

Port Macquarie Aquatic Facility - Frequently Asked Questions



Why is PMHC looking at our aquatic facilities now?

Port Macquarie is undergoing unprecedented growth with its population forecast to reach more than 100,000 by 2030. Recent growth in both the number of residents and visitors to the region has resulted in congestion at the current facilities during peak periods.

The Port Macquarie Pool was built in 1966 and whilst fit-for-purpose when it was built, the pool's structure is deteriorating and no longer meets the needs of our growing community. This deterioration has led to significant water leakage'.

As the pool is a major health and recreation facility for the region and caters for a wide range of both competitive and recreational swimmers, the construction of a new aquatic facility will address the above challenges that are presenting issues for operations and management of the current pool.

Council is planning ahead to ensure the Port Macquarie Aquatic Facility can meet the needs of the region for at least another 50 years. This will be an important investment in infrastructure for the enjoyment, health and wellbeing of the whole community.

What's the timeframe for a new pool?

The upgrade of the Port Macquarie pool has been identified as a key project within Council's [Recreation Action Plan](#). Planning for the facility has commenced, with the construction phase categorised as a medium-term priority project in the Plan.

Updates on a more defined timeframe for the construction and completion of the facility will be provided as project planning progresses.

How much will new aquatic facilities cost?

Detailed costing for a new aquatic facility will be determined following the detailed design stage of the project. However, based on recently developed contemporary facilities within Australia, it is estimated that the project in its entirety will cost in the vicinity of \$40 - \$50 million.

Council will continue to engage with the community on their needs for the new facility and what they believe is feasible in balancing the cost of construction and ongoing operational expenses.

What process will Council follow in delivering a new aquatic facility?

This is a significant project which will be staged as highlighted in Council's [Recreation Action Plan](#):

Stage/Priority	Action	Timeframe
Stage 1 Immediate Priority	Develop a strategic concept plan for Port Macquarie Pool upgrade.	2019/20
Stage 2 Short Term Priority	Detailed designs and approvals.	2019/20
Stage 3 Medium Term Priority	Construction.	2020/21 – 2024/25

Will ample parking be provided?

Access and the provision of adequate parking at a new aquatic facility will be an important consideration within the site selection and strategic concept stages of this project.

If the pool is moved what will happen on the old site?

This is yet to be determined and will not be known until the site selection process for the project is finalised.

How will we pay for this?

Council will explore all available funding options to support this project.

What about a tidal pool? Is it an option?

A tidal pool has not been identified by Council in their current Delivery Program or strategic plans.

How were the six new site options identified?

Following consultation with the community in late 2017 via a survey to identify their priorities for inclusion in a new aquatic facility, Council engaged Otium Planning Group, a specialist consultancy service with extensive expertise in facility development and management. In mid-2018 Otium commenced a thorough review of our region's aquatic facilities and explored our LGA's growing demographics, including our projected future population and targeted engagement. Otium have identified key facility design components

that are recommended to meet the aquatic needs of our community for the next 50 years. These elements include traditional aquatic facilities (e.g. 50 metre and 25 metre pools) combined with emerging ancillary components (e.g. children's water play, program pools) and commercial elements to offset operating costs (e.g. fitness and wellness elements). For each design component that Otium have identified for a contemporary aquatic facility they have also identified the spatial requirements for these inclusions.

Based on the above initial external engagements (incorporating data from the community survey and recommendations from Otium) six Council owned or managed Port Macquarie sites have been identified that could accommodate the spatial requirements for a new aquatic facility.

What would an upgrade of the existing pool involve?

It is recognised that the existing pool site is not large enough to accommodate a new aquatic facility based on the identified spatial requirements. However, an alternate option to constructing a new aquatic facility would be to upgrade or replace the existing pool facilities to extend their useful life. This would essentially involve a like-for-like upgrade; however, further works would be required to bring the facility up to current industry standards and meet compliance requirements, which have come into effect since the original facility was constructed. This would include addressing accessibility and the upgrade of plant and equipment for operational purposes. Independent structural assessments have determined that the existing pool structures are at end of useful life, so full renewal of these facilities will be required.

It is estimated that these works would extend the usability of the facility for a further 50 years, noting the works would need to be undertaken over an estimated 8 month period and create impacts during this time for users of the facility. Further, this option does not address existing congestion issues associated with this facility, which will only worsen as our population continues to expand.

What will happen if a sporting/community group's existing site is chosen?

Some of the potential sites have sporting/community groups that currently use them. Following a decision on the preferred site for the Aquatic Facility, it is of paramount importance for Council to work closely with any displaced user groups to ensure that a suitable alternate location that meets the group's operating requirements is achieved.

Why hasn't Stuart Park been included as a site option when it has previously been identified?

Stuart Park was previously identified in approximately 2005 as a site option for a new Aquatic Facility in Port Macquarie. Since this time, capacity demands from a number of user groups resulted in a Master Plan being developed for the Stuart Park and Wood Street precinct. The purpose of the Master Plan was to address a range of issues including an increase in participation in sport and providing premier recreational facilities that will benefit a range of sports, and that can be accessed by all ages and abilities.

In 2018, Council was successful in securing \$3.2 million in funding under the NSW Government's Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund. In addition to a co-contribution of \$800,000 from Council, the funds will achieve implementation of the Stuart Park Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan with works being undertaken in 2019 and 2020. The remaining space at Stuart Park will not be large enough to accommodate a new Aquatic Facility.