

Open Space and Recreation





CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Aquatics Network

Aquatic facilities, water play parks, natural rivers and waterways play a central role in defining part of our nation's culture and identity and provide for a diverse range of recreational opportunities.

Swimming continues to be one of Australia's most popular and well participated in recreational activities. Facilities and natural assets provide services which promote physical fitness, water safety skills and confidence.

They are a place for competition and play, a place to seek relief from the summer heat and relax, they have positive benefits for mental and physical health, and support social connections.

Defining our Aquatics Network

Aquatic Facilities

Formal controlled water spaces with outdoor aquatic components, indoor aquatic components or both. They usually have ancillary amenities such as change rooms, public amenities and a café/kiosk. Such facilities may be co-located with other community, recreation, leisure and ancillary functions such as an indoor sports hall, crèche, fitness centre (including gymnasium), wellness offerings and more.

Natural Area Play/Swimming

An open body of water where a person can be immersed in water. Can be a formally or informally defined facility or location within a natural setting.

There may be degrees of control (and supervision) at times as well as varying capacity and quality of ancillary amenities and other facilities or equipment present to support natural swimming participation.

Water Play Parks

Formal play spaces within a park setting with accompanying zero depth splash pad and an array of water play and sensory equipment supported by appropriate aquatic standard plant and water treatment, designed for participants to get wet. They may exist within a larger integrated playground with wet and dry play spaces or be a dedicated offering.

Note: throughout our parks and plazas other water based experiences are offered. These include non-immersive water based experiences for cooling off, education or sensory objectives. This may include fountains, spouts, opportunities to immerse a small portion of the body (e.g. feet/legs), integrated playground features in which water can be engaged with and there is the potential to get a little wet. These other water based experiences are not included within this analysis.

AQUATICS NETWORK

Current Situation

What is provided now?



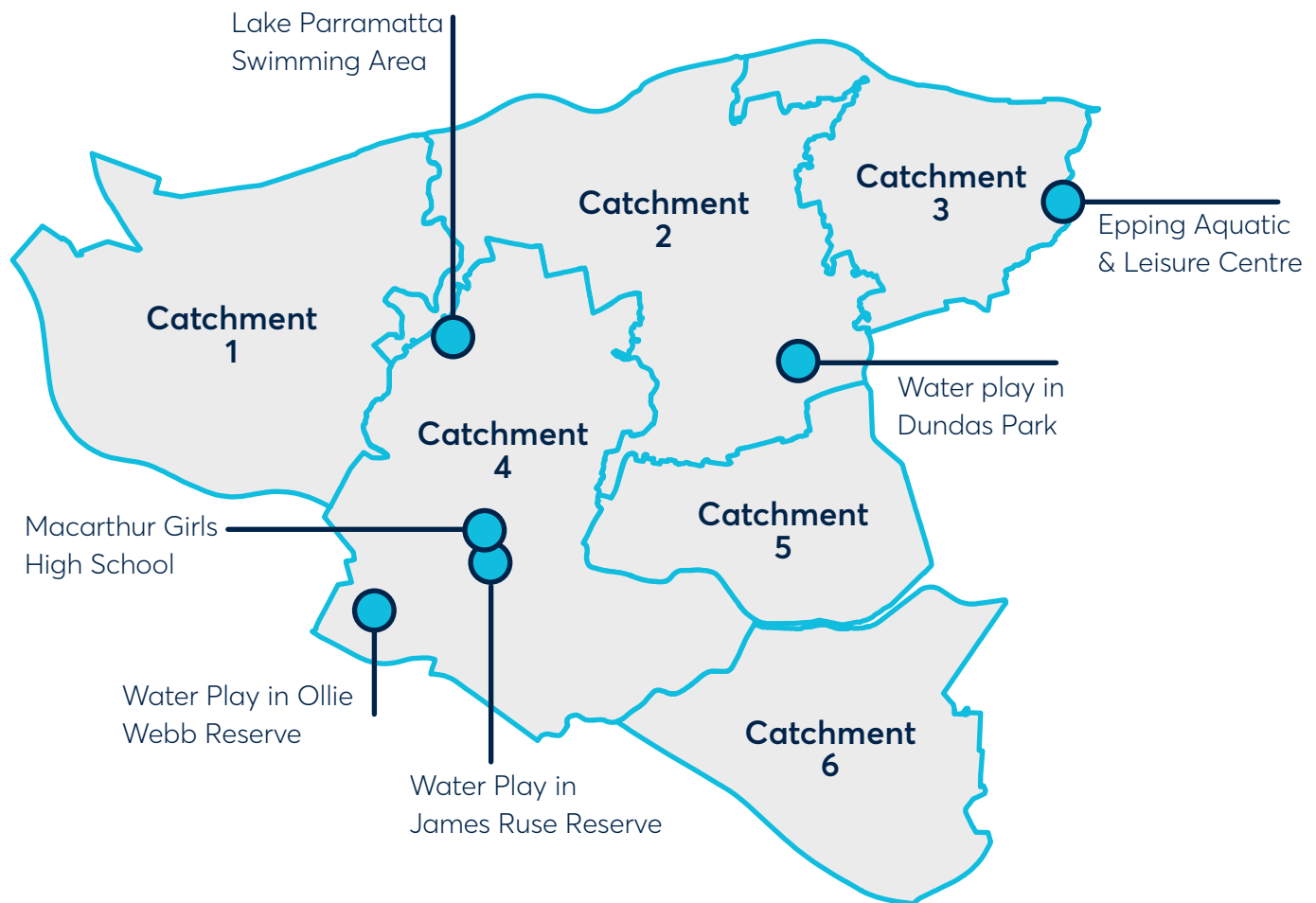
KEY: ● Council owned and operated ● Other agency owned & operated

City of Parramatta Council (Council) plays a significant role in the provision of aquatic offerings. From the Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre 50m pool and programs, "Learn to Swim" programs at Macarthur Girls High School, to 3 water play parks, and natural water play and swimming at Lake Parramatta; City of Parramatta offers a diverse aquatic network.

Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) operates an Aquatics Centre which is a regional scale facility. It includes: one 50m pool, two 25m pools, a leisure pool, water slide, sprays and river rapid ride. Blaxland Riverside Park at Newington, also part of SOPA, is a regional destination with a water play park.

There are approximately 4 swimming pools within schools and several privately owned commercial swim centres available to varying degrees to the general public.

2019 City of Parramatta Aquatics Network



Council's Aquatic Network

AQUATICS CENTRES / FACILITIES				
Facility Name	Facility Type	Components	Strengths	Weaknesses
CATCHMENT 3				
Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre <i>Epping</i>	Local neighbourhood outdoor only swimming pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 lane 50m outdoor pool • Covered toddlers play pool • Learn to swim pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly valued by the community • Within a park setting and surrounded by natural bush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open 6 months of the year with trial of winter hours underway • Ageing infrastructure • Poor universal design/ disability access • Structural issues • Hidden location • Poor public transport access
CATCHMENT 4				
Macarthur Girls High School <i>Parramatta</i>	School based local neighbourhood outdoor only swimming pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 lane 25m outdoor pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good location near CBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access (Learn to Swim and lap swimming only) • Not Council owned
NATURAL SWIMMING AREAS				
Facility Name	Facility Type	Components	Strengths	Weaknesses
CATCHMENT 4				
Lake Parramatta Swimming Area <i>North Parramatta</i>	Natural area swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural setting • Fresh water offering • No cost for swimming • Co-located with other recreation and leisure facilities • Open all year round (primarily summer focus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking during peak times • Universal access • Limited public transport • Supervised swimming for six months (October-March), and dependent on weather, e.g. temperature and water quality following heavy rain event. • Ageing and limited infrastructure e.g food & beverage options, change rooms & toilets.

WATER PLAY IN PARKS

Facility Name	Facility Type	Components	Strengths	Weaknesses
CATCHMENT 2				
Water Play in Dundas Park <i>Dundas Valley</i>	Water Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Play • Toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a park with other recreation uses • Parking • Good condition overall • Shade structures • Toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport
CATCHMENT 4				
Water Play in James Ruse Reserve <i>Parramatta</i>	Water Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Play • Temporary toilet facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within walking distance to current and future high density growth areas • Within a park and other recreation facilities • Shade structures • Good condition overall • Close to public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary toilets • Limited parking
Water Play in Ollie Webb Reserve <i>Parramatta</i>	Water Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Play • Toilets and accessible change facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within walking distance to current and future high density growth areas • Within a park with other recreation uses • Good condition overall • Fully inclusive design for all abilities and user groups • Accessible toilets and change facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking during peak times

Epping Aquatic Centre

A Valued Neighbourhood Facility in Bushland Setting

The Epping Aquatic Centre is located at Dence Park, 26 Stanley Road, Epping, approximately 1km east of Epping train station.

The Centre is a highly valued neighbourhood facility that is owned and managed by City of Parramatta Council.

The Centre is surrounded by a tranquil bushland setting and is a seasonal facility that is traditionally open six months of the year. City of Parramatta Council is trialling winter opening hours to extend the availability of the Centre.

The Centre includes:

- A six lane 50m outdoor pool
- Covered toddler play pool
- Change rooms and showers
- Snack bar

Free on-site parking is available behind the Epping Creative Centre.

During the summer school holidays, the Centre often provides extra attractions for children and families, such as the popular giant inflatable obstacle course.

Visitors to the pool can choose to visit on a casual basis, or more regular visitors can select to purchase a '20 Visit Pass'. Subsidised pricing for students, pensioners, children, spectators and families are also available for purchase.

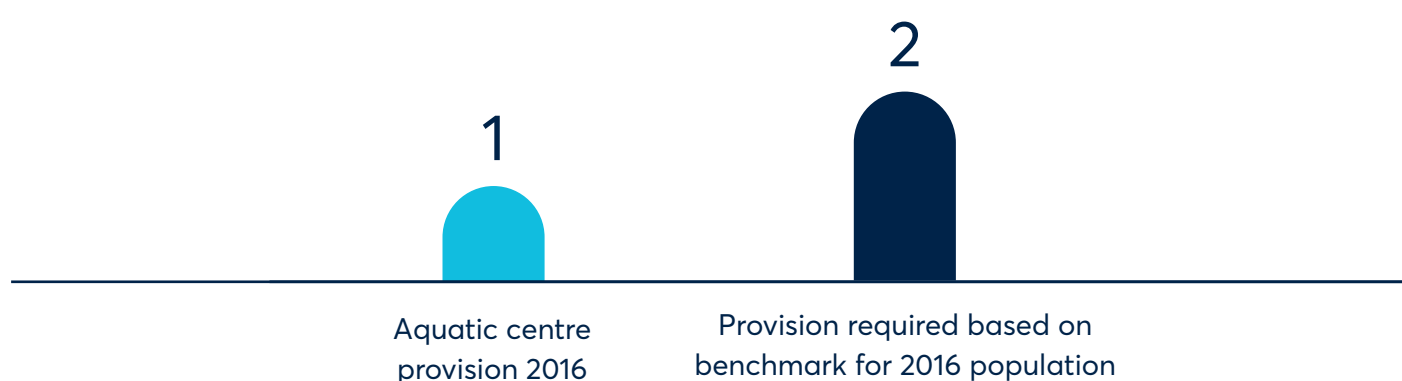
**CASE
STUDY**



Image credit: Salty Dingo 2018

Rates of Provision

City of Parramatta: 2016 Aquatic centre provision against benchmark



KEY: ● Council owned or managed ● 2016 population benchmark

*Benchmark based on Aquatics Recreation Victoria 2011 and Parks and Leisure Australia, Guidelines for Community Infrastructure 2012

City of Parramatta Council's current provision of aquatics facilities available to the general public broadly aligns with provision indicated through benchmarking.

Benchmarking would suggest that at least two regional aquatic facility would be ideal to meet City of Parramatta's current resident population of approximately 235,000.

The current offering at Epping Aquatic Centre of one 50m pool is suitable for neighbourhood level use. In addition, Council utilises Macarthur Girls High School's outdoor pool for limited public use, including lap swimming and learn to swim programs.

Aquatic Facility Benchmarks

Aquatics and Recreation Victoria Guidelines (2011) provide the following industry benchmarks to guide provision of aquatic facilities:

One Regional Aquatic Facility for every 100,000 - 150,000 people, including:

- Extensive & varied programs
- Leisure water attractions
- An indoor 50m pool and separate warm water pools
- Wellness/health club and extensive program room inclusions

- Complementary services and amenities, creche, food and beverage
- Sports Courts (flexible and multipurpose)

There are no industry accepted benchmarks for provision of water play parks specifically.

For more information on the application of benchmarks and their strengths, weaknesses and considerations, refer to the 'Table of Benchmarks' pp. 58-59

How well positioned is our current Aquatics Network?

The strengths of our aquatics network include:

- The network provides diverse offerings
- Planning is under way to realise a new aquatic facility close to the Parramatta CBD
- Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre is greatly valued by the community and is set within a park surrounded by natural bushland
- The natural area of Lake Parramatta is highly valued by the community
- The Parramatta River is a unique and valued resource. Significant work is underway to revitalise the river and make it swimmable again by 2025
- Several aquatic facilities are located in adjoining council areas and provide further opportunities for our community to participate in district or regional level water based activities

Despite some strengths, Council's aquatics network has weaknesses:

- Ageing and increasingly financially unsustainable infrastructure and services
- Quality and breadth of services are not aligned to current consumer expectations and demand
- Facilities are not well located to meet future needs of the community
- Facilities are not accessible or inclusive
- The Parramatta River is an underutilised natural asset and historical practices and rapid industrial development nearby have impacted water quality

Communities need diverse aquatic offerings

Aquatics for play

- Cool off experiences
- Water play – zero depth and low depth splash pads
- Water Play – slides and water play space components
- Large inflatables
- Recreational swimming
- Free water play in parks
- Major destination water play (e.g. Wet n Wild)

Aquatics for sport

- Competition swimming and training
- Swimming carnivals
- Water Polo
- Diving
- Other school sport activities

Aquatics for fitness & wellbeing

- Lap swimming
- Aqua aerobics
- Rehabilitation
- Other programming
- Open water swimming

Water safety skills & confidence

- Learn to Swim – children and school programs
- Learn to Swim - adults
- Life saving and First Aid training
- Mum's and bubs classes

Other water based play

- Swimming in Natural Areas
- Touch and feel (but not immersed in) water play – educational and sensory play elements – may include fountains, spouts, public art or be integrated into playgrounds
- Fishing
- Boating
- Other

Complementary recreation

- BBQ and picnic – outdoors
- Café/restaurants
- Viewing/spectating
- Spa/Sauna/Steam
- Rejuvenation and wellness features
- Gymnasium and fitness classes
- Within a community or recreation hub or precinct
- Indoor multi-use courts

Facts at a Glance

In City of Parramatta in 2018, we have:



2

Aquatic Facilities



3

Water Play Parks



1

Natural Swimming & Play Area



68,775

Visitors annually to Lake Parramatta



57,327

Visitors
between September 2017
to July 2018 to Epping
Aquatic Centre



1

New Aquatic facility planned for Parramatta CBD

Auburn Ruth Everuss Aquatic Centre

A Valued Neighbourhood Facility in Bushland Setting

The Auburn Ruth Everuss Aquatic Centre was redeveloped in 2017 and now provides 5 pools, water play facilities, fitness facilities and a café. The centre is owned by Cumberland Council and managed by Belgravia Leisure.

The fitness centre provides gym equipment, personal training and group training classes. Large windows provide light access to the indoor pools, which are all fully accessible.

There are numerous play opportunities including:

- Water play areas that are separated from lap swimming

Pool facilities include:

- 50m heated 10-lane outdoor pool with undercover grandstands
- 25m heated 6-lane indoor pool (fully accessible)
- Heated outdoor water polo pool purpose built for water polo and squads. In summer, it is home to a large inflatable obstacle course
- An outdoor family leisure pool, with an inflatable obstacle course in summer

- Outdoor splash pad with small slide designed to help build young children's confidence with water in a safe, fun, interactive aquatic environment
- An Indoor family leisure pool, which is fully accessible and purpose built for recreational family swimming
- Program pool, which is fully accessible and caters for swimming and water safety lessons and rehabilitation programs
- The Program pool includes a lightweight curtain which can create a private area for women-only swimming lessons, while allowing light and air in.



**CASE
STUDY**

Image credit: Auburn Aquatic Centre

Emerging Trends

What
does future
best practice
look like?

The importance of access to aquatic facilities for formal and informal recreation uses will only increase in City of Parramatta's increasingly urbanised environment.

Council considers the following issues as critical to the future of our aquatics network:

A spectrum of community expectations.

The community has demands for a range of water based play and engagement on a spectrum of experiences and customer needs. Each is an opportunity to provide vital experiences that will enrich people's lives and provide broader social, cultural and economic outcomes. The spectrum of experiences and market segments include:

- Water based play and aquatics for play (including cooling off)
- Water safety skills and confidence
- Aquatics for fitness and wellbeing
- Aquatics for sport and competition

Contributing to broader liveability objectives.

To varying degrees, aquatic assets of the future will also be expected to meet other related objectives including:

- Activation of public domain and entertainment (e.g. fountains and water features)
- Activating adjacent waterways and open space
- Idyllic, relaxing or vibrant settings for a range of purposes, including: iconic and unique destinations, and as quiet locations which provide a buffer or escape from the built environment
- Improving awareness of water quality issues in major creeks and waterways

A diversity of offer.

In the future, responses to the needs for aquatics and water based play opportunities can and should be diverse, providing:

- Regional, district and/or local services
- Free, subsidised and market priced services
- Outdoor and indoor facilities
- Natural environment and formal facilities (and varying degrees of formalisation)
- Publicly accessible offerings within parks and green spaces, within urban public domain, or within private spaces such as education campuses, commercial and residential developments
- Public access and/or member based services
- Wellness facilities and other complementary offers



- Combining with other community and recreational infrastructure and services
- The importance of access to aquatic facilities for formal and informal recreation uses will only increase in City of Parramatta's increasingly urbanised environment
- Private pools (no public access) within backyards and communal facilities within residential developments

Comprehensive aquatic facilities.

In regard to planning of future regional aquatics facilities the offering should ideally cover dedicated Learn to Swim pools, water play areas, warm water exercise pools, family and group change facilities, group meeting and training spaces, complementary indoor recreation, leisure and wellness offerings, environmentally sustainable design and management as well as reception foyers.

Maximising natural assets.

City of Parramatta's future aquatics offering will need to include increased use of the Parramatta River. Gentrification is occurring along the river as high value is placed on having close proximity to a waterway. Community expectations are shifting and people are looking for quality open space and recreation experiences in and along the river. With advances in regulation and technology, the condition of the river has been improving and the Parramatta River Catchment Groups' mission to bring back swimming to Parramatta, is within reach.

Kalamunda Water Park



This aquatic centre in Western Australia has a focus on being family friendly.

The Kalamunda Water Park centre has extensive lawn and shaded picnic areas, picnic tables, and grandstand. There are gas BBQs available for hire (BYO utensils) as well as the onsite kiosk.

It is open seasonally, from November to March and includes:

- 50m eight lane outdoor Olympic pool
- Two tube slides and an inflatable obstacle course

Children's pools and splash pads including:

- Splash pad
- One 80cm deep children's pool
- One 40cm deep children's pool

**This information has been sourced from <http://www.kalamundawaterpark.com.au/>*



Image credit: Tina Nunnington @ Weekend Notes

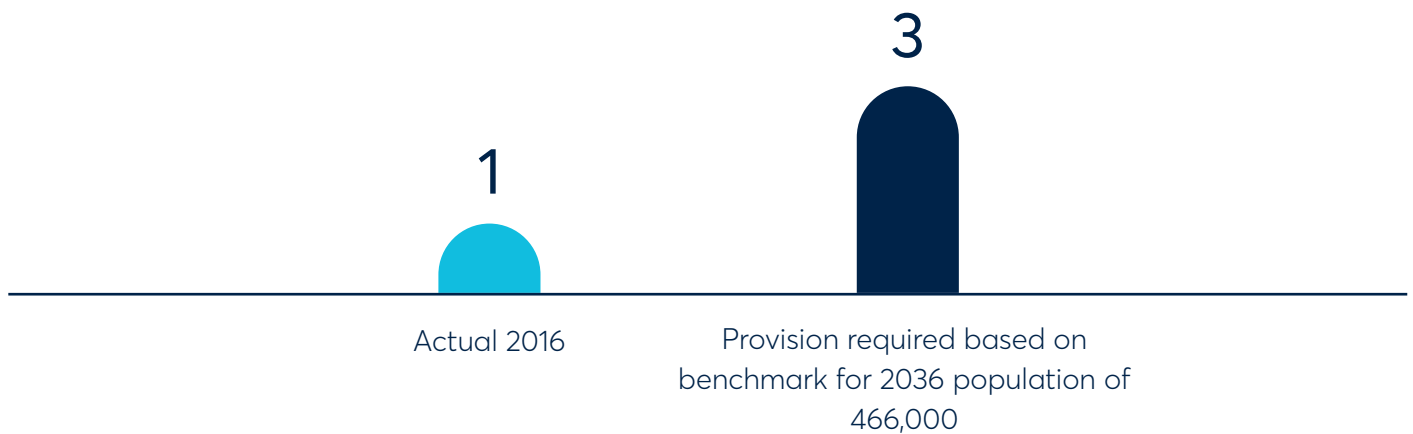


AQUATICS NETWORK

Future Needs



City of Parramatta: 2036 aquatics facility provision against benchmark



KEY: ● Number of Aquatic facilities ● 2036 population benchmark

Benchmark Analysis

City of Parramatta's future population is estimated to grow to 466,000 people by 2036. Based on population benchmarking this would justify up to 3 aquatic facilities.

What Our Community Has Told Us...

Between August – October 2017, the draft Community Infrastructure Strategy was on public exhibition

This period of engagement allowed Council to better understand the needs and expectations of our community and we were able to use this information to strengthen the draft Strategy.

Through this consultation process, and others, we heard that:

Our community values:

- The important role our aquatic facilities play in our community
- Natural swimming offerings
- Our existing aquatic facilities

Our community would like to see:

- New aquatic facilities and upgrades to existing facilities
- Different types of aquatic facilities that are co-located with other facilities
- Affordable aquatic facilities that are accessible to everyone and employ universal design principles
- More information regarding the replacement of the Parramatta CBD Pool
- Natural swimming reintroduced along the Parramatta River

"...All features are important. Consider growing communities and different age groups that will be using it."

- Resident, public submission

"...Different types of aquatic spaces need to be accessible."

- Resident, public submission

Monash Aquatic Centre, Melbourne

An accessible pool with support workers, programming for young people and adults.

The Attendant Support Initiative program supports people with disability to access all aquatic and gymnasium facilities and is run across three of Monash Council's facilities.

Personalised support and assistance is provided for entering the centre, accessing the aquatics area, gymnasium, facility equipment, personal changing process, and support for the duration of the desired recreation activity.

Individualised bookings, respite bookings or support organisations are encouraged to be involved in the program.

In the fitness centre, specific programs are run for older people and young people, including older adults, fitness programs, active abilities for children 6+ of all abilities, and the teen fit class.

Other facilities include:

- 50m outdoor pool surrounded by landscaped gardens and shade umbrellas
- 25m indoor pool with hoist access
- Hydrotherapy pool with hoist access
- Learn to Swim pool
- Toddler play pools
- Spa, sauna and steam
- Inflatable slide in school holidays, and
- Wave pool

**This information has been sourced from <http://www.monashaquaticrecreationcentre.com.au/Home>*

CASE STUDY



Image credit: Monash Aquatic Recreation Centre

Strategic Challenges We Face Together

As City of Parramatta continues to undergo transformational change, our aquatics network can contribute to improving access to formal and informal recreation opportunities for the community.

We will need to plan and use our resources to find solutions to the following critical strategic challenges:

Q. How can we increase the quality of our existing aquatics network to meet the needs of our growing and changing communities?

Q. How can we increase the utilisation of our existing aquatics network by a variety of user groups now and into the future?

Q. How can we ensure our natural waterways are protected and enhanced for swimming and other water based activities now and into the future?

Q. How can we ensure our aquatics network supports inclusiveness and universal design principles to meet the needs of all our community?

Q. What funding strategies will be most successful for delivering best practice aquatic facilities and supporting infrastructure, in both the short and long term?

AQUATICS NETWORK

Future Directions



Strategic Directions

To meet the needs of City of Parramatta's growing and increasingly diverse community, Council will seek to realise diverse aquatic experiences in the right locations.

This will enable community access to recreational activities and facilities that promote physical fitness, water safety skills, places for competition and play, places to seek relief from the summer heat and to form social connections.

It is appropriate for Council to continue to work in this area, as this provision is often not fully met by the private market.

City of Parramatta Council will focus on the following strategic directions:

- Deliver contemporary aquatics facilities to meet the needs of local catchments in Parramatta CBD and Epping.
- Expand community access to aquatic offerings that support Learn to Swim programs and wellness, play, leisure, and health programming, in high growth neighbourhoods through:
 - Shared and joint use arrangements with schools, universities, churches, businesses, community organisations and developers.
- Optimising use of traditional and non-traditional sites (e.g. industrial areas, shopping centres and residential buildings).
- Maintain current water play parks.
- Continue to maintain, improve and promote Lake Parramatta as a swimming destination.
- Expand natural water play and swim experiences along the Parramatta River and natural water ways in various formats.
- Explore non-traditional uses of water in the urban landscape.

City of Parramatta Aquatics Network: 20 YEAR PROVISION TARGETS

Through collaboration, partnerships and the resources of many, we seek to achieve the following targets for our community:

Aquatic Centres /Facilities



Water Play Parks



Natural Area Swimming /Water Play



Key Recommendations

GENERAL

Expand access to local level indoor aquatics facilities to support water safety skills and confidence programs and leisure and health offerings, in high growth neighbourhoods through:

- Shared and joint use arrangement with schools, universities, churches, businesses, community organisations and developers
- Optimising Council-owned, non-Council owned and natural assets

CATCHMENT 2

Suburb	Recommendation
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Dundas

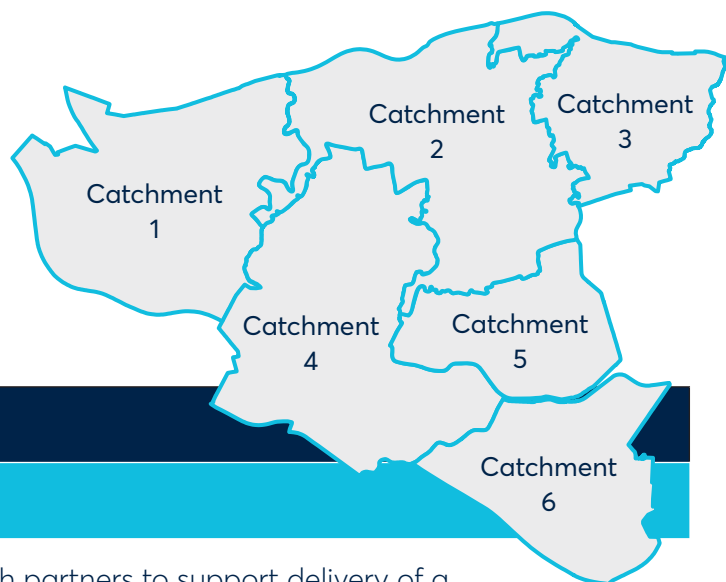
- Maintain quality of the water play park at Dundas Park.

CATCHMENT 3

Suburb	Recommendation
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Epping

- Continue to progress master planning of Dence Park, including a review of future opportunities and uses of the Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre.



CATCHMENT 4

Suburb

Recommendation

Parramatta CBD

- Continue to work with partners to support delivery of a contemporary Aquatic Leisure Centre offering at Mays Hill.
- Maintain quality of the water play park at James Ruse Reserve.
- Work with 'Parramatta River Catchment Group' and other partners to deliver an additional natural water swimming or play experience along Parramatta River within Parramatta CBD in line with Council's River City Strategy, May 2015.
- Undertake detailed analysis to design a water play/swimming experience in the Parramatta CBD as outlined in Council's River City Strategy, May 2015.

Parramatta

- Maintain quality of the water play park at Ollie Webb Reserve.
- Continue joint use arrangements with Macarthur Girls High School to operate learn to swim programs and lap swimming from the school's pool. Review and consider expanding in context of progress of a Parramatta CBD Aquatic Leisure Centre offering.

North Parramatta

- Continue to support natural area swimming and play at Lake Parramatta.

CATCHMENT 5

Suburb

Recommendation

Silverwater

- Work with Our Living River Network and other partners to deliver a new natural water swimming or play experience along Parramatta River in Silverwater or nearby.

Criteria to Guide Decision Making for New Aquatic Facilities

The following criteria complement and are to be used in conjunction with City of Parramatta's stated principles for community infrastructure planning found on pages 61-63.

Council will use them to guide decision making and discussion with stakeholders and partners about new aquatic facility infrastructure opportunities.

<p>For all scenarios, will the future aquatic offering:</p>	Align with City of Parramatta Council's aquatic network strategic directions?
	Contribute to and complement the current aquatic offerings throughout the LGA?
	Be justified in terms of meeting an unmet need?
	Be financially viable as demonstrated through a financial feasibility assessment, covering construction, ongoing maintenance and renewal costs as well as operational costs?
	Be part of a master plan for the relevant site area?
	Reflect universal design, safety by design, and support inclusiveness?
	Be located close to public transport?
	Be sustainable in design and operations, as demonstrated through a sustainability assessment, and minimise environmental impact?
	<p>Have positive social impact, as demonstrated through a social impact assessment that identifies (at a minimum) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders likely to be affected by the proposal as well as those that stand to benefit from the proposal and how, • The consultation and engagement processes undertaken or planned, • Probable impacts (positive and negative) and • Proposed mitigation strategies?

In addition, for new water play parks, will the future offering:

Offer inclusive play options?

Include an amenities building?

For new natural swimming areas, will the future offering:

Use the Parramatta River Catchment Group's swim site activation framework to further scope and design new natural swimming sites within the LGA? Include an amenities building?

For More Information:

This Community Infrastructure Strategy draws on the knowledge and experience of many staff from across Council who have a passion for enabling socially sustainable communities. Together with feedback from our community, and our key stakeholders, this document has been a shared effort.

For further information on City of Parramatta's Aquatics Network, or Council's key strategic directions, the following resources are available:

- "Sharing the Opportunities of Growth for All – Socially Sustainable Parramatta Framework"
- City of Parramatta Council's Website: www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au
- City of Parramatta Customer Contact Centre: **9806 5050**
- For access to demographic data log onto: <http://profile.id.com.au/parramatta>