

Wingecarribee Shire Council  
Business Case for Regional Aquatics Facility

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## Executive Summary

This project progresses one of the Strategic Directions identified in Council's CRFS, namely:

- Aquatics: Development of an Aquatics Plan for the portfolio of aquatics facilities, inclusive of preparation of a business case for a Regional Aquatic Facility.

This will include one of the key principles identified within the CRFS of co-locating community and recreational facilities, improving operational efficiencies and providing a focal point for the community.

The review of aquatic facilities identified examples of existing or potential gaps or duplication of aquatic facilities that have been considered in development of recommendations.

### Potential Duplication in Provision

- The primary catchment of Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre and Bowral Swimming Complex overlap.
- The primary catchment of Bowral Swimming Complex and Mittagong Swimming Pool overlap.
- The Bluefit 2023/24 Annual Plan provided a visual representation of active members of the facility. This showed a cluster of members in the areas of not only the direct catchment of Moss Vale but also Bowral and Bundanoon. As such it is clear that Bundanoon is already being serviced to some extent by the Moss Vale aquatic facility, despite there being a swimming pool in Bundanoon.
- Aquabliss Frenshnam and Vitarose swim school are commercial facilities that operate in close proximity to Council's facilities and would overlap the respective catchment areas.

### Existing or Potential Gaps in Provision

- Aquatic facilities that provide year round swimming options, particularly in the northern part of the Shire to support higher population growth areas both now and those forecast to grow into the future.
- The need to address short term demands on pool shell maintenance, repair and replacement as facilities approach end of life at Bowral and Bundanoon.
- Significant expenditures will be required to bring Bowral and Bundanoon up to a reasonable standard.
- Limited rehabilitation and therapeutic facilities across the Council area.
- Modern aquatic facilities meeting contemporary community expectations.
- A modern accessible dedicated competition venue for all aquatic sports, including competition swimming and water polo, for example.

There are a range of works in Council's Condition Audit and Maintenance Schedule with a total estimated value of in excess of \$500,000 across the three facilities of Moss Vale, Bowral and Bundanoon that are overdue and to have been completed by end of the 2023/24 financial year. If Council does not have adequate resources to continue the program of asset maintenance and renewal, it may be appropriate to plan for the closure either one or both of the Bundanoon and Bowral facilities in conjunction with a development plan for construction of a new regional aquatic facility in the north of the Shire.

In considering recommendations of the preferred aquatic facility mix to support the business case for a new regional aquatic facility for Wingecarribee Shire, a range of 'facts' have been considered:

- The catchment area for aquatic facilities and programs will vary depending upon the activity, frequency of participation, degree of specialisation and demographic characteristics of participants. In regional areas,

the catchment will be larger than metropolitan centres however there is still a limit to the time and distance people are willing to travel to access facilities.

- The catchment area of aquatic centres in Wingecarribee has significant overlap. The Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre has significant overlap with Bowral Swimming Complex, and extends into rural communities to the south. Bowral also has significant overlap with the locations assessed in Mittagong. This is to the extent that the Bowral catchment is fully encapsulated by the Moss Vale and Mittagong catchments.
- Aquatic facilities are a high cost community service. Duplication of aquatic facilities in overlapping catchments will result in higher expenditure for no additional community benefit.
- It is not practical or financially feasible for Council to meet the needs of all markets. This means that Council needs to ensure it is providing the greatest benefit it can across as much of the community as possible.
- Aquatic centres are politically, highly sensitive and subject to vocal pressure groups. Closing facilities will be subject to community angst and potentially protest. Wingecarribee has had 50m outdoor pools in the community (at Mittagong and Bowral) for many years. It is likely that there is high community expectation that the community would continue to have a 50m pool into the future. This is particularly the case since the closure of the Mittagong pool due to continued flood remediation requirements in an aging asset.
- Swimming is a 12 month activity, which requires heated water. It is not feasible to have an outdoor 50m pool in the winter climate experienced in the Southern Highlands. Similarly, the cost for an indoor 50m pool can be substantially more than an indoor 25m pool so there needs to be a balance between capital cost and year round community benefit.
- Occupational, health and safety has significantly increased in priority over the past decade. This needs to be considered particularly in relation to older facilities. Wingecarribee Shire Council has already noted that the pools at Bowral Swimming Centre offer limited disability access and water flow rates do not meet NSW Health Swimming Pool and Spa Advisory Guidelines.

Based on the aquatic markets in Wingecarribee Shire, a series of outcomes are proposed for aquatic facilities:

1. Facilities across the shire will be designed, developed and maintained to meet current and future demand from the main aquatic markets, by providing high quality programs and services in a high quality environment.
2. Facilities will be environmentally sustainable. Heating and water treatment systems will be based on the most recent technologies available with consideration to prudent financial expenditure.
3. Facilities will be managed in line with “best practice”.
4. Facilities will provide an equitable and accessible range of aquatic programs and services.
5. Facilities will complement, rather than compete against aquatic centres owned and operated commercially or by other public organisations, to create a network of aquatic facilities across the Council area.
6. Facilities will be designed and managed in the most cost effective way, to minimise the cost to Council, whilst maximising community benefits.

### **Business Case Scenarios**

The business case identifies the recommended operating model, activation opportunities, revenue streams, user fees and usage targets such that the current financial result of bottom line cost of \$1.4M (see below) to Council can be maintained for the following scenarios:

#### Option 1:

- Regional Aquatic Facility is provided at most suitable Mittagong location.
- Existing facilities of Bundanoon, Moss Vale and Bowral are maintained and renewed as required.

#### Option 2:

- Regional Aquatic Facility is provided at most suitable Mittagong location.
- Only the existing facility of Moss Vale is maintained and renewed as required.

#### Option 3:

- Regional Aquatic Facility is provided at Bowral Pool site.
- Existing facilities of Bundanoon and Moss Vale are maintained and renewed as required.

The current financial result is the sum of operational costs, operational revenue and annual depreciation of \$1.4million, being determined as:

- 2022/23 financial result of Moss Vale Pool as a \$422k operational cost;
- 2018/19 financial result of Bowral, Mittagong and Bundanoon – adjust to 2022/23 at 5%/yr.

This is to account for last full year for which Mittagong Pool was open. This was a \$385k operational cost to Council in 2018/19 (inflated to \$490k in 2023/24).

- 2022/23 annual depreciation of all four pool facilities is \$473k.

It is appreciated that facility closures may not be supported by Council, due to local pressures. However, unless adequate funds are allocated to Council's aquatic facilities, continued deterioration of the facilities will occur. The end result may be failure of the assets to meet basic OH&S standards and community expectations.

The range of aquatic facilities owned and/or operated by Wingecarribee Shire Council is relatively limited. As aquatic participation trends change, aquatic centres will need to be more adaptable to community requirements, particularly warmer water for aquatic therapy and programs for older members of the community. At the same time, there will continue to be a need to provide facilities for lap and recreation, as well as learn to swim. If these facilities are not able to meet contemporary aquatic market expectations, a decrease in attendances is likely. In other words, Council has a significant number of limited facilities which need substantial upgrades to meet community demands in the next 10 to 20 years.

Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre is currently Wingecarribee Shire's major aquatic and health and fitness facility. It has a wide catchment, although it is located on a constrained site, with limited parking. This facility is currently the most frequented pool in Council, it services a large catchment in the local area and is likely operating at or close to its capacity.

Bowral Swimming Centre operates on a seasonal basis and is the only facility that has a functioning 50m pool in the Shire. The facility is approaching the end of its serviceable life. The site was not identified as a preferred location of a new regional aquatic facility due to being subject to flooding and having a catchment with a large overlap with both Moss Vale and Mittagong. This site is also not consistent with the recommendations adopted by Council from the Community Regional and Facilities Strategy for development of a regional aquatic facility within the Mittagong Precinct, which would service a wider catchment, including the key service centres of Mittagong and Bowral year-round.

Bundanoon Swimming Pool operates on a short season and provides limited community benefit. The facility is at the end of its life. From the information provided, the catchment is small and based on attendance figures, there is limited potential to increase attendance at the facility. It is also evident there are already people who travel from Bundanoon to Moss Vale in preference to using Bundanoon pool, likely due to its seasonal operation and the aged and limited facilities.

The opportunity exists to develop a new regional aquatic facility at the northern part of the Shire in Mittagong. The preferred site for this has been identified at Mittagong Oval, however there is a need for a Master Plan to be prepared for the Mittagong Oval site to explore how the site could be developed to support the existing rugby league, golf club and indoor facility use in addition to a new aquatic facility with associated gymnasium, allied health space and additional indoor multiuse sports courts.

### **Recommended Option 2**

Based on the assessment in this report it is recommended that Council pursue Option 2 based on:

- Development of a new Regional Aquatic Facility at Mittagong Oval.
- Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Facility is maintained and renewed as required.

Supporting recommendations, similar to the Aquatics Plan include:

### **Infrastructure and Facility Recommendations**

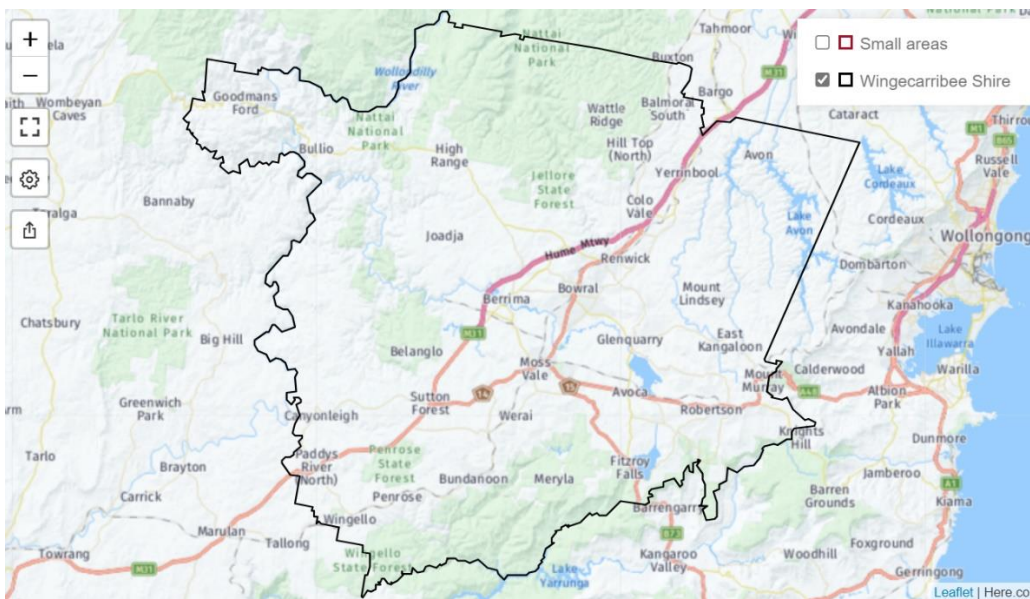
- 1 Prepare a Master Plan for Mittagong Oval, to include development and construction of a new regional aquatic centre with associated gymnasium, allied health space and multiuse indoor sport facilities.
- 2 Review the Condition Audit and Maintenance Schedule to ensure that maintenance and/or capital works identified for Moss Vale War Memorial Pool are adequately planned, budgeted and undertaken.
- 3 Undertake an assessment of the pool shells and equipment at Bowral Swimming Complex. It is recommended this facility be maintained and operated until the new regional aquatic facility is constructed and operational. At a minimum it is recommended that works are undertaken to ensure the facility is able to meet relevant OH&S and accessibility standards.
  - 3.1 Once the new facility is operational, it is recommended the Bowral facility be closed and a Master Plan be undertaken of the Bowral site to determine its most appropriate future use. This could incorporate development of a free seasonal community splash pad facility incorporated into a wider play space and recreational precinct.
- 4 Once the new facility is operational, it is recommended the Bundanoon facility be closed and a Master Plan be prepared for the Bundanoon site to determine its most appropriate future use.
- 5 Leading up to expiry of the current management contract for Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, undertake a new tender for management rights for the facility. This should be a competitive process to ensure the best result can be obtained for the Shire. Key outcomes should include:
  - Receiving audited accounts
  - Monthly financial and participation reporting to the Shire
  - Focus upon efficient management of the facility
  - Target for a breakeven management of the centre.

- 6 Review and implement a new structured accounting process for all aquatic facilities. For all facilities this should include collation of information on the number/type of entries with revenue separated into categories so it can be accurately accounted for against programs and services offered at each facility.

# 1. Project Background

## 1.1. Wingecarribee Shire<sup>1</sup>

Wingecarribee Shire is located 75 km from the south-western fringe of Sydney, approximately 110 km from Sydney’s central business district (Figure 1.1). The Shire covers a total area of approximately 2,700 km<sup>2</sup> and is comparable in size to urban Sydney. The geographic centre is north-west of Berrima and its demographic centre is to the south-east of Bowral.



**Figure 1.1:** Wingecarribee Shire

This area is known as the Southern Highlands of New South Wales with the main towns Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong. Smaller villages include Bundanoon, Hill Top, Yerrinbool, Colo Vale, Robertson, Berrima, New Berrima, Exeter, Burrawang, Penrose, Willow Vale, Alpine, Balaclava, Renwick, Wingello, Sutton Forest, Avoca, Fitzroy Falls, Balmoral, Medway, Wildes Meadow, Kangaloon, and East Kangaloon.

The pattern of development is one of small towns and villages, separated by a semi-rural landscape. The network of towns and villages provides a unique challenge in provision of key infrastructure, including for aquatic facilities, as residents in smaller villages in the far north or west of the Shire can face travel times of up to 30 to 35 minutes by car to reach key service centres.

## 1.2. Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy

In 2022, extensive community engagement and research was undertaken to understand the community’s vision for its community and its recreational facilities. A strong sentiment was identified as having “sustainable, multi-purpose, accessible and innovative community and recreation facilities equitably distributed across the Shire”.

<sup>1</sup> [www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Council/About-Council/About-Wingecarribee](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Council/About-Council/About-Wingecarribee)

As a result, Council's Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy (CRFS) was adopted in October of 2023. The CRFS considers all facilities that play a role in providing support for recreational and community activities, helping inform Council of potential gaps in the provision of infrastructure.

Projects and actions identified in the Strategy are focused on delivery of Council owned infrastructure and on strengthening key partnerships with other providers within the community to ensure they are supported. The CRFS provided a total of almost 60 actions across three planning levels.

### 1.3. Purpose and Objectives

This project progresses two of the Strategic Directions identified in Council's CRFS, namely:

- **Aquatics:** Development of an Aquatics Plan for the portfolio of aquatics facilities, inclusive of preparation of a business case for a Regional Aquatic Facility.
- **Multipurpose Indoor Sporting Facility:** Preparation of a business case for a Multipurpose Indoor Sporting Facility in the Mittagong Area of the Shire.

The outcomes of the project will support implementation of the priority projects within the CRFS by developing analysis and recommendations to inform decision-making for aquatics and recreation facilities that provides value for money to the community and is commercially viable.

This will include one of the key principles identified within the CRFS of co-locating community and recreational facilities, improving operational efficiencies and providing a focal point for the community.

### 1.4. Business Case for Regional Aquatics Facility

This report presents the Business Case for a Regional Aquatics Facility, with the scope defined with consideration to the key principles defined within the CRFS. Key elements for consideration in the Business Case include:

#### **Potential Locations**

Council has identified the following locations to be considered:

- Mittagong Oval – co-located with potential future Multipurpose Indoor Centre
- Iron Mines Oval – co-located with potential future Multipurpose Indoor Centre and potential future Mittagong Community Hub (including library and community spaces)
- Bowral Swimming Centre – no co-location due to land size constraints.

#### **Minimum Facility Inclusions**

The facility would also be designed to meet the Swimming Australia Regional Facility requirements and adopt the provision of:

- 25m indoor pool and 50m outdoor pool.
- Dedicated 'learn to swim' indoor pool
- Outdoor toddler pool and all ages splash pad
- Gym and allied health rooms to enable additional revenue streams.

Each site has been investigated to ascertain if they are a viable option after which, if deemed viable, ranked in order of suitability.

## **Business Case Scenarios**

The business case identifies the recommended operating model, activation opportunities, revenue streams, user fees and usage targets such that the current financial result of bottom line cost of \$1.4M (see below) to Council can be maintained for the following scenarios:

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The current financial result is the sum of operational costs, operational revenue and annual depreciation of \$1.4million, being determined as:

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This is to account for last full year for which Mittagong Pool was open. This was a \$385k operational cost to Council in 2018/19 (inflated to \$490k in 2023/24).

- 2022/23 annual depreciation of all four pool facilities is \$473k.

## 2. Document Review

There are a range of Wingecarribee corporate documents that provide high level guidance in relation to sporting and recreation facilities in the region, particularly aquatic facilities. A key document is the Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy, supported by Swimming Australia's Regional Facility requirements.

For the aquatic strategy and supporting business cases, it is important the direction for development and renewal of facilities both now and into the future is aligned with key council documents and plans. This chapter provides a summary review of these documents to support the business case for a regional aquatics facility. The associated Aquatics Plan provides a more detailed review of other council documents and plans.

### **Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy**

The Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy (CRFS) is a 20year strategic document developed to guide and inform Council and the Community about planning, funding and delivery of formal community and recreation facilities across the Shire. The CRFS identified emerging trends, challenges and opportunities on the provision of community and recreational facilities across the Shire. These included:

- Increase in knowledge and focus on health and wellbeing with increased importance of community places and spaces.
- Increased focus on active ageing, female participation in sports, and an increased demand for modified sports.
- Trends in the provision of co-located, flexible spaces for a range of uses.
- The three main town centres (Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong) and network of smaller villages across the Shire provide a unique challenge that requires a balance between providing local facilities in smaller population catchments, as well as providing bigger, co-located facilities to service larger areas.
- 6 out of 10 facilities required maintenance, renewal, were not serviceable or were at the end of their life.
- The Shire owns and operates four aquatic/swimming facilities in Bowral, Moss Vale, Mittagong and Bundanoon. Three are either reaching the end of their useful life, costly to operate and/or not operational and will require significant renewal in the foreseeable future.
- Construction and ongoing operational costs of facilities has put additional pressure on Councils, particularly rural and regional Councils with limited populations but significant geographic spread.
- The geography of the Shire creates opportunities for innovative models of provision that are place based, and designed to meet the needs of the local community which they serve.
- Providing larger, contemporary, flexible co-located community and recreation hubs provides an opportunity to rationalise the provision of smaller single use facilities.

The CRFS recommended:

- Development of a regional aquatic facility within the Mittagong Precinct, which would service a wider catchment including the key service centres of Mittagong and Bowral year-round. The CRFS further recommended that detailed scoping review opportunities to provide this facility as part of a larger

multipurpose community and recreation hub with associated indoor facilities to ensure year-round access for the community<sup>2</sup>

- A detailed cost benefit analysis be undertaken of the Bundanoon and Bowral aquatic facilities to determine the feasibility and wider community benefit of renewing both assets
- Council provide a multi-purpose indoor facility in Mittagong Precinct to ensure access within the 15min driving catchment for residents towards the north of the Shire.

### **Swimming Australia Regional Facility Requirements**

The project scope specifies the minimum facility inclusions for an aquatic facility to be designed to meet the Swimming Australia Regional Facility requirements and adopt the provision of:

- 25m indoor and 50m outdoor pool
- A dedicated 'learn to swim' indoor pool
- An outdoor toddler pool and all ages splash pad
- A gym and allied health rooms.

### **Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041, NSW Department of Planning and Environment<sup>3</sup>**

The draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041 is the 20-year strategic planning blueprint that sets the land use planning framework, vision and direction for future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment and connected communities. For the Wingecarribee Local Government Area, the plan includes an identified Strategic Investigations area, noting the population of 52,320 is expected to grow to 70,969 by 2041.

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<sup>2</sup> Note: At Ordinary Council Meeting 18 October 2023, it was resolved that Bowral Swimming Centre was to also be considered as a potential location for the Regional Aquatic and Leisure Facility.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/draft-south-east-and-tablelands-regional-plan-2041.pdf>

### 3. Wingecarribee – The Community

This chapter presents a snapshot of the community that makes up the Shire of Wingecarribee based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. A detailed more population summary, extracted from the profileID Wingecarribee community profile is included in the Wingecarribee Aquatics Plan.

<b>Population</b>		
<p><b>53,109</b>  <b>2023 estimated resident population</b>                  There are slightly more females living in Wingecarribee (50.2%) compared to males (49.8%)</p>	<p><b>48 years</b>  <b>Median age</b></p>	<p><b>2,690km<sup>2</sup></b>  <b>Land area</b>                  19.74 people per square km</p>
<p><b>70,969</b>  <b>2041 forecast population<sup>4</sup></b>                  Projections forecast an increase across all ages, but predominantly younger (0-14 years) and older age groups (80+ years)</p>	<p><b>Burradoo, Moss Vale, Bowral, Mittagong</b>  <b>Highest Growth Areas</b>                  Burradoo (2.34%), Moss Vale (1.77%), Bowral (1.23%) and Mittagong District (1.23%) will see the highest average annual population growth</p> <p>Berrima – North West District (-0.09%) and Wingello – South West District (-0.01%) will see small population declines</p>	

The estimated residential population of Wingecarribee is 53,109 people with a median age of 48 years. This is compared with 43 years for Regional NSW, and is significantly more than the 39 years for New South Wales and 38 years for Australia as a whole. At the time of the 2021 Census:

- The population was 52% female and 48% male.
- 2.3% of the population was of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.
- There was a similar percentage of Australian citizens, eligible voters and population over 15 years of age between residents of Wingecarribee and regional NSW.

The population is forecast to grow to 70,969 by 2041 at an average annual growth rate of 1.54%.

The towns with the highest growth across Wingecarribee Shire are forecast to be Burradoo, Moss Vale, Bowral and the Mittagong District.

Analysis of the service age groups of Wingecarribee Shire compared to Regional NSW shows there was a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17 years) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years). In total, 20.3% of the population was aged between 0 and 17 and 34.8% was aged 60 years and over, compared with 21.4% and 29.1% respectively for Regional NSW.

Table 3.1 provides a comparison of the 2021 age and gender profile for Wingecarribee with the 2041 forecast. This shows there will be consistent growth across all age groups, however the highest absolute growth will be for those aged 0-9 years, 25-54 years and those aged 75 and over. This means there will be a need for the Shire to continue to provide services and support across all age and family types, with an increasing need to adapt to provide services to meet the needs of an aging population.

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<sup>4</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment forecast population.

**Table 3.1:** Wingecarribee Shire 2021 and 2041 population comparison by age and gender

Age	Male				Female				Total			
	2021	2041	%	Growth	2021	2041	%	Growth	2021	2041	%	Growth
85+	634	1,706	5.0%	1,072	940	2,393	6.5%	1,453	1,574	4,099	5.8%	2,525
80-84	847	1,642	4.8%	795	1,019	1,810	4.9%	791	1,866	3,452	4.9%	1,586
75-79	1,375	2,040	6.0%	665	1,555	2,132	5.8%	577	2,930	4,172	5.9%	1,242
70-74	1,703	2,114	6.2%	411	2,000	2,299	6.3%	299	3,703	4,413	6.2%	710
65-69	1,610	2,097	6.1%	487	1,953	2,258	6.1%	305	3,563	4,355	6.1%	792
60-64	1,682	1,851	5.4%	169	1,855	2,049	5.6%	194	3,537	3,900	5.5%	363
55-59	1,655	1,940	5.7%	285	1,875	2,122	5.8%	247	3,530	4,062	5.7%	532
50-54	1,565	2,118	6.2%	553	1,820	2,301	6.3%	481	3,385	4,419	6.2%	1,034
45-49	1,641	2,207	6.4%	566	1,754	2,299	6.3%	545	3,395	4,506	6.3%	1,111
40-44	1,251	2,019	5.9%	768	1,461	2,133	5.8%	672	2,712	4,152	5.9%	1,440
35-39	1,270	1,853	5.4%	583	1,313	1,981	5.4%	668	2,583	3,834	5.4%	1,251
30-34	1,184	1,783	5.2%	599	1,176	1,881	5.1%	705	2,360	3,664	5.2%	1,304
25-29	1,132	1,582	4.6%	450	1,020	1,630	4.4%	610	2,152	3,212	4.5%	1,060
20-24	1,354	1,408	4.1%	54	1,228	1,463	4.0%	235	2,582	2,871	4.0%	289
15-19	1,674	1,879	5.5%	205	1,771	2,033	5.5%	262	3,445	3,912	5.5%	467
10-14	1,704	2,060	6.0%	356	1,741	2,124	5.8%	383	3,445	4,184	5.9%	739
5-9	1,551	2,043	6.0%	492	1,503	2,017	5.5%	514	3,054	4,060	5.7%	1,006
0-4	1,228	1,890	5.5%	662	1,277	1,813	4.9%	536	2,505	3,703	5.2%	1,198
	25,060	34,232		9,172	27,261	36,738		9,477	52,321	70,970		18,649

### Households

#### 26.2%

#### Couples with children

14% couples with young children  
3.9% couples with mixed aged children  
8.3% couples with older children

#### \$1,676

#### Median weekly household income

Wingecarribee has a larger proportion of high income (earning \$3,000 or more per week) and a lower proportion of low income households (earning less than \$800 per week) compared to Regional NSW.

#### 18%

#### Older couples without children

18.4% older couples without children  
15.1% older lone person households

#### 43.3%

#### Home ownership

43.3% household ownership  
31.3% purchasing their home  
16.2% renting privately

#### 21,232

#### Separate houses

90.1% separate houses  
8.7% medium density dwellings  
0.1% high density dwellings

#### \$430

#### Median weekly rent

45.5% of renting households paying \$450 or more per week in rent

In 2021 there were 5,579 couples with children in Wingecarribee Shire, comprising 26.2% of households. The dominant household type with children for Wingecarribee Shire was:

- 14.0% couples with young children
- 8.3% couples with older children
- 5.2% single parents with older children.

Older couples without children accounted for 18% (6,834 households) of total households in 2021. Households without children include couples without children and lone person households. They require different services

depending on the age of the people in the households. For example, young couples who have not had children compared to older "empty nester" couples whose children may have left home.

In 2021, there were 21,232 separate houses in Wingecarribee Shire, 2,057 medium density dwellings, and 35 high density dwellings. Analysis of the types of dwellings shows that 90.1% of all dwellings were separate houses; 8.7% were medium density dwellings, and 0.1% were in high density dwellings.

In Wingecarribee Shire, 75% of households were purchasing or fully owned their home, 16.2% were renting privately, and 2.3% were in social housing in 2021. Overall, 43.3% of households owned their dwelling; 31.3% were purchasing, and 18.6% were renting.

### Family Background

**18%**

**Born overseas**

Highest 6.6% born in the United Kingdom

**7%**

**Language other than English**

7% of households speak a language other than English at home

Analysis of the country of birth of the population in Wingecarribee Shire in 2021 shows 18% of people were born overseas with the highest percentage (6.6%) born in the United Kingdom.

Analysis of the language used at home by the population of Wingecarribee Shire in 2021 showed 88.0% of the population used English only, and 7.0% used a non-English language, with the dominant language other than English being Nepali (with 0.8% of the population).

### Employment and Education

**97%**

**Employment**

53% full time

36% part time

8% employed away from work

**26%**

**Bachelors degree or higher**

Of residents have a Bachelor or higher degree, significantly higher than the rest of Regional NSW (18%)

**2.6%**

**Attending university**

2.6% attending university

7.6% attending primary school

6.5% attending secondary school

The size of Wingecarribee Shire's labour force in 2021 was 24,700, of which 8,960 were employed part-time and 13,201 were full time workers. Overall, 97.0% of the labour force was employed, and 3.0% unemployed.

In 2021, 1,348 people in Wingecarribee Shire were attending university (representing 2.6% of the population). Analysis of the share of the population attending educational institutions in Wingecarribee Shire in 2021 shows 7.6% of the population were attending primary school, 6.4% of the were attending secondary institutions and 5.0% were learning at a tertiary level.

In total 26% of people in Wingecarribee Shire had a Bachelor or Higher degree qualification.

## 4. Sport and Recreation Participation

Clearinghouse for Sport, through Sport Australia (Australian Sports Commission) provides national, state and territory data on almost 400 different participation sports and activities in Australia and who is participating in them (Ausplay)<sup>5</sup>.

This chapter presents participation data for swimming to support the business case for a regional aquatics facility. A summary is also presented for fitness/gym and higher participation indoor sports as the scope for this business case has specified the inclusion of a gym and allied health rooms to enable additional revenue streams and co-location with a future multipurpose indoor sports centre at the identified sites of Mittagong and Iron Mines Ovals.

### 4.1. Swimming

The Ausplay survey results for New South Wales from July 2022 to June 2023 found for the adult population (aged 15+) 20.0% participated in swimming at least once per year. This was the third most popular activity after walking (recreational) (42.6%) and fitness/gym (38.5%). For children 0-14 years the most popular organised participation activity was swimming with 41.6% having participated at least once per year outside of school hours.

Ausplay results on a national level from July 2022 to June 2023 were released on 31 October 2023. The results provide a breakdown of participation in swimming by age category and participation rates for the previous five years. National data is presented as it is not provided to this level of detail on a lower level.

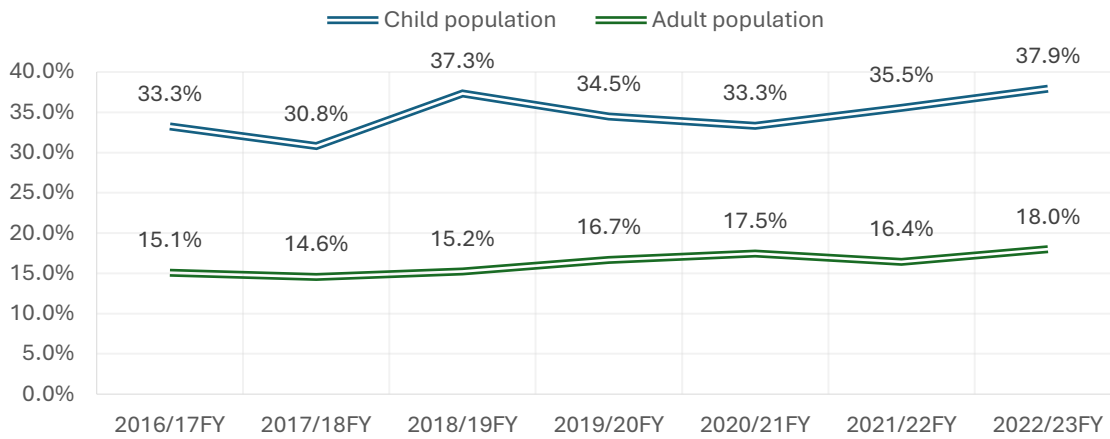
Table 4.1 shows the highest participation rates for children aged 0-4 years, 5-8 years and 9-11 years. For adults, the highest percentage of people who participated in swimming at least once in the previous year were aged between 25 to 64 years.

**Table 4.1:** Participation in swimming by age, Australia, July 2022 – June 2023

Swimming	Estimate (000s)	%
Children (aged 0-14) organised participation		
0-4	735.1	42.6%
5-8	660.1	49.4%
9-11	359.1	35.8%
12-14	163.7	16.5%
Males total	947.6	36.5%
Females total	970.4	39.4%
Total	1,918.0	37.9%
Adults (aged 15+)		
15-17	170.0	17.6%
18-24	355.3	14.6%
25-34	788.7	19.5%
35-44	727.2	19.7%
45-54	705.5	21.4%
55-64	586.6	19.4%
65+	613.6	13.7%
Males total	1,701.9	15.7%
Females total	2,245.1	20.2%
Total	3,947.0	18.0%

<sup>5</sup> [www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results](http://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results)

Figure 4.1 shows both adult and child’s participation has been increasing over time. Adult participation averaged 34.7% and has been increasing since 2020/21 and child’s participation has averaged 16.2% with a small increasing trend over time.



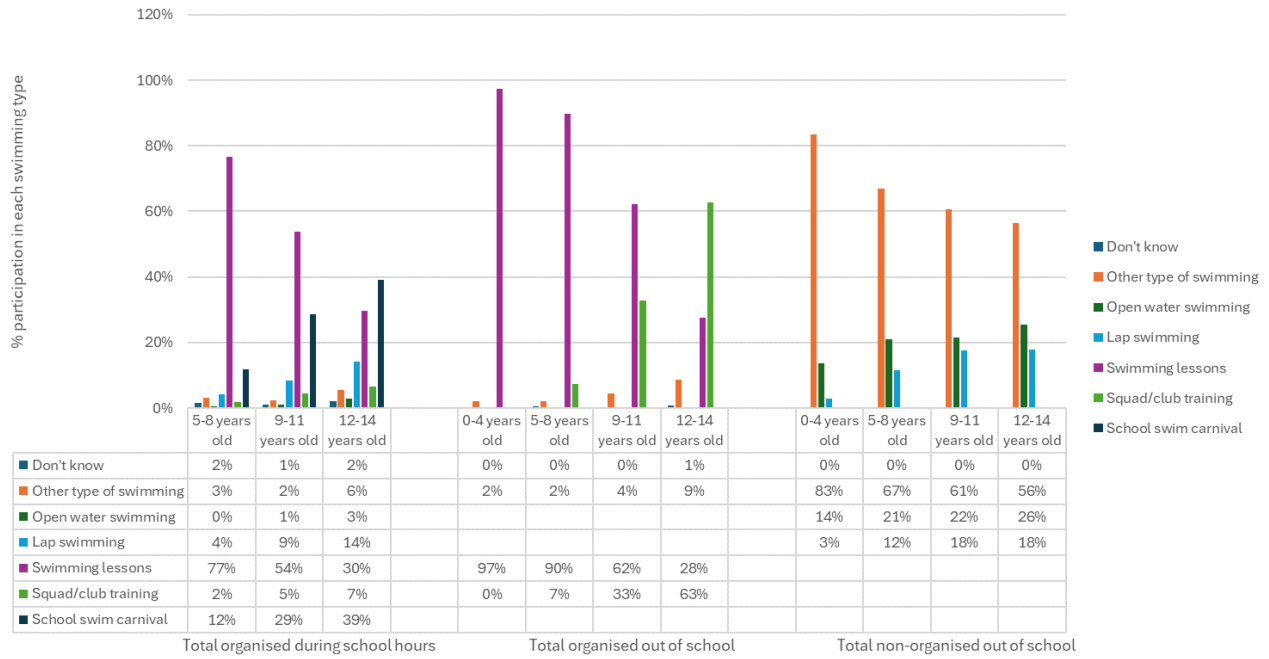
**Figure 4.1:** National participation rates from 2016/17 to 2022/23

The Ausplay Swimming Detail Report presents aggregated data collected from the start of Ausplay in October 2015, up to and including the latest release of data (for this report that is to June 2023). Figure 4.2 shows a breakdown of type of swimming for adults 15+ for ‘organisation/venue based’ swims by age category. This shows the most popular type of swimming for:

- 15-17 year olds is lap swimming (38%) followed by squad/club training (27%)
- Lap swimming for all other age groups (all over 60%) with the balance predominantly ‘other type of swimming’ and open water swimming.

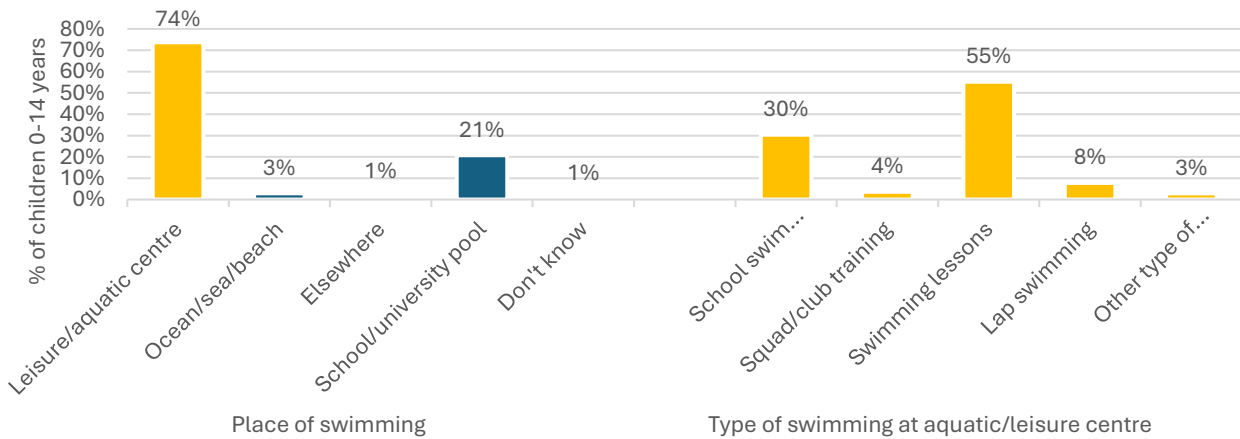






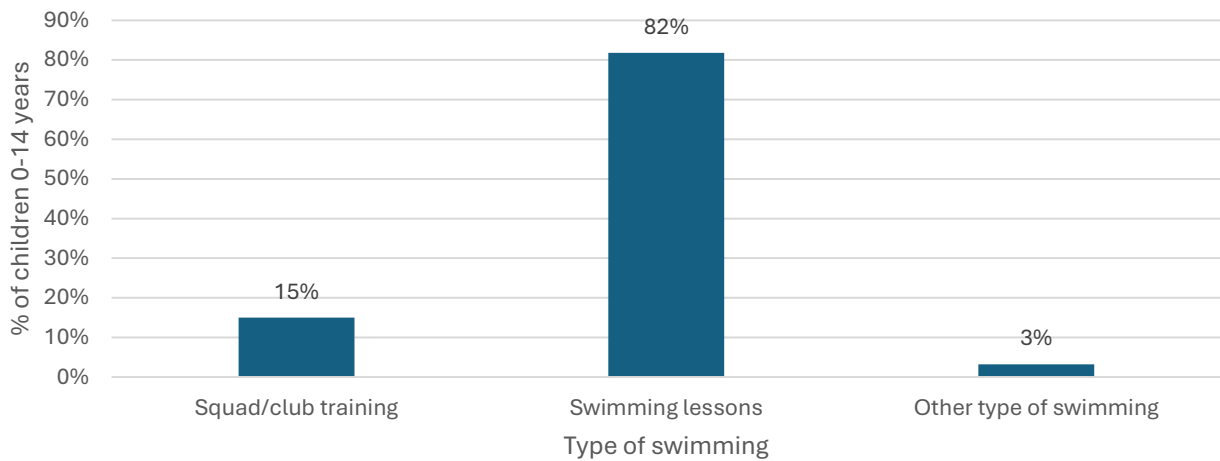
**Figure 4.5:** Swimming type by age category for children 0-14 years

Figure 4.6 shows that for swimming organised during school hours, children 0-14 years are more likely to swim at an aquatic/leisure centre (74%) or school/university pool (21%). The most popular type of swimming will be swimming lessons (55%) followed by school swim carnival/event (30%).



**Figure 4.6:** Place and type of swimming for children 0-14 years organised during school hours

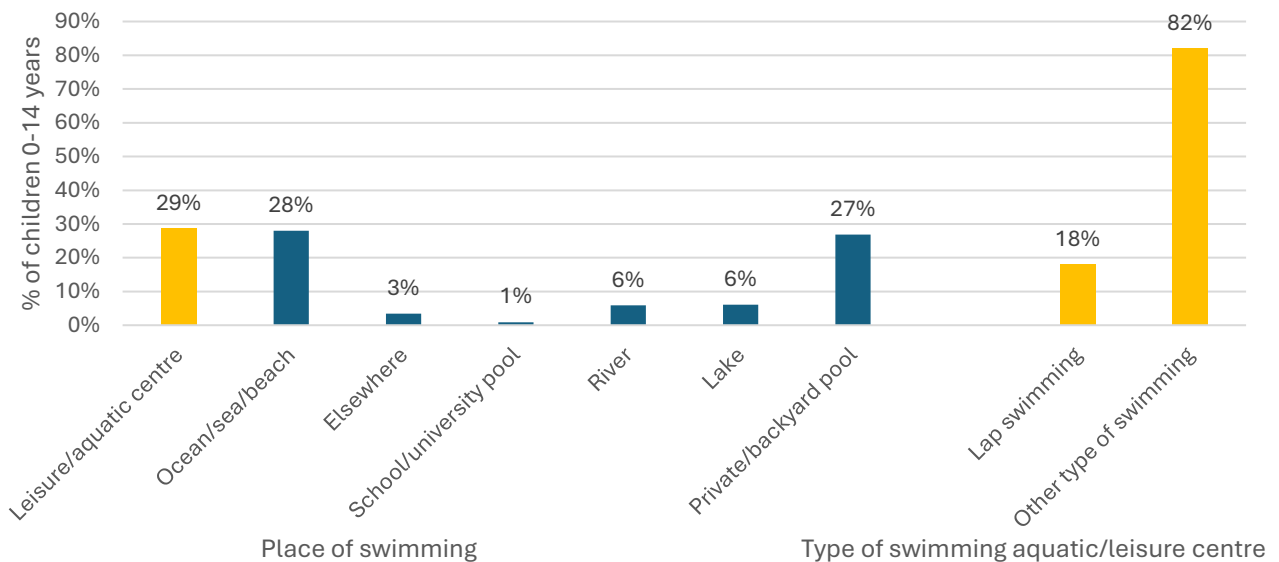
For organised out of school swimming for children 0-14 years all swimming was identified as being undertaken at 'organisations other than schools'. Figure 4.7 shows the most popular type of swimming is swimming lessons (82%), followed by squad/club training (15%). It is likely this type of swimming would be undertaken at an aquatic centre, council swimming pool or private facility that provides swimming lessons/swim squad.



**Figure 4.7:** Type of swimming for children 0-14 years organised out of school

Figure 4.8 provides a breakdown of non-organised out of school swimming for children 0-14 years. This shows:

- 29% of non-organisation/venue based swims were undertaken at a leisure/aquatic centre or local community/council pool
- 82% of non-organisation/venue based swims undertaken at a leisure/aquatic centre were ‘other type of swimming’ with the remainder being lap swimming.



**Figure 4.8:** Place and type of swimming for children 0-14 years non-organised out of school

Table 4.2 presents frequency of participation broken into age and gender for adults 15+ years. This data demonstrates that as the frequency of participation increases participation levels decline for both genders across all age categories.

**Table 4.2:** Participation frequency by age and gender

Frequency of participation	Gender	Age category						
		15-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
1-11 times per year	Male	2.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%	3.3%	2.5%	1.8%
	Female	5.7%	4.2%	5.3%	5.3%	4.5%	3.4%	2.6%
12-23 times per year	Male	2.2%	1.8%	2.7%	3.2%	3.5%	2.5%	1.7%
	Female	1.5%	2.5%	3.4%	4.2%	4.0%	3.0%	1.7%
24-51 times per year	Male	2.5%	2.2%	2.7%	3.5%	3.4%	2.9%	1.7%
	Female	2.6%	2.8%	3.3%	4.3%	4.0%	3.3%	2.1%
52-103 times per year	Male	2.3%	1.8%	2.1%	3.1%	2.7%	2.5%	2.0%
	Female	3.5%	2.3%	3.3%	4.0%	3.9%	3.7%	2.1%
104-155 times per year	Male	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.6%	2.0%	2.2%	1.7%
	Female	2.6%	1.5%	1.6%	1.9%	2.3%	2.7%	1.7%
156-207 times per year	Male	0.9%	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%
	Female	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%	1.2%
208-259 times per year	Male	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%
	Female	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%
260-311 times per year	Male	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
	Female	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
312-363 times per year	Male	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
	Female	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
364 or more times per year	Male	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%
	Female	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%

The same Ausplay report also presents participation rates for children 0-14, however this is not separated by gender or the same categories. For 2022-23 the data shows the percentage of children aged 0-14 years that participated in swimming as:

- 1+ times per year – 37.9%
- 4+ times per year – 36.8%
- 1+ times per month – 33.5%
- 1+ times per week – 16.3%
- 2+ times per week – 3.0%.

#### 4.1.1. Summary

- Swimming is one of the most popular sport and recreation activities across Australia with one in five adults aged 15 years and over and 2 in five children aged 0-14 having participated at least once in the previous year.
- For adults aged 18 and over the most popular type of swimming is ‘lap swimming’ followed by ‘other type of swimming’. For adults 15-17 years of age, ‘lap swimming’ is also the most popular, however the second most popular type is ‘squad/club training’.

- When swimming at an organisation or venue, the majority of swims were undertaken at an aquatic or leisure centre (66%) and the most popular type of swimming is 'lap swimming' (76%). This demonstrates the importance of aquatic facilities, particularly for regional communities with no direct open water access.
- For children 0-14 years of age the most popular type of swimming is for
  - Organised school hours swims, for children aged 5-8 and 9-11 years old, swimming lessons (77% and 54% each respectively) and for children aged 12-14 years school swimming carnivals (39%) followed by swimming lessons (30%). These swims are most likely to be undertaken at a leisure/aquatic centre (74%) followed by a school/university pool (21%).
  - Organised out of school hours the most popular swim type for children aged 0-4, 5-8 and 9-11 years old is swimming lessons (97%, 90% and 62% each respectively). For children aged 12-14 the most popular swim type is squad/club training (63%). These swims are most likely to be undertaken
  - Non organised out of school swimming the most popular swim type for all children is 'other type of swimming', with 29% of these swims undertaken at a leisure/aquatic centre or local community/council pool.
- As the frequency of participation increases, participation levels decline across both genders across all age categories.

## 4.2. Fitness/Gym

- Fitness/gym is the second most popular sport and recreation activity for adults aged 15+, with 38.5% having participated at least once in the previous year.
- The highest participation rates are for those aged 18-34 years with almost 50% participating in fitness/gym at least once per year.
- Participation across all age groups over 18 years is higher for females than for males.
- The majority of participation (69.6%) for adults aged 15+ was undertaken at a gym/fitness centre. This was followed by non-organised (22%) participation.
- The highest frequency of participation falls within the band of 52 to 207 times per year across all of the adult 15+ age groups.
- There is limited participation for children aged 0-14 years.

## 4.3. Indoor Sports

A review of the indoor sports of basketball and gymnastics has been undertaken. These sports were chosen as basketball is the most popular sport that would be undertaken in the proposed multipurpose indoor sporting facility and gymnastics has been identified as an existing high use sport for the PCYC Southern Highlands at Mittagong.

#### 4.3.1. Basketball

- The highest participation rates for basketball are for children aged 5 through to 14 (5-8 years 10.4%, 9-11 years 16.7%, 12-14 years 16.6%) and adults from 15 to 17 years old (13.6%) having participated at least once per year.
- Males have more than double the participation rate to females, both for children and younger adults.
- Participation is most likely to be non-organised (34%), followed by at a sports club or association (34%).
- The highest frequency of participation for adults aged from 15 to 17 years is 24 to 155 times per year. For children aged 0-14 years the highest participation rate is 1+ times per year, followed by 4+ times per year and then 1+ times per month.

#### 4.3.2. Gymnastics

- The highest participation rates for gymnastics are for children aged 0 to 14 years with limited participation from older children and adults aged 15+.
- Females have a significantly higher participation rate than males across all of the child age categories with participation rates increasing over time.
- The highest frequency of participation for children aged 0-14 years is 1+ times per year, followed by 4+ times per year and then 1+ times per month.

## 5. Benchmarking and Industry Trends

This chapter presents an overview of trends in aquatic facility development.

### 5.1. The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia

Royal Life Saving Australia published *The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia, Rebuilding our Aging Public Swimming Pools in 2022*. The report found that over the next 10 years, up to 40 per cent of public aquatic facilities that local governments own will need to be replaced at a cost of over \$8 billion. It noted that state and federal governments regularly make funds available through grants, however they contribute to less than one-third of the total aquatic project cost on average, meaning local governments will collectively need to fund the balance of \$5.3 billion in aquatic facility capital costs over the next 10 years.

The report noted aquatic facilities are essential for the provision of learn to swim, water therapy, leisure, physical activity and swimming, which over 5 million Australians regularly attend. Key benefits from aquatic facilities were identified as:

- Water Safety
- Social Value and Impact
- Employment
- Health Benefits

The report identified options for facility development that should be strongly considered include:

- Encouraging, facilitating and potentially providing financial assistance to the private sector to reach beyond the delivery of swim lessons, and to make privately owned facilities available for recreational, leisure and fitness swimming to the broader community.
- Exploring how public and/or private schools might build and share their aquatic facilities.
- Encouraging and facilitating greater cooperation between councils.
- Better understanding how sports clubs and associations who may seek aquatic facilities for their sports might also consider collaborative approaches to the development of such facilities.
- Reviewing how state and federal governments plan and allocate funds to support aquatic facility developments.

Royal Life Saving Australia identified the following objectives through development of its report:

- To understand the state and profile of aquatic infrastructure within Australia, including historical and current contexts of aquatic infrastructure.
- To understand the key challenges and opportunities confronting the sector with respect to aquatic infrastructure.
- To effectively engage with the sector to ensure information obtained is up to date and reflective of the current environment.
- To advocate the need to address aquatic infrastructure needs across Australia, so that no child or person misses out on swimming for fun, fitness or education.

### 5.2. Aquatic Facility Strategies and Plans

Local governments have been following a trend in classifying their aquatic facilities based on a hierarchy, largely dependent on the size of the catchment population, facility size and mix, function and type. This is generally to

inform and guide planning and development of facilities to ensure they meet the needs of each community, both now, and into the future.

### 5.3. Industry Trends

The primary focus in contemporary aquatic facility design is on providing a facility mix to include a combination of wet and dry options. These include spaces for a range of activities such as lap swimming, aquatic programs, learn to swim, leisure water space, interactive water play spaces and health and fitness including gymnasiums, cardio, weight training and group exercise class spaces. Added to this is multi-use program spaces, including community meeting rooms/spaces, creche, food and beverage options and retail/merchandising spaces. Increasingly contemporary aquatic and leisure facilities are being designed and developed as community destinations and meeting locations for a range of physical and social activities.

Key influences for aquatic facility design and provision have been identified as:

- Ageing population – with increasing life expectancy and lower birth rates there is an increased demand on specific programs for older people. This includes warmer water temperatures as well as pools more suited to therapy and water exercise.
- Flexible recreation times – people are increasingly seeking to participation in sport and recreation activities at different times and at facilities that offer a variety of activities at the one location.

Local and state governments are recognising the social, health and economic benefits of providing increased opportunities for physical activity in communities. Some have developed physical activity strategies to serve this purpose. There is increasing awareness of a ‘whole of life’ approach to facility development and asset management. Key design and facility development considerations have been identified as:

<b>Design issue</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pool design	More emphasis on a wider range of aquatic participation opportunities by providing different bodies of water/pool types at different temperatures within one venue
Financial sustainability and long term viability	Increasingly seeking to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce service delivery costs to the community</li> <li>• ensure efficient and effective management</li> <li>• provide flexibility to meet changing community needs</li> <li>• increase attendances and physical activity rates in the community</li> </ul>
Year round access	Provision of several pools for lap swimming as well as water play, program areas and therapy in one environment to ensure optimisation of operating costs
Destination facilities	Development of aquatic facilities that are linked to other facilities (including libraries, other clubs, parks or shopping centres)  Longer visitation times
Leisure water components	Facilities that include water play features such as water slides, cannons and sprays, rapid rivers, dump buckets, etc

Dry facility components	Health and fitness facilities, sports therapy, meeting spaces and kiosk/café
Quality developments	Development of facilities that are high quality and easy to maintain at lower ongoing cost
Shaded spaces	Meeting the community expectation for sun smart facilities, and use of shade to assist in management of water temperature during hotter months
Ecological design	Facilities that consider self power generation (ie, solar), water recycling, modern filtration systems
Facility differentiation	Providing quality aquatic facilities for training for lap and squad swimming (50m pools) for key markets that are supported by 25m pools with associated leisure, program and therapy pools where supported by community need

## 5.4. Role and Function of Aquatic Facilities

The role and function of local government in the provision of aquatic facilities, programs and services has changed over time. The focus of swimming pools has become much broader, catering for five major markets; aquatic education, fitness, leisure, competition and rehabilitation/therapeutic. Each market has specific facility requirements, complemented by programs to meet the needs of different segments within each market.

Aquatic facilities owned and/or operated by local government exist within a broader network of aquatic centres owned and or operated by other public organisations, (eg, schools), private not for profit organisations (eg, Royal Life Saving Society) and commercial organisations (eg, swim schools).

Other key drivers in the aquatics industry have been an emphasis on professional business management practices, environmental sustainability, access for all and a return on investment (financial and non-financial).

## 5.5. Aquatic Market Assessment

When broken to age cohorts key aquatic groups are identified as:

Age group	Participation/activity drivers
0-8 years	Learn to swim and water appreciation, leisure, social interaction
9-14 years	Learn to swim, skill development, competition training/squad, leisure, social interaction
15-24 years	Fitness, leisure, performance based and squad training
25-55 years	Fitness, physical activity, weight management, injury prevention and rehabilitation, social interaction, family and leisure
Over 55 years	Fitness, non-weight bearing activity, water therapy, injury prevention and rehabilitation and social interaction.

These groups fit within an aquatics market that comprises six distinct segments, each requiring a specific marketing mix to maximise market share (shown in Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1:** Aquatic Market Segments

Market	Assessment
Lap swimming	<p>Tend to swim early in the morning or after work, supplemented by some who swim during lunch time.</p> <p>Require lane space (at least 25 metre pool size), with speed indicators for each lane (i.e. slow, medium, fast).</p> <p>Tend to swim on a regular basis, and often more than once per week.</p> <p>Water temperature is preferably between 26°C and 28°C.</p> <p>Most lap swimmers prefer to swim year-round.</p>
Swim coaching/squads	<p>Usually children and young people up to about 16 years, supplemented by adult squads (mainly masters swim squads and triathlon swim squads).</p> <p>Main squad training times are early morning (from 5.30am) and early evening (5.30pm – 7.30pm).</p> <p>Require reserved lane space, for between three and 10 times per week.</p> <p>Water temperature is preferably between 26°C and 28°C.</p> <p>As with lap swimmers, squads swim year-round.</p>
Learn to swim lessons	<p>Lessons are offered to all ages, from “caregivers and babies” to adult lessons.</p> <p>Most lessons are conducted after school (4pm to 6pm) and on Saturday and sometimes Sunday.</p> <p>Adult lessons tend to be offered later in the evening and “caregiver and babies” classes are usually on weekday morning between 9am and 12pm.</p> <p>Most classes are offered once a week, often for a ten-week term or block.</p> <p>Water temperature is preferably between 29°C and 31°C.</p> <p>The number of people in swim lessons declines in winter, although many children participate in lessons year-round.</p>
Recreational aquatic play	<p>All humans play and socially interact. In an aquatic environment, play is often defined by the age of participants (i.e. pre-school, junior primary school age, senior primary school age, young teenagers, young people and adults).</p> <p>Play equipment is larger and more adventurous the older the participant.</p> <p>Play experiences are enhanced by either moving water (e.g. water cannons and rapid rivers) or moving the participant (e.g. water slides and climbing structures).</p> <p>Most recreational play is conducted after school/work time (e.g. weekday evenings and weekends).</p> <p>It can also involve relaxation (e.g. sunbathing, and “hanging about”) and supervising young children.</p> <p>Water temperature is preferably between 28°C and 31°C.</p>
Aquatic fitness programs	<p>Aquatic fitness programs include aqua aerobics (group exercise to music in water), water walking (using a floatation vest), and other similar gentle exercise activities.</p> <p>These activities tend to attract older adults, particularly females.</p> <p>Classes are held at times to suit the participants (e.g. older females on weekday mornings).</p>

	Water temperature is preferably between 28°C and 31°C.
Therapeutic and rehabilitation programs	<p>Generally more applicable as a niche operation, aimed at treatment, management and rehabilitation of physical injuries and disabilities.</p> <p>Tend to be supervised by a physiotherapist.</p> <p>In some instances an individual will perform prescribed exercises for warm water exercise without supervision.</p> <p>Not normally commercially viable without health rehabilitation focused facility.</p> <p>The main requirement is warm water (approximately 34°C) of about 1.5m in depth.</p>

## 5.6. Recent Aquatic Facility Developments

This section provides a review of recent and proposed aquatic facility developments across Australia. This shows that many councils are seeking to provide facilities that will meet the needs of the market segments identified above, with the facilities designed to meet both existing and future demand.

It also demonstrates that construction costs have increased significantly in recent years as a result of inflation following covid. The Gippsland Regional Aquatic Facility was completed in 2020 at a cost of \$57 million. Other projects below range in cost from \$51.8 to \$89.7 million, depending on the aquatic and other components.

### 5.6.1. Bundaberg Regional Aquatic Centre

The new Bundaberg Regional Aquatic Centre will be co-located with the Bundaberg Multiplex, which includes a conference centre and the Bundaberg PCYC. It will be developed as a single stage over three financial years.

The facility will include:

- 50m, 10 lane heated outdoor pool
- 25m, 8 lane indoor heated pool
- Indoor heated accessible program pool
- Equitable access facilities, ramps and change rooms
- Entrance and staff administration
- Training rooms
- Indoor multipurpose activity areas
- Sports club areas
- Grandstand seating
- Event amenities
- Café, open space and dry playground
- Grassed spectator area
- Toilets and amenities
- Plant and pool infrastructure
- Car parking, driveways and general landscaping

The total construction cost for the facility has been forecast at a value of \$89.7 million with construction scheduled for completion in early 2025.

### 5.6.2. Mount Barker Aquatic and Leisure Centre

The Mount Barker Aquatic and Leisure Centre will be delivered through a staged approach, with stage 1 of the facility designed to meet existing community demand. It has been designed to allow expansion once demand has reached a level that justifies additional facilities being developed. Stage 1 includes:

- 25m, 10 lane heated indoor pool
- Indoor heated learn to swim pool
- Shallow entry leisure/play pool
- Warm water therapy pool
- Gym and fitness rooms
- Creche
- Kiosk/café
- Toilets/change rooms
- Meeting rooms

The design allows for future expansion to include:

- 50m outdoor lap pool
- Expanded leisure facilities, including splash pad and water slides
- Indoor sports courts

Works commenced in 2023 with construction scheduled for completion in mid to late 2025 with the project forecast to cost \$51.8 million. This is a \$22.2 million increase from the original 2018 estimate of \$29.6 million due to construction cost increases post covid.

### 5.6.3. Palm Beach Aquatic Centre Redevelopment

Construction is nearing completion on the Palm Beach Aquatic Centre redevelopment. This project will see the existing 50m outdoor pool retained and integrated into redevelopment of the site to include:

- Heated indoor learn to swim pool
- Indoor warm water program pool
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- New fitness centre
- Water play area
- Café with indoor and outdoor seating
- New creche
- Landscaping and lawns
- Community centre including multipurpose space and meeting rooms
- Basement car parking with lift access to the aquatic and community centre

The redeveloped facility is due to open in spring of 2024. The redevelopment cost increased to \$87.5 million from the original \$54 million estimate due to construction cost increases due to inflation following covid.

### 5.6.4. Botany Aquatic Centre

Bayside Council is currently progressing redevelopment of the Botany Aquatic Centre, with the facility to include:

- 50m outdoor pool
- 25m indoor lap pool
- Indoor learn to swim pool
- Adventure waterplay and slides
- New entrance and amenities
- Kiosk
- New grandstand
- Gymnasium and fitness rooms
- Landscaping of the green space

Botany Council have lodged a development application for the redevelopment with decommissioning of the existing site planned for winter 2025 for construction to commence with an anticipated completion date of 2027. The current redevelopment cost is estimated at \$68 million.

### 5.6.5. Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre

The Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre opened in March 2020. The facility includes:

- 50m indoor heated pool with 500 spectator seats
- 25m outdoor geothermal heated pool (open year round)
- Warm water program pool
- Learn to swim pool
- Toddler pool
- 2 water slides
- Indoor aquatic play area
- Sauna, spa and steam rooms
- Wet and dry change facilities
- Gym and fitness spaces
- Multipurpose rooms

The facility was constructed at a cost of \$57 million and took 23 months to complete.

## 6. Facility Provision and Demand

This chapter provides an analysis on aquatic facilities provided in Wingecarribee Shire.

It also includes a review of the location of fitness/gyms and indoor sports courts as the scope for this business case has specified the inclusion of a gym and allied health rooms to enable additional revenue streams and co-location with a future multipurpose indoor sports centre at each of Mittagong and Iron Mines Ovals.

### 6.1. Aquatic Facilities

#### 6.1.1. Catchment Area

In metropolitan areas it has been found that a majority of users of aquatic centres live within 5 and up to 10km of the facility (the primary catchment). For regional areas, the catchment area is often wider than this due to lower population density, locations and types of facilities and the proximity of towns/villages within each region.

Membership data from the Bluefit 2023-24 Annual Plan for Moss vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre shows the top five suburbs by member total. Using these membership numbers as a baseline, the catchment area for Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre can be estimated as 50% within 5km and a further 30% within 10km, both of which would make up the primary catchment. The secondary catchment would be made up by a further 15% who travel up to 17km and the remaining 5% more than 17km away (greater than a 20-25 minute drive) (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1:** Wingecarribee Catchment Area

Suburb	Total Members	Population <sup>8</sup>	Distance from MVAC	% of membership	Catchment
Moss Vale	327	9,310	Less than 5km	50%	Primary
Bowral/Burradoo	199	13,643	Up to 10km	30%	Primary
Exeter/Bundanoon	100	3,956	Up to 17km	15%	Secondary
Balance of Shire	35 <sup>9</sup>	25,800 <sup>10</sup>	Greater than 17km	5%	Balance

#### 6.1.2. Council Owned Aquatic Facilities

There are currently four council owned aquatic facilities in Wingecarribee Shire, however only three are operational with Mittagong Swimming Centre closed. Map 6.1 displays the location of the three operating aquatic facilities, and the location of Mittagong Swimming Centre, with their primary catchment areas highlighted.

Map 6.1 shows:

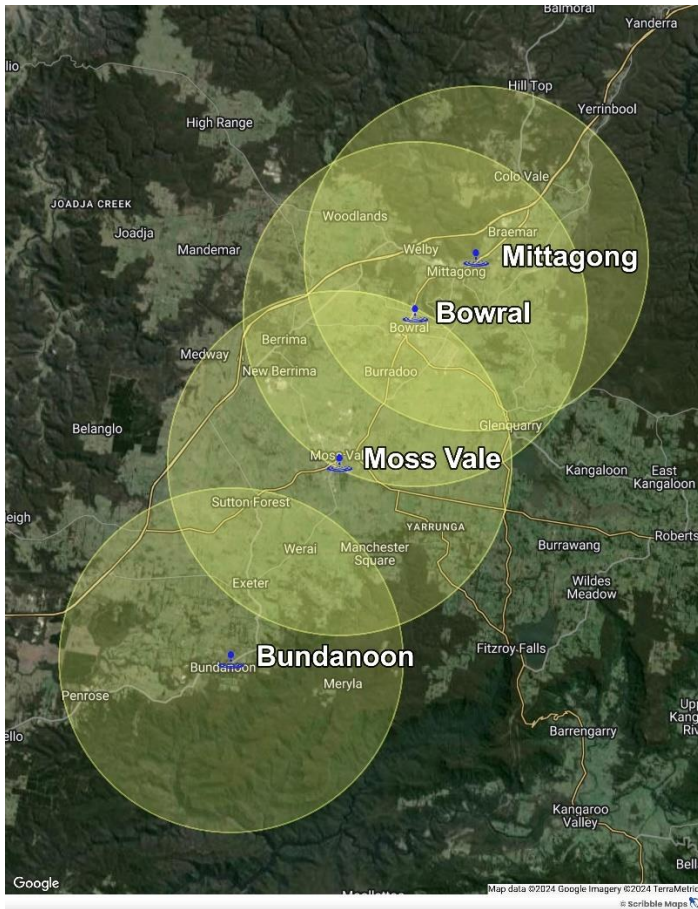
- significant overlap in the catchment areas for Bowral Swimming Centre and Moss Vale War Memorial Pool

<sup>8</sup> 2012 Census of population and housing

<sup>9</sup> Estimate based on 5% of memberships

<sup>10</sup> Estimate based on the balance of the Wingecarribee LGA population

- significant overlap between Bowral Swimming Centre and the site of Mittagong Swimming Pool
- some overlap between Moss Vale War Memorial Pool and Bundanoon Swimming Pool.



**Map 6.1:** Wingecarribee Aquatic Facilities Table 6.2 summarises the towns in the Wingecarribee Shire that sit within each of the pool catchment areas based on distance from each facility (for Mittagong this is based on the location of Mittagong Swimming Pool however it will encompass the catchments for both Iron Mines Oval and Mittagong Oval as they encompass the same catchment area). Specific catchment numbers by suburb total:

- Moss Vale – contains 71.9% of the Wingecarribee population in its primary and secondary catchment areas and 51.3% within its primary catchment area.
- Bowral – contains 75.9% of the Wingecarribee population in its primary and secondary catchment areas and 51.4% within its primary catchment area.
- Bundanoon - contains 9.5% of the Wingecarribee population in its primary and secondary catchment areas and 7.7% within its primary catchment area.
- Mittagong - contains 82.4% of the Wingecarribee population in its primary and secondary catchment areas and 59.2% within its primary catchment area.
- Not in either primary or secondary catchment of any location – 5.2% of the Wingecarribee population.

There is some overlap between the catchments, so totals across all locations will add to more than 100%.

It is noted that the catchments for Moss Vale to the south and the site of Mittagong Oval to the north cover all of the primary and secondary catchment suburbs identified for Bowral Swimming Centre. This is important in regard to supporting selection of the site for the regional aquatics facility as it shows more optimum coverage of catchments for the community can be obtained with one facility in Moss Vale and a second facility to the north of the shire at either Iron Mines or Mittagong Oval. **Table 6.2:** Catchment areas in Wingecarribee by suburb

Town	2021 Population	Moss Vale	Bowral	Bundanoon	Mittagong
Alpine	141		Secondary		Primary
Aylmerton	195		Primary		Primary
Avoca	208	Secondary			
Balaclava	574		Primary		Primary
Balmoral	469				
Belanglo	22				
Berrima	813	Primary	Primary		Secondary
Bowral	10,764	Primary	Primary		Primary
Braemar	966		Primary		Primary
Bullio	79				
Bundanoon	2,642	Secondary		Primary	
Burradoo	2,879	Primary	Primary		Primary
Burrawang	431	Secondary			
Canyonleigh	455				
Colo Vale	1,775		Secondary		Primary
East Kangaloon	80				
Exeter	1,087	Primary		Primary	
Fitzroy Falls	220				
Glenquarry	261		Secondary		Secondary
High Range	497				
Hill Top	2,792				Secondary
Joadja	139				
Kangaloon	206				
Manchester Square	27	Primary			
Mandemar	64				
Medway	143	Secondary	Secondary		
Meryla	9				
Mittagong	6,090	Secondary	Primary		Primary
Moss Vale	9,310	Primary	Secondary		Secondary
Mount Murray	53				
New Berrima	598	Primary	Secondary		
Paddys River	64				
Penrose	263			Secondary	
Renwick	1,453		Primary		Primary
Wattle Ridge	-				
Welby	764	Secondary	Primary		Primary
Werai	98	Primary		Primary	
Wildes Meadow	249				
Willow Vale	826		Primary		Primary
Wingello	647			Secondary	
Woodlands	294		Primary		Primary
Yerrinbool	1,196				Secondary

### 6.1.3. Private Aquatic Facilities

In addition to Council aquatic facilities, there are two private swimming facilities across the Shire that offer learn to swim classes, squads and swimming clubs. A desktop review identified these as:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Facilities and programs</b>
Aquabliss Frensham	Range Road, Mittagong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 25m indoor heated pool (32°C)</li><li>- Underfloor heating</li><li>- Babies programs</li><li>- Pre-schooler program</li><li>- Kids learn to swim</li><li>- Kids stroke development</li><li>- Adults learn to swim/programs</li><li>- Squads</li></ul>
Vitarose Swim School	Bowral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Private one on one lessons for all ages</li></ul>

### 6.1.4. Facilities in Neighbouring LGA's

The closest neighbouring aquatic facility to Wingecarribee Shire that operates year-round is Wollondilly Community Leisure Centre (WCLC), located in Picton. This facility offers an indoor 25m 8 lane heated pool, an outdoor 50m 7 lane seasonal pool, learn to swim pool, toddlers pool, a 2 court indoor sport facility, health club and café. The WCLC is 43km to the north of Mittagong (30 minute drive).

### 6.1.5. Aquatic Demand in Wingecarribee

Table 6.3 provides annual attendance numbers for each of the Wingecarribee Shire Council pools from 2016/17 to 2023/24 year to date. It is noted that for Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, the numbers also include gym attendances as figures for swimming attendances were not provided.

**Table 6.3:** Annual Swimming Pool Attendances<sup>11</sup>

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 <sup>12</sup>
Bowral Swimming Centre	47,965	43,854	38,464	29,745	27,023	26,167	32,551	31,888
Bundanoon Swimming Pool	6,146	6,066	5,788	4,295	4,256	3,307	4,371	4,607
Mittagong Swimming Pool	Closed	Closed	16,437	14,257	7,270	12,655	Closed	Closed
Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre	166,144	189,207	188,918	152,085	182,445	190,863	241,132	234,482
<b>Total Attendances</b>	<b>220,255</b>	<b>239,127</b>	<b>249,607</b>	<b>200,382</b>	<b>220,994</b>	<b>232,992</b>	<b>277,954</b>	<b>270,977</b>

Estimating demand for aquatic facilities is not an objective exercise, rather it is based on objective data, overlaid with a subjective assessment. The challenge is to avoid being too optimistic and present realistic estimates of demand. The starting point must be existing use of aquatic centres, supplemented by increased use by current swimmers and new swimmers. This assumption has been made in aquatic demand projections for swimming for Wingecarribee Shire.

Using swimming participation rates and the age profile of the Wingecarribee Shire from the 2021 Census data, an estimate of the total number of swims per annum has been made (Table 6.4). This has given the following expected swimming range based on swimmers that use an aquatic/leisure centre as identified in Figure 4.3:

Minimum annual swims: 234,066

Maximum annual swims: 353,975.

**Table 6.4:** Wingecarribee Shire estimate of total annual swims

Wingecarribee Market	Swimming	Minimum		Maximum	
		Annual Swims	Total Swims	Annual Swims	Total Swims
Annual Participation					
1-11 times	22.0%	1	849	11	9,337
12-23 times	17.0%	12	7,870	23	15,085
24-51 times	19.0%	24	17,593	51	37,385
52-103 times	17.0%	52	34,105	103	67,555
104 -155 times	11.0%	104	44,136	155	65,780
156 - 207 times	7.0%	156	42,130	207	55,904
208 -259 times	2.0%	208	16,050	259	19,985
260 -311 times	2.0%	260	20,062	311	23,997
312 -363 times	1.0%	312	12,037	363	14,005
364+ times	2.0%	364	28,087	364	28,087
			222,920		337,119
Regional Market	0.05%		234,066		353,975

<sup>11</sup> 2020/21 and 2021/22 were COVID impacted seasons reducing attendance and increasing operating costs due to additional measures required for cleaning and COVID marshals.

<sup>12</sup> Year to date figures excluding part of June 2024.

## 6.2. Gyms/Fitness Centres

A desktop analysis has been undertaken to identify gymnasiums/health and fitness centres across Wingecarribee Shire. Table 6.5 provides a summary of each facility and its program and service mix, demonstrating a total of 16 facilities were identified in the search.

These facilities offer a range of services and programs, however the most common to be provided include:

- 24/7 access
- Gym and cardio equipment
- Group fitness classes
- Personal training.

A standard rate for gym/fitness centre membership is charged at approximately \$30.50 per fortnight.

**Table 6.5:** Gyms and fitness centres in Wingecarribee Shire

Facility	24/7	Gym	Cardio	Group fitness	Personal training	Child minding	Price
1. Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Adult \$23.10/week Concession \$17.10/week
2. Plus Fitness 24/7 Mittagong	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	\$14.95
3. Evolution Strength & Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$13.95
4. Simply Fitness Southern Highlands	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	\$20/class \$150/month
5. Marky Mark's Personal Training	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$55.00
6. Anytime Fitness Mittagong	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
7. The Shed Fitness Studio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$25.00
8. Highlands Health Club	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$33/week \$22/week student
9. Crossfit Southern Highlands	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	\$55/week unlimited \$50/week 3 classes
10. Anytime Fitness Bowral	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
11. F45 Bowral	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$79/week \$269/month \$2,860/annual
12. FS8 Bowral	No	No	No	Yes	No		\$59/week \$269/month pass
13. Aurora Active	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	N/A
14. Equilibrium Health & Fitness	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
15. Highlander Personal Training	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	\$15/week
16. Benton Gym	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$22/week

Table 6.6 identifies the distance from each of the sites that are subject to the business plan, being Bowral Swimming Centre, Iron Mines Oval and Mittagong Oval. This shows:

- The majority of facilities are located in Bowral and surrounds, with 11 facilities less than 5km from Bowral Swimming Centre and a further facility within 10km (12 of the 16 identified facilities).
- Four facilities within 5km of Iron Mines Oval and a further eight within 10km.
- Five facilities within 5km of Mittagong Oval and a further seven within 10km.

**Table 6.6:** Gym/fitness centre distance from potential aquatic facility sites

Facility	Bowral Swimming Centre	Iron Mines Oval	Mittagong Oval
1. Moss Vale Aquatic Centre	10.9km	15.2km	16.1km
2. Plus Fitness 24/7 Mittagong	3.8km	1.7km	2.9km
3. Evolution Strength & Fitness	12.7km	17.0km	17.9km
4. Simply Fitness Southern Highlands	11.0km	15.4km	16.2km
5. Marky Mark's Personal Training	12.5km	16.9km	17.7km
6. Anytime Fitness Mittagong	4.0km	1.4km	2.6km
7. The Shed Fitness Studio	0.9km	5.2km	6.1km
8. Highlands Health Club	4.3km	1.4km	1.5km
9. Crossfit Southern Highlands	3.1km	2.1km	3.0km
10. Anytime Fitness Bowral	1.3km	5.7km	6.5km
11. F45 Bowral	1.3km	5.3km	6.1km
12. FS8 Bowral	1.2km	5.3km	6.1km
12. Aurora Active	0.8km	5.1km	6.0km
14. Equilibrium Health & Fitness	1.1km	5.5km	6.3km
15. Highlander Personal Training	2.0km	6.4km	7.2km
16. Benton Gym	9.1km	6.2km	3.9km

### 6.3. Indoor Sports Courts

A desktop analysis has been undertaken to identify existing indoor courts across Wingecarribee Shire. This analysis found three existing facilities:

1. Moss Vale & District Basketball. This is a two court facility owned and operated by Moss Vale & District Basketball Association. The facility caters for social and competition basketball.
2. PCYC Southern Highlands. This is a single court facility with attached gymnastics room and multi use hall. The facility is leased by PCYC from Wingecarribee Shire Council. Activities undertaken at the facility include basketball, gymnastics, futsal, pickle ball, indoor soccer, trampolining, school groups and learn to play programs.

The PCYC has advised the facility is well used with 1,200 members, 350 weekly visits for gymnastics and approximately 40-45 hours of use.

3. Hill Top Community Centre. This facility has a single indoor court that is suitable for use for basketball, netball and indoor soccer.

These facilities each provide a different community service and function.

## 7. Minimum Facility Inclusions

Wingecarribee Shire Council has determined the Regional Aquatic Facility should be designed to meet the Swimming Australia Regional Facility requirements and adopt the provision of:

- 25m indoor pool and 50m outdoor pool
- Dedicated ‘learn to swim’ indoor pool
- Outdoor toddler pool and all ages splash pad
- Gym and allied health rooms to enable additional revenue streams.

### 7.1. Design Brief

The above facility requirements have been expanded into a design brief for the regional aquatics facility (Table 7.1). This would require a footprint of approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup> for the stand alone aquatic facility with associated gymnasium and allied therapy space.

**Table 7.1:** Regional Aquatic Facility Design Brief

Component	Elements to include
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b> Minimum footprint 2,900m <sup>2</sup>	50m Outdoor heated pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50m x 19m (8 x 2.25m wide lanes plus ramp 1.0m wide) outdoor heated pool, depth 1.2 – 1.8m</li> <li>▪ 3m wide concourse surrounding (footprint 1,400m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Heating temperature 26°C, solar heating</li> <li>▪ Pool to operate November to March annually (5 months)</li> </ul> 25m Indoor heated pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 25m x 19m (8 x 2.25m wide lanes plus ramp 1.0m wide) indoor heated pool, depth 1.2 – 1.8m</li> <li>▪ 3m wide concourse surrounding (footprint 589m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Heating temperature 26°C, solar/mechanical heating</li> <li>▪ Pool to operate year round</li> </ul> Learn to swim indoor heated pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 25m x 11m (includes 1.0m wide ramp) indoor heated learn to swim pool, depth 0.75 – 1.2m</li> <li>▪ 3m wide concourse surrounding with fixed spectator seating along the long side of the pool (2m wide allowance) (footprint 561m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Heating temperature 30°C, solar/mechanical heating</li> <li>▪ Pool to operate year round</li> </ul> Outdoor toddler pool and splash pad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zero depth splash pad 150m<sup>2</sup> footprint</li> <li>▪ Toddler pool 15m x 10m, depth 0.0 – 0.3m</li> <li>▪ Concourse and surrounds 150m<sup>2</sup> footprint</li> <li>▪ Located near the shallow end of the 50m outdoor pool</li> </ul>
<b>Reception/Amenities</b> Minimum footprint 600m <sup>2</sup>	Reception, entry foyer and café seating area located at entry to the centre (200m <sup>2</sup> )

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Café included as part of reception facing café seating area</li> <li>▪ First aid room (6m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Pool storage (30m<sup>2</sup>) and cleaning/storage room (10m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Change rooms and toilets, including accessible amenities (150m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Pool plant and chemical storage areas (approx. 150m<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Gymnasium/Health and Fitness</b>  Minimum footprint 745m <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Weights/cardio area (250m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Warm up/stretching area (45m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Group exercise space (150m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Multipurpose activity space (150m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Circulation area and reception/merchandise/office (50m<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>▪ Change rooms/toilets (100m<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Allied Health</b>  Minimum footprint 250m <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 x offices/reception space (250m<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>External areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Car parking</li> <li>▪ Set down/pick up area</li> <li>▪ Bike racks</li> <li>▪ Landscaping (soft and hard)</li> </ul>

To enable the site assessments to be undertaken, SGL has also prepared a design brief for the associated multipurpose indoor sporting facility (Table 7.2). This assumes there would be shared reception and amenities with the aquatic facility. The footprint would require a site of approximately 1,500m<sup>2</sup> for a total site footprint of approximately 6,000m<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 7.2:** Multipurpose Indoor Facility Design Brief

Component	Elements to include
<b>Indoor Courts</b>  Minimum footprint 1,500m <sup>2</sup>	Two court sports halls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 28 x 15m wide multipurpose courts (footprint size 43.8m x 34m)</li> <li>▪ 3m wide runoff surrounding each court</li> <li>▪ Suitable for basketball, volleyball, futsal, badminton and netball</li> <li>▪ Three tiers of spectator seating (2.4m total width) on two end walls.</li> </ul>

## 8. Site Assessment

Wingecarribee Shire Council has identified Mittagong Oval, Iron Mines Oval and Bowral Swimming Centre as potential sites for development of a regional aquatics facility. This chapter evaluates each site to ascertain if they are a viable option, with them ranked in order of suitability.

### 8.1. Mittagong Oval

Mittagong Oval has been identified, with the regional aquatics facility to be co-located with a potential future multipurpose indoor sporting centre. Co-location with an indoor facility would require a footprint of approximately 6,000m<sup>2</sup> with additional provision for car parking.

Mittagong Oval is home to the Mittagong Lions Rugby League Club. The wider site also includes the Mittagong Recreation Centre (operated by the PCYC), the Highfields Golf Course and the site of the old Mittagong Swimming Pool.

#### Catchment Demand

Using swimming participation rates and the age profile from the 2021 Census data, an estimate of the total number of swims per annum has been made for Mittagong Oval (Table 8.1). This provides the following expected swimming range:

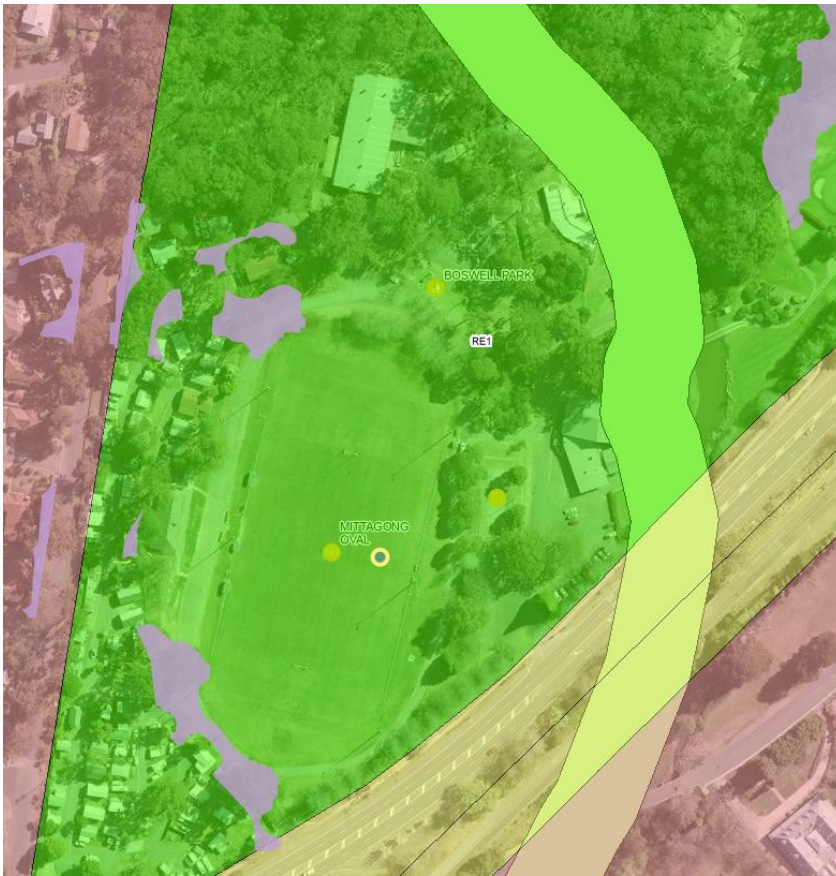
Minimum annual swims: 87,762

Maximum annual swims: 132,721.

**Table 8.1:** Estimate of total annual swims for Mittagong Oval

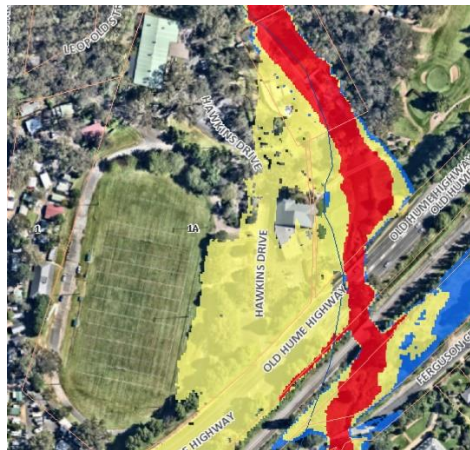
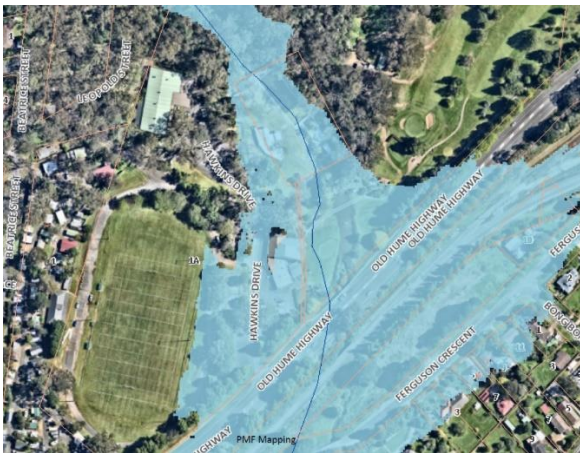
<b>Moss Vale Market</b>		<b>Minimum</b>		<b>Maximum</b>	
Annual Participation	Swimming	Annual Swims	Total Swims	Annual Swims	Total Swims
1-11 times	22.00%	1	318	11	3,501
12-23 times	17.00%	12	2,951	23	5,656
24-51 times	19.00%	24	6,596	51	14,017
52-103 times	17.00%	52	12,788	103	25,329
104 -155 times	11.00%	104	16,549	155	24,664
156 - 207 times	7.00%	156	15,797	207	20,961
208 -259 times	2.00%	208	6,018	259	7,493
260 -311 times	2.00%	260	7,522	311	8,998
312 -363 times	1.00%	312	4,513	363	5,251
364+ times	2.00%	364	10,531	364	10,531
			83,583		126,401
Regional Market	0.05		87,762		132,721

The site is designated as Public Recreation and includes small areas that have been identified with biodiversity values (threatened species or communities with potential for serious and irreversible impacts) and the Nattai River sensitivity area (Map 8.1).



**Map 8.1:** Mittagong Oval – Recreation Zone and biodiversity values

Map 8.2 shows the flood levels for Mittagong Oval. This shows the majority of the oval area is free from any major flood concerns, however the site of the Swimming Centre has significant flood concerns and is a medium level flood hazard.



**Map 8.2:** Mittagong Oval – Flood levels Map 8.3 provides an overlay of the footprint for that would incorporate the following elements:

- The aquatic facility design brief summarised at Table 7.1 (4,500m<sup>2</sup>). This includes all aquatic facilities, reception/café, toilets and change rooms, gymnasium and allied health rooms.

- Two indoor courts with a footprint of approximately 1,500m<sup>2</sup>.
- An additional footprint of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> has been allowed for a dual sided building that could incorporate multi-use space, amenities and viewing areas for multiple sports for the realigned rugby league field.



**Map 8.3:** Mittagong Oval – Aquatic and Indoor facility footprint overlays

The overlays show that a regional aquatics facility co-located with a potential future multipurpose indoor sporting centre could be developed at Mittagong Oval and be largely free of any flood and other biodiversity impacts. This is with the following observations:

- The footprint would be clear of any flood level impacts.
- The footprint would largely be clear of areas with identified biodiversity value.

- Site levels would need to be assessed as part of any design process through development of a master plan for this site.
- Access and any road works to support forecast traffic volumes would need to be assessed through a Traffic Impact Assessment.

Map 8.3 also includes an overlay of the building footprint for Moss Vale War Memorial Pool to demonstrate the footprint size of that facility in comparison to the proposed facility if it were developed at Mittagong Oval.

### **Strengths**

One of the strengths of the site is the pre-existing and historic community use of the site as a swimming hole, and subsequently as swimming pool. As a consequence, the pool is community “loved” facility with ongoing demand for swimming at the site.

Mittagong has the youngest demographic across the Shire, and so is likely to see more demand at the site in the future.

### **Weaknesses**

Excluding the areas subject to potential flood impact, the site is constrained by the existing use by Highlands Golf Club, PCYC Southern Highlands and the Mittagong Lions Rugby League Club.

There are a large number of trees on the site which may impact any area available for redevelopment.

### **Opportunities**

There are opportunities to utilise the longstanding community connection to the Mittagong Pool to develop a new aquatic facility at this location. Given the issues with the current location on site, this would need to be developed on the Mittagong Oval adjacent the existing pool precinct. The opportunities at the site include:

- existing community swimming use at the site,
- large council owned parcel of land that could potentially be used for redevelopment,
- adjacent to Council owned and PCYC Southern Highlands indoor sports facility,
- ample space for carparking, and
- effective street access from the road with the potential for additional turning lanes if required due to increased traffic volumes.

### **Threats**

The flood risk is significant in the current site, and as such is not considered as a viable location for the swimming pool.

Should there be a redevelopment of the site, there may be community concern about associated impacts on non-swimming recreation uses on the site including Highlands Golf Club, PCYC Southern Highlands and the Mittagong Lions Rugby League Club.

## **8.2. Iron Mines Oval**

Iron Mines Oval has been identified, with the regional aquatics facility to be co-located with a potential future multipurpose indoor sporting facility and potential future Mittagong Community Hub that would include a library

and community spaces. Similar to Mittagong Oval, co-location with an indoor facility and community hub would require a larger footprint for the building site, and additional provision for car parking.

### Catchment Demand

Using swimming participation rates and the age profile from the 2021 Census data, an estimate of the total number of swims per annum has been made for Iron Mines Oval (Table 8.2). This is the same catchment for Mittagong Oval and provides the following expected swimming range:

Minimum annual swims: 87,762

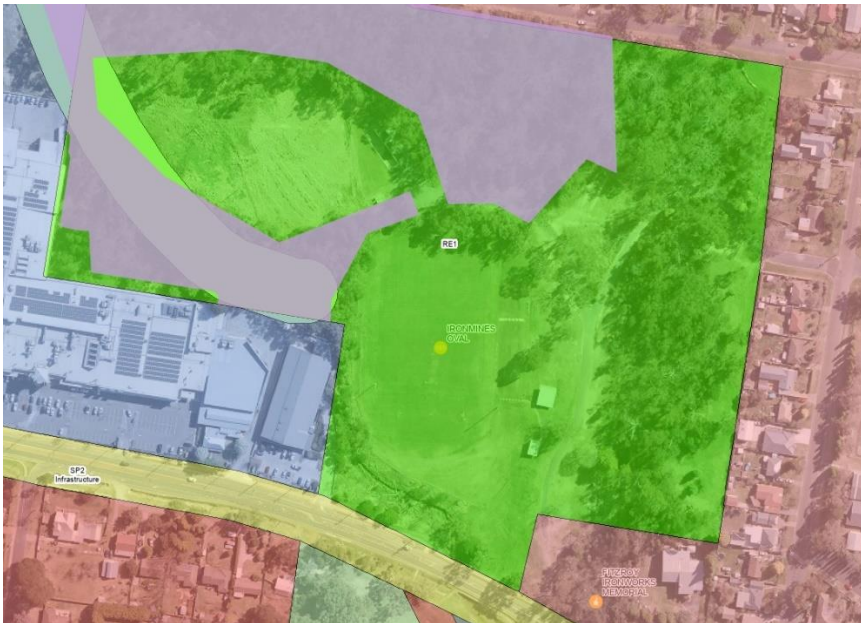
Maximum annual swims: 132,721.

**Table 8.2:** Estimate of total annual swims for Iron Mines Oval

<b>Moss Vale Market</b>		<b>Minimum</b>		<b>Maximum</b>	
Annual Participation	Swimming	Annual Swims	Total Swims	Annual Swims	Total Swims
1-11 times	22.00%	1	318	11	3,501
12-23 times	17.00%	12	2,951	23	5,656
24-51 times	19.00%	24	6,596	51	14,017
52-103 times	17.00%	52	12,788	103	25,329
104 -155 times	11.00%	104	16,549	155	24,664
156 - 207 times	7.00%	156	15,797	207	20,961
208 -259 times	2.00%	208	6,018	259	7,493
260 -311 times	2.00%	260	7,522	311	8,998
312 -363 times	1.00%	312	4,513	363	5,251
364+ times	2.00%	364	10,531	364	10,531
			83,583		126,401
Regional Market	0.05		87,762		132,721

Iron Mines Oval is home to the Mittagong Football Club. It is understood the club is already looking to relocated to a more suitable site. The site is designated as Public Recreation and includes a significant area to the north and north west identified with biodiversity values (threatened species or communities with potential for serious and irreversible impacts). This is in the area where there is significant vegetation on site (Map 8.4).

Wingecarribee Shire Council has also advised a portion of the site is of local heritage significance and the south eastern corner will soon be noted as being of State Heritage Significance.



**Map 8.4:** Iron Mines Oval – Recreation Zone and biodiversity values

Map 8.5 shows the flood levels for Iron Mines Oval. This demonstrates the flatter oval area of the site is within the probable maximum flood level and the south western part of the oval falls within a medium to low hazard flood zone.



**Map 8.5:** Iron Mines Oval – Flood levels

Map 8.6 provides overlays of the footprint for that would incorporate the following:

- The aquatic facility design brief summarised at Table 7.1 (4,500m<sup>2</sup>). This includes all aquatic facilities, reception/café, toilets and change rooms, gymnasium and allied health rooms.
- Two indoor courts with a footprint of approximately 1,500m<sup>2</sup>.
- An additional footprint of 3,500m<sup>2</sup> has been allowed for a Community Hub that would include a library and community spaces.

The overlays show that a regional aquatics facility co-located with a potential future Multipurpose Indoor Centre and Community Hub could be developed at Iron Mines Oval. To fit within existing site levels the building could not be constructed as a single structure.

### **Strengths**

The northern part of Wingecarribee Shire has the youngest demographic, and so is likely to see more demand at the site in the future.

### **Weaknesses**

This site is low lying and well below the road level.

Part of the footprint would lie within the medium to high and peak flood levels.

The site contours will limit any potential building footprint size, particularly if co-located with a potential community hub on this site. This would require the complex to be split into structures on the site.

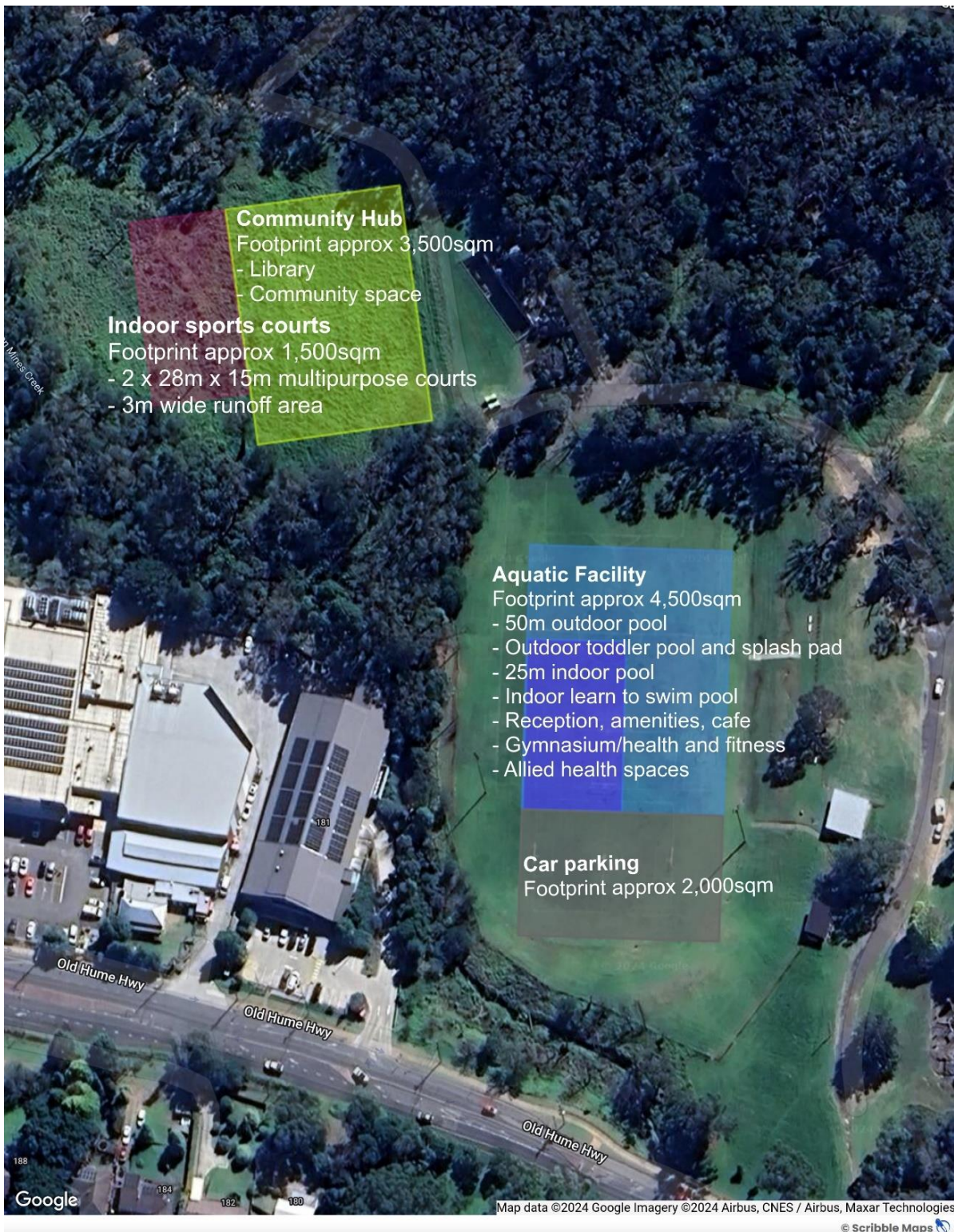
Access for the anticipated traffic volumes may be problematic at this site and would need to be assessed through a Traffic Impact Assessment.

### **Opportunities**

The site is a large council owned parcel of land that could potentially be used for redevelopment.

### **Threats**

The flood risk is significant, and as such should not be considered as a viable location for the regional aquatics facility.



**Map 8.6:** Iron Mines Oval – Aquatic, Indoor Facility and Community Hub footprint overlays

### 8.3. Bowral Swimming Centre

Bowral Swimming Centre has been identified as a site for a standalone regional aquatic facility due to the land size constraints.

#### Catchment Demand

Using swimming participation rates and the age profile from the 2021 Census data, an estimate of the total number of swims per annum has been made for Bowral Swimming Centre (Table 8.3). This estimate is based on the new facility operating 12 months a year as opposed to the current 5.5 month seasonal operation. This results in the following expected swimming range:

Minimum annual swims: 81,251

Maximum annual swims: 122,875.

**Table 8.3:** Estimate of total annual swims for Bowral Swimming Centre

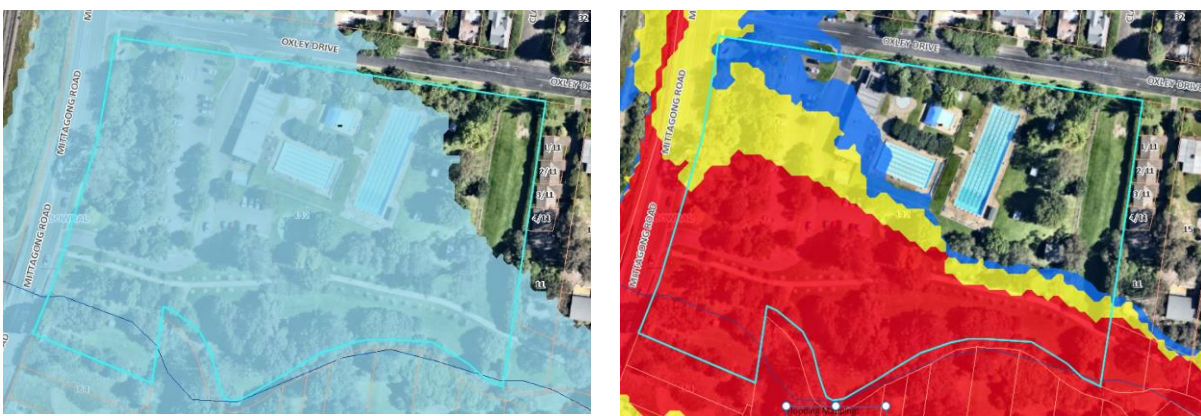
Bowral Market	Swimming	Minimum		Maximum	
		Annual Swims	Total Swims	Annual Swims	Total Swims
1-11 times	22.00%	1	295	11	3,241
12-23 times	17.00%	12	2,732	23	5,236
24-51 times	19.00%	24	6,107	51	12,977
52-103 times	17.00%	52	11,839	103	23,450
104 -155 times	11.00%	104	15,321	155	22,834
156 - 207 times	7.00%	156	14,625	207	19,406
208 -259 times	2.00%	208	5,571	259	6,937
260 -311 times	2.00%	260	6,964	311	8,330
312 -363 times	1.00%	312	4,178	363	4,861
364+ times	2.00%	364	9,750	364	9,750
			77,382		117,024
Regional Market	0.05		81,251		122,875

The site is designated as Public Recreation and along the south of the site is the Mittagong Creek sensitivity area (Map 8.7).



**Map 8.7:** Bowral Swimming Centre – Recreation Zone

Map 8.8 shows the probable maximum flood level for Bowral Swimming Centre. This shows the majority of the site falls within the area identified for probable maximum flood. It also shows that a large part of the site is within a high flood hazard zone (highlighted by the red area).



**Map 8.8:** Bowral Swimming Centre – Flood levels

Map 8.9 provides an overlay of the footprint for that would incorporate the aquatic facility design brief summarised at Table 7.1 (4,500m<sup>2</sup>). This includes all aquatic facilities, reception/café, toilets and change rooms, gymnasium and allied health rooms. It does not include any components for the multipurpose indoor sporting facility.

The overlays show that a regional aquatics facility could be developed at Bowral Swimming Centre. This is with the following observations:

- Access for the anticipated traffic volumes would need to be assessed through a Traffic Impact Assessment.

### **Strengths**

This is the location of the only operating outdoor 50m swimming pool in the Shire. It has had a pre-existing community use as a swimming centre for many years.

### **Weaknesses**

The site is located adjacent to a creek, and the flood maps for the area shows that in times of flood water is expected to encroach upon the boundaries of the pools, and inundate the lower levels of the carpark.

The site is constrained by the creek and flood zone on one side, and housing and roads on the other sides. As a consequence, there are constraints that make it only suitable as a swimming pool complex.

The site is not conducive to development of a regional aquatic facility co-located with a multipurpose indoor sporting facility as recommended in the Wingecarribee Community Recreational and Facilities Strategy.

### **Opportunities**

There are opportunities to utilise the longstanding community connection to the Bowral Swimming Centre to redevelop a new swimming complex as the site approaches its end of life.

There would be an opportunity to develop a new 50m swimming pool, an indoor 25m swimming pool and learn to swim pool on the site.

### **Threats**

The flood risk is significant in the current site, and as a consequence any redevelopment reduces the usable land available to redevelop the site.

Additional threats to the site include the proximity to other swimming pools in the region, such as the Mittagong Pool (if it were to be redeveloped) and the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre. Both of these alternative sites cover overlapping catchment zones for Bowral Swimming Centre and support a wider geographic catchment of the remaining suburbs in the Shire.



**Map 8.9:** Bowral Swimming Centre – Aquatic Facility footprint overlays

## 8.4. Site Analysis

Table 8.4 provides a summary assessment of each site in terms of a number of criteria. This shows that Mittagong Oval would meet the majority of site criteria. Both Iron Mines Oval and Bowral Swimming Centre would be subject to potential flood impacts and Iron Mines Oval has accessibility issues to the site from the existing road network. Bowral Swimming Centre would have significant catchment overlap with Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre.

**Table 8.4:** Key Assessment Criteria

Key Criteria	Mittagong Oval	Iron Mines Oval	Bowral Swimming Centre
Minimum footprint size (6,000m <sup>2</sup> )	Yes	Yes	Yes
Potential for associated indoor sporting complex	Yes	Yes	No
Potential for Community Hub (including library)	No	Yes	No
Subject to flood impact	No	Yes	Yes
Accessibility of site (from existing road network)	Yes	No, potential site access issues	Yes
Impact on existing users	Yes	Yes	No
Optimisation of catchment capture	Yes	Yes	No, significant overlap with Moss Vale

To enable a more rigorous assessment, SGL has undertaken a site assessment based on a number of identified key internal and external management and internal capability factors.

#### 8.4.1. Site Selection Criteria

SGL has prepared a site selection criteria based upon five external management factors (Table 8.5) and five internal capability factors (Table 8.6). Each of factors were scored and given a weighting across the five factors which equal to the sum total of one.

The key site assessment factors were chosen based upon industry best practice.

**Table 8.5:** External Management Factors

External Management Factor			
Factor	Importance	Weighting	Scoring
<b>Flood Mitigation Factors</b>	Level of Flood Impact	0.15	1 high 10 low
<b>Catchment Area</b>	Measuring Level of Expected usage in the region	0.3	1 high 10 low
<b>Suitable Land Size</b>	Land availability for each proposed site	0.4	1 high 10 low
<b>Accessibility of Site</b>	Ease of access to site from main roads	0.1	1 high risk 10 low risk
<b>Impact on Existing Recreation Infrastructure</b>	Impact on existing recreation infrastructure	0.05	1 high impact 10 low impact
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>	

**Table 8.6:** Internal Capability Factors

Internal Capability Factors
-----------------------------

Factor	Importance	Weighting	Scoring
Existing Community Use of Site	Sporting use on Site related to future site use	0.2	1 high 10 low
Multi Sport Suitability	Ability to incorporate multiple sport usages	0.35	1 low 10 high
Revenue Maximisation	Opportunity to drive revenue maximisations	0.2	1 low 10 high
Carparking Availability	Ability to accommodate enough carparking onsite	0.1	1 low 10 high
Opportunity for Expansion	Opportunity to expand in future years	0.15	1 low 10 high
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>	

#### 8.4.2. Site Decision Grid

All three sites were evaluated against the site selection criteria with each site scored on a scale of 1-10 as identified in Tables 8.5 and 8.6. This is a subjective measure, with each site ranked against the others on all factors with the resulting scores presented in Table 8.7.

**Table 8.7:** Site Ranking Scores

External Management Factors					
Option	Flood Mitigation Factors	Catchment Area	Suitable Land Size	Accessibility of Site	Impact on Existing Recreation Infrastructure
Mittagong Oval	9	9	6	9	6
Iron Mines Oval	6	9	9	3	9
Bowral Swimming Centre	3	8	3	6	3

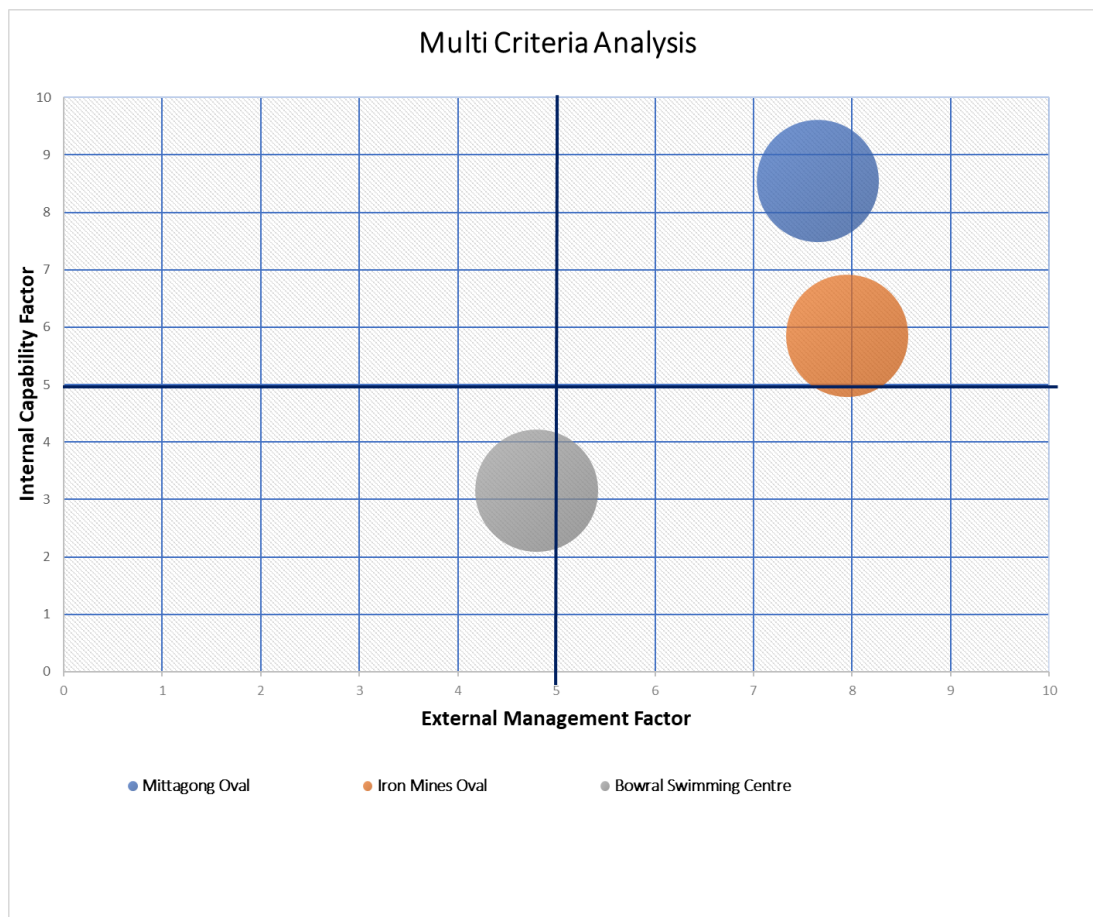
Internal Capability Factors					
Option	Existing Community Use of Site	Multi Sport Suitability	Revenue Maximisation	Carparking Availability	Opportunity for Expansion
Mittagong Oval	9	9	9	9	6
Iron Mines Oval	3	6	6	6	9
Bowral Swimming Centre	6	3	3	3	3

### 8.5. Preferred Site

Based on the decision grid assessment, the Mittagong Oval site, and the Iron Mines Oval site were deemed to have some suitability, however the Mittagong Oval site was deemed to be the most suitable site location based upon most factors and is considered more appropriate (Figure 8.1).

Both sites would enable continued operation of a swimming pool at Bowral while a new or redeveloped aquatic centre is constructed at either Mittagong Oval or Iron Mines Oval. Ranked in order of suitability the sites are:

1. Mittagong Oval.
2. Iron Mines Oval.
3. Bowral Swimming Centre.



**Figure 8.1:** Multi Criteria Analysis – Preferred site for regional aquatics facility

## 9. Management and Governance

### 9.1. Management Options

There are a number of management options for aquatic facilities with each model having multiple variations. In practice however, they fit into three core categories:

1. In-house management by local government.
2. External management by a non-local government organisation.
3. Shared management whereby a formal agreement will establish the operating responsibilities of the parties to the agreement. Once the agreement has been negotiated, the facility will be managed either in-house or by an external management organisation.

When deciding on the most appropriate management model, it must be recognised that no one management model will suit all facilities and situations. Consequently, a unique solution must be designed to meet the specific needs of Council, the facility and its community.

In recent years, the three management most popular management models that have been adopted are:

1. External contract management by a commercial organisation (eg Belgravia Leisure/Bluefit) or not for profit organisation (eg YMCA or a sporting club or association). Under this model, a contract is negotiated between Council and the commercial organisation. Often Council pays an operating subsidy and the contractor manages and maintains the facilities on a day to day basis. The management contract provides the parameters under which the facilities are operated.
2. Direct management by Council. Under this model, Council is fully responsible for the financial performance, programming, day to day and structural maintenance. This model is potentially a high-risk model, as Council guarantees the financial outcome. Rarely is a contract negotiated between sections within Council's administration, and it is unusual for facility staff to be held accountable for failing to meet operational key performance indicators.
3. A variation of the direct management model is to establish a wholly owned subsidiary of Council such as an incorporated association or company. This model enables Council to maintain oversight, albeit at arm's length. A formal contract will be negotiated and the arrangements will be similar to external contract management. The major difference is that Council will have control of appointments to the Board of the management entity.

All three management models have advantages and disadvantages. A major consideration and driver of successful aquatic and recreation centres is the quality and experience of the on-site staff, and probably more important the quality and experience of management who support and manage those staff

### 9.2. Factors to Consider

In deciding the most appropriate management model a suite of factors should be considered as identified in Table 9.1.

**Table 9.1:** Management factors

Factor	Issues to consider
<p><b>Asset Management</b> – determining the importance of maintaining the facilities in a safe working condition</p>	<p>Council has invested substantial funds into the development and operation of recreation/aquatic facilities.</p> <p>Asset management involves at least three elements, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Day to day (ie, minor) maintenance and repairs</li> <li>2. Cyclical and major maintenance and repairs</li> <li>3. Structural maintenance and repairs.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Presentation of the facility</b> – Determine the importance of the presentation and appearance of facilities</p>	<p>The quality and standard of maintenance and cleaning of a recreation facility will have a significant impact on its presentation. Consumers have increasing expectations regarding the level of presentation and the quality of maintenance.</p>
<p><b>Finance</b> – Determine the importance of the cost to operate a facility and level of certainty to meet budget projections</p>	<p>The cost of operating recreation facilities varies substantially. When full cost accounting for a recreation facility is used it will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overhead costs (eg ICT, management supervision, payroll, book keeping and accounting functions).</li> <li>• Depreciation and/or loan servicing costs.</li> <li>• Operating costs (eg income and expenditure related directly to the facility).</li> <li>• Capital development, capital upgrades and major restorative maintenance works.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the certainty of operating within a predetermined budget may be important.</p>
<p><b>Financial contribution</b> – Determine the importance of a known or guaranteed income stream to support the operation and/or development of a facility</p>	<p>Long term financial sustainability of aquatic facilities can be enhanced through financial contributions to use of the facility and for capital development and upgrades. Wherever possible some form of guaranteed income stream should be generated.</p>
<p><b>Control</b> – Determine the importance of retaining control over operational and/or policy matters impacting upon the facility</p>	<p>The level of control Council wishes to retain over various facets of an aquatic facility’s operation, from staff selection to pricing to programming priorities, has a direct influence on the management model selected.</p> <p>Council can retain some rights such as pricing, use by community clubs and maintenance, but may not require direct control over other aspects such as staffing and programming.</p> <p>A significant issue relating to the level of control is the level of involvement in the day to day operation of the recreation facility by Councillors. In other words, the level of delegated authority that elected members will give to officers to implement policies.</p>

<p><b>Cost of changing management model</b> – Determine the importance, and cost of short-term staffing expenses against the benefits of changing the management model</p>	<p>The cost to change a management model is usually a significant factor when management changes from direct management to external management.</p>
<p><b>Responding to market demands</b> – Determine the importance of staff responding rapidly to changing market demands</p>	<p>Council has high levels of governance and probity. Consequently, strict protocols and procedures must be observed.</p> <p>Conversely, staff working in a dynamic industry, such as recreation facility management should not be unduly constrained when responding to an evolving market place. For example, promotional strategies and program pricing may need to be implemented on short notice.</p>
<p><b>Longevity of management</b> – Determine the importance of stability and longevity of management and relationships</p>	<p>A consistent approach to management is usually in the best interests of all stakeholders. It allows for relationships between owner, operator and consumers to be developed. Conversely frequent changes in management structures can have a negative influence on the operational viability.</p>
<p><b>Performance indicators</b> – Determine the importance of meeting KPI's</p>	<p>Recreation facilities are developed to meet the needs and wants of the community and market. Managers of recreation facilities are also required to deliver specific outcomes, based on the policy and priorities of Council.</p>
<p><b>Core purpose</b> – Determine the importance of the facility as a public – merit – private good or service</p>	<p>Aquatic facilities tend to be developed as community infrastructure as a public service.</p> <p>Examples exist of local government owned aquatic facilities which are specifically developed as commercial facilities. Where a facility sits on the public – merit – private good/service continuum will have a significant impact on the management model adopted.</p>
<p><b>Management capability</b> – Determine the importance of providing industry knowledge, support and guidance to operational staff</p>	<p>Managing an aquatic facility requires specific skills at all levels. At the facility level, skills can be obtained through staff selection. At the senior organisation levels (eg Council executive staff), another set of recreation facility management skills are required.</p> <p>Management capability is a reflection of the skills of staff at all levels, and especially at the higher levels who are required to provide support and guidance to operational staff.</p>
<p><b>Risk management</b> – Determine the importance of managing risk through the management model</p>	<p>Risk management is the joint responsibility of the owner, operator and user of an aquatic facility.</p> <p>From a Council perspective a key issue to be addressed is its level of risk, which is directly related to the management model adopted. It is also apparent that risk will not be eliminated whilst retaining ownership of an aquatic facility.</p>

### 9.3. Assessment of Models

There are good and bad examples of in-house managed recreation facilities and good and bad examples of externally managed aquatic and recreation facilities. The relative importance of each factor discussed above has to be made before choosing a management model. Key points to note are that:

- Both in-house and external management of aquatic facilities will achieve policy outcomes desired by Council if the management model is correctly structured.
- There is no evidence that in-house or external management models have different cost structures when all direct and indirect costs are included. However, commercial operators have greater emphasis on maximising revenues, and minimising expenditures.
- The relative importance of a small number of criteria will suggest whether in-house or external management is most appropriate.
- The quality, skill and experience of the on-site manager, and the degree of autonomy given to the manager will be the greatest determinant of financial success.

In-house management is best suited to situations where Council:

- wishes to exert a high level of control over the day to day operation of the facility, including elected members making operational decisions on an ad hoc basis.
- wants to ensure that the facility is maintained to a high standard and has the capacity to provide adequate funds for all categories of asset management including cyclical and structural maintenance.
- wants to directly manage its potential risk exposure.

In-house management is not best suited to situations where Council does not have senior and/or executive staff with skills and experience in managing, operating and/or maintaining the type of recreation facility under consideration.

External management is best suited to situations where:

- Council wishes to minimise the cost of operating the facility.
- Council wants to attract capital investment in the facility or plant and equipment.
- Council wants a fixed budget to operate a facility.
- The facility competes in a dynamic market, requiring rapid response to changing market conditions.

### 9.4. Recommendation

Wingecarribee Shire Council has experience in management of its aquatic facilities over many years and has outsourced management of the newest facility, Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre. Based on the condition of Bowral and Bundanoon Swimming Pools, it is recommended that in house management of these facilities continue. For Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, it is recommended that the market be tested in preference to an extension to the current management contract.

Development of a new aquatic facility presents the opportunity to define management and governance responsibilities for the new facility and also apply these to Moss Vale. Modern aquatic centre management

agreements are based on well defined responsibilities for both the operator and Council as asset owner. Whilst contracts vary substantially, a series of governance principles may be used and are recommended for:

- Council as the owner of the asset and responsible for delivery of aquatic and leisure programs for the benefit of the Wingecarribee community will be responsible for:
  - ✓ Monitoring the contract to ensure that programs are delivered to meet community expectations and agreed key performance indicators are achieved.
  - ✓ Providing adequate resources to the contract operator to ensure that the facility is maintained and operated in line with best practice principles, including an operating subsidy.
  - ✓ Undertaking structural and cyclic maintenance, and major repairs to the facility.
  - ✓ Insuring the asset.
- The contractor will be responsible for:
  - ✓ Paying all operating and maintenance costs of the facility, including all utilities and staffing costs.
  - ✓ Employing all staff.
  - ✓ Delivering all programs and activities.
  - ✓ Ensuring the facility operates within agreed budget parameters.

In simple terms, an agreed budget will be prepared by the operator, including an agreed annual operating subsidy payable by Council to the operator. All revenues generated by the aquatic centre will be retained by the contractor.

In light of this it is recommended:

1. Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre continue with the existing management arrangement until the current management term expires. This arrangement should be market tested before the current arrangement is further extended.
2. Bowral and Bundanoon Swimming Pools continue operation with in-house management, while they are scheduled for closure and rehabilitation.
3. Market testing be undertaken for any new Regional Aquatic Facility that is developed for Wingecarribee. This would allow the operator of Moss Vale, as well as any alternative operators to submit an offer for management of the facility with it assessed against an in-house bid. This could be packaged individually or if the timing was right, be jointly packaged with the management rights to Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre.

## 10. Operating Plan

Based on the design brief outlined in section 7.1 it is envisaged the new regional aquatic facility would be operated year round. It is envisaged that:

- The indoor components of the facility will operate on a 12 month basis.
- The outdoor 50m pool and splash pad will be operated on a seasonal basis (October to March).

Minimum opening hours will vary according to demand and seasonal variations, such as:

### **Summer season – 1 October to 31 March:**

Early morning:	6am – 8am	Monday – Friday
Morning:	10am – 12pm	Monday – Friday
	9am – 12pm	Saturday, Sunday
Afternoon:	12pm – 4pm	Monday – Friday
	12pm – 5pm	Saturday, Sunday
Evening:	4pm – 8pm	Monday – Friday

### **Winter season – 1 April to 30 September:**

Early morning:	6am – 8am	Monday – Friday
Morning:	10am – 12pm	Monday – Friday
	9am – 12pm	Saturday, Sunday
Afternoon:	12pm – 4pm	Saturday, Sunday
Evening:	4pm – 6pm	Monday – Friday

The operator will have the option of extending opening hours to meet demand and for specific programs.

### 10.1. Staffing Principles

A manager with pool operator, lifeguard and first aid accreditation will be required to supervise the operation of the aquatic centre.

At all times the pool is open to the public a qualified lifeguard will be on duty. With appropriate design of the complex, and expected level of attendance, one lifeguard should be capable of supervising the 50m and 25m pools and the learn to swim pool should only be utilised during swimming lessons. Direct supervision of the splash pad is not required as it has zero depth water. Additional lifeguards may be required for peak periods, such as school holidays and during hot weather.

Ideally, a second staff member will be on duty at all times. In practice it is unlikely that a second staff member will be required for early morning sessions and, early afternoon sessions. The second staff member will be responsible for supervising the kiosk and for other maintenance and cleaning activities.

In addition to basic staffing discussed above, each scheduled program will require a qualified instructor. Typical programs include swim teaching, swim squad coaching and aqua fitness.

## 10.2. Programs

Most aquatic centres offer a range of core programs, subject to the availability of qualified instructors as summarised in Table 10.1. The regional aquatic facility should be well positioned to meet the demand of the markets below.

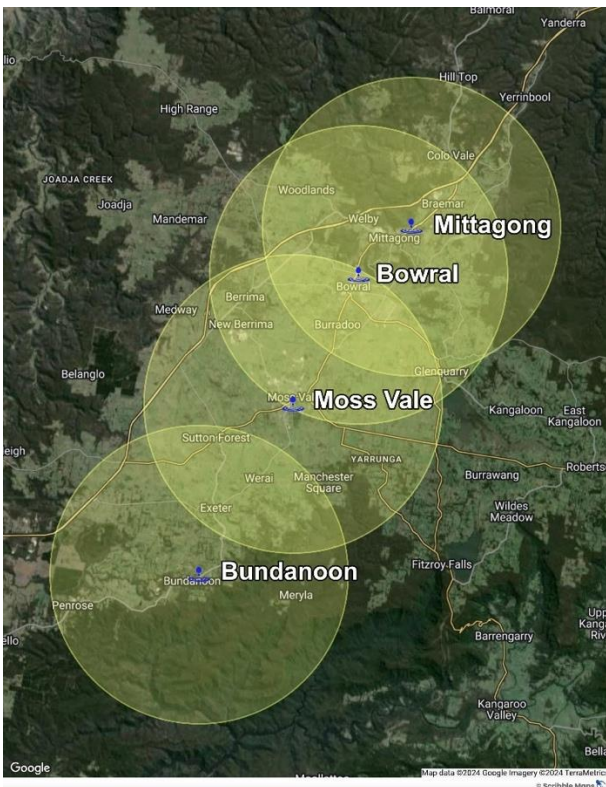
**Table 10.1:** Aquatic Programs and Scheduling

<b>Program</b>	<b>Scheduling</b>
Lap swimming	Primarily adults swim early morning, and retirees in mid morning.
Swim coaching/squads	<p>Junior squads primarily train early morning and after school hours.</p> <p>Adult swim squads (masters and triathlon) also train in the early morning and after work.</p> <p>Most squads only train on weekdays, although elite swim squads may have weekend sessions.</p>
Learn to swim lessons	<p>Most group and private lessons are conducted after school (4pm to 6pm) and on Saturday mornings.</p> <p>School swimming lessons are conducted during school hours.</p> <p>Adult lessons tend to be offered later in the evening.</p> <p>“Caregiver and babies” classes are usually on weekday morning between 9am and 12pm.</p> <p>Most classes are offered once a week, often for a ten week term or block.</p>
Recreational aquatic play	Most recreational play is conducted during summer months after school/work time (e.g. weekday evenings and weekends).
Aquatic fitness programs	Aquatic fitness programs tend to attract older adults, particularly females. Classes are held at times to suit the participants (e.g. older females on weekday mornings).
Therapeutic and rehabilitation programs	Tend to be supervised by a physiotherapist and timed to fit in with appointments with clients throughout the day.
Events and carnivals	Complementing regular programs and activities a suite of events and swim carnivals are often held throughout the year. Swim carnivals are usually conducted by swim clubs and schools, whereas events are organised and coordinated by centre management, council staff and community organisations.

## 11. Financial Assessment

A range of operating budgets have been prepared for the suite of aquatic facilities based on a series of assumptions in order to assess the financial viability of the options identified by Wingecarribee Shire Council. Expenditure and income assumptions are based on:

- Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Bowral Swimming Centre and Bundanoon Swimming Pool being maintained and renewed as required.
- A new regional aquatic facility being provided at the most suitable Mittagong location, including a gym/fitness facilities and associated allied health rooms, co-located with a multipurpose indoor sport facility.
- A new regional aquatic facility being provided at Bowral Swimming Centre, including a gym/fitness facilities and associated allied health rooms. This is not co-located with a multipurpose indoor sport facility.
- Projected attendance numbers are based on the minimum expected annual swims based on the identified catchment for each facility. As was displayed by Map 6.1 which is shown below, there is significant overlap between the catchments so in reality there would be overlap for people who live in a catchment that encompasses multiple facilities. The assessment has been based on the conservative figure of the minimum expected annual swims for each facility to take this into account.
- A review of recent and proposed aquatic facility developments across Australia shows that many councils are seeking to provide facilities that will meet the needs of the market segments identified above, with the facilities designed to meet both existing and future demand. It also demonstrates that construction costs have increased significantly in recent years as a result of inflation following covid. The Gippsland Regional Aquatic Facility was completed in 2020 at a cost of \$57 million. Other projects below range in cost from \$51.8 to \$89.7 million, depending on the aquatic and other components.



**Map 6.1:** Wingecarribee Aquatic Facilities

## Expenditure Assumptions

Expenditure assumptions include:

	Moss Vale	Bowral	Bundanoon	New regional aquatic facility
<b>Staffing</b>				
Manager	\$120,000	\$100,000		\$120,000
Pool Coordinator	\$75,000			\$75,000
Aquatic Program Coordinator	\$70,000			\$35,000 (P/T)
Reception wages	\$156,520	\$52,080	\$23,100	\$156,250
Lifeguards – indoor	\$134,680			\$134,680
Lifeguards – outdoor	\$0	\$177,216	\$23,100	\$62,160
Lifeguards – total	\$134,680	\$177,216	\$23,100	\$196,840
LTS instructors	\$121,884			\$121,884
<b>Operational expenses<sup>13</sup></b>				
Maintenance	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$175,000
Cleaning	\$75,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$120,000
Cleaning consumables	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Pool chemicals	\$45,000	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$70,000
Security	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$5,000
First aid and safety	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$4,000
Utilities	\$300,000	\$160,000	\$45,000	\$500,000
Telecommunications	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$10,000
Insurance	\$40,000	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$60,000
Advertising & Marketing	\$50,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$50,000
Legal & Accounting	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
General Administration	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Bank Charges	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$6,000
Swimming Incidentals	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$5,000
Fitness Centre Incidentals	\$5,000			\$5,000
Sports Hall Incidentals				\$5,000
Payroll & Accounts	\$50,000			\$50,000
Management Supervision	\$100,000			\$100,000
Depreciation (furniture)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Staff uniforms	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$10,000
Workcover	3%	3%	3%	3%
Payroll Tax	6%	6%	6%	6%
Superannuation	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%
Leave Provisions	5%	5%	5%	5%

<sup>13</sup> Based on industry standard rates

## Income Projections<sup>14</sup>

Income projections are based on the existing Moss Vale, Bowral and Bundanoon facilities being renewed and maintained as required and a new regional aquatic facility being developed at either Mittagong or Bowral. These are based on:

	Moss Vale	Bowral	Bundanoon	New Mittagong facility	New Bowral facility
<b>Learn to Swim</b>					
Students – summer	437			368	327
Students – winter	288			243	215
Weeks per season	24			24	24
Students per class	5			5	5
Total number of classes	3,482			2,935	2,602
Total LTS attendances	17,412			14,676	13,008
Price per class	\$18.20			\$18.20	\$18.20
Learn to Swim Income	\$288,090			\$242,820	\$215,224
<b>Casual Admissions</b>					
<b>Adult</b>					
Attendances	60,082	21,651	2,262	50,712	45,964
Entry price	\$7.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$7.00
Entry income	\$382,343	\$98,412	\$10,281	\$322,711	\$292,496
<b>Child</b>					
Attendances	23,380	8,425	880	19,733	17,886
Entry price	\$5.40	\$3.90	\$3.90	\$5.40	\$5.40
Entry income	\$114,772	\$29,870	\$3,120	\$96,872	\$87,802
<b>Concession</b>					
Attendances	3,129	1,128	118	2,641	2,394
Entry price	\$5.40	\$3.90	\$3.90	\$5.40	\$5.40
Entry income	\$15,360	\$3,998	\$418	\$12,965	\$11,751
<b>School/Group/Bulk entries</b>					
Attendances	4,106	2,000	76		2,000
Entry price	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00		\$5.00
Entry income	\$18,663	\$9,091	\$345		\$9,091
<b>Multi visit passes</b>					
<b>20 visit passes</b>					
Number sold		103	16		
Pass price		\$76.00	\$76.00		
Income		\$7,116	\$1,105		
<b>50 visit passes</b>					
Number sold		60	8		
Pass price		\$162.00	\$162.00		
Income		\$8,836	\$1,178		
<b>Family Season tickets</b>					
Number sold		5			
Pass price		\$536.00			
Income		\$2,436			

<sup>14</sup> Entry prices include GST. Income excludes GST.

Total swimming attendances	108,109	36,563	3,360	87,762	81,251
Total swimming income	\$819,229	\$159,759	\$16,448	\$675,369	\$616,363
Other Revenue	\$250,000				
Fitness Centre	\$557,101			\$278,551	\$139,275
Indoor sporting facility				\$119,136	

## Financial Result

Based on the expenditure and income assumptions, the following budgets have been derived for each facility:

	Moss Vale	Bowral	Bundanoon	New Mittagong facility	New Bowral facility
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>Swimming</b>					
Adult casual admission	\$382,343	\$98,412	\$10,281	\$322,711	\$292,496
Child casual admission	\$114,772	\$29,870	\$3,120	\$96,872	\$87,802
Concession admission	\$15,360	\$3,998	\$418	\$12,965	\$11,751
Learn to swim	\$288,090			\$242,820	\$215,224
School/group admission	\$18,663	\$9,091	\$345		\$9,091
Multi visit/family passes		\$18,389	\$2,284		
Other revenue	\$250,000				
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,069,229</b>	<b>\$159,759</b>	<b>\$16,448</b>	<b>\$675,369</b>	<b>\$616,363</b>
<b>Fitness Centre</b>					
Membership fees	\$557,101			\$278,551	\$139,275
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$557,101</b>			<b>\$278,551</b>	<b>\$139,275</b>
Indoor sporting facility				\$119,136	
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$119,136</b>	
Kiosk net profit	<b>\$209,100</b>	<b>\$74,174</b>	<b>\$9,164</b>	<b>\$188,603</b>	<b>\$123,273</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,835,430</b>	<b>\$233,933</b>	<b>\$25,612</b>	<b>\$1,261,659</b>	<b>\$878,911</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Staffing wages/salaries	\$678,084	\$279,296	\$46,200	\$705,244	\$705,244
Staff overheads	\$176,131	\$71,428	\$13,243	\$221,573	\$221,573
Maintenance expenses	\$544,000	\$236,000	\$103,000	\$899,000	\$829,000
Administration expenses	\$341,000	\$89,000	\$64,000	\$376,000	\$371,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,739,215</b>	<b>\$675,724</b>	<b>\$226,443</b>	<b>\$2,201,818</b>	<b>\$2,126,818</b>
<b>Operating Profit/Loss</b>	<b>\$96,215</b>	<b>-\$441,791</b>	<b>-\$200,831</b>	<b>-\$940,159</b>	<b>-\$1,247,907</b>
Subsidy per admission	Nil	\$12.08	\$59.77	\$10.71	\$15.35

Income from the allied health rooms has not been included as the demand is unknown and the set up/operation and lease rates are unknown for this type of facility. It can be assumed revenue will help to reduce the council subsidy paid for the facility.

### 11.1. Option 1

This option includes development of a new regional aquatic facility in Mittagong with the existing facilities of Moss Vale, Bowral and Bundanoon retained and renewed as required. Under this option it is likely that people will travel from Bowral to Mittagong to swim and potentially from Moss Vale to Mittagong. The dilution from one facility to another is impossible to determine so the assumed swims at each facility has been based on the estimated minimal annual swims to account for this.

This option will see a net annual cost to Wingecarribee Shire Council of \$1,486,566 and is the most expensive outcome for the Shire.

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Operating Profit/Loss</b>
New regional aquatic facility in Mittagong	\$1,261,659	\$2,201,818	-\$940,159
The following facilities are retained and renewed			
Bundanoon Swimming Pool	\$25,612	\$226,443	-\$200,831
Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre	\$1,835,430	\$1,739,215	\$96,215
Bowral Swimming Centre	\$233,933	\$675,724	-\$441,791
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$3,356,633</b>	<b>\$4,843,199</b>	<b>-\$1,486,566</b>

### 11.2. Option 2

This option includes development of a new regional aquatic facility in Mittagong with only Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre retained and renewed as required. This option provides the most positive financial outcome for the Shire with a net annual cost of \$843,944.

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Operating Profit/Loss</b>
New regional aquatic facility in Mittagong	\$1,261,659	\$2,201,818	-\$940,159
The following facility is retained and renewed as required			
Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre	\$1,835,430	\$1,739,215	\$96,215
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$3,097,088</b>	<b>\$3,941,033</b>	<b>-\$843,944</b>

### 11.3. Option 3

This option includes development of a new regional aquatic facility at Bowral, with Moss Vale and Bundanoon retained and renewed as required. Similar to option 1, under this option it is likely that an increased number of people will travel from Moss Vale to Bowral to swim, which may dilute the attendance numbers for Moss Vale. It is not possible to calculate this number so the assumed swims at each facility has been based on the estimated minimal annual swims to account for this.

This option will see a net annual cost to Wingecarribee Shire Council of \$1,352,523.

This option is not recommended option as it is not consistent with the recommendations adopted by Council from the Community Regional and Facilities Strategy for development of a regional aquatic facility within the Mittagong Precinct, which would service a wider catchment, including the key service centres of Mittagong and Bowral year-round.

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Operating Profit/Loss</b>
New regional aquatic facility at Bowral	\$878,911	\$2,126,818	-\$1,247,907
The following facilities are retained and renewed as required			
Bundanoon Swimming Pool	\$25,612	\$226,443	-\$200,831
Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre	\$1,835,430	\$1,739,215	\$96,215
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 2,739,952</b>	<b>\$ 4,092,476</b>	<b>-\$ 1,352,523</b>

## 12. Recommendations

In considering recommendations of the preferred aquatic facility mix to support the business case for a new regional aquatic facility for Wingecarribee Shire, a range of 'facts' have been considered:

- The catchment area for aquatic facilities and programs will vary depending upon the activity, frequency of participation, degree of specialisation and demographic characteristics of participants. In regional areas, the catchment will be larger than metropolitan centres however there is still a limit to the time and distance people are willing to travel to access facilities.
- The catchment area of aquatic centres in Wingecarribee has significant overlap. The Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre has significant overlap with Bowral Swimming Complex, and extends into rural communities to the south. Bowral also has significant overlap with the locations assessed in Mittagong. This is to the extent that the Bowral catchment is fully encapsulated by the Moss Vale and Mittagong catchments.
- Aquatic facilities are a high cost community service. Duplication of aquatic facilities in overlapping catchments will result in higher expenditure for no additional community benefit.
- It is not practical or financially feasible for Council to meet the needs of all markets. This means that Council needs to ensure it is providing the greatest benefit it can across as much of the community as possible.
- Aquatic centres are politically, highly sensitive and subject to vocal pressure groups. Closing facilities will be subject to community angst and potentially protest. Wingecarribee has had 50m outdoor pools in the community (at Mittagong and Bowral) for many years. It is likely that there is high community expectation that the community would continue to have a 50m pool into the future. This is particularly the case since the closure of the Mittagong pool due to continued flood remediation requirements in an aging asset.
- Swimming is a 12 month activity, which requires heated water. It is not feasible to have an outdoor 50m pool in the winter climate experienced in the Southern Highlands. Similarly, the cost for an indoor 50m pool can be substantially more than an indoor 25m pool so there needs to be a balance between capital cost and year round community benefit.
- Occupational, health and safety has significantly increased in priority over the past decade. This needs to be considered particularly in relation to older facilities. Wingecarribee Shire Council has already noted that the pools at Bowral Swimming Centre offer limited disability access and water flow rates do not meet NSW Health Swimming Pool and Spa Advisory Guidelines.

Based on the aquatic markets discussed in chapter 5.5, a series of outcomes are proposed for aquatic facilities for Wingecarribee Shire:

1. Facilities across the shire will be designed, developed and maintained to meet current and future demand from the main aquatic markets, by providing high quality programs and services in a high quality environment.
2. Facilities will be environmentally sustainable. Heating and water treatment systems will be based on the most recent technologies available with consideration to prudent financial expenditure.
3. Facilities will be managed in line with "best practice".
4. Facilities will provide an equitable and accessible range of aquatic programs and services.
5. Facilities will complement, rather than compete against aquatic centres owned and operated commercially or by other public organisations, to create a network of aquatic facilities across the Council area.

6. Facilities will be designed and managed in the most cost effective way, to minimise the cost to Council, whilst maximising community benefits.

## 12.1. Existing or Potential Duplication and Gaps in Provision

The review of aquatic facilities identified examples of existing or potential gaps or duplication of aquatic facilities that have been considered in development of recommendations.

### Potential Duplication in Provision

- The primary catchment of Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre and Bowral Swimming Complex overlap.
- The primary catchment of Bowral Swimming Complex and Mittagong Swimming Pool overlap.
- The Bluefit 2023/24 Annual Plan provided a visual representation of active members of the facility. This showed a cluster of members in the areas of not only the direct catchment of Moss Vale but also Bowral and Bundanoon. As such it is clear that Bundanoon is already being serviced to some extent by the Moss Vale aquatic facility, despite there being a swimming pool in Bundanoon.
- Aquabliss Frenshnam and Vitarose swim school are commercial facilities that operate in close proximity to Council's facilities and would overlap the respective catchment areas.

### Existing or Potential Gaps in Provision

- Aquatic facilities that provide year round swimming options, particularly in the northern part of the Shire to support higher population growth areas both now and those forecast to grow into the future.
- The need to address short term demands on pool shell maintenance, repair and replacement as facilities approach end of life at Bowral and Bundanoon.
- Significant expenditures will be required to bring Bowral and Bundanoon up to a reasonable standard.
- Limited rehabilitation and therapeutic facilities across the Council area.
- Modern aquatic facilities meeting contemporary community expectations.
- A modern accessible dedicated competition venue for all aquatic sports, including competition swimming and water polo, for example.

## 12.2. Activation opportunities of existing facilities

The review of the current aquatic usage at the three swimming pools within the shire network has identified compromised participation data. This makes it difficult to determine whether the facilities are operating below capacity, at capacity or above expected capacity within the region. Key activation gaps for the shire managed aquatic centres include:

### Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre

This site is constrained by space, and is currently achieving strong utilisation.

### Bundanoon Swimming Pool

It is recommended this pool be scheduled for closure due to low utilisation rates, and a small catchment area. Until the pool has been closed there may be opportunities to activate the space further by undertaking micro-

community events at the pool. These could include:

- Acoustic Musician on a Sunday afternoon
- Creating a Pop up Bar
- Movie night on an outdoor projector.

Other activation opportunities at Bundanoon could include:

- Opening up the visibility of the site so that it is not as enclosed
- Creating an outward oriented café that is open for community members.

### **Bowral Swimming Centre**

This pool is approaching its end of life and as a consequence should be scheduled for closure in the event of redevelopment of the Mittagong Oval for a new aquatic facility. Until any new facility has been developed, there may be opportunities to activate the space further by undertaking micro-community events at the pool. These could include:

- Acoustic Musician on a Sunday afternoon
- Creating a Pop up Bar
- Movie night on an outdoor projector
- Developing an inflatable obstacle course for school holidays in the 50m pool.

Other activation opportunities at Bowral could include:

- Developing pool level decking around the 25m swimming pool, to allow for easier access to the pool.
- Developing new splashpad equipment, including new buckets, spray guns and climbing equipment for children. This infrastructure could be developed and designed so that it can become part of a wider community recreation facility once the remainder of the pool has been closed and removed.

## **12.3. Usage Targets**

The three pools in operation within the Wingecarribee Shire have all been reviewed to identify expected demand, and measured against actual revenue to determine the likely participation at each of the venues. Participation data is highly correlated with the revenue generation, and as such developing effective usage and revenue targets are connected.

In evaluating each of the facilities we have assessed the likely demand for swimming annually across the entirety of the Shire. We have then calculated separate catchments for each of the pools. These usage rates have been discounted to account for casual swimming in backyard swimming pools, rivers, lakes and at the beach. As such we have identified the minimum and maximum swimming usage within the Shire as:

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold: 234,066

Maximum Swimming Usage Target: 353,975.

As a consequence each of the formal swimming pools in the region is part of the mix that will satisfy this demand. Consequently it is expected that the aquatic network should provide at least a minimum participation of 234,066 swims per annum (based on 2021 population data), seeking to satisfy up to a maximum of 353,975 swims

annually.

A median usage target 294,021 is an effective swimming target to achieve across the Shire's aquatic network.

### **Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre**

The Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre has high relative usage at the aquatic centre, attracting swimmers from across the Shire, but predominantly in the south of the shire and in areas within 15 minutes drive of Moss Vale. Participation data provided to SGL indicated there are upwards of 175,000 participants at the centre every year. This number has not been differentiated to account for learn to swim, casual swimming, spectators, gym users, group fitness users or users at the creche. In assessing the expected swimming demand for the centre we have identified minimum and maximum usage data for swimming:

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold: 108,109

Maximum Swimming Usage Target: 163,492

Consequently it is expected that Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre should provide at least a minimum participation of 108,109 swims per annum (based on 2021 population data), seeking to satisfy up to a maximum of 163,492 swims annually.

A median usage target 135,800 is an effective swimming participant target to achieve annually at the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre.

### **Bowral Swimming Centre**

The Bowral Swimming Centre has good seasonal usage, attracting swimmers from within the Bowral catchment and stretching into neighbouring Mittagong. Participation data provided to SGL indicated an average of 34,707 at the centre. In assessing the expected swimming demand for the centre we have identified minimum and maximum usage data for swimming, and accounting for an opening times for the summer period has resulted in the following usage thresholds and targets.

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold: 36,563

Maximum Swimming Usage Target: 55,294

Consequently it is expected that the Bowral Swimming Centre should provide at least a minimum participation of 36,563 swims per annum (based on 2021 population data), seeking to satisfy up to a maximum of 55,294 swims annually.

A median usage target 45,928 is an effective swimming participant target to achieve annually at the Bowral Swimming Centre.

It should be noted that a future indoor facility would allow swimming year round and as a consequence the expected usage would be higher. The estimate for this usage is:

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold: 81,251

Maximum Swimming Usage Threshold: 122,875.

### **Bundanoon Swimming Pool**

The Bundanoon Swimming Pool has good usage, attracting swimmers from within the Bundanoon catchment. Participation data indicated an average of 4,855 at the pool. In assessing the expected swimming demand for the pool we have identified minimum and maximum usage data for swimming, and accounting for opening times for the summer period has resulted in the following usage thresholds and targets:

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold:	3,636
Maximum Swimming Usage Target:	5,081

Consequently it is expected that the Bundanoon Swimming Pool should provide at least a minimum participation of 3,636 swims per annum (based on 2021 population data), seeking to satisfy up to a maximum of 5,081 swims annually.

A median usage target 4,220 is an effective swimming participant target to achieve annually at the Bundanoon Swimming Centre. It should be noted that the five year average participation at Bundanoon is above the expected maximum demand for the pool, however across the network this number is very small when compared to the cost of providing this facility for the community.

### **Mittagong and Iron Mines Ovals**

In assessing the expected swimming demand for a new regional aquatic facility at either of Mittagong or Iron Mines Ovals we have identified minimum and maximum usage thresholds and targets:

Minimum Swimming Usage Threshold:	87,762
Maximum Swimming Usage Target:	132,721.

A median usage target 110,242 is an effective swimming participant target to achieve annually at a new regional aquatic centre developed in the northern part of the Shire in Mittagong.

## **12.4. Recommendations**

Council’s Condition Audit and Maintenance Schedule is a working document that provides key information around component type, condition rating, age, estimate of remaining life and replacement value of aquatic assets. This plan identifies the need for significant priority funding towards ongoing maintenance of aquatic assets to ensure existing facilities continue to meet appropriate standards.

There are a range of works in the schedule with a total estimated value of in excess of \$500,000 across the three facilities of Moss Vale, Bowral and Bundanoon that are overdue and to have been completed by end of the 2023/24 financial year. If Council does not have adequate resources to continue the program of asset maintenance and renewal, it may be appropriate to plan for the closure either one or both of the Bundanoon and Bowral facilities in conjunction with a development plan for construction of a new regional aquatic facility in the north of the Shire.

It is appreciated that facility closures may not be supported by Council, due to local pressures. However, unless adequate funds are allocated to Council’s aquatic facilities, continued deterioration of the facilities will occur. The end result may be failure of the assets to meet basic OH&S standards and community expectations.

The range of aquatic facilities owned and/or operated by Wingecarribee Shire Council is relatively limited. As aquatic participation trends change, aquatic centres will need to be more adaptable to community requirements, particularly warmer water for aquatic therapy and programs for older members of the community. At the same time, there will continue to be a need to provide facilities for lap and recreation, as well as learn to swim. If these facilities are not able to meet contemporary aquatic market expectations, a decrease in attendances is likely. In other words, Council has a significant number of limited facilities which need substantial upgrades to meet community demands in the next 10 to 20 years.

Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre is currently Wingecarribee Shire’s major aquatic and health and fitness facility. It has a wide catchment, although it is located on a constrained site, with limited parking. This facility is

currently the most frequented pool in Council, it services a large catchment in the local area and is likely operating at or close to its capacity.

Bowral Swimming Centre operates on a seasonal basis and is the only facility that has a functioning 50m pool in the Shire. The facility is approaching the end of its serviceable life. The site was not identified as a preferred location of a new regional aquatic facility due to being subject to flooding and having a catchment with a large overlap with both Moss Vale and Mittagong. This site is also not consistent with the recommendations adopted by Council from the Community Regional and Facilities Strategy for development of a regional aquatic facility within the Mittagong Precinct, which would service a wider catchment, including the key service centres of Mittagong and Bowral year-round.

Bundanoon Swimming Pool operates on a short season and provides limited community benefit. The facility is at the end of its life. From the information provided, the catchment is small and based on attendance figures, there is limited potential to increase attendance at the facility. It is also evident there are already people who travel from Bundanoon to Moss Vale in preference to using Bundanoon pool, likely due to its seasonal operation and the aged and limited facilities.

The opportunity exists to develop a new regional aquatic facility at the northern part of the Shire in Mittagong. The preferred site for this has been identified at Mittagong Oval, however there is a need for a Master Plan to be prepared for the Mittagong Oval site to explore how the site could be developed to support the existing rugby league, golf club and indoor facility use in addition to a new aquatic facility with associated gymnasium, allied health space and additional indoor multiuse sports courts.

## **Recommended Option 2**

Based on the assessment in this report it is recommended that Council pursue Option 2 based on:

- Development of a new Regional Aquatic Facility at Mittagong Oval.
- Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Facility is maintained and renewed as required.

Supporting recommendations, similar to the Aquatics Plan include:

### **Infrastructure and Facility Recommendations**

- 1 Prepare a Master Plan for Mittagong Oval, to include development and construction of a new regional aquatic centre with associated gymnasium, allied health space and multiuse indoor sport facilities.
- 2 Review the Condition Audit and Maintenance Schedule to ensure that maintenance and/or capital works identified for Moss Vale War Memorial Pool are adequately planned, budgeted and undertaken.
- 3 Undertake an assessment of the pool shells and equipment at Bowral Swimming Complex. It is recommended this facility be maintained and operated until the new regional aquatic facility is constructed and operational. At a minimum it is recommended that works are undertaken to ensure the facility is able to meet relevant OH&S and accessibility standards.
  - 3.1 Once the new facility is operational, it is recommended the Bowral facility be closed and a Master Plan be undertaken of the Bowral site to determine its most appropriate future use. This could incorporate development of a free seasonal community splash pad facility incorporated into a wider play space and recreational precinct.
- 4 Once the new facility is operational, it is recommended the Bundanoon facility be closed and a Master Plan be prepared for the Bundanoon site to determine its most appropriate future use.

## **5 Operational Recommendations**

- 1 Leading up to expiry of the current management contract for Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, undertake a new tender for management rights for the facility. This should be a competitive process to ensure the best result can be obtained for the Shire. Key outcomes should include:
  - Receiving audited accounts
  - Monthly financial and participation reporting to the Shire
  - Focus upon efficient management of the facility
  - Target for a breakeven management of the centre.
- 2 Review and implement a new structured accounting process for all aquatic facilities. For all facilities this should include collation of information on the number/type of entries with revenue separated into categories so it can be accurately accounted for against programs and services offered at each facility.

## 12.5. Timing of the delivery of the Regional Aquatics Facility

The first step in delivery of the regional aquatics facility is to undertake a master plan, full feasibility and community consultation for the Mittagong Oval site as identified in step one of the above recommendations. This plan will include timeframes for delivery of the facility.

Key steps in delivery of the new regional aquatics facility will include:

Approval of Business Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Shire approval of Aquatics Plan and Business Case for Regional Aquatic Facility</li> <li>✓ Timeframe - October 2024</li> </ul>
Site Masterplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A Masterplan is prepared for the preferred site. This will include community consultation, preliminary concept design and preliminary construction cost estimates for use in securing funding commitments</li> <li>✓ Timeframe – 6-12 months including internal council processes</li> </ul>
Funding commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Funding commitments to be sourced by the Shire, including potential state and commonwealth government contributions</li> <li>✓ Timeframe - up to 18 months</li> </ul>
Detailed Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Detailed design completed for the facility</li> <li>✓ Revised construction cost estimates prepared based on detailed design, including facility specifications, fittings and finishes</li> <li>✓ Timeframe – 6-12 months including internal council processes</li> </ul>
Additional funding/redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Design review to fit budget/source additional funding if required</li> <li>✓ Funding for construction committed and secured (internal and external sources and commitments)</li> <li>✓ Timeframe – 6-12 months depending on complexity</li> </ul>
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tender is let with construction commenced</li> </ul>

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✓ Timeframe - up to 24 months

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Swimming

✓ New regional aquatic facility opens

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