 – Harden Memorial Pool, Boorowa Town Pool, Jugiong Swimming Pool, Young Aquatic Centre
Pool season:	**Harden:** 50m outdoor pool and baby/toddler pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) **Boorowa:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) Jugiong: Outdoor pool – seasonal (Nov-Mar) **Young:** 50m outdoor pool and baby/toddler pool – seasonal (Oct-Mar)

The Hilltops Council LGA has four swimming pools, all of which are outdoor pools and open seasonally, servicing a much smaller population than Wingecarribee. Table 20 shows the distance in kilometres between the aquatic facilities within Hilltops Shire, illustrating the distances between each pool.

Council's 2017-18 Operational Plan identifies income from swimming pools as $103,120, and expenditure as $921,790.[75]

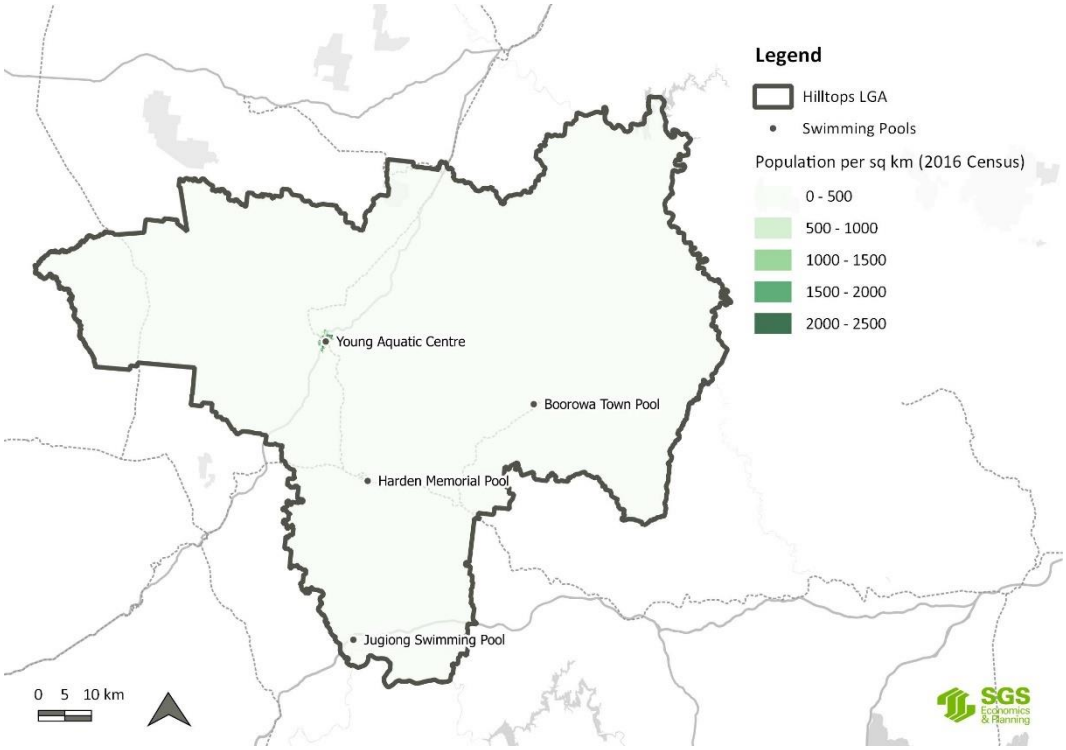
Figure 43 below shows larger population densities are located around Young in particular, which has a population of around 7,000. The populations of Harden, Boorowa, and Jugiong are much lower, at around 2,000, 1,200 and 200 respectively, with consequently lower population densities.

TABLE 20: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – HILLTOPS SHIRE

Hilltops Shire	Young Aquatic Centre	Boorowa Town Pool	Harden Memoral Pool	Jugiong Swimming Pool
Young Aquatic Centre	-	46	35	70
Boorowa Town Pool	46	-	38	72
Harden Memoral Pool	35	38	-	38
Jugiong Swimming Pool	70	72	38	-

[75] Hilltops Council, 2017, *Operational Plan 2017-18*, http://hilltops.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Operational-Plan-2017-2018-final.pdf

FIGURE 43: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, HILLTOPS LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Wagga Wagga City Council

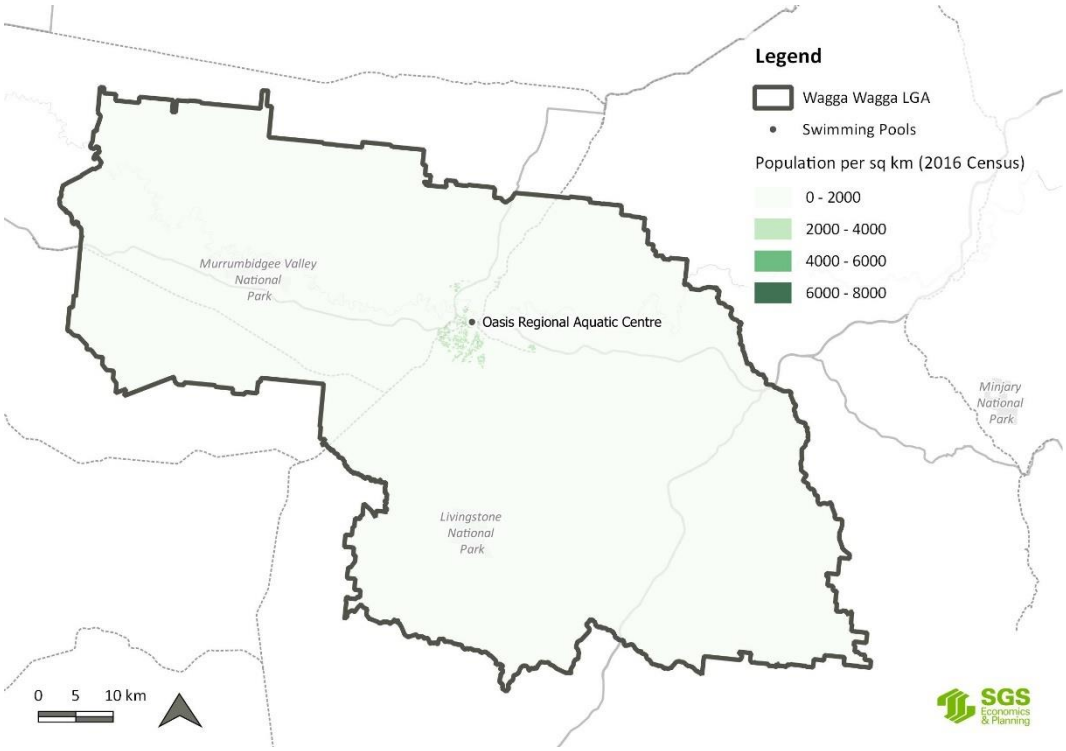
Population (2016):	62,385
Number of pools:	1 – Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre
Pool season:	50m heated outdoor pool; 25m indoor pool and program pool – year round

Though the Wagga Wagga LGA has a larger population than Wingecarribee, it only operates one public swimming facility, located close to the city centre. The facility has two pools, and is open year round.

Expenses for running the Oasis centre in 2016-17 totalled $3,636,000, while income was $1,743,000, representing a net cost of $1,893,000.[76]

Figure 44 shows that the LGA's population is significantly concentrated around Wagga Wagga itself, reducing the need for multiple swimming facilities. While the population densities in the immediate surrounds of the pool facility are fairly low, as the LGA's only publicly-run pool, it has a larger captive catchment to draw on.

FIGURE 44: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, WAGGA WAGGA LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

[76] Wagga Wagga City Council, 2017, *General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2017*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/69598/Wagga-Wagga-City-Council-Financial-Statements-2016-17.pdf

FIGURE 45: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND OASIS REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Clarence Valley Council

Population (2016):	50,671
Number of pools:	5 – Grafton Olympic Pool, South Grafton Indoor Pool, Glenreagh Swimming Pool, Maclean Olympic Swimming Pool, Yamba Community Heated Pool
Pool season:	**Grafton:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Sept-Apr) **South Grafton:** 25m indoor pool – year round **Glenreagh:** 16m outdoor pool – seasonal (Sept-Apr) **Maclean:** 50m outdoor pool – seasonal (Sept-Apr) **Yamba:** 25m heated outdoor pool and baby/toddlers pool – seasonal (Aug-Jun)

The Clarence Valley LGA has five swimming pools, catering to a slightly larger population than Wingecarribee. Only one of these, the 25m indoor pool in South Grafton, is open year round, though the Yamba pool is only closed for the month of July. The location of Clarence Valley on the NSW North Coast means that outdoor temperatures are generally warmer year round than in Wingecarribee, which is likely to increase usage of outdoor pools.

Table 21 shows the distance in kilometres between aquatic facilities within the Clarence Valley, illustrating the distances between each pool.

For the 2016-17 year, the operational expenses for swimming pools in the LGA was $1,713,000, with income of $400,000, giving a net cost of $1,313,000.[77]

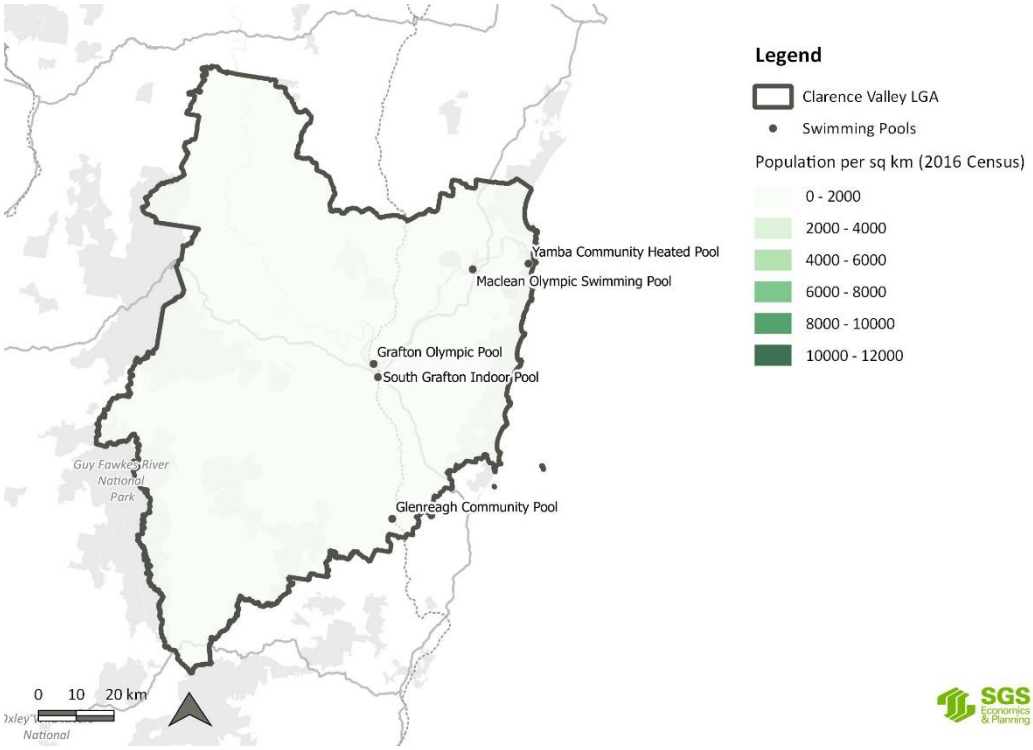
[77] Clarence Valley Council, 2017, *General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2017*, Special Schedule 1 – Net Cost of Services, https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/metro/page.asp?p=DOC-SYU-25-10-81

Figure 46 illustrates the distribution of the pools within the LGA. The Grafton and South Grafton pools are close together, serving a population of 16,000, while the facilities at Yamba, Maclean and Glenreagh cater to comparatively small local populations of 6,000, 2,600, and 400 respectively.

TABLE 21: DISTANCE IN KMS BETWEEN AQUATIC FACILITIES – CLARENCE VALLEY

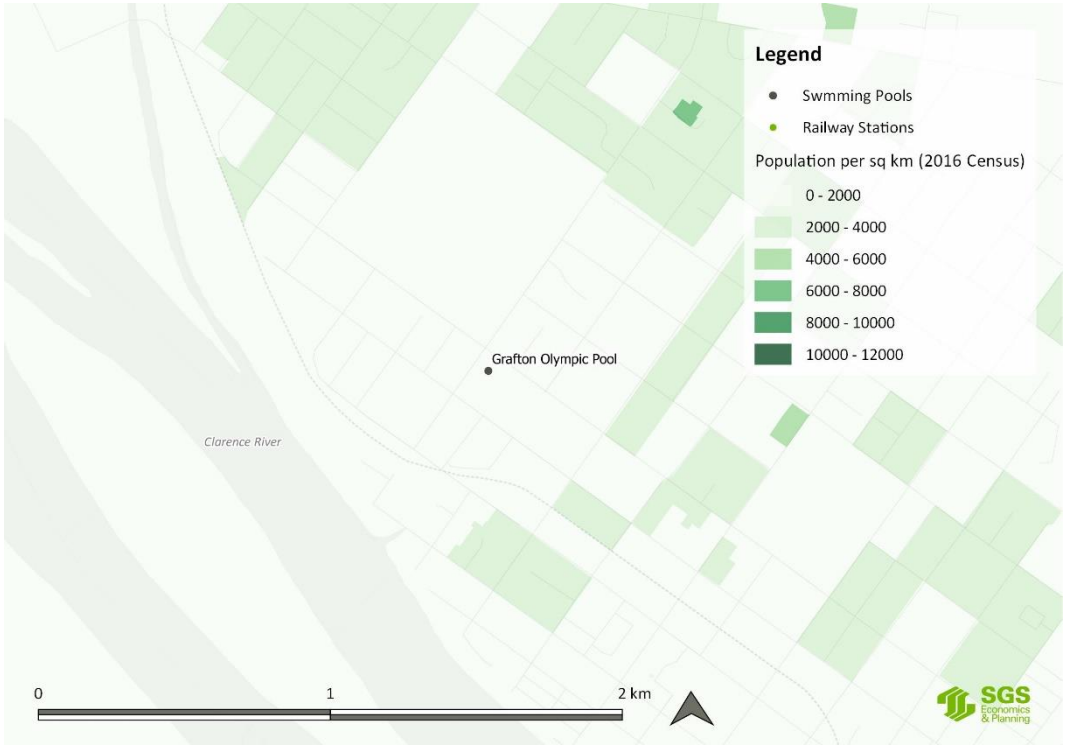
Clarence Valley	Yamba Community Heated Pool	Maclean Olympic Swimming Pool	Grafton Olympic Pool	South Grafton Indoor Pool	Glenreagh Community Pool
Yamba Community Heated Pool	-	18	64	62	102
Maclean Olympic Swimming Pool	18	-	47	45	85
Grafton Olympic Pool	64	47	-	5	48
South Grafton Indoor Pool	62	45	5	-	43
Glenreagh Community Pool	102	85	48	43	-

FIGURE 46: SWIMMING POOL AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, CLARENCE VALLEY LGA, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

FIGURE 47: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND GRAFTON OLYMPIC POOL, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Population concentrations around pools in other LGAs

Young Aquatic Centre (Hilltops LGA)

FIGURE 48: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND YOUNG AQUATIC CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

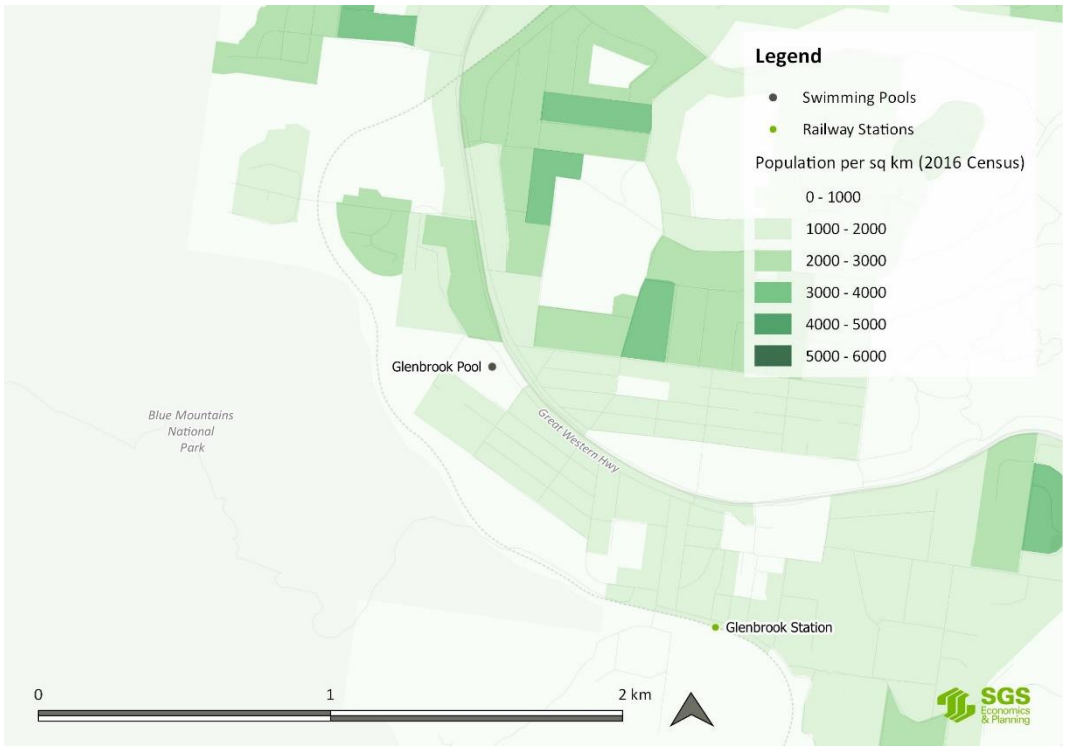
Wollondilly Leisure Centre (Wollondilly LGA)

FIGURE 49: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND WOLLONDILLY LEISURE CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Glenbrook Pool (Blue Mountains LGA)

FIGURE 50: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND GLENBROOK POOL, 2016 CENSUS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Goulburn Aquatic and Leisure Centre (Goulburn Mulwaree LGA)

FIGURE 51: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND GOULBURN AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre (Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA)

FIGURE 52: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND QUEANBEYAN AQUATIC CENTRE, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

Bega Memorial Swimming Pool (Bega Valley LGA)

FIGURE 53: POPULATION PER SQ KM AROUND BEGA MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL, 2016 CENSUS

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2017, based on ABS 2016 Census data.

SGS Economics & Planning

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