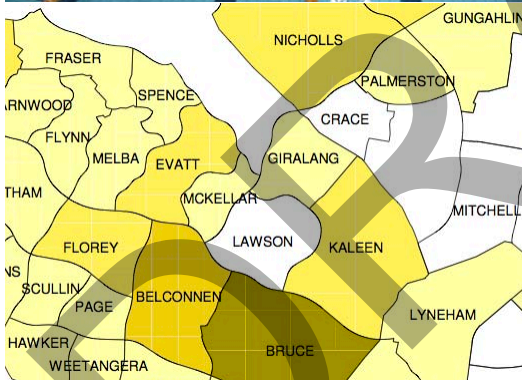


# Aquatic and Related Facilities: ACT Strategic Plan 2011-2030



**H M Leisure Planning Pty Ltd  
Suters Architects Pty Ltd  
C Leisure Pty Ltd**

**June 2011**

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>		
<b>Study Objectives</b> .....		1
1.1 Study Objectives .....		1
1.2 Study Approach .....		2
<b>2</b>		
<b>ACT Sport and Recreation: Corporate Vision</b> .....		3
2.1 Introduction .....		3
2.2 The Sport and Recreation Services Business Plan .....		3
2.3 Conclusion .....		4
<b>3</b>		
<b>Recent Trends in Aquatic, Leisure and Community Services Provision in Australia</b> .....		5
3.1 Drivers of Change .....		5
3.2 Trends in Aquatic Leisure Provision .....		5
3.2.1 Facilities .....		5
3.2.2 Programs .....		6
3.2.3 Services .....		6
<b>4</b>		
<b>The 1997 Aquatic Strategy</b> .....		
4.1 Introduction .....		7
4.2 Review Purpose and Recommendations .....		7
4.3 Commentary .....		7
4.3.1 Northern Region .....		7
4.3.2 Central Region .....		8
4.3.3 Southern Region .....		9
4.4 Conclusion .....		10
<b>5</b>		
<b>The Present Aquatics Provision in the ACT</b> .....		12
5.1 Introduction .....		12
5.2 Existing Provision .....		12
5.3 Conclusion .....		18
<b>6</b>		
<b>Hierarchies of Provision</b> .....		19
6.1 Introduction .....		19
6.2 The Purpose of a Provision Hierarchy .....		19
6.3 Recommended ACT Aquatic Leisure Provision Hierarchy .....		19
6.3.1 Multi-suburb Venues .....		20
6.3.2 District Venues .....		21
6.3.3 ACT-wide (Territory) Venues .....		22
6.3.4 National Level Venues .....		23
6.3.5 Site Selection Criteria .....		24
6.4 The Aquatics Hierarchy: Overview .....		24
<b>7</b>		
<b>Managing Aquatic Leisure Facilities</b> .....		26
7.1 Introduction .....		26
7.2 Key Elements of Successful Management .....		26
7.3 Aquatic Venue Aims and Objectives .....		26
7.4 Management Models .....		28
7.4.1 The Models .....		28
7.4.2 Management Models: An Overview .....		30
7.5 Programs and Services .....		31
7.6 Marketing Strategies .....		32
7.7 Asset Management .....		33
7.8 Performance Monitoring .....		34
7.8.1 Purpose .....		34
7.8.2 Tools .....		34
7.9 Funding the Developments .....		35
7.9.1 Introduction .....		35
7.9.2 ACT Government Funding .....		36
7.9.3 Commonwealth Government Funding .....		36
7.9.4 Other Federal and Territory Agencies .....		36
7.9.5 Commercial Investment and Partnerships .....		36

7.9.6 Commercial and Community Fundraising .....	36
7.9.7 Funding Strategy .....	37
7.10 Management: Conclusions .....	37
<b>8</b>	
<b>The Planned City – Its Changing Face and Aquatic Provision Implications .....</b>	<b>39</b>
8.1 Introduction .....	39
8.2 Projected ACT Demographics .....	40
8.2.1 Population Growth Areas .....	40
8.2.2 Ageing Population .....	41
8.3 Projected Educational Provision .....	42
8.4 Projected Land Releases .....	43
8.4.1 Housing Demand .....	43
8.4.2 Commercial and Industrial Land Releases .....	44
8.5 Health Infrastructure and Community Health Servicing .....	45
8.6 Retail Trends and the Development of Retail Resources .....	46
8.6.1 Retail Centres Hierarchy .....	46
8.6.2 The Workforce Consumer .....	47
8.7 Future Employment, Transport Hubs and Nodes .....	50
8.8 Conclusions .....	53
<b>9</b>	
<b>A Strategic Plan for Aquatic and Associated Provision in the ACT 2010-2030 .....</b>	<b>55</b>
9.1 Introduction .....	55
9.2 The Strategic Vision .....	55
9.3 The Objectives .....	55
9.4 Existing Provision and its Strategic Capacity .....	56
9.5 Recommended Development Actions .....	57
9.5.1 Introduction .....	57
9.5.2 Adopt a Strategic Framework .....	57
9.5.3 Upgrade and Redevelop Existing Aquatic Leisure Venues .....	58
1. Active Leisure Centre, Wanniasa .....	58
2. Lakeside Pool, Greenway/Tuggeranong .....	58
3. Phillip Pool and Iceskating Centre, Woden Town Centre .....	59
4. Manuka Pool, Kingston .....	59
5. Canberra Olympic Pool, Civic .....	59
6. Dickson Pool, Dickson .....	60
7. Australian Institute of Sport, Bruce .....	60
8. Big Splash, Macquarie .....	61
9. Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) .....	61
10. Deakin Pool .....	61
11. Other ACT Pools .....	62
9.5.4 Provide New Aquatic Leisure Venues .....	62
1. Gungahlin District .....	62
2. Molonglo .....	62
3. Airport Business Park/Queanbeyan .....	63
4. North Western Suburbs .....	63
9.5.5 Adopt a New Funding Regime .....	64
9.5.6 Adopt a New Management Structure .....	64
9.6 Strategic Plan Review Timing and Process .....	65
9.7 Development Priorities .....	65

## Study Objectives

### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the present study is to “develop a framework to guide the planning, development and management of aquatic facilities to optimise benefits delivered to the ACT community for the period through to 2030” (Study Brief, p. 1).

The study has been undertaken in recognition of the importance of aquatic facilities in the mix of resources available to the ACT community. It reflects the increasingly diverse roles that aquatic facilities play and the broad benefits they deliver –including competitive swimming and other water sports; activities that enhance health and fitness; rehabilitation after illness or injury; retention of physical abilities to avoid illnesses; social interchange; relaxation, and fun. Significantly, aquatic leisure venues can also make an important economic contribution to a local the regional economy.

Importantly, the study seeks to respond to the changing nature of aquatic provision in that they are increasingly being developed in association with a range of other community facilities including schools, libraries, health services, meeting venues, outdoor sporting facilities, retail areas and transport nodes. Such a mix achieves a range of “synergies” that support the development of healthy, active communities.

Further, the study Brief stated that the ACT government sees it to be important that:

“...aquatic facilities under its responsibility are planned and developed in a manner (such) that each centre occupies a distinct position and serves an identified role within the portfolio of community facilities”, and that

the study should “maximise the range of community demands for aquatic related activities” that can be met in an “organised and rational manner” and in a way that provides “reasonable access and opportunity for all potential users”.

The study Brief argued the need for the future provision of aquatic facilities in the ACT to be designed so their focus can be expanded to provide a range of other recreational and non-recreational opportunities; so they are developed in keeping with the trend to co-location of a range of community services; so they can be used by as wide as practical a cross-section of the community, and so the community has good access to them.

The study Brief acknowledged that the present mix of aquatic leisure opportunities –in terms of size, components, ownership, condition, and distribution in relation to the present population and to projected patterns of population growth-- has created “some opportunities, gaps and inconsistencies that need to be examined to give direction to the planning process in coming years”. Exploring these opportunities and overcoming the gaps and inconsistencies will ensure that the community has access to appropriate facilities, and that public funding is allocated in the most effective and productive ways.

The lack of a framework to guide the planning, development and management of aquatic facilities in the ACT has been evident for some years with the last such plan being prepared in 1996-97.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the population of the ACT has grown and changed quite significantly; a number of private pools have closed and new ones opened, and a major venue, the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre, has been opened in Belconnen. In parallel with these changes, there have been extensive changes in the format, mix and scale of the facilities, programs and services delivered by aquatic leisure centres elsewhere in Australia.

---

<sup>1</sup> LRM Australia Pty Ltd., 1997: *Strategic Review of Swimming Pools and Related Facilities in the ACT*, prepared for ACT Bureau of Sport, recreation and Racing

Many of these broader changes and the benefits delivered to the community, have not flowed on to aquatic facilities in the ACT. As a consequence, the relevance of a number of them has declined --especially those that are government-owned-- their clientele has stagnated or fallen away and their contribution to the recreational and wider opportunities available to the community has declined. This study seeks to redress this situation.

## 1.2 Study Approach

The present study has evolved from earlier research and planning for the ACT government into the feasibility and design of a new aquatic leisure centre in Gungahlin and the longer term redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic. That research entailed:

- An extensive analysis of the demographics of the ACT
- A review of existing aquatic facilities in the region, their condition and the markets they served
- An analysis of leisure and aquatic participation and provision trends
- A survey of school and sporting club use of aquatic facilities and of their provision needs, and
- In Gungahlin, meetings with community service agencies, other providers and the community association to assess local community needs.

Much of the information collected for the Gungahlin and Olympic Pool studies was initially evaluated at the City-wide level before the focus then turned to the context of the two venue studies. This allowed those venues to be “positioned” in terms of the hierarchical role they should fulfil within the broader city-wide context. Although the initial positioning was somewhat arbitrary, the completion of the research appears to have confirmed it.

In light of the above, the present study seeks to confirm the positioning of the two venues but more importantly and as explained in the first section of this paper, to define a long term development framework to guide further aquatic leisure provision across the remainder of the ACT over coming years.

Sections of this report are drawn from the earlier Gungahlin and Canberra Olympic Pool reports including material on leisure and aquatic trends, and the review of the existing aquatics provision mix in the ACT. This material has been added to and refined through:

1. A review the 1996 *Aquatic Strategy* to identify conclusions and recommendations deemed to be relevant to the study and confirm the elements to be carried forward to the 2010 strategy
2. A draft vision statement for aquatics development in the ACT, this having been derived from a review and interpretation of the 2010-2011 Sport and Recreation Services Business Plan
3. Preparation of a draft hierarchy of aquatic facilities and programs for the ACT
4. A half-day planning and review workshop with representatives from a range of government agencies including those responsible for planning, demographic projections, transport, health, and education. The intent of this workshop was to identify projected future initiatives by other agencies that would help guide future aquatics provision priorities and that could offer opportunities for co-location and shared provision initiatives
5. A comprehensive review of current planning documents prepared by all relevant ACT government departments and agencies
6. Site visits to all existing aquatic leisure venues in the ACT in order to assess their capacity to meet, or to be redeveloped to meet projected future needs, and
7. Preparation of an indicative mix of components at each hierarchical provision level and of the service area (geographic, population size) to be served by each level.

This information was then used to prepare a draft strategic development plan for distribution and review.

## ACT Sport and Recreation: Corporate Vision

### 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a brief overview of the present corporate goals of Sport and Recreation Services as a basis for the strategic plan for aquatic facilities in the ACT.

### 2.2 The Sport and Recreation Services Business Plan

The 2010-2011 Sport and Recreation Services Business Plan has identified a set of key risks and opportunities for 2010-11. The “key risks” that are pertinent to the present study are:

- Ageing assets eg: pools
- Maintenance of traditional planning models by government
- Reliance on partnerships and concurrent government projects for delivery of key capital works, and
- Reliance on partnerships to deliver services on behalf of government.

In light of the trends in the nature and positioning of aquatics provision over recent years (discussed in detail in the following chapter), each of these risks offers a challenge but also an important opportunity. Thus, ageing pool assets provide the opportunity to research, plan, design and deliver new and more appropriate facilities; a *review* of traditional planning models can identify new and more effective strategies (with several of these again being discussed in the following chapter), and partnerships that are based on shared information, shared objectives and an understanding of the outcomes desired by each member of the partnership, can stop being a “risk” and achieve far greater outcomes than would otherwise have been possible. Again, partnership opportunities are touched on in the following chapter.

The “key opportunities” identified in the Business Plan of relevance to the present study include consolidating relationships with state/territory sporting organisations; greater facility access for sports through the completion of major capital works; partnership initiatives with non-government organisations and tertiary institutes, and use of an Economic Impact Study that had been undertaken to build support for sport and recreation. Each of these opportunities can be furthered by the present study, with the latter being relevant in that the co-location of aquatic leisure facilities with educational, social, health, retail and commercial facilities and services will strengthen and enhance the viability and attraction of such venues.

Further to the above, the Business Plan for 2010-2011 sets out the three *goals* of Department of Territory and Municipal Services and the sport and recreation interpretation of these. The goals are:

1. Deliver great services
2. Bring out the best in our people, and
3. Work smartly and efficiently.

While the first two of these goals are essentially internal, organisational goals, number of the business unit *objectives* that fall under all three are pertinent to the present study. Under “Deliver great services”, these are:

- Building relations with industry stakeholders
- Building capacity within the local sporting industry to enhance participation opportunities

- Aligning capital works priorities with key sports
- (Achieving) well utilised high quality sporting facilities with satisfied user groups, and
- Quality services to athletes in alignment with national objectives.

Under “Bring out the best in our people”, the most relevant objective is:

- Promotion of staff skill sets and encouraging ongoing development,

while under “Work smartly and efficiently”, the most relevant objective is:

- Strategic partnerships within industry to maximise resources and delivery opportunities.

Achieving each of these objectives can be targeted through aquatic leisure initiatives and the strategic plan presented in this report presents the means for most effectively doing that.

Several other objectives warrant proposing for inclusion in future Business Plans prepared by Sport and Recreation Services as these too can be advanced through action on aquatic leisure facilities in the form recommended by this report. They can also help achieve far broader, personal, community, economic and environmental outcomes. These are:

- Pursuing integrated development partnerships with other government and non-government agencies
- Providing opportunities for enhancing the recreational, sporting, health, and wellbeing opportunities available to the community in a manner that reflects the nature and needs of the community
- Providing integrated social, education and community resources, and
- Providing sustainable resources.

These have been incorporated into the strategic vision proposed later in this report.

## 2.3 Conclusion

This brief Chapter has reviewed the goals and objectives of ACT Sport and Recreation Services. Several other provision objectives have also been proposed. It is evident from the review that several of the goals and a number of the objectives could be effectively achieved through targeted action on aquatic leisure facilities.



## Recent Trends in Aquatic, Leisure and Community Services Provision in Australia

### 3.1 Drivers of Change

A range of diverse factors has led to extensive changes in the leisure and recreation interests and in the mix of leisure and recreation opportunities *available* to the Australian community over the past 30 years. Most important amongst these have been:

- Higher education levels
- Extended and more flexible work and business hours
- Greater national and personal affluence
- The changing ethnic mix of the community
- The growth and ageing of the population
- Major growth in commercial leisure provision
- Technological innovation
- Improvements in health services and in standards of living and the recognised links between health and participation in active leisure pursuits
- Changing urban form, densities and land use planning
- Loosening of rules and regulations regarding social behaviour
- Greater consumer expectations of quality and professional service, and
- Emergence of community and leisure services professionals and planners.

In combination, these changes have seen leisure and recreation accepted as a “mainstream” element of Australian society. They are now recognised as making a major contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community, to social cohesion and national pride, to economic growth, and to environmental protection.

The acceptance and growing professional position of leisure and recreation has allowed the establishing of a strong leisure services industry which, in turn, has had an increasingly strong impact on government policy and on the delivery of leisure and recreation facilities, programs and services. As a result, there are measurable and often quite dramatic differences from past practice and provision. This change is particularly evident in the aquatic leisure field. Some of the most evident changes are detailed below.

### 3.2 Trends in Aquatic Leisure Provision

The acceptance of leisure and recreation as a mainstream community activity has been strengthened by links with community development, health and wellbeing, education and economic development. And as a result, substantial changes have occurred in the nature and mix of provision of the facilities, programs and services provided. Key examples include:

#### 3.2.1 Facilities

- The provision of multiple pools at aquatic venues to ensure appropriate water depths, temperatures, accessibility, privacy, and through these, diversity in programming
- Co-location of aquatic venues with schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses, libraries, medical centres, shopping centres, outdoor playing fields, retail hubs and transport nodes



- The pursuit of funding, programming and management partnerships with educational, not for profit and private providers
- Provision of major aquatic theme parks such as Wet n Wild
- Creation of a diversity of settings to ensure venues support all levels of activity ranging from social and health programs through to elite competitions
- Provision of all year indoor and/or indoor/outdoor facilities to meet each of social, training, education and health objectives
- Creation of a hierarchy of venues so that all levels of activity and competition can be supported in an effective and viable fashion and so that venues are not pushed to “over-reach” their capacity and roles
- Increasing pressure for greater environmental sustainability, especially in water and energy use, and
- Venue and precinct master planning, performance monitoring and staged redevelopment to ensure the optimum outcomes are achieved.

### **3.2.2 Programs**

- Initiation of a smorgasbord approach to programming so that people and families can choose from a wide range of activities
- Provision of non-competitive but active pursuits as “stepping stones” to wellbeing and return to work
- Activities to support social engagement for mothers, disabled, aged, new immigrant groups, women, and at-risk youth
- A greater focus on healthy living and well-being programs through health services personnel, personal trainers and support programs for those with injuries and disabilities, and for special needs groups
- Development of strong links with educators and in-house education programs: health and fitness, aquatics, leadership, outdoor education, hospitality, leadership
- The use of aquatic venues for festivals, events, fairs and seasonal carnivals, especially over summer
- Provision of activities across a wider period of the day and week and a move to week day evening sports programs in response to changed work structures and the wider desire for weekend involvement in non-sporting pursuits and spectating
- Before and after school programs, and
- Program specialisation at individual or groups of venues so a diverse array of activities and competition can be supported in an effective and viable fashion.

### **3.2.3 Services**

- Provision of cafes and retail spaces, club and party rooms, club storage and multi-user, flexible community and display areas
- Disability access and health professionals
- Specialised and personalised coaching and training
- Health support: visiting doctors and other specialists
- Information dissemination and internet access, and
- Integrated and centralised management and use scheduling.

Each of these trends will be addressed in the development of an effective ACT aquatics strategy.

## The 1997 Aquatic Strategy

### 4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a review the 1997 *Strategic Review of Swimming Pools and Related Facilities in the ACT* that was prepared for the then ACT Bureau of Sport Recreation and Racing by LRM Australia Pty Ltd. The review has been undertaken to identify conclusions and recommendations deemed to be relevant to the study and confirm the elements to be carried forward to the present, 2010 strategy.

### 4.2 Review Purpose and Recommendations

The 1997 review was undertaken to “evaluate existing swimming and related facility provision and (to) develop a territory-wide planning strategy for the next ten to fifteen years” (p. ii). The 1997 study report outlined the methodology used and provided an assessment of the demographics of the ACT together with a review and assessment of the existing facilities, their management and financial performance, market demands and trends in aquatics provision.

The findings of the research were used to identify a set of broad conclusions regarding the then-current provision mix in the ACT and a set of specific development recommendations for each of the northern, central, and southern “regions” of the ACT and for Queanbeyan in New South Wales. The broad provision conclusions were:

- The majority of the public pools in the ACT in 1997 were traditional outdoor facilities that were ageing, expensive to operate and limited in their capacity to cater for the needs of sporting groups and the wider community
- There was a high level of unmet demand for good quality, indoor aquatic facilities, especially in the northern region of the ACT
- The AIS facilities, in catering for elite athletes, “should not be expected to cater for general public use in any future strategy
- There is a notable lack of “a public, indoor, ‘state level’ aquatic facility in the ACT” to accommodate the specialist needs of aquatic sports, and
- The private and institutional facilities catering for specific market segments have an important provision role in that they complement larger-scale public facilities.

The majority of these conclusions still hold true and are endorsed by the present study. One important exception is that the opening of the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre in Belconnen has made an important contribution to reducing demand in the northern region of the City. Yet the population is continuing to grow hence the 1997 recommendation that a further pool is provided in Gungahlin in the medium to longer term (see below).

The specific recommendations made in the 1997 report for each region of the ACT are summarised in Table 4.1 below, together with the recommended timeline.

### 4.3 Commentary

It is evident that a number of the recommendations listed in the chart have been acted on since 1997. These are discussed below.

#### 4.3.1 Northern Region

In the northern region, the most evident action since 1997 has been construction of CISAC in Belconnen and the commissioning and completion of the feasibility study for a new venue at

Gungahlin. Design work is expected to begin in early-mid 2011, with construction to follow completion of that work.

### 4.3.2 Central Region

With regard to the “central region” cited in the Table, a planning and feasibility study for the Canberra Olympic Pool is nearing completion, although the scope of the research and planning undertaken has been far broader than originally proposed. No date for commencing the redevelopment has been confirmed. As the 1997 report recommended a 5-10 year timeframe for a redevelopment, it is probable that there is now some urgency in the need for action.

Recommended Action	Immediate Term	Short Term: 0-5 yrs	Medium Term: 5-10 years	Long Term 10-15 yrs
<b>Northern region</b>				
1. Undertake a feasibility study for the proposed Belconnen Aquatic Centre				
2. Construct the proposed Belconnen facility if deemed to be feasible as a result of 1.				
3. Undertake master planning to integration an aquatic centre into Gungahlin Town Centre				
4. Undertake a planning and feasibility study into the development of an aquatic centre in the Gungahlin Town Centre				
5. Construct the aquatic facility in Gungahlin				
<b>Central region</b>				
6. Planning and feasibility for Canberra Olympic Pool				
7. Redevelopment of Canberra Olympic Pool				
8. Phase out Dickson Pool on completion of the redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool				
9. Upgrade Manuka Pool by enclosing it for all year use and adding fitness facilities				
<b>Southern region</b>				
10. Undertake a feasibility study at Tuggeranong Aquatic Centre to address design deficiencies and to add an outdoor pool				
11. Transfer the management and operation of Erindale Leisure Centre (now Active Leisure Centre) to the Department of Education and Training and reposition it as a school rather than a community facility	No timing listed			
12. Undertake a planning and feasibility study into development of an aquatic centre in South Tuggeranong				
13. Construct an aquatic centre in South Tuggeranong				
14. Review the planning strategy.				

Table 4.1: Summary of recommendations of the 1997 aquatic strategic plan

Recommendation 8 of the 1997 report, that the Dickson Pool be closed on the completion of the redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool is not endorsed by the current study despite its proximity to the Canberra Olympic Pool. This is because:

- The quality setting and layout of the venue makes it particularly attractive to local residents, families, and schools
- The Dickson pool is away from the Canberra CBD
- the greater scale of redevelopment being proposed for the Canberra Civic/Olympic Pool in another report (that is presently being completed) will make it less suited to fulfilling a “local” role
- The higher population densities projected for the inner areas of Canberra through urban renewal and redevelopment mean that the retention of two venues of quite a different nature will be warranted, and
- The setting of the venue would make it possible to add further outdoor and indoor elements to it to transform it into a very viable all year multi-suburb venue.

A first step toward the further development of the venue has been the addition of a new interactive water play element that is opening for the 2010-11 summer.

Manuka Pool is a unique facility, having been built in 1930 to service the then small town of Canberra. It is heritage listed and has a number of loyal user groups. It provides a valuable service in that it is an attractive venue for fitness and relaxation, but does not readily fit in with an orthodox hierarchy of facilities. The main pool is around 30.5 metres by 15 metres (100 feet by 50 feet), and there is a small toddlers' pool in the grounds. The proposal in the 1997 report that the pool be enclosed to enable year-round use would face considerable engineering difficulties and as such should not be pursued. More appropriate would be the addition of further indoor multi-use dry spaces to augment that small cafe that is to be built in the landscaped grounds in 2011 to provide better service to users. Additional indoor pools would almost certainly be marginal if the remaining pools in the central in inner south are retained and particularly if these are further developed.

### **4.3.3 Southern Region**

With regard to the “southern region” of the ACT, the small number of recommendations listed in the 1997 report reflects the quite significant level of private provision there at the time the report was prepared, with this including Phillip Swimming and Ice Skating Centre in Irving Street, Phillip, Oasis Leisure Centre, Tuggeranong Aquatic Centre (now Lakeside Leisure Centre) and Club Lifestyle in the Woden Centre). This logically led to the belief that there was a limited or no need for further provision.

However, since 1997, the Oasis Leisure Centre/Deakin Pool has closed while the Phillip venue has aged substantially and is potentially under threat --although any redevelopment of the site is at present compelled by the Territory Plan to retain a 50 metre pool and an international sized ice rink. The outdated nature of the venue means that considerable investment would be needed to upgrade it to meet current day standards and needs. It is questionable if this could be done on the present site and it might be more effective to pursue development of a totally new venue elsewhere in the Woden Town Centre precinct.

In light of the closure of Deakin and the ageing nature of the Phillip venue, the southern region now has a substantive deficiency of appropriate modern provision and residents in several communities have sought additional local provision for a number of years. This deficiency was in fact, considered to be “severe” by a number of those consulted during the research into the future nature and scope of the proposed Gungahlin centre and the redevelopment of Canberra Olympic Pool. In fact, several respondents indicated that health program providers are resorting to using motel/hotel pools due to the lack of appropriate facilities.

As detailed further in the following Chapter, proposals have recently been made to redevelop the Deakin venue to create two 25 metre pools targeted mainly at learn to swim and fitness programs so this could see some of the shortfall addressed, though it could retain a focus on learn to swim to the detriment of wider market needs. Also, the Deakin venue is very much in an “inner” south location and as such it would be of lesser value to more southerly residents.

No study was undertaken in response to recommendation 10. in the above chart, that being to “Undertake a feasibility study at Tuggeranong Aquatic Centre to address design deficiencies and to add an outdoor pool” Current thinking amongst Sport and Recreation Services officers at the time of the present study is that it may be more appropriate to provide a water play park than an outdoor pool. This would be likely to be more attractive, would complement what already exists on the site, and would be more economic. It is also felt that this may be seen as a more popular strategy once the new water play area planned for Dickson pool is open in the 2010-2011 summer. Such a proposal has considerable merit but would need to be balanced against other potentially higher needs at the venue.

Recommendations 12. and 13. of the 1997 study regarding a feasibility study into development of an aquatic centre in South Tuggeranong and the construction of such a facility were not undertaken. Present Officer opinion within Sport and Recreation Services is that it is improbable that new provision in South Tuggeranong will now occur with the Lakeside and Active Leisure Centres being seen as a reasonable level of supply. This position may need to be tested in terms of the mix of opportunities provided by the latter venues.

Finally, it has been suggested that some form of aquatic facilities could be included in the Stromlo Forest Park, possibly co-located with a large multi-court sports hall or built in nearby residential areas. The suggestion sees the potential for such an initiative to:

- Meet elite aquatic sporting and training needs and potentially, include some low cost accommodation as part of the Stromlo Forest Park development
- Meet the needs of residents in the new Molonglo residential areas (being developed on the former forest areas lost to the 2003 bushfires and projected to eventually house around 70-80,000 residents)
- Service the Weston Creek area, and
- Possibly meet needs for some of the Woden Valley area, dependent on how the Phillip venue is eventually redeveloped.

The potential development of an aquatic facility in the Molonglo area is to be the subject of a feasibility study in 2011/12. This study will need to examine the issues noted above including as well as:

- The need for and viability of the low cost accommodation that has been proposed as part of the Stromlo Forest Park development
- Other regional demands and priorities in southern Canberra and across the City as a whole
- Relationships with other facilities in the region, including Woden, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong
- Long term demographic projections across the south-west and western suburbs as a guide to the most appropriate scale, location and timing for any new facility
- The fact that the Molonglo district population is projected to take from 10-15 years to reach its maximum level
- Any potential shortcomings with a Molonglo or Stromlo Forest Park location including that fact that a venue in these locations could have a truncated catchment due to the lack of a resident market to the west
- Financial and operational viability if a new venue was developed as an elite aquatic sporting and training venue for the overall ACT market, and
- Whether such a location for an elite aquatic sporting and training venue would disadvantage residents living in the northern half of the City.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The 1997 report, *Strategic Review of Swimming Pools and Related Facilities in the ACT*, provided clear guidance to the ACT government on a broad range of initiatives designed to modernise, add to, and develop new aquatic leisure venues in the ACT.

The recommendations for the north of the City led directly to the construction of CISAC in Belconnen and to the commissioning of feasibility studies into development of a new complex in Gungahlin. In the central area, the recommended strategic development plan for the Canberra Olympic Pool has been developed, but other recommendations have not eventuated. In the south, only the transference of Erindale Leisure Centre to the Department of Education and Training has occurred. The venue is commercially operated and has been rebranded as “Active Leisure Centre”.

Residential development works in Molonglo since the 2003 bushfires suggest that the 1997 proposal regarding a pool in Tuggeranong South will not proceed, with it being suggested that future needs in this part of the City will perhaps be addressed by Lakeside Leisure Centre, a potentially redeveloped Phillip Leisure Centre and a new venue in Molonglo. The latter option could see development occur as part of a complex of outdoor high performance sports facilities at Stromlo Forest park or within the new residential areas.

The options for most effectively meeting needs in the southern suburbs of the ACT are somewhat in flux and these will be evaluated in the feasibility study to be undertaken during 2011/12. However, care must be taken to ensure that any new provision is not initiated to the detriment of the redevelopment and modernisation of existing venues or to the provision of new multi-suburb venues in *existing* residential areas. Any new provision should, if possible, be central to the markets it is seeking to serve.

These findings and conclusions have been carried over to Chapter 9 of this report where a set of recommendations for action are presented.

DRAFT

## The Present Aquatics Provision in the ACT

### 5.1 Introduction

The following section provides an overview of the mix of aquatic and leisure related opportunities available to the ACT community at present and proposed in the future. Understanding the types of facilities and services offered within the region makes it clearer as to possible gaps in provision and what is required to meet the immediate and longer term needs of the community. The review also assesses the gaps in community opportunities in terms of recognised standards of aquatic provision. Some of the key findings of both the Gungahlin aquatic and leisure feasibility study and Canberra Olympic Pool long term options study have been used as reference material to support this overview.

### 5.2 Existing Provision

Currently, the ACT has the following aquatic facilities:

- 5 learn to swim centres
- 5 Multi-purpose leisure centres
- 3 Standard swimming pools, and
- 1 Water play pool.

Figures 5.1 –Northside- and Figure 5.2 –Southside- show the positioning of this provision. A brief description of each facility is provided in Table 5.1.

With regard to the maps and Table, it should be noted that:

- In the north, a new public multi-pool venue is presently being planned at Gungahlin in the north. The mix of components to be provided at this venue is still to be finalised
- Also in the north, a new private learn to swim venue is being planned for Forde. This venue will have a 20 metre indoor swimming pool for learn to swim purposes, a hydrotherapy pool, 2 consulting rooms and a health and fitness area of approximately 500 – 600 square metres. The freehold of the building is owned by the Aquatots private swim group
- Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic supports social and lap swimming all year and is also used for a range of club events and programs. Planning is nearly complete for a major upgrading and refocusing of this venue and the mix of components additional to the existing 50 metre and diving pools is yet to be finalised, and
- Deakin Pool, until recently an inner south side enclosed 50 metre pool, had an operational history under various management arrangements dating back to the 1960s. The venue was closed in 2009 due to its deteriorating condition and as such is indicated by the black dot on the accompanying map. It is understood that the owner recently sought approval to develop office buildings on part of the site and that following negotiations with ACTPLA, this has been approved, provided two 25 metre pools are provided, with these to be used mainly for learn to swim and related programs. If this proposal comes to fruition, it is probable that some dry health and fitness provision will also be made.

These venues will also need to be considered in the context of the wider strategy. In addition, there are 25 metre pools at the Canberra Boys and Girls Grammar Schools that attract some club use.



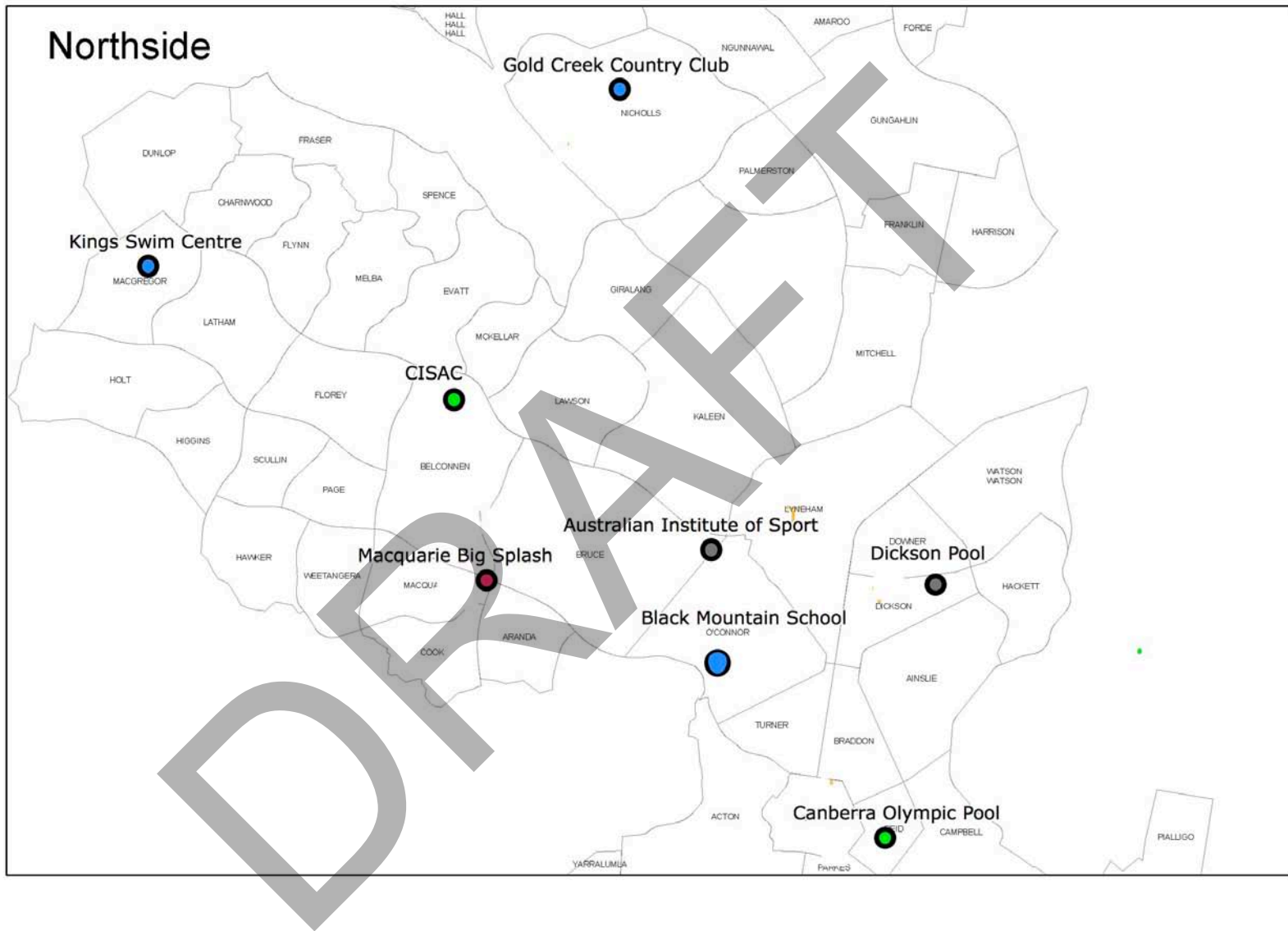


Figure 5.1: Northside pools, ACT. (Note: The colours refer to the type of pool venue as listed in Table 5.1)

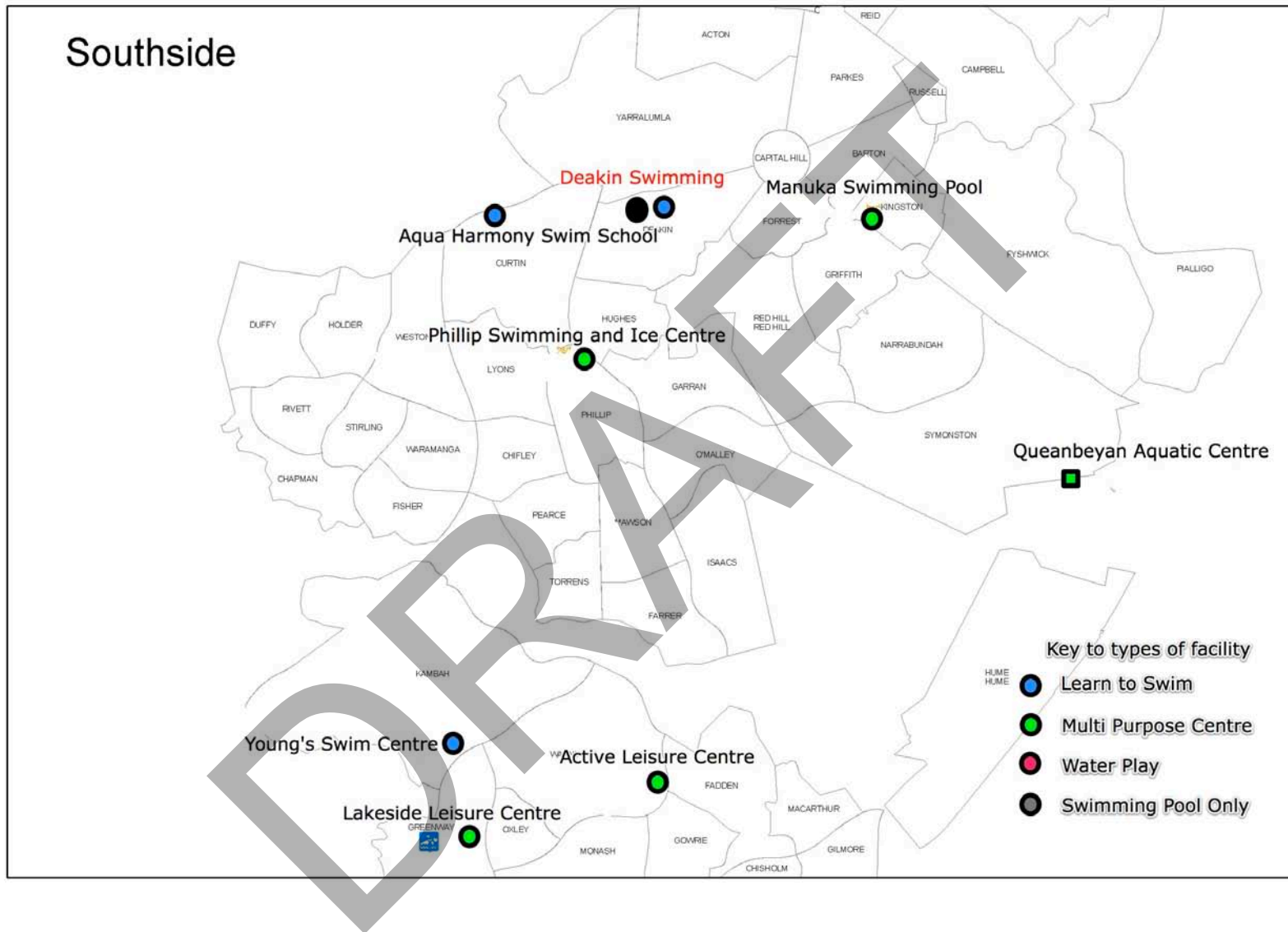


Figure 5.2: Southside pools, ACT. (Note: The colours refer to the type of pool venue as listed in Table 5.1)

Pool Type	Centre Name	Address / Location	Comments
	<b>Learn to Swim</b>		
	Aqua Harmony Swim School	Cotter Road, CURTIN	Centre is part of a horse riding / training complex set on a farmlet. Indoor heated teaching pool predominately operated as a swim school catering to children aged 4 months to 8 years. Main use – LTS - limited local use. No wider community opportunities.
	Black Mountain School	Cockle Street, O'CONNOR	Leased and managed by the Aquatots private swim group. It is part of the Black Mountain Special Needs School. Indoor heated teaching pool that provides learn to swim for babies and pre-schoolers and children with special needs. No wider community opportunities.
	Deakin Swimming	King Street, DEAKIN	This venue is presently closed but negotiations are under way between ACTPLA and the owner re a redevelopment of the site which will eventuate in 2 indoor 25 m. pools for learn to swim and program use being provided along with dry health and fitness facilities
	Gold Creek Aquatic Centre	Gold Creek Country Club – Curren Drive, NICHOLLS	Leased to the Aquatots private swim group. Situated within the Gold Creek Country Club. Indoor heated teaching pool predominantly operated as a swim school catering for pre-school and lower primary school ages. Limited wider community opportunities.
	Kings Swim Centre	Palmers Place, MACGREGOR	Privately owned by Cornwell developments. The centre operates under the banner of the Kings Swim Centre brand which own, lease and operate other centres in Victoria. Indoor heated pool operates predominantly as a swim school for pre-school to lower primary school ages. Limited wider community opportunities.
	Young's Swim Centre	Jenke Circuit, Kambah	Leased component of a wider venue (including children's play /party business, indoor sports including indoor cricket, soccer and netball complex). 15 m. LTS pool used for swim school with no wider community opportunities.
	<b>Multi- purpose</b>		
	Active Leisure Centre	Mc Bryde Crescent, WANNIASSA	Owned by the Department of Education and managed under contract by the Erindale College Parent and Child Association. Operates as a public facility. Multi-purpose centre that includes an indoor swimming pool, health and fitness area, theatre, outdoor tennis courts, squash courts and one indoor stadium. Swimming pool and gymnasium areas have recently been upgraded.
	Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC)	Eastern Valley Way, BELCONNEN	Largest multi-purpose health club and leisure centre in the ACT. It is privately owned and operated by The Club Group Pty Ltd. Facility offers a broad range of aquatic and dry based fitness and leisure programs and services catering for general market services and needs. The health club provision is run under the Club Lime and Club Pink (women's only) brand. A commercial focus means that whole of community needs and opportunities are not offered or promoted because they are not commercially viable.
	Canberra Olympic Pool	Allara St, CIVIC	Centre is managed under contract from the ACT Government. Operates as a community facility and predominantly attracts local business users and school groups. It is also used for club training, water polo, triathlon and dive clubs. Includes indoor and outdoor pools. Has the only diving facility in the ACT. Dry health and fitness space is limited.
	Lakeside Leisure Centre	Anketell Street , GREENWAY	Managed under contract from the ACT government. Centre includes a mix of aquatic and dry facilities that cater to the general public and schools. Health and fitness membership has been affected in the past two years due to the establishment of Club Lime and Club Pink health clubs next door. Club Lime and Club Pink are part of The Club Group Pty Ltd.
	Phillip Swimming Pool and Ice Centre	Irving Street, PHILLIP	Centre includes outdoor swimming pools and the only ice skating rink in the ACT. Privately owned. Ice skating rink is operated all year round with the swimming pools operating in the summer months only. The swimming pools are predominantly used for lap swimming and recreational play

Table 5.1: Existing aquatic provision in the ACT

Pool Type	Centre Name	Address / Location	Comments
	<b>Pools only</b>		
	AIS Aquatic Centre	Leverrier Street, BRUCE	Managed by the AIS. Pool is prioritised for elite swim /training for AIS athletes. Open to users when not booked. Schools and community use, and a learn to swim program are also provided when not used for AIS training purposes.
	Dickson Pool	Cowper Street, DICKSON	Open only in the summer months and managed under contract for the ACT Government. Predominantly used for lap swimming, school hire, and learn to swim programs are offered. The provision of lawn areas makes it popular to families on warm days where there is a predominant recreational use. Substantial new water play features have been developed to increase recreational and leisure use.
	Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre	Crawford Street, QUEANBEYAN	This centre operates as a public indoor swimming pool. The centre offers lap swimming, learn to swim and lane hire to schools and community groups. Operated by Queanbeyan City Council.
	Manuka Swimming Pool	Manuka Circle, MANUKA	Outdoor aquatic facility that is only open in the summer months managed under contract for the ACT Government. Summer season pool only. No LTS or regular programming but used as a social hub for recreational use by local and district community. Heritage listed.
	<b>Water play</b>		
	Big Splash Water Park	Catchpole Street, MACQUARIE	Privately owned centre is the only major outdoor leisure play facility in the ACT. The centre has a 50 m. outdoor pool and a range of water slides and play features. Open in the summer months only.

Table 5.1 continued: Existing aquatic provision in the ACT

**Note:** In addition to the venues listed in the Table, the Department of Education operates a specialist hydrotherapy pool at Malkara Special School in Boake Place, Garran. The pool has been in operation for over 20 years and represents an essential facility for children with complex and multiple disabilities. The pool is a therapeutic resource used by all Malkara students during school hours, community agencies in spare sessions during school hours and that work with adult clients with disabilities (in after hours sessions), and the families of students, after hours. DET has prepared a business case for a refurbishment project which is due to take place in 2011/12.

There are also pools at the RMC and ADFA but there is little if any opportunity for community use of these.

Across the array of aquatic venues listed in Table 5.1, there is a mix of water spaces offered for full, programmed or partial public use. This provision encompasses:

- 5 x 50 metre indoor pools (including two at the AIS)
- 3 x 50 metre outdoor pool
- 1 x 30 m. outdoor pool (Manuka)
- 2 x 25 metre indoor pools
- 2 x 20 metre indoor pools
- 1 x 12.5 metre indoor pool
- 4 outdoor learner pools
- 2 indoor learner pools
- 2 indoor and 1 outdoor leisure pools
- 1 indoor and 3 outdoor toddlers pools, and
- 1 outdoor diving pool.

There are also at least two school pools.

A number of conclusions can be drawn regarding the present aquatic provision in the ACT. These are:

- There is a wide range and mix of swimming spaces available to the community with no venue indicating that they had reached capacity
- There is a high level of provision of water space catering specifically for the learn to swim market for pre-school and primary aged children. This water space can be found in the majority of both the privately owned and government owned venues
- Due to development costs and return on investment priorities, private aquatic provision developers/operators tend to have built dedicated indoor learn to swim pools only. These pools range in depth but are predominantly shallow to cater for the pre and primary school aged children market. Traditionally, the highest number of learn to swim enrolments can also be expected from this age group. The learn to swim market is a financially profitable market segment which can provide a return on investment as a program offering by itself
- Private aquatic developers and operators tend to offer limited and/or no general community aquatic opportunities because they are less profitable to operate
- There are more privately owned and/or operated venues than public venues. Many of the privately-owned venues tend to be smaller in size and less capable of accommodating wider community needs. Further, private facilities are more susceptible to financial and market pressures, as evidenced by the closure of Deakin Pool over recent years
- Of the government-owned pools, all are operated by contracted managers or management companies. Unless there are clear objectives, contract drafting and effective performance monitoring, this approach limits the ability of the owning authority to pursue its social and community wellbeing policies through the venues while the private operators focus on delivering what will optimise their financial returns
- There is only a small number of venues with 50 or 25 metre indoor pools that are suitable for all year higher level learn to swim, fitness and squad training. Operators indicated that there was capacity to cater for more local swim carnival and school use
- No venue has the capacity to completely or fully effectively cater for national or international aquatic meets or events

- Older adults are disadvantaged by the current provision through a lack of dedicated warm water for rehabilitation and gentle exercise opportunities. Only three venues provide aqua aerobics classes for older adults
- Although the only dive facility available in the ACT is that at the Canberra Olympic pool in Civic, no need has been identified for a second facility. However, it is noted known the existing facility does not comply with current standards, and
- Only two of the facilities, CISAC and Lakeside Leisure, had designated leisure pools with beach entry elements. Beach entry pools are very popular with young families as a social experience and as a means of water play for children.

### 5.3 Conclusions

The above review provides an overview of the competing provision for the aquatic and leisure markets in the ACT region. A number of conclusions can be drawn from this review in relation to the strategy including:

- The Canberra Olympic Pool no longer meets the wider needs of the community in its current configuration
- No aquatic facility in the ACT is capable of hosting national and international swim meets due to seating, marshalling, access and other limitations
- There is a shortfall of all year aquatic facilities for the social, leisure and recreation markets
- There is a lack of facilities catering for rehabilitation and older adult health markets
- There are adequate venues currently to cater for the learn to swim markets. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that most, if not all, swim schools are at or near capacity and will continue to grow strongly, and as such demand for facilities will expand
- The provision for learn to swim (and in the wider leisure provision of health clubs) venues has developed on a commercial basis where entrepreneurs have seen the opportunities, and
- There is a continuing need for a more comprehensive and integrated program of provision focused on meeting wider community needs (such as has been pursued with the current Gungahlin and Canberra Olympic Pool studies), so that a more effective, equitable and balanced mix of provision is achieved.

The above summary indicates that from a provision point of view, there is strong evidence to indicate the need for a long term strategy to ensure a mix of opportunities is available to the whole community to fill market gaps, to meet community needs, and to cater for projected population growth.

Factors such as the mix, size, distribution and future growth predictions of the ACT and regional population, the community needs and the financial implications will all need to be considered before any final strategy recommendations are made. From a service provision point of view, the lack of whole-of-community aquatic related providers in the region clearly indicates that a planned approach to future provision will have added community, financial and health benefits.

## Hierarchies of Provision

### 6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a draft hierarchy of provision to guide future aquatic leisure developments in the ACT.

### 6.2 The Purpose of a Provision Hierarchy

The allocation of recreation venues and programs to a position in a hierarchy of provision is a key tool in planning and management processes. Establishing a hierarchical classification is of benefit in that allows a better evaluation of existing provision and of the role played by that provision, and it sets the parameters for what should and should not be provided, in terms of both facilities and programs, at each level in the hierarchy.

For a hierarchy to be effective in directing investment and use, every effort should be made to ensure that lower order venues do not have the facilities, programs or services that should rightly be provided at each successively higher level of provision. Where this *does* occur, market distortion, inappropriate investment, access inequities, sub-optimal performance, and facility, use, traffic and parking management can occur.

### 6.3 Recommended ACT Aquatic Leisure Provision Hierarchy

A four level hierarchy of aquatic leisure provision is recommended for the ACT. The hierarchy and the proposed elements associated with each have been derived from the national trends identified in the leisure and aquatics industries over the past twenty years and reported in Chapter 3 of this report. The proposed levels are:

1. Multi-suburb
2. District/sub-ACT
3. ACT-wide (Territory), and
4. National.

Under this hierarchy, there would be no “local” venues –by comparison with, for instance, “local” playgrounds. This is because individual suburbs or localities generally do not provide a market of sufficient size to sustain a viable aquatic leisure centre given the known levels of use and given the capital and operational costs of aquatic provision. It is acknowledged, however, that private providers may build “local” aquatic venues that target particular client groups, most notably learn to swim and some health and fitness markets. Such venues can afford to be “local” as their components are generally smaller than what would be provided at public venues. They are also cheaper to build and operate as they are not designed to the standards of public venues, do not provide the same breadth of programs and services as public venues, and are not operated for the same length of time each day.

As is noted at several points in the following descriptions, it is possible for the “nesting” or hybrids of the recommended provision levels to occur when, for instance, the siting and space available for a District centre also allows it to effectively fulfill a Multi-suburb role. Opportunities for this should be explored where appropriate.

Each level of the recommended hierarchy is discussed in the following sections.



### 6.3.1 Multi-Suburb Venues

**Area and population served.** Under the hierarchy proposed above, the “lowest” level would be a multi-suburb venue. As the name implies, such a facility would seek to meet core aquatic needs across a group of contiguous suburbs, with the actual number being dependent on the total or projected population. It could be expected that a population of 25,000- 30,000 would be sufficient to support viable a multi-suburb venue. This is not to say, however, that there should be one such venue for every 25,000-30,000 ACT residents. A multi-suburb venue actually service 50,000 or more residents. No consideration may need to be given to additional provision –either at that venue or elsewhere-- until catchment analyses and market contribution ratios (the number of users per 1,000 residents) indicated that particular suburbs were being disadvantaged by gaps in provision.

**Facilities and programs provided.** The mix of facilities and programs provided by a multi-suburb venue would be restricted by both the size of the market available to it and by the fact that there would be other similar-level venues servicing other groups of suburbs. That said, it could be expected that a multi-suburb venue would have facilities that supported flexibility of use and a capacity to provide all year learn to swim, water play, health and fitness and possibly, some lap swimming activities. It should also be capable of supporting aquatic and non-aquatic health and fitness, social and community activity needs. The facilities could thus be expected to include:

- A 25 metre indoor or outdoor heated pool of 6 or 8 lanes
- Small fitness gym
- Warm water program pool
- Small water play area
- 1 – 2 consulting suites
- Meeting room(s)
- Cafe and social area, and
- A small number of partner facilities, programs and services as identified.

Multi-suburb venues would not have either indoor or outdoor 50 metre pools, large swim club programs or substantial specialised fitness gyms *unless these were pre-existing facilities*. They could however, have small outdoor summer social and water play settings, meeting rooms for local clubs and groups, strong learn to swim programs, and strong links with other community facilities such as shopping centres, primary and secondary schools, sports fields, local transport nodes, and bike path/walking trail networks.

**Programs and the target markets.** The nature of the specific programs and the target markets serviced through a multi-suburb venue would be dependent on the characteristics of the catchment population, on the nature of any other providers and their programs, and on the nature of any development or co-location partners. To illustrate, a multi-suburb venue with a multi-purpose program pool in an ageing community may have a greater focus on aged health and body strengthening /aquarobics programs than on learn to swim. A multi-suburb venue co-located with a school may provide learn to swim, club training and after school programs as its key services, while teenage aquatic play, social activities and family programs may be given a stronger focus in suburbs with many families of secondary school age.

As noted previously, a key criterion in designing multi-suburb venues would be use flexibility although it could be expected that there would be a fair degree of duplication amongst the facilities provided as people would not be expected to travel long distances or across the city to reach these venues.

**Venue and site sizes.** Experience suggests that a modern multi-suburb venue will have a built footprint of 5,000 to 7,000 square metres. However, if developed at ground level, it should be sited on 15,000 to 21,000 square metres of land to ensure that changing needs and additional aquatic leisure provision over a life span of 60 plus years can be accommodated. Multi-level developments may have the capacity to reduce the size of a site required

although this should be treated with caution as smaller sites has a lesser capacity for later redevelopment and for the opportunistic addition of other co-located elements.

The site allowance *does not include* provision for parking (with around 250 spaces being the ideal), or provision for other facilities or spaces with which the venue is integrated or co-located –such as schools, community sports halls, neighbourhood centres, retail, office or public transport services.

**Venue examples.** At present there are no existing aquatic leisure venues in the ACT that directly reflect the multi-suburb hierarchical model, although the venue proposed in the current Gungahlin Aquatic Leisure Centre feasibility study is most akin to it. Even though this venue is presently being regarded as the equivalent of a District/sub-ACT level venue, (see following section), the site constraints will not allow it to fully achieve this size or scale of operation.

The Active Leisure Venue in Wanniasa; Lakeside Leisure Centre, immediately south of Tuggeranong Town Centre; Phillip Pool and Ice Rink at the northern end of the Woden Town Centre, and the Dickson outdoor pool have potential to be developed to a multi-suburb standard although an argument can be put that the first three warrant development to a higher level again while each of the Phillip and Dickson sites are too small to accommodate much further development.

Few of the private venues have any capacity for development as multi-suburb venues as many have pools of less than 25 metre length, have no dry fitness/program areas, limited social and support spaces and are on small or inappropriately zoned and serviced sites. This means that while they may presently serve a multi-suburb clientele it is for only one or two client groups and they do not have the flexibility or facilities needed to effectively meet the overall multi-suburb markets.

### 6.3.2 District Venues

**Area and population served.** District level aquatic venues serve the needs of far larger areas of the ACT. These could be, for instance, the far north, central north, inner north (or central area), the central south and the lower south or south-west. Over time and as the City grows toward 500,000 residents, there could eventually be as many as 6-8 district level aquatic venues in the ACT. The final number will be dependent on population densities, travel distances, and the capacity of the ACT government and/or private equity partners to fund provision and possibly, on-going operational costs.

District level aquatic venues would be expected to fulfil a number of the same roles as multi-suburb venues as well as supporting higher numbers of users seeking higher standards of provision for school programs, lap swimming, coaching and training, district level competitions, health services and the like.

Some unique facility or program specialisation should ideally, also be provided so that the community is able to gain a wider mix of recreational experiences by spreading its use across a number of district level venues rather than confining use to only one or two venues.

The catchment population served by a district level venue would be expected to range from 80,000 to 100,000 residents, this being the number which south-eastern Australian experience indicates is needed to support the viable operation of a 50 metre indoor pool. As with multi-suburb venues, the actual population served could be significantly larger with this being dependent on location, accessibility and other factors. Similarly, provision of additional district level venues would be dependent on catchment reach and use ratios.

**Facilities and programs provided.** The facilities to be provided in a District venue could be expected to include:

- 25 and/or 50 metre *indoor* lap pool of 8-10 lanes
- 25 or 50 metre *outdoor* lap pool of 8-10 lanes
- Warm water program pool of 25 metres and 4 lanes
- Spa pools

- Sauna
- Outdoor lawn, shade and picnic areas
- Indoor and outdoor water play areas
- Fitness gym of 500 square metres plus
- 2-3 meeting, club, activity rooms
- Cafe/catering facility
- Retail area(s)
- Suites for permanent use by trainers, health professionals, educators, youth/aged/multi-cultural staff
- A range of partner facilities, programs and services as identified, and
- Other unique elements such as a wave pool, wave rider/standing wave and outdoor performance space.

As indicated above and unlike the duplication of facilities between multi-suburb venues, district level aquatic venues would have far higher levels of facility and program differentiation, with the mix being particularly dependent on co-location and partnership decisions. In this context, aquatic facility planners should actively seek out different co-location and partnership opportunities for each of these venues.

The programming of district level aquatic venues should reflect the age/socio-economic make-up and leisure interests of the district population, as well as the development and co-location partners. However, it could be expected that they would service strong lap swimming markets, swim and other aquatic sport clubs, school programs, advanced aquatic and non-aquatic health and wellbeing services. A provision level of one district level facility for a base population of 80-100,000 residents would ensure an accessible and viable number of venues.

**Venue and site sizes.** Based on the components to be provided, a district level aquatic venue could be expected to require a footprint of 7,000 to 12,000 square metres and should be sited on land of 21,000 to 36,000 square metres to allow for expansion and growth over time in keeping with the changing needs of the community. Additional land would be required if other facilities were to be co-located with a project. As noted with regard to Multi-suburb venues, developments that occur in multi-level buildings may have some capacity to reduce the size of a land area required. However, this should be treated with caution as smaller sites has a lesser capacity for later redevelopment and for the opportunistic addition of other co-located elements.

**Venue examples.** At present, it is probable that Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) in Belconnen is the only aquatic venue in Canberra that equates to a District level centre. However it does not include a number of the facility and programming elements proposed above and it is managed principally with commercial objectives rather than with community opportunities as a priority. Other existing venues in the ACT that could be upgraded to District status include Lakeside Leisure Centre and Phillip Pool and Ice Rink, though the later, as noted previously, has potentially significant site constraints.

### 6.3.3 ACT-wide (Territory) Venues

**Area and population served.** An ACT or Territory level venue would serve the whole of the ACT as well as wider regional markets. However, in keeping with the modern aquatic leisure development models discussed in Chapter 3, and given that the venue will have its own surrounding and district markets, this level of venue should also incorporate some of the facilities and programs provided through each Multi-suburb and District venues so as to serve these markets.

**Facilities provided.** The mix of facilities that should be provided would include:

- Territory level competition facilities for aquatic sports including possibly, one or two 50 metre indoor pools of 10 lanes and with boom(s) to allow flexible aquatic spaces capable of accommodating competition, lessons, team aquatic team sports including water polo, synchronised swimming, triathlon events, coaching and lap swimming

- Territory standard diving facilities
- Advanced aquatic health facilities
- Specialist coaching, teaching and health staff
- Dry training areas for diving
- Outdoor lap pool
- Indoor and outdoor water play areas to allow all year involvement
- Outdoor social areas
- Outdoor non-aquatic sports
- Full event change, marshalling and judging facilities
- Corporate and sponsor areas and services
- Club/association rooms/offices
- Multiple dry health and fitness areas covering a range of disciplines
- Fine dining, cafe and social areas
- Specialist facilities, programs and services reflecting development and co-location partners including accommodation for elite trainees, tourist resort facilities, bars, specialist retail and specialist entertainment facilities, corporate reception areas and areas for a diversity of conference and related programs
- Other unique elements such as a wave pool, wave rider/standing wave and outdoor performance space.

As noted in relation to lower order venues, an ACT-wide Territory centre would also include elements of Multi-suburb and District venues so as to meet the needs of surrounds residents for these facilities.

**Venue and site sizes.** An ACT-wide venue should allow for a footprint of the order of 12,000 to 15,000 square metres --plus other co-located facilities—on a site of around 36,000 to 45,000 square metres. Again, as noted with both Multi-suburb and District level venues, some land savings could be achieved through a development that features use of multi-level buildings. However, at the ACT-wide level this should be treated with severe caution as presentation will be critical and the capacity for later redevelopment and for the opportunistic addition of other co-located elements must be retained.

**Venue examples.** At present, there are no facilities in the ACT that fit the ACT / Territory level venues hierarchical position, although the AIS swimming facilities have fulfilled this role for state/regional level competition when they are free from AIS requirements. However, the AIS mix of facilities is quite narrow when compared with the above list of ideal functions.

Significantly, the proposals envisioned for the redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool in the study currently being completed would see it move up the hierarchical order to become the *only* ACT-wide/ Territory level venue --as the ACT population could only successful sustain one ACT/ Territory level venue.

### 6.3.4 National Level Venues

National level facilities tend to focus predominantly on two markets: national and international competitive programs and events and national tourist markets as, epitomised by for instance, the Gold Coast “Water World” and “Wet n’ Wild” tourist destinations.

In the competitive context, the ACT is the home of one of several national level elite aquatic sports venues in Australia, that being the Australian Institute of Sport’s swimming facilities. The other national aquatics venue is the Sleeman Sports Complex in Brisbane, the base for the national diving program. That said, the major aquatic venues in each of the main State capitals have also supported national and, of recent years in Sydney and Melbourne, *international* events, in the form of the Olympic and Commonwealth Games and the World Swimming Championships.

As the AIS swimming venue is in the ACT, no further national level provision *for* elite training is needed. The scale of the AIS facilities could not be justified on the basis of the ACT

population alone and the centre has to rely on continuing federal funding and a national market, to remain operational. Given the level of competition from interstate for national and international events, it is recommended that no further consideration be given to the provision of such facilities and venues at this level into the foreseeable future.

As noted above, the other form of “national” level aquatic venue that has emerged over recent decades are the Gold Coast “Water World” and “Wet n’ Wild” tourist destinations. These have a sole water play focus. The only venue in this format in the ACT is “Big Splash” in Macquarie although the size of the immediate or visitor market it can draw on is comparatively small while climatic limitations restrict traditional outdoor pool facilities. As a consequence, the venue has not been developed to the scale comparable with interstate venues.

In general, State/ Territory government’s do not get involved with aquatic leisure venues focused on tourism and given the scale of other actions needed in the ACT, any such involvement should be avoided or be given a low priority. The scale of investment needed at “Big Splash” to make it competitive (in terms of attracting large markets away from Queensland venues) would be substantial, may never be financially viable and as such it is recommended that any such investment should be avoided.

More appropriate in the Canberra context, more in keeping with international trends, and more “unique” in the Australian context would be a venue that included provision of elements of the European-style resort spas, the provision of related health and wellness services<sup>2</sup>, and setting the aquatic facilities in a street/cafe/restaurant precinct. These would be best suited for provision at the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic and would add a rich cosmopolitan atmosphere to the venue given its CBD setting, the diversity of markets it could reach, its proximity to other nationally-significant destinations, its central location and its high accessibility. Such elements of provision are recommended in the feasibility study into the redevelopment of that venue and are endorsed by the present strategy plan.

### 6.3.5 Site Selection Criteria

All sites considered for acquisition or reservation for the future development of aquatic leisure venues should be assessed in terms of the sizes cited in the previous paragraphs and in terms of at least the following:

- Ownership
- Availability of utilities and services
- Accessibility
- Aspect
- Slope
- Drainage
- Geology
- Existing vegetation communities
- Projected long term adjoining uses that may be sympathetic or generate use conflicts
- Capacity for site expansion.

It is recommended that a weighted rating scheme is developed using these and other criteria to ensure the most appropriate sites are selected.

## 6.4 The Aquatics Hierarchy: Overview

The foregoing draft aquatic facilities and programs hierarchy has been developed to provide a framework to guide a consistent program of future venue provision across the ACT. Signif-

---

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Sweaney, Karen, “The world’s top fitness trends for 2011”, in *Australasian Leisure Management*, No. 85, March-April 2011, p. 26

icantly, when the hierarchy is applied to the existing set of opportunities, it becomes evident that there are substantive gaps in the capacity of many venues to meet the mix of facilities and programs identified as being appropriate to that level. Few if any of the venues meet the scope recommended for a multi-suburb venue, there is really only one definite district level venue (and even that does not deliver the optimum mix of opportunities), and there are no venues that meet the criteria for ACT-wide or Territory level centres. These conclusions are supported by the detailed analyses of use that were carried out as part of the Gungahlin and Canberra Olympic Pool feasibility studies.

These conclusions suggest that a substantial program of upgraded and new provision will be needed over the coming years if the ACT community is to benefit from an effective set of aquatic leisure venues. It is probable that some of the gaps will be able to be filled by further developing existing venues although siting, condition and ownership means that action at a number of these would almost certainly provide to be quite difficult and potentially, inappropriate. As such, consideration will also need to be given to the development of new facilities if needs are to be effectively met. In keeping with the trends discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, wherever possible, such provision should be undertaken in partnership with other government, not-for-profit and private organisations.

DRAFT



## Managing Aquatic Leisure Facilities

### 7.1 Introduction

The extent to which facilities, programs and services successfully meet community needs and aspirations depends heavily on the way in which they are managed, programmed and serviced.

Facilities which rely on the community knowing how and when to use them, rarely achieve the outcomes which they could with good management, marketing, programming and performance monitoring. A facility is simply one of the means to the delivery of a mix of beneficial experiences. Delivering these outcomes in an optimal manner requires far more than just the “delivery” of a building.

This Chapter summarises a number of key issues regarding the management of aquatic recreation venues. No attempt has been made to evaluate the management models and strategies presently used at ACT aquatic venues as these will be addressed at later stages of the provision process and only in relation to those venues that have been earmarked for further development within the strategic plan recommended in the final Chapter of this report.

### 7.2 Key Elements of Successful Management

The key elements of successful aquatic and leisure management are:

- A clear statement of the aim of the provision
- A clear set of management objectives to guide decision making for all management elements
- An appropriate management structure or model to deliver the above aim and objectives
- A set of programs which reflect the researched needs and nature of the community and their aspirations –in keeping with the overall goal of the ACT Government
- A team of appropriately skilled staff with the ability to continually grow and change the services offered to meet the needs of the community
- A strategy for marketing the programs and services offered
- A strategy for scheduling use
- A strategy for maintaining and where appropriate, improving the condition of assets, and
- A strategy for monitoring the outcomes and performance of the venue or venues, the staff, the programs and the services.

All too often, government authorities devolve the majority if not all of these responsibilities to independent venue operators with little or no requirements for meaningful performance reporting. Not surprisingly, venues operated in this manner rarely meet the needs of the broad community in an effective manner. Addressing the key elements of successful management should thus be a key task at an early point in the development of any aquatic and leisure venue/s.

### 7.3 Aquatic Venue Aims and Objectives

The most critical element of any management process is to have a clear aim and a set of objectives. Without this guidance and commitment the desired outcome of meeting



community needs and aspirations can quickly be replaced with a particular focus on one element of management, or indeed little focus on any outcome. An overarching aim and set of management objectives will be proposed as part of the ACT aquatics strategy.

The following aim is recommended for the delivery of aquatic and leisure venues in the ACT Government:

To enrich community life and social connection and enhance the general well being of people of all ages by providing a wide range and mix of high quality passive and active social, cultural and recreation opportunities for the community.

The primary objective of any aquatic and leisure development is to meet the needs of its community through relevant programs and services. Therefore, the following 'service' and 'operational' objectives are proposed in support of the above management aim:

**'Service' Objectives:**

- To foster, accommodate and provide the broadest possible range of passive/active aquatic and leisure programs and services
- To promote the benefits of participation as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle
- To provide equitable access and service to all persons and groups regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, level of skill or specific interest, without unreasonably discouraging those who wish to achieve individual excellence in their chosen pursuits, and
- To maximise use of facilities by the provision of the highest quality activities and support services, consistent with appropriate and recognised standards.

**'Operational' Objectives:**

**Communication**

- To develop market research procedures that assist management to identify needs and develop programs and services to meet community expectations
- To keep all users and the wider community well informed about activities and services offered at each of the facilities via a number of means including the internet and IT technologies
- To promote the community facilities as premier community venues for the ACT Government, and
- To ensure that all staff, service providers and officials are aware that all programs, services, actions and facilities are forms of promotion and must be presented in a positive, helpful and efficient manner to all sections of the community.

**Administration**

- To ensure that all facilities meet relevant standards and policies as set down by the ACT Government and other relevant agencies / authorities.
- To engage the best and most qualified staff and have them attend regular training programs/ workshops to maintain the highest possible standard of planning, organisation and customer service
- To install and maintain efficient, prompt and cost effective administrative systems, and
- To develop an efficient, effective and user-friendly ticketing, booking and hiring system.

**Asset Care**

- To provide and maintain the quality and condition of buildings, plant and equipment and to regularly upgrade and/or expand these facilities to meet changing demands
- To present all facilities and surrounds in a clean, safe and attractive manner at all times, and

- To achieve multi-use of all facilities, equipment and grounds wherever possible.

#### Finance

- To ensure that the ACT Government obtains optimum value and return for its investment, interest and support for the facilities
- To adopt a pricing structure consistent with the standard of facilities and services provided and in line with public enterprise principles, and
- To have sufficient flexibility in pricing structures to ensure equity of access by the community.

## 7.4 Management Models

### 7.4.1 The Models

Several management options are available for government-owned aquatic and leisure venues (and most other public community venues as well). These fall into three broad categories:

- Direct management: Venues directly managed and operated by Government employees
- Indirect Management: Venues managed or part-managed by a specialist management agency through a management services agreement direct with Government, and
- Independent Management: Venues managed by a private (commercial) individual or organisation through a formal lease.

The ACT Government uses indirect and independent management models for its current arrangements. The strengths and weaknesses of each model from a Government perspective are briefly discussed in the following text and charts.

The strengths and weaknesses of each model from a Government perspective are briefly discussed in the following sections.

#### Direct Government Management

There are many successful in-house teams managing aquatic and leisure facilities across Australia. Under this model local or state government would appoint an in-house team to manage, maintain, promote and program individual or all aquatic and Leisure venues.

The strengths and weaknesses of this model include the ability to directly control the quality of service and the ability to focus on particular sections of the community at any time. These are strong reasons for retaining control over management. This has to be balanced against the potential for Government “interference” in management processes and the need for Government approval of service changes or new opportunities that often need an immediate response.

---

#### Strengths:

---

- The operation of the venue can be structured to directly reflect Government’s aim and objectives for the service
  - There is a direct ability to change programs and services to suit community needs
  - Government can initiate direct promotion of all activities
  - Regular reports are delivered to Government
  - Government has the capacity to make ongoing input
  - Venues are maintained by Government staff to Government standards and budget provisions
  - There is a capacity to make prompt responses to changed needs and policy directives by Government staff
-

---

**Weaknesses:**

---

- Management is slower to exploit opportunities due to governance structures
  - Because Government can make direct input, management is vulnerable to political influence
  - Less flexible industrial arrangements may limit resourcing decisions
  - There is less certainty around financial plans as risks are carried directly by Government
  - Planned resources can be impacted by wider Government budget decisions
  - Government can be wary of change and new ideas and thus stifle or delay new opportunities.
- 

**Indirect Management**

This option entails government entering into a management services contract with a contractor/service provider to manage the whole or part of one or more aquatic and leisure facilities on its behalf. By way of example, the ACT Government uses this model to operate Civic Olympic Pool and Lakeside Leisure Centre. The key strengths and weaknesses for this model are summarised in the chart below.

---

**Strengths:**

---

- The operator can bring in and apply specialist experience through wider professional networks which are usually not be available to Government
- Government does not need to establish a separate facilities management team
- The operation of venues is at arms length from Government and thus freed from day to day Government issues, intervention or budget considerations
- The operator can usually respond to needs and issues more rapidly and independently than Government
- More flexible industrial arrangements can be made
- Staff can more readily be encouraged by way of incentives
- Operators are often willing to provide capital for development initiatives
- Government can usually remain a partner in the arrangement which thus gives it some continuing control and access to performance monitoring
- Regular reports are provided to Government re use, fees, finance and administration
- Formal commitments for maintenance and refurbishment allocations can be set.

---

**Weaknesses**

---

- There can be an inappropriate focus on profitable programs to the detriment of wider community obligations and equitable access by special needs groups
  - There is often a financial imperative to replace costly programs as soon as possible regardless of their importance to the community
  - Government can find itself locked into an external management agreement with an ineffective manager for a significant period of time.
  - There are legal implications and possible action for failure to deliver contract obligations.
- 

**Independent Management**

Under this model, a government outsources the entire management and operation of a venue or even groups of venues to an external individual or agency through a formal lease. Government is thus able to 'wash it's hands' of the day-to-day operations of the venue having established broad policy directions for it.

Although this model is often the most effective financially --in that a government can seek financial contributions for development and mitigate refurbishment and ongoing operational costs-- there are a number of weaknesses with it. In particular, consideration would need to be given to the issue of the loss of community benefit and input and to balance this against the level of financial gain achieved.

The strengths and weaknesses of the independent management model are recorded in the following chart.

---

**Strengths**

---

- Lessee / operators are able to make operational economies on conditions of use, labour, goods and services
- The financial and risk implications for Government are minimised
- More flexible industrial arrangements can be made
- A guaranteed operating financial position can be set by Government
- The operator may be able to provide immediate capital for re/development needs

---

**Weaknesses**

---

- There is limited or no community input when setting fees, timetables, programs etc
  - The predominant focus is usually on generating profit for the leaseholder and this often causes conflict in decision making related to appropriate maintenance of buildings and equipment
  - Control is usually via a mid to long term lease with no provision for changes to reflect local circumstances during the lease period
  - There is usually no opportunity for Government to participate in management
  - Single or small numbers of users/ programs are often favoured
  - Use restrictions often apply
  - Operators objectives may conflict with achieving equitable access outcomes desired by Government
- 

Independent management can be the most effective for Government from a financial point of view in that it minimises the need to employ staff, allows it to seek financial contributions from management agencies if desired, and minimises refurbishment and ongoing operational costs. However, the general experience is that there is a loss of wider community benefits as staffing, programming and service inputs and outputs are tightly constrained in favour of financial gains, with these gains often being achieved well outside the community being serviced.

### **National Aquatic & Leisure Management Structures**

The ACT Government may wish to consider setting up a management model similar to that used by several other Australia states and a number of major overseas cities (eg: Edinburgh) to manage their major aquatic, sport and leisure facilities. This model is briefly described below.

The New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland governments have set up statutory authorities for the express purpose of managing their major leisure facilities. As an example, see [www.vic.gov.au/contactsandservices/](http://www.vic.gov.au/contactsandservices/) or [www.ssct.com.au/](http://www.ssct.com.au/)

The primary objective of the statutory authorities or trusts is to provide independent management of sporting venues whilst ensuring that they meet the relevant state's provision objectives. The legislation allows the venues to be independently managed and thereby to achieve greater flexibility in terms of service provision, marketing, administration, human resources management, pricing, decision making and operating conditions. At the same time however, the respective Government still retains ultimate control as the statutory bodies / trusts report directly to the appropriate Minister in each State.

In the ACT context, a Territory government trust could be established to assume responsibility for the management and programming of all government-owned venues as contracts and /or leases came up for renewal. New government-owned venues or the relevant components of partnership developments would then be brought under the same operational structure as they were opened. Such an approach would contribute substantially to overcoming the present situation in the ACT wherein the disparate mix of venues currently owned, operated and managed by different agencies and organisations do not deliver an optimally effective and efficient mix of programs and services to the community.

### **7.4.2 Management Models: An Overview**

It is evident that each of the management models outlined above has strengths and weaknesses which can be advantageous or detrimental to the community and to achieving the outcomes which are desired.

In practice, no one model is necessarily better or worse as each depends on the individual staff/ contractors responsible for implementing them. That said, it is generally found that when indirect or independent management is applied, quantity is given priority over quality, and efficiency is valued ahead of effectiveness. In other words, attendance numbers, sales, costs per program unit and bottom line figures are focused on ahead of the delivery of high standard services to potentially lesser numbers of targeted community members.

This suggests that direct Government management is the most effective. Unfortunately, this is always not the case: Government staff are needed to manage, train and supervise venue staff and if these processes are not put in place, there is a tendency to let things “drift”. Also, when operational costs and losses are less critical to job retention and when there are no contracts or leases coming up for renewal, performance standards and efforts to develop and maintain market share fall away. If elected members come to dictate what should or should not be offered or which groups can or cannot use a venue, staff morale flags and the aim of meeting the widest mix of needs in the community will not be achieved.

The weaknesses of the indirect and independent models can be overcome by the right management agreement or lease clauses and inputs. However, Government will still need to set up resources to monitor the outcomes. The weaknesses of the Government or direct management model can be overcome by the whole of Government agreeing to a set of management principles and procedures and by the establishing of government-owned management trusts, so that day-to-day political influences are minimised as far as possible.

Yet difficulties with the adoption of a single model continue and there are now numerous instances around Australia where a mix of models are used. Thus, some venues are operated directly by Government whilst others are outsourced through management agreements or leases. This means first determining the proposed mix of services and then determining the skill set required. By way of example, Government may not have in-house production, retail or catering experience so could outsource these services to a contractor but still keep the overall management responsibility. A venue could include, for example, cultural, community, welfare, library and leisure facilities within a precinct. Support staff could be either directly employed or could be outsourced based on the elements within the precinct.

## 7.5 Programs and Services

It is essential that Government provides programs and services which reflect community needs and aspirations. Regular research through, for example, community surveys and focus groups should be carried out to determine such needs. This is often referred to as a ‘programming charter’.

*Proactive programming* entails researching the socio-demographic and other characteristics of the community and establishing a diversity of program types which reflect the findings of this analysis rather than simply asking people what they would ‘like’ (as they frequently do not know) or making venues available to existing groups which express a desire to use them. Proactive programming often entails testing new program ideas and concepts so as to offer the community something new, attractive and inspiring.

Further to the above, providing a wide range of passive and active programs and services will enhance the ability of Government to cater for all sections of the community in an efficient and effective manner. As with any proposed hierarchy of venues, there should also be a hierarchy of programs and services planned.

Prior to their provision, programs should be assessed in terms of the likelihood of their being sustainable (eg: market availability, cost, funding), their feasibility (eg: venue, funding and staffing availability), and their community relevance (eg: reflecting assessed need, appropriateness for provision). Once initiated, programs should be regularly assessed in terms of their effectiveness in achieving the desired social and beneficial outcomes (eg: numbers involved, the nature of participants, benefits achieved, positive changes in behaviour), in terms of projected costs, and in terms of any environmental impacts.

A coordinated approach to the development and delivery of services should be initiated across all venues so that program opportunities are not duplicated but rather, are complementary between different areas of the Government and between individual venues.

This is demonstrated by Figure 7.1 which provides an example of the level of programs and services that could be offered within a hierarchy of venues. The specific programs and services would be very much guided by community needs and wants. Management would focus on providing the identified programs and services at the relevant multi - suburb/ district/ state level (as per the examples in Figure 7.1), and if a particular program was deemed to not be appropriate to a specific venue, it would be moved to a 'higher' or 'lower' venue in the Government hierarchy. This process helps to ensure the provision of more opportunities and the effective use of facilities across the broad 'system' of government (and potentially, other aquatic and leisure venues).

### **Programs and Services Scheduling**

In order to ensure equitable access for the whole community, a number of key scheduling principles should be applied to aquatic and leisure facilities. This will help to ensure that one user or group does not dominate venue use to the detriment of other potential users. It is important that the scheduling principles relate to the agreed management objectives.

The following types of scheduling principles should be applied where appropriate within the proposed hierarchy of provision:

- Regular users or groups using venues shall not be able to book more than 20% of available space at peak times in a venue at any time
- Regular users or groups using venues shall not be able to book more than 30% of available space at off peak times in a venue at any time
- 30% of available space will be retained for direct programs and services in a venue at any time
- No user or group will be able to reserve space for longer than a 12 month period
- At least 10% of available space will be retained at all times for casual use
- Service providers will need to demonstrate positive community benefits before a booking is confirmed
- Preference will be given to users or groups that promote and allow wider community access to their programs and services, and
- Preference will be given to service providers, users or groups that provide programs and services for all ages, genders and abilities.

Whilst the above principles do not cover every circumstance, they will ensure that equitable access is provided to all sections of the community. Management will need to support and develop a wide range of opportunities that meet the researched needs of the community.

## **7.6 Marketing Strategies**

As a matter of policy, the ACT Government should develop (or require operators to develop) a comprehensive marketing philosophy and strategy into both its strategic plan and each annual business plan for community service provision. The strategic plan should evaluate the market place three to five years ahead, aiming to seize relevant opportunities in a planned manner.

The contents of a marketing philosophy and strategy should set a framework for the marketing of the whole service. It should cover all of the elements of the marketing mix viz: promotion, price, product, people, presentation and position. The strategy should then be broken down into annual individual action plans for each of the venue elements. Resources should then be required to be allocated to ensure the agreed actions are implemented. Detailed marketing and promotional plans will not succeed if appropriate resources are not applied.



By far the most effective promotion tool is by word of mouth. Any marketing plan should recognise this and set strategies in place to encourage word of mouth promotion. Research needs to be implemented to assist in the development of the marketing plan. Examples of this could include focus groups of existing and/or non- users, surveys to help determine who is not using the services, and the holding of needs assessment forums at different locations to draw on a wider market. As with all management elements, it is vital to understand community needs and wants in order to best provide any opportunities.

As part of each annual business plan, a detailed promotion plan should be developed twice per year targeting specific market segments with specific services, using a range of sales and promotion techniques, including:

- Shopping centre displays and demonstrations
- Direct marketing via phone, mail and personal presentations
- Quarterly newsletters to local clubs, groups and schools
- Term brochures to existing users and guests
- Regular visits to local schools and corporate groups, and
- Occasional zany events aimed at gaining local, district , regional and potentially state-wide media coverage.

At the conclusion of each promotion, an analysis should be conducted in order to measure the success of the promotion against the predetermined targets. This will assist management in the planning of more effective future promotional strategies.

Another important element of marketing that should be pursued is the development of a common “branding” of aquatic and leisure facilities and spaces across the ACT Government and development of a clear and attractive style to promote the venues and the activities they offer. It is strongly recommended that the ACT Government develops an overall brand for aquatic services provision that over time will build confidence, a sense of identity and quality within the ACT community.

## 7.7 Asset Management

Asset management is best described as the process of guiding the acquisition, use and disposal of assets to make the most of their service delivery potential while managing the related risks and costs over their entire life.

The principal objective of an integrated asset management plan is to enable government to continually meet its service delivery objectives efficiently and effectively.

The following asset management principles can be used by government to guide the maintenance and improvement of aquatic and leisure facilities infrastructure:

- Undertake asset management activities within a strategic framework that is driven by program and service delivery needs
- Integrate asset planning and management with corporate and business plans, budgetary and reporting processes
- Base asset management decisions on evaluations that take into account full life cycle costs, benefits and risks of assets
- Determine and clearly communicate accountability and reporting requirements for both ownership and control, and
- Undertake asset management activities within an integrated Government asset management policy framework.

Management, whether direct or outsourced will need to implement systems to make sure that the facilities are presented in a clean and attractive way at all times. One of the most significant deterrents to community use is if the venue is seen to be run down, untidy and unclean.



Accountability and reporting requirements for both ownership and control must be determined and clearly communicated and asset management activities must be undertaken within an integrated Government asset management policy framework.

## 7.8 Performance Monitoring

### 7.8.1 Purpose

Evaluating the extent to which aquatic and leisure facilities achieve the objectives established for them is critical to their success. If the performance of each venue, venue component, program and staff input is not measured and evaluated, Government will have very little insight or understanding as to whether it is objectively meeting the needs of its community, whether there are gaps in provision, or whether it is receiving optimum value and benefit from the investments made.

It is therefore essential that Government introduces a series of performance monitoring tools to measure the success or otherwise of the provision made. These should be applied directly at government operated venues; through lease and contract conditions at venues managed on behalf of the government (using government-developed monitoring tools), and through the provision of support and assistance to private owner-operators.

### 7.8.2 Tools

A range of tools exist for monitoring the performance of aquatic leisure centres. Numerous centre operators pay for the annual CERM® performance surveys provided through the University of South Australia, with these using visitor and other surveys to measure the performance of a centre by comparison with the average performance of others in the same venue category. Alternatively, a set of specific performance measures can be developed that measure the specific outcomes that are desired from provision.

There are numerous measurements that can be used but it is essential to understand and then gather the right and most useful information. Even more important is to *use* those measurements to evaluate and improve the service outcomes. The measures can be broken down into the following broad categories:

1. Financial performance and costs per participant/group/program type
2. Participation
3. Safety
4. Customer satisfaction
5. Diversity of opportunity
6. Access, and
7. Asset management and maintenance.

The following are more specific indicators of various aspects of venue performance:

1. Program range: the diversity and number of sessions of programs and activities offered
2. Visits to each venue: including a breakdown of visits for each program at each facility by the age, gender, origins, cultural background etc of users
3. Visits per square metre of programmable space: total visits divided by the amount of programmable space
4. Costs: the net cost of each facility to Government; the cost for each program type; cost per user; surplus/subsidy per visit/program; labour costs per facility/program/user; fees per visit
5. Total income and expenses for each facility
6. Promotional expenditure per facility
7. Catchment multiple: total users divided by agreed catchment population

8. Energy cost per facility/program, and
9. Research expenditure per facility/program/user.

The ACT Government has been using the CERM® performance indicators as a means of benchmarking performance efficiencies and management contracts at its aquatic and leisure facilities. The use of this material needs to be strengthened and made more purposeful. However, it may be more appropriate for ACT-specific measures to be developed and applied to both government's aquatic and leisure facilities (and to other venues in the ACT if the owners/ managers agree) in order to more effectively monitor performance.

It is recognised that a balance must be maintained between *efficiency* in the use of capital, operational and staffing resources and effectiveness in meeting social justice and community development goals. It is therefore also recommended that a series of annual surveys be undertaken of existing users to measure the quality of the service that is provided against what is expected. This will also ensure that a balanced approach to service delivery is taken.

## 7.9 Funding the Developments

### 7.9.1 Introduction

Funding opportunities for aquatic leisure facilities development have historically been limited to a few sources, with the main ones in Australia over the past 10 to 15 years being a mix of:

- LGA funding
- Other state and federal government grants
- Commercial investment
- Commercial fundraising, and
- Community fundraising and user group contributions.

A survey of Victorian Councils in Australia in 2005 (by SGL Group) highlighted the following investment mix to fund sports and leisure developments:

- Council capital funding: up to 75%
- Other government funding: up to 20%
- Community trusts/institutions: up to 2%
- Community fundraising: up to 5%
- Commercial fundraising: up to 10%
- Asset sales: up to 5%
- Management company contracts: up to 2%

Experience in the development of sports and leisure facilities also suggests that this mix of funding is common in most leisure development projects around Australia.

Traditionally, a combination of Council funding with small State/Federal government grants and some limited community fundraising has occurred for most aquatic and leisure facilities in Australia. In larger Councils/regions with greater commercial opportunities, commercial investments from management companies of the order of \$1m. - \$2m. are now emerging in exchange for the right to manage venues on longer-term management agreements.

In the last couple of years there also has been a number of Councils look at commercial fundraising although this appears to have been more successful in New Zealand than Australia.

The following information provides an overview of funding opportunities that the ACT government may wish to pursue more fully once detailed aquatic and leisure venue development projects and timelines are confirmed.

### **7.9.2 ACT Government Funding**

As can be seen from the above information, local government is usually the major funders of community sport and leisure facilities. The SGL data indicate that the ACT government will need to accept responsibility as the major funder of any aquatic and leisure developments unless it considers a number of alternate internal initiatives to assist with funding. These could include but should not be limited to:

- Asset sales
- Special rate levy
- Special usage levy
- Management rights to operate centre in return for capital funding, and
- Commercial investment or partnership funding.

### **7.9.3 Commonwealth Government Funding**

Commonwealth government funding for aquatic leisure developments has generally been restricted since the early 1990s when the Community Sports and Cultural Centres Improvement Scheme ceased. However, the Federal Minister for Regional Development has recently announced a \$1.4 billion Regional Development Australia Fund designed to boost economic development in Australia's regional areas. The Minister has stated the allocation of funding will be competitive, merit-based and that only applications that have the backing of local Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees will be considered. The key criteria of the funding guidelines include:

- Delivery of concrete economic and social benefits to the region
- Commitment to innovation and building capacity in local communities
- Linking regional communities across traditional boundaries, and
- Ability to leverage additional funding across government and the private sector.

Applications are currently open and the first round of funding will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

It should be noted that the \$1.4 billion in the Regional Development Australia Fund includes \$350 million that the Government set aside for disaster relief in regional areas. The ACT Government could pursue this grant as part of the possible funding mix for any proposals.

### **7.9.4 Other Territory and Federal Agencies**

A number of other Territory and federal agencies could and should be approached for funding assistance, particularly where there are opportunities for development partnerships at the Territory level. Relevant departments including education, tourism, economic development and health. As discussed in the following Chapter, several of these at the Territory level have already expressing considerable interest in joint initiatives.

### **7.9.5 Commercial Investment and Partnerships**

The ACT Government could seek expressions of interest for commercial investment under a Public Private Partnership arrangement similar to that used in the development of the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) in Belconnen. However, it would need to balance the implications outlined in the 'outsourced' management model described in section 8.5.3 above before pursuing this opportunity. Further, rigorous performance, performance measurement and reporting requirements would also need to be put in place to ensure that the investment/partnership delivered the outcomes in the community desired by the government.

### **7.9.6 Commercial and Community Fundraising**

Commercial fundraisers have been used on a number of sports and leisure projects to raise funds. The results indicate that they usually have some success but that the funds raised generally contribute small amounts when compared to the high capital cost of building such

facilities. The fundraiser fees can also be significant and have been known to exceed the funds raised.

Community-based fundraising also warrants consideration. In the past, a number of interstate communities have raised well over \$1 m. each (and in communities with as few as 10,000 residents), by establishing community giving programs.

Under this approach, a group of 100 (or 50, 20 or even only 10) individuals would become Foundation Members of a new venue by agreeing to donate say \$1,000 pa. for 3, 4 or 5 years. At a lower donating level, "associates" would donate say \$500 pa., while "juniors" would donate \$250 pa. Corporate or Gold Foundation members might donate \$10,000+. Even smaller amounts can be sought through an extension of this program into the wider community. In the 1980s and 90s, numerous interstate communities raised upward of \$1 m. toward recreation and leisure assets by developing community-based not-for-profit donation programs. One small Victorian community raised \$1.3m. in 15 months while another (with only 12,000 residents), raised \$660,000 in 6 weeks.

Community co-operatives could also be explored and these can be established in the ACT under the Cooperatives Act 2002. Co-operatives can be formed by a group of community members (amongst others) and function to borrow money for community initiatives, with co-operative members guaranteeing to underwrite a small amount of the funds sought with the remainder being borrowed from a bank or other financial institution. In the past, many public and commercial facilities were funded through cooperatives and although they have tended to fall out of popularity, they still warrant evaluating.

### **7.9.7 Funding Strategy**

Implementing the strategic actions recommended in the present report will cost many millions of dollars over the next 10-20 years. As such, a long term funding strategy will be needed. A mix of the options discussed in the previous section will warrant pursuing but it is evident from the foregoing review that the ACT Government will need to commit significant budget allocations over the coming years in order to fund the majority of works.

Whilst internal funding can be planned, external funding cannot and opportunities will need to be pursued on a case by case basis depending on factors such as the project's time frame and stage of development.

Set out below are the recommended steps to be taken when considering funding options for each project.

1. Determine the project aim and objectives and the likely market the project is proposed to serve
2. Determine the best fit management model to achieve the aim and objectives, and
3. Determine the range of available funding options to achieve the above and provide a dedicated focus to pursue those options.

It is therefore recommended that the ACT Government commit to a long term internal funding strategy for the future provision of aquatic and leisure provision.

### **7.10 Management: Conclusions**

This chapter has provided an overview of the management options and funding strategies that will need to be pursued to delivery modern, effective and efficient community aquatic and leisure venues in the ACT over the coming years.

The ACT Government has the opportunity and potential through a variety of different management approaches to deliver a range of quality aquatic and leisure services in an efficient and effective manner. In order for this to happen, it will be necessary to implement a number of policies, strategies, plans and management systems. The following commentary summarises the steps required to fully exploit this opportunity and potential:

1. Needs and expectations must be well researched to determine and provide relevant community services and programs
2. There is a need to confirm and articulate exactly what the management objectives are in terms of the proposed outcomes. The management objectives should be aligned with the Government's overall corporate and community objectives and should provide the foundation for of all decision making in relation to the aquatic and leisure opportunities provided. This will obviously also influence where best to locate services, and in what form and mix
3. It is critical to determine the most appropriate management model or models to provide the proposed services within each district or smaller area of the city. It is felt that a legislative-based trust similar to that outlined in this Chapter should be further investigated as it gives government the capacity to determine the objectives to be achieved and oversee their effective achievement. Alternately, however, government should not be concerned about outsourcing the funding, provision and management in areas for which it has little or no experience or expertise. What is important is that *Government retains the authority to determine and require provision of the facilities, services and programs needed to meet community needs*
4. The government will need to develop and commit to a long term funding strategy and to acknowledge that while other funding sources should be pursued, a significant government financial commitment will be needed over the coming years
5. A management and organisational structure and the right managerial skill set needs to be developed with a focus on driving greater use through marketing and promoting the venues to the community as destinations of choice for aquatic and leisure services and programs
7. Management should monitor and report on the success of each venue and the programs and services provided in a regular and continuing manner. This is important to the ongoing service delivery planning process for without this, it will not be possible to guarantee effective and efficient outcomes.

## The Planned City – Its Changing Face and Aquatic Provision Implications

### 8.1 Introduction

As indicated in earlier chapters of this report, the nature of aquatic facilities being developed today is quite different to that being provided no more than 10 or 15 years ago. The key differences lie in the *objectives* of the provision -with modern venues having a strong focus on health, wellbeing, community development and product differentiation as well as the more traditional learn to swim, lap swimming and recreational roles. As a consequence, there are also significant variations in the mix of facilities, programs and services that are provided – and in the provision agencies.

The practical extension of these changes has seen modern aquatic leisure centres increasingly become an integral part of wider community health, education, retail, social, community support and recreational and sporting opportunities. Physically, aquatic leisure centres are now being integrated with venues and precincts that provide varying mixes of these other facilities, programs and services where it is practical, appropriate and beneficial to do so. These include educational establishments, commercial and retail hubs, hospitals, other recreation venues and transport networks.

Contemporary knowledge indicates that co-location of leisure services with other urban community infrastructure offers the best opportunity for the community to socially engage and connect. It also delivers significant cost savings for government through the reduced duplication of infrastructure and the sharing of management and other resources. Such co-location is also consistent with the philosophical goal whereby sustainability is enhanced through addressing the environmental, economic and social issues and goals of a community concurrently<sup>3</sup>.

In order to ensure that the present strategic plan most effectively reflects the patterns and nature of urban growth within the ACT and the varying characteristics of the ACT community, input was sought from other relevant government agencies and officers with these covering urban planning, transport, population, education, health and demographics. This input was provided via a planning workshop where participants were asked to outline their understanding or projections of the future growth of the city and /or initiatives planned by their agencies which would or could have implications to the scale, mix and location of aquatics provision. Follow-up consultations and a detailed reports review were also used. The findings and possible provision implications are discussed in the following paragraphs with these having been assessed most particularly in the light of the existing and planned mix of provision discussed in Chapter 5 and the proposed hierarchy of provision detailed in Chapter 6.

As such, this Chapter provides a broad and general view of ACT current planning policies and social data pertaining to the following:

1. Demographics
2. Projected educational provision
3. Projected land releases
4. Health infrastructure and community health servicing
5. Retail trends and the future development of retail resources (including commercial and industrial development), and
6. Future employment and transport hubs and nodes.

---

<sup>3</sup> *People Place Prosperity: A policy for sustainability in the ACT* by the ACT Government (2008)



## 8.2 Projected ACT Demographics

### 8.2.1 Population Growth Areas

The Australian Capital Territory's population is projected to reach 400,000 persons by mid 2022 and then slowly increase to 500,000 persons by 2050<sup>4</sup>. Approximately 75 percent of this population growth is anticipated to be driven by natural increase (greater births than deaths) with the remainder met by net migration.

According to the population projection reports released by ACT Demographics, much of the projected new growth of approximately 50,000 persons is expected to occur in the developing areas of Gungahlin and Molonglo with their populations to be boosted by 20,500 and 10,300 persons respectively<sup>5</sup>. Gungahlin's population is expected to reach 60,000 people by 2022 with younger families dominating the household mix.

Gungahlin will experience an expansion through its easterly corridor (including the suburbs of Franklin, Harrison and Gungahlin) in the coming years while commercial land release data suggests that Mitchell will become a dynamic industrial estate for the district at the same time.

By comparison, growth will be slight in other population centres such as Belconnen, North Canberra, South Canberra, Woden Valley and Weston Creek. Interestingly, Tuggeranong has already reached its peak with a projected small decline of 0.1 per cent per annum to occur for the district over the next decade.

Until 2019, it is projected that North Canberra (due to its location close to tertiary institutions) and Molonglo (due to the propensity of young families to migrate to newly released suburbs), will have the youngest populations, with median ages of 32 and 29 years respectively.

Significantly, the projected population increases will make no change to the comparative size of the various districts but will certainly require some changes in servicing. Despite their comparatively low growth, the Belconnen and Tuggeranong town centres will remain the most populated districts in the ACT. Weston Creek will remain the least populated area in 2019, despite the population increase of over 10,000 people due to the development of Molonglo.

In terms of aquatics provision, the data on population growth and its distribution suggest that:

- The capacity of the new Gungahlin Leisure Centre to meet local and district demands is likely to have limitations. There may therefore be a need to consider further provision in the future in for example the Majura Valley or Mitchell. A review of the demand for and performance of the new Gungahlin Leisure Centre is recommended after it has been operational for 2-3 years to determine more accurately the need for this additional provision and potential locations.  
A Majura Valley or Mitchell venue could cater for the leisure demands of workers in Mitchell and the Airport Business Park as well as families in Gungahlin, the suburbs of Watson and Dickson which have undergone a period of infill with medium density accommodation, tourist campers and possibly, patrons of the Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC) in Lyneham
- A greater community "dividend" may need to be sought from CISAC in Belconnen and a strategy for achieving this is discussed in Chapter 9
- The Molonglo population growth, together with the smaller increases in Woden Valley and Weston Creek, will add weight to the on-going calls for provision to service these districts, especially given the ageing/outdated nature of Phillip Pool
- Additional or modernised provision may well be needed to service the needs of the growing and demographically, *quite mixed* communities in North Canberra, South Canberra, and

---

4 2009 release of ACT Government age by sex population projections for the ACT by ACT Demographics (28 February 2011)

5 2009 release of the ACT Government projected suburb based populations of the ACT for 2019 by ACT Demographics (28 February 2011)



- Additional provision is unlikely to be needed in Tuggeranong although the existing facilities will need to be updated and revised in terms of their standards and mix of offerings if they are to effectively meet community needs.

## 8.2.2 Ageing Population

Consistent with the national trend, the ACT population is projected to age over the coming years. The traditional retirement age group of 65 years and over is projected to increase from 10 percent of the total population in 2007 to 14.3 percent in 2019.

Figure 8.1 illustrates the changes in the ACT population age structure from 1971 to 2059. It shows that in 1971 the largest group was children in the 0-4 years group followed closely by their parents in the 20-24 years group. Except for a small late 40s bulge, the population fell every year from the mid 20s through to well less than 1,000 of each of male and female residents in every year from the mid to late 30s. Numbers above 65 years were very small.

By 2009, the graph shows that the number of young children in the community was exceeded by every age group from 18 to 50 years with those in their mid 20s, late 30s and early and late 40s being the most populous. The 2009 graph also shows that the traditional population “pyramid” of 1971 was very much more the shape of a spinning top with a narrow base and a bulge extending from the late teens right through to the early 60s. And even beyond that age, there were well over 1,000 men and women right through until the age of 70 years.

The 2059 projection shows further change. The number of young children has increased, but are still exceeded by every subsequent age group through to the late 50s. The 70+ age group has changed from the spire of 1971 (with virtually no one over 85 years), to a broad-based pattern with 3,000+ men and women in each year from 60-75 years and neither falling below 1,000 until the early 90s. There are still many residents up to and over 100 years.

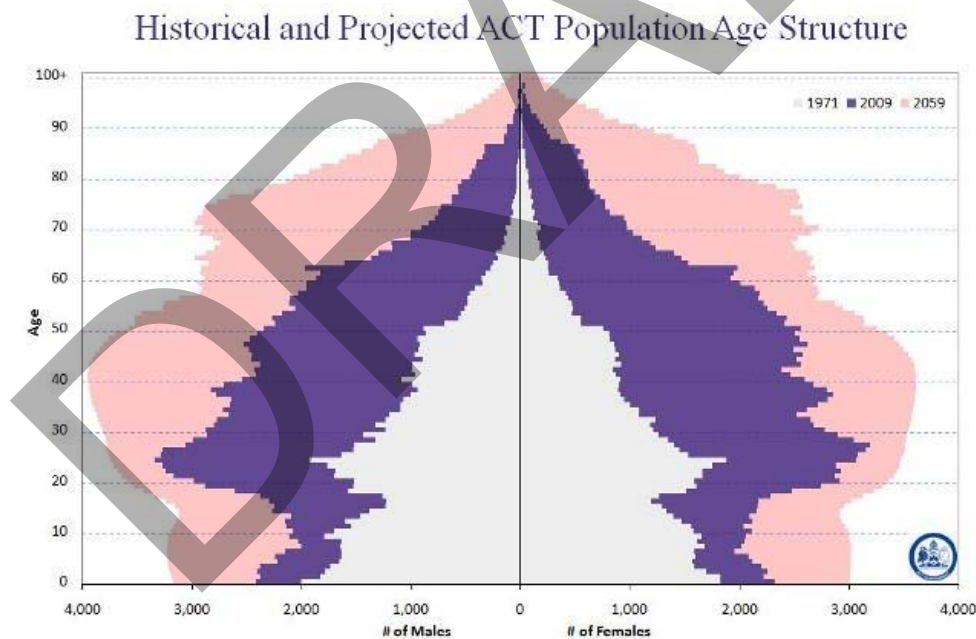


Figure 8.1: Past and projected changes in the ACT age structure, 1971-2059.  
Source: ACT and Region Demographic and Trends commissioned by the Chief Minister's Department Skills Commission Secretariat to be completed by Access Economics (2007)

Such changes in both the age distribution and the size of the population in each age group will have substantive implications for the mix of aquatics provision that is made and possibly, for the number and distribution of venues provided. While some older residents still swim, many do not and if they do use aquatic facilities, the predominant use is for health and wellbeing purposes rather than recreation. Older residents exercise for fitness, rehabilitation and body strengthening purposes and often need associated dry and social facilities to support these. Older residents rarely swim laps and even more rarely compete. They need

smaller, warmer, more accessible venues, and venues where there is a greater focus on the provision of both wet and dry professional programming and servicing. While some existing ACT venues may have the capacity to be modified to accommodate these new services and users, most do not and as such, additional more specialised new provision may be needed.

Translating the broad picture of the ageing population illustrated by Figure 8.1 into district data, ACT Demographics data indicates that Belconnen, Weston Creek, Gungahlin and Tuggeranong are expected to age most rapidly and that their median age range will increase by three years by 2019. Not surprising, Weston Creek will become the ACT district with the oldest population due to its higher proportion of residents in the area greater than 85 years of age. As a consequence, it is probable that aquatic leisure provision in these districts will need to be changed sooner than in other districts if it is to effectively serve community needs.

The growth areas of migrating families such as Gungahlin (which, as noted above, also has a rapidly ageing population) and Molonglo will require regular assessment to ensure that suitable facilities are available to meet both their growing *and* changing needs.

### 8.3 Projected Educational Provision

To maintain educational infrastructure whilst planning for new school sites in growing areas is an act of balancing priorities. In the ACT, the government owns and operates 83 public schools which include five early childhood schools (catering for children from birth to 8 years old) and four special education schools within a greater mix of primary, combined, high and secondary schools and colleges<sup>6</sup>.

The drive to enhance and construct educational facilities in the ACT is led by data that shows the number of children aged from 5-15 years is expected to increase by 12.7 per cent over the next decade<sup>7</sup>. Consistent with earlier data on the projected distribution of the population, the majority of this increase will be in Molonglo and Gungahlin where young families will migrate to newly constructed suburbs.

The strategic policy direction to respond to this growth of demand is set to guide the future provision of school sites in Canberra. At the same time, education planners have indicated a strong willingness to permit greater community access to school facilities and to their co-location with other community services. With 65 percent of ACT public schools now up to 50 years old, many require remodelling to meet contemporary standards and hence the opportunity exists to plan both new and updated facilities in a manner which can also contribute to meeting broader community needs.

A change is already being witnessed with the establishing of early childhood schools, new gymnasiums, performing arts centres, school sports fields with synthetic surfaces, and joint community/school libraries<sup>8</sup>. These initiatives could readily be extended to include aquatic leisure and community health and wellbeing facilities, given the early lead provided by Active Leisure Centre in Wanniasa and the co-location (though not co-development) of the new Gungahlin Leisure Centre and the new Gungahlin secondary college.

Table 8.2 lists the major infrastructure priorities in education in the ACT for the next decade<sup>9</sup>. Significantly, all of the projects except the New CIT learning centre in Tuggeranong are in areas of population growth (particularly, Gungahlin and Molonglo) and as such, offer potential opportunities for co-provision and/or co-location.

The CIT learning centre and the training centre developments offer important opportunities in that both recreational and a diverse range of educational programs could be supported by appropriate provision. In addition to the priority projects listed in Table 8.2, many other school buildings across Canberra will require retrofitting over the coming years and these too, may offer significant co-location opportunities.

---

<sup>6</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan by the ACT Chief Minister's Department (2010)

<sup>7</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010)

<sup>8</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010)

<sup>9</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010)

A final and related issue which warrants noting here is that of childcare. The ACT community currently makes above average use of child care facilities<sup>10</sup> and this is projected to continue over coming years. As at June 2005, some 60.6 percent of all ACT children aged from 0 to 11 years were in formal care (10,558 children), mixed care (13,547) or informal care (6,305). The total number of children is projected to grow to 32,517 by 2015 and the percent in care will also increase, though only slightly, to 60.9 percent. Amongst 0-4 year olds, the percentage in 2005 was 68.8 percent and this is expected to remain unchanged by 2015.

This is a strong point of difference between the ACT and other areas of Australia and reflects, at least to some extent, the fact that the ACT is seen as a place that people 'come to work and then they live'. This means that the development of community amenities should be considered in the context of workforce catchment areas and transit corridors between work and home.

Given the importance of aquatic programs to young children (from both a safety and healthy development perspective), consideration warrants being given to the future co-location of childcare and aquatic leisure venues. This is occurring to an extensive degree at interstate venues and would further add to the development of community activity hubs in the ACT.

Project	Location	Completion Date
Combined Gungahlin College/Community Library	Gungahlin Town Centre	School opened in 2011. Library to be completed shortly
Kambah P-10 School	Tuggeranong District	Opened in 2011
Harrison Secondary School	Gungahlin District	Opening in 2012
Bonner Primary School	Gungahlin District	Opening in 2013
Franklin Early Childhood School	Gungahlin District	Opening in 2013
Molonglo Primary School	Molonglo District	Construction to commence in the next 2 years
New trade training centres in North and South Canberra	To be identified	Construction to commence in the next 2 years
Student Accommodation facilities at CIT Reid	Canberra Central (Civic)	Construction to commence in the next 5 years
New CIT learning centre	Tuggeranong	Construction to commence in the next 5 years

Table 8.2: Major infrastructure priorities in education in the ACT 2010-2020. Source: ACT Government Infrastructure Plan (2010)

## 8.4 Projected Land Releases

### 8.4.1 Housing Demand

Housing demand remains strong in the ACT due to the high population growth with the current rate of 1.9 percent per annum being well above the long term average of 1.2 percent<sup>11</sup>. Over the next decade, it is estimated that 30,000-35,000 new residential dwellings will be built in Canberra with over half of these expected to be greenfield developments in Molonglo and Gungahlin. The rest will be constructed through urban consolidation, predominantly in the inner north and south of Canberra.

Table 8.3 indicates the regional breakdown of the residential land release program for 2010 - 14. This should result in the completion of 17,000 dwellings. It is evident from the Table that the greatest provision will occur in the Gungahlin district, with 5,600 new dwellings, while Molonglo will have the second highest growth, with 4,800 new homes. Importantly, urban redevelopment and infilling in central Canberra will see the creation of 2,195 new dwelling sites. These figures clearly endorse the findings of the demographic growth patterns and the educational analysis reported earlier in this Chapter. They also highlight the fact that the expansion of the ACT "footprint" is leading to raised expectations regarding more localised facilities provision so as to reduce travel times and costs.

<sup>10</sup> ACT and Region Demographics and trends by Access Economics (October 2007)

<sup>11</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010)

## 8.4.2 Commercial and Industrial Land Releases

Commercial land demand in Canberra has been affected by the tightening credit arrangements due to the Global Financial Crisis and the volume and vacancy rate of available commercial land stocks. However, it appears that rapid residential growth with a driving demand for trade and service sectors, particularly in the greenfield areas, will maintain a short term need for commercial land in Canberra<sup>12</sup>.

**Indicative Residential Land Release Program  
(dwelling sites)**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Gungahlin	3,027	1,125	800	650
Belconnen	200	600	750	240
Central Canberra	510	925	200	560
Molonglo	813	2,100	800	1,100
Woden and Weston	340	100	100	100
Tuggeranong	-	-	200	200
Other	110	150	650	650
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,500</b>

Table 8.3: Regional breakdown of residential land release program, 2010-11 to 2013-14 (Source: *ACT Government Infrastructure plan* (2010))

Table 8.4 records the indicative regional breakdown of commercial land releases for the next four years. It shows the dominance of Central Canberra in the projected release program (with around 156,000 square metres), followed by Gungahlin with 82,500 square metres.

**Indicative Commercial Land Release Program (site area m<sup>2</sup>)**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Gungahlin	21,996	27,471	18,000	15,000
Belconnen	36,394	2,309	11,164	-
Central Canberra	62,065	40,625	33,674	20,343
Molonglo	-	-	-	5,000
Woden and Weston	19,050	-	6,058	4,350
Tuggeranong	3,431	-	4,151	11,480
Other	-	30,000	27,000	45,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>142,936</b>	<b>100,405</b>	<b>100,047</b>	<b>101,173</b>

Table 8.4: Indicative regional breakdown of commercial land releases, 2010-11 to 2013-14 (Source: *ACT Government Infrastructure plan* (2010))

<sup>12</sup> *ACT Government Infrastructure plan* (2010)

With regard to industrial land, supply is currently keeping up with demand. However, with bulky goods centres now becoming popular and storage sites being regularly sought, an average release of 110,000 square metres per year is intended<sup>13</sup>. Table 8.5 below indicates the regional breakdown of the industrial land release. It indicates that the Hume district, with 291,000 square metres, dominates industrial land releases, while Fyshwick with 109,600 square metres was the second most important district.

### Indicative Industrial Land Release Program (site area m<sup>2</sup>)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Fyshwick	45,616	-	26,000	42,000
Hume	65,000	110,000	68,000	48,000
Symonston	-	-	16,000	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>110,616</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>110,000</b>

Table 8.5: Indicative regional breakdown of industrial land releases, 2010-11 to 2013-14 (Source: ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010))

## 8.5 Health Infrastructure and Community Health Servicing

As demonstrated previously, the ACT population is ageing, and this has significant implications for its health servicing needs and capacity. In its capital asset development plan, *Your Health, Our Priority*, ACT Health explored the changing needs and identified new models of care to manage chronic disease over the next decades. A key change in the model of care that was identified was “community-based post hospitalisation support”, wherein patients return to their homes with care being provided to them there, while the option always exists for them to “step up” to more intensive, hospital-based care if needed and “step down” from that once the need passes. Such a strategy strengthens the argument for more therapy facilities such as hydrotherapy pools and health support services to be based in community venues rather than in hospitals.

To meet the demand for more locally based care for the Canberra region,<sup>14</sup> building and enhancing community health centres is now a key focus. Table 8.6 lists the current development program for the delivery of quality community health centres across Canberra.

Project	Location	Completion Date
Refurbished community health centre	Tuggeranong	Within next 2 years
New community health centre	Gungahlin	Within the next 5 years
Enhanced community health centre	Belconnen	Within the next 5 years
Expanded community health centre	Tuggeranong	Within the next 5 years
Refurbishment of other community health centres	Phillip, Dickson and Civic	Within the next 10 years

Table 8.6: Current development program for the delivery of community health centres, Canberra. Source: ACT government infrastructure plan (2010)

<sup>13</sup> ACT Government Infrastructure plan (2010)

<sup>14</sup> Cross border arrangements are in place with NSW for health servicing of regional patients and the subsequent cost



It is evident that only one of the proposed new or refurbished centres is in one of the districts identified in earlier paragraphs as having substantial population growth ie: Gungahlin. However, with the exception of Gungahlin and Belconnen, the aquatic facilities in each of Tuggeranong, Phillip, Dickson and Civic are ageing and in need of redevelopment (especially in Phillip and Civic) and all of the districts listed by ACT Health lack health-focused aquatic venues. Thus, the opportunity to co-locate community health services with new or redeveloped aquatic facilities –or vice versa—warrants exploring. The community health centre in Tuggeranong is potentially worth pursuing as a pilot as it is based in the town centre and is close to both the Lakeside aquatic facility and the Club Lime gym and fitness centre. The combined sites of the two businesses (gym and pool) could be linked to allow for medical suites (such as physiotherapy, massage, dietician) to be included so as to complement the rehabilitation capacity of the gymnasium and the pool. While the management arrangements of the government-owned pool and the commercial gym would need to be addressed, the opportunities here are substantial.

Health and education professionals who attended the planning workshop held as part of the preparation of this report indicated a strong willingness to work together with recreation planners from Territory and Municipal Services in identifying and pursuing opportunities for the co-location and shared development of resources.

Finally, while a case could be put that each of the areas listed in Table 8.6 warrants priority attention, there will also be other parts of the ACT which would benefit from joint provision initiatives in the future.

## 8.6 Retail Trends and the Development of Retail Resources

### 8.6.1 Retail Centres Hierarchy

As in other Australian cities, Canberra has witnessed the socio-economic changes of longer retail trading hours, the introduction of online commerce opportunities and smaller household sizes. This has resulted in the emergence of a decentralised and diverse shopping environment with an increased concentration of retail ownership and development of bigger stores.

In its background paper, *Retailing in Canberra*, the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) explored new forms of retailing that could balance consumer demand for greater choice and competition with the need to maintain equity and accessibility to retail services for all. ACTPLA designed a '*centres hierarchy*' management tool to ensure that residents of each district received equitable access to convenient goods and services. The hierarchy is based on meeting the needs of three basic types of shopping trips:

1. Trips to *local* centres to provide goods bought on a daily basis
2. Trips to *group* centres for weekly grocery shopping
3. Trips to *town* centres to primarily meet the needs for higher order goods or major goods purchases where a customer would travel further<sup>15</sup>.

Overall, this hierarchical model offers certainty to commercial investors about where to invest, good accessibility to retail facilities for vendors and customers, and clearer co-ordination of infrastructure development and improvements. This model is also deemed to be successful as Figure 8.2 demonstrates that town centres typically receive over 50 percent of the retail expenditure occurring in the districts in which they are located<sup>16</sup>. Under this model, all centres should thrive but town centres become the major hive of activity for a district population base with a diverse range of retail and service space. The spatial distribution of retail centres at each level of the hierarchy is shown in Figure 8.3.

<sup>15</sup> *Retailing in Canberra* background paper by ACTPLA (September 2009)

<sup>16</sup> The exception is Civic which shares its market with the industrial suburb of Fyshwick with its bulky goods and major service outlets

## Retail expenditure share by hierarchy level 2007

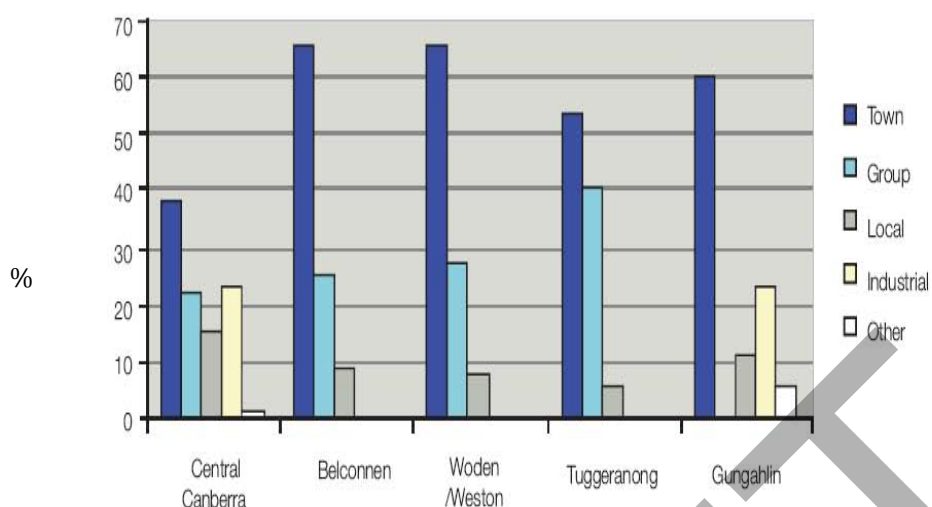


Figure 8.2: Retail expenditure by shopping centre hierarchies in ACT districts (Source: *Retailing in Canberra* (2009))

Significantly, the retail hierarchy established by ACTPLA has strong parallels with the hierarchy proposed for aquatic leisure venues in Chapter 6 of this report. Thus, the “multi-suburb” hierarchical level proposed in Chapter 6 is the equivalent of the “Group” retailing hierarchy while the “District” centre in Chapter 6 is the equivalent of “Town” in the retailing hierarchy. The only differences (but not incompatibilities) between the two hierarchies are (a) that the aquatic hierarchy sees the “multi-suburb” aquatic venue as the lowest in the hierarchy because smaller centres or populations could simply not support the viable operation of public multi-purpose centres, and (b) the retailing hierarchy does not include categories above “Towns”, these being “ACT-wide” and “National” in the aquatics hierarchy. These categories are most probably not relevant to the retailing hierarchy, although Civic and emerging big box bulk stores could be considered to serve an ACT-wide market.

The retailing data suggest that in order to optimise provision synergies and to stimulate cross-pollination of users, District-level aquatic leisure facilities could, wherever appropriate, be located in or adjacent to Towns while the lower order “multi-suburb” venues would be located in Group retail centres. This co-location has been pursued in the new aquatic leisure development in Gungahlin.

In terms of the current provision, District-level provision has been achieved to a considerable degree at the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) in Belconnen. However, the Gungahlin Leisure Centre will provide a more limited range of facilities. By comparison, there are no District-level facilities at all in Weston while the Phillip Pool facilities in Woden are outdated and do not offer the full complement of recommended elements and, as with Gungahlin, are on a site which would almost certainly be incapable of accommodating them. Finally, neither of the Lakeside or Active Leisure venues in Tuggeranong could be classified as offering a District-level mix of opportunities although between them they come close and if redeveloped to complement each other, they have the capacity to do so.

### 8.6.2 The Workforce Consumer

A further and important consideration with regard to retail trends and retailing centres is that of the “workforce consumer”: a person who efficiently seeks out services or products to purchase and have supplied in the vicinity of his or her workplace. This new purchasing pattern has now seen a microcosm of cottage and small retail industries such as gourmet coffee shops, florists, child care centres and 24 hour gyms established within or close to industrial and commercial areas to capitalise on this somewhat ‘captive’ market.

Although the “workforce consumer” group is unlikely to support provision of a viable aquatic leisure venue in most or any workplace environments in the ACT, when the group is coupled



with residents, visitors and tourists, it can substantially boost viability and begin to generate its own facility and programming requirements. This would be particularly so in Civic and could eventually apply (albeit to a lesser extent), in Gungahlin, Woden and Tuggeranong.

By 2007, Canberra had over 2.7 million square metres of commercial space (excluding major commercial offices) found in:

- Town centres (31 %)
- Group centres (11 %)
- Local centres (4 %) and
- Industrial areas (51 %) <sup>17</sup>.

Of this total floor space, 38 per cent was held by retail and a further 38 per cent for 'other' floor space retail outlets <sup>18</sup>.

Significantly, between 2005 and 2007 there was a total growth of over 137,000 square metres of floor space in commercial centres across Canberra, with the largest growth being for retail. Seventy percent of this growth was found in Gungahlin, demonstrating the distinctive commercial growth surge for the town centre at this time. Figure 8.4 shows the 2007 breakdown of floor space capacity across all the districts.

In combination, Figures 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 (showing the distribution of hierarchical commercial centres and industrial areas in the ACT in 2005), suggest that were aquatic leisure provision to be made in a manner that effectively serviced the needs of workforce consumers, consideration would need to be given to District (Town) level venues in each of:

Gungahlin  
Belconnen  
Civic  
Phillip, and  
Greenway.

Some form of Provision exists or is planned in or near to each of these centres. However, as noted previously, none of the venues can or will effectively achieve the ideal District (Town) level or mix of provision that was posited in Chapter 6.

Similarly, Figures 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 suggest that Multi-suburb (Group) venues would warrant *consideration* for (from north to south) although those underlined could well be excluded from consideration due to their proximity or accessibility to other existing or planned venues:

<u>Amaroo</u>	<u>Griffith</u>
Charnwood	<u>Curtin</u>
<u>Kaleen</u>	Weston
<u>Holt</u>	<u>Mawson</u>
<u>Hawker</u>	Kambah
<u>Macquarie</u>	<u>Wanniassa</u>
<u>Dickson</u>	<u>Gilmore</u>
<u>Kingston</u>	<u>Calwell</u> , and
<u>Parkes/Barton</u>	<u>Conder</u> .
Fyshwick	

<sup>17</sup> *Retailing in Canberra* background paper by ACTPLA (September 2009)

<sup>18</sup> Other floor space retail outlets include motor vehicle sales, printing and publishing supplies, plumbing and construction supplies.

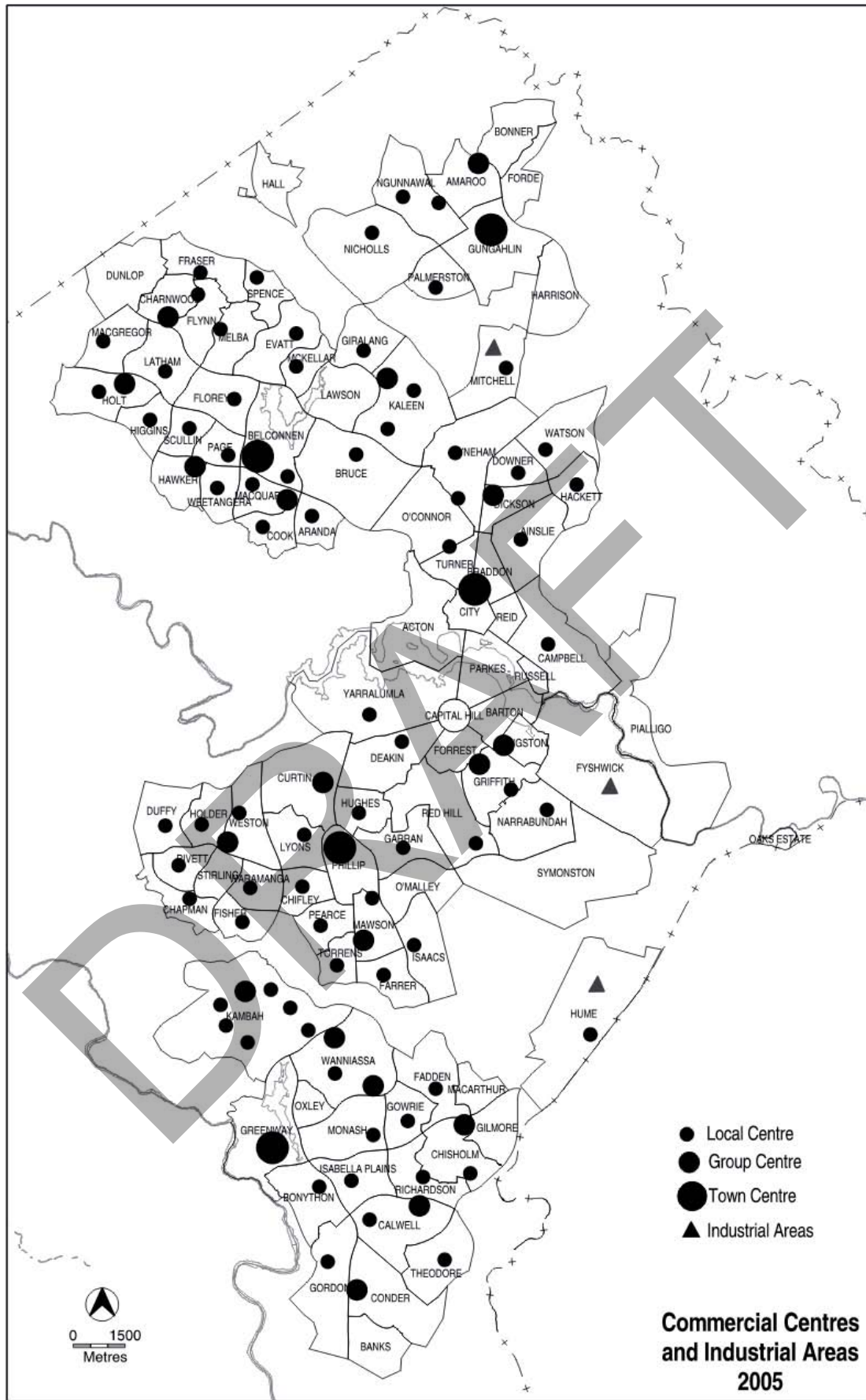


Figure 8.3: The distribution of hierarchical commercial centres and industrial areas in the ACT (2005). Source: Retailing in Canberra background paper by ACTPLA (September 2009)

There is already provision at Dickson (Dickson Pool), in the Kingston-Parkes-Barton area (Manuka Baths) and at Wanniasa (Active Leisure Centre) although, as with District level venues, none of these venues offers the optimum mix recommended in Chapter 6 for a multi-suburb venue.

As noted above, others of the “group”/multi-suburb locations warrant consideration although it is stressed that providing facilities at commercial centres and industrial areas on the basis of the workforce alone would almost certainly be unsustainable as the often quite low employment numbers at the bottom of Figure 8.4 suggest. However, if combined with resident and student numbers, it is clear that a number of the centres could almost certainly justify provision of a multi-suburb aquatic leisure centre.

## 8.7 Future Employment, Transport Hubs and Nodes

In the planning of Canberra, employment dispersal, particularly to the centres of each new town, has been a fundamental objective seen to offer significant travel time- and cost-reduction benefits.

There is also an identified need to develop sustainable transport models and infrastructure that will encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to commute to workplaces and the community activities they offer. The ACT sustainable transport model detailed in the *2011 Transport for Canberra* package has a long term target of 30 percent of journeys to work in 2026 being taken via sustainable transport options.

To understand the significant challenge this target presents, the past and future employment hubs of Canberra need to be identified and the projected commuter levels across Canberra explored. Figure 8.4 below shows where the concentration of employment sites were across the town centres from 2001 to 2006.<sup>19</sup>

The significant feature of this period was the 40 percent growth in employment in the City/Braddon area, largely due to the development and refurbishment of Commonwealth office space (although this is now slowing down).

The Business Park at the airport was also developing rapidly during this period (with employment numbers rising from 900 to 5,300 until 2006). The Park will continue to expand with the continued redevelopment of the airport. This area has now been recognised as a significant employment hub which, significantly, is central to Civic, adjacent to Queanbeyan, is linked to Gungahlin by a major arterial road for regional workers and can also support Fyshwick and other residential areas such as Campbell and the Australian Defence Force Academy. Such a precinct may, in fact, allow for a 3 way partnership between the airport owners and Federal government, the ACT government and Queanbeyan Council.

The construction of retail outlets (including Costco) next to the Business Park will further the growth of the area as a significant business and retail hub for Canberra. Figure 8.5, taken from the National Capital Plan, Amendment 44 (2007), shows the airport as one of the defined office employment centres in Canberra located on the major transport corridor to Queanbeyan.

It is projected that in the next decade the number of people commuting to work in the ACT will increase by more than 10 percent to about 238,000 people daily. The following changes are also expected to occur:

Civic will see the greatest increase to 39,000 commuting there to work on a daily basis  
Barton and Parkes will have around 20,000 daily commuters, and  
Phillip and Belconnen will have around 15,000 / day<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> *Employment Locations in Canberra* by ACT Planning and Land Authority (April 2009)

<sup>20</sup> *ACT Government Infrastructure Plan* (2010)

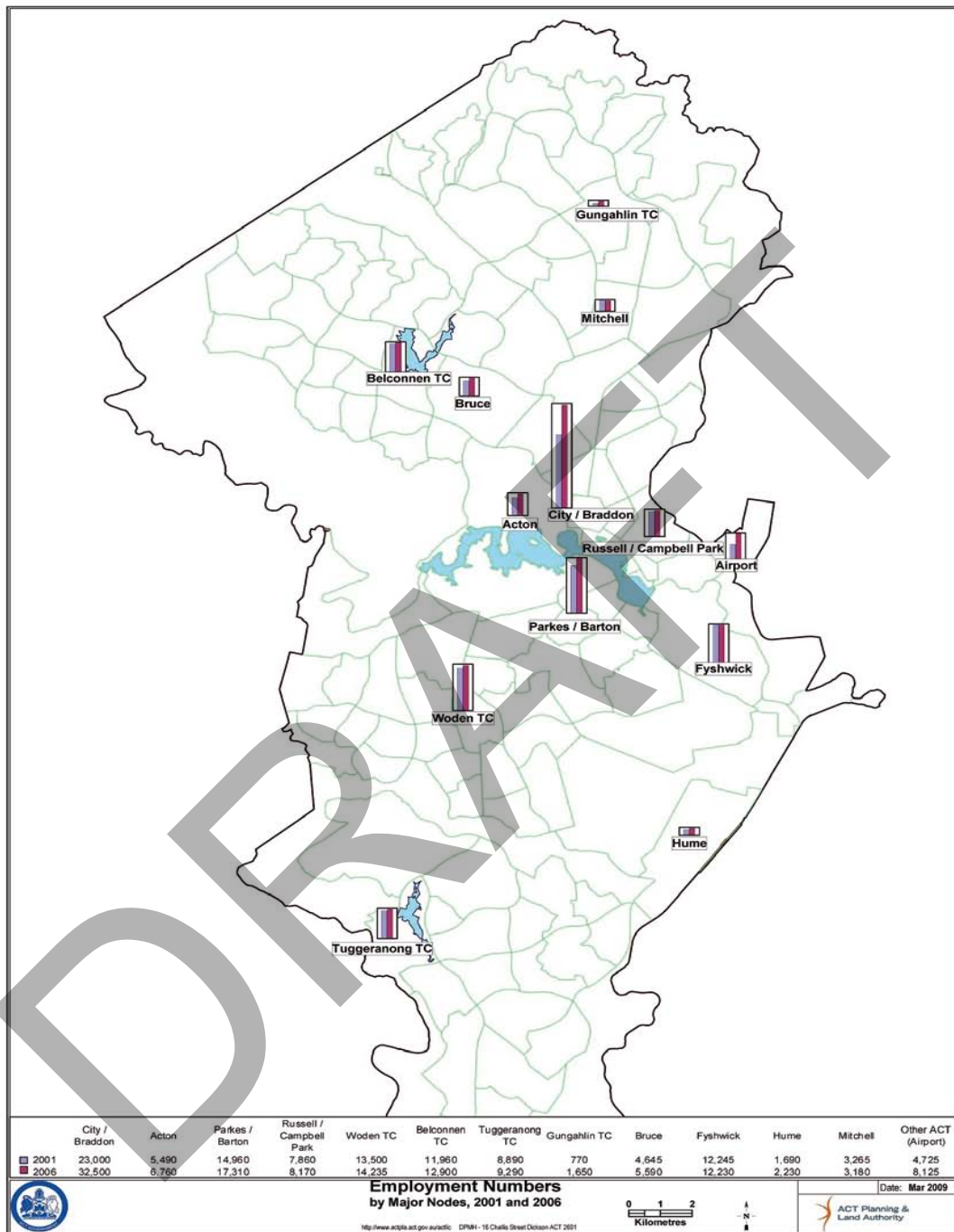


Figure 8.4: Concentration of employment sites across the town centres from 2001 to 2006 – Employment locations in Canberra by ACT Planning and Land Authority (April 2009)

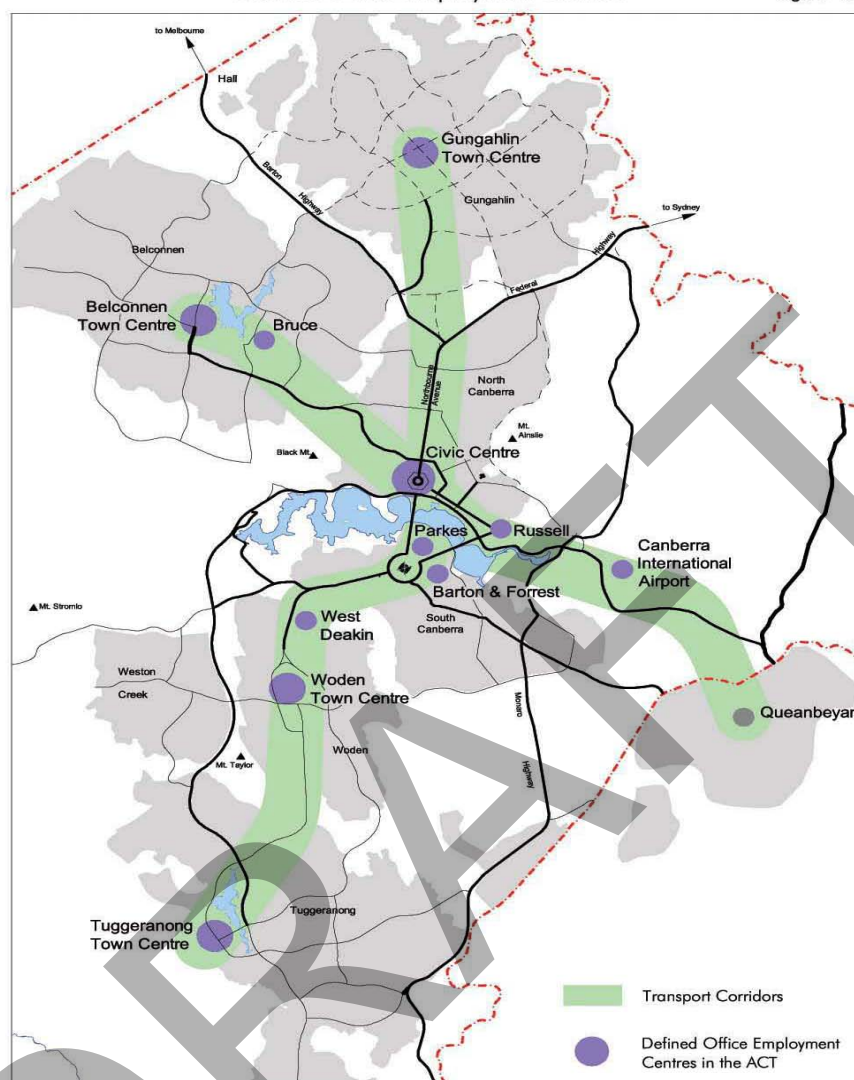


Figure 8.5: Defined office employment centres in Canberra and major transport corridors (Source: ACT government infrastructure plan (2010))

These projections demonstrate that the work being undertaken to modernise the ACT public transport system and make infrastructure improvements such as the construction of 'Park and Ride' and 'Bike and Ride' facilities at key locations on public transport corridors is critical to achieve the set commuter targets. From the perspective of the present study, the commuter figures:

- Reinforce the importance of the existing facilities in Belconnen
- Heighten the role of the soon to be built facilities in Gungahlin
- Highlight the importance of the current planning study being carried out in relation to the future of the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic
- Highlight the potential value of further developments or redevelopments in Woden, and
- Suggest that consideration may warrant being given to both the Canberra airport precinct and the inner southern suburbs of the City as possible locations for future aquatic leisure venues.



## 8.8 Conclusions

The review of the condition and capacity of the existing facilities presented in Chapter 5 of this report, together with the data presented in this chapter has seriously questioned the capacity of the current mix of facilities to even *somewhat meet* future usage demands. This places pressure on decision makers to ensure that the future siting of aquatic venues will allow them to respond to community demands in an effective and efficient manner.

The data examined in this chapter highlights the need for provision to reflect demographic trends. It also highlights the opportunities for placing aquatic leisure venues (and a wide mix of other community facilities) within or adjacent to town centres, schools, childcare centres and kindergartens, medical facilities, and transport and employment hubs. Such co-location will enhance patron accessibility to venues, raise the visibility of services and activities to a larger consumer base and achieve effective and efficient use of infrastructure provision and maintenance.

In overview, the review suggests that on the basis of **population size and growth**, the following aquatic leisure provision actions are likely to be needed over the coming years:

- A new multi-feature venue to meet the needs of residents of Woden Valley, Weston Creek and Molonglo with the most appropriate location to be decided by feasibility study proposed for 2011/12
- Upgrading and expansion of the Lakeside and Active leisure facilities that serve the needs of Tuggeranong residents
- Additional or modernised provision may well be needed to service the needs of the growing and demographically, *quite mixed* communities in North Canberra, South Canberra
- Action to achieve a greater community “dividend” from CISAC in Belconnen through a partnership reworking of that venue or through provision of a new, smaller multi-suburb venue further to the north-west of Belconnen, and
- Further provision is likely to be needed in the Gungahlin district to meet the level and mix of needs that will not be able to be catered for at the new Gungahlin Leisure Centre. This could occur, for example, in Mitchell or in the Majura Valley.

With regard to **the ageing of the ACT population**, the review data suggests that consideration should be given to the provision of aquatic and related facilities at all new and renovated venues over the coming years to ensure that they are relevant to an ageing community. In concrete terms, this suggests that warm water program and health pools, service and support suites and specialised professional staff should be provided at all District level venues.

The information reported on **projected educational provision** in section 8.3 indicates that there will be significant opportunities to both co-locate new aquatic leisure facilities with schools and other educational institutions over the coming years and for aquatic venues near schools to strengthen their links with them.

The CIT learning centre in Tuggeranong and the trade training centre developments in North and South Canberra offer potentially substantive opportunities for shared provision and these should be explored, either in association with existing venues or at new sites. Similarly, the provision of student accommodation at CIT Reid in 5 years’ time strengthens the argument for improvements to the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic as a facility that can function as both a leisure hub and a educational venue. In the wider context, other school buildings across Canberra will require retrofitting over the coming years and these too, should be assessed as co-location opportunities.

The high demand for **childcare** facilities in the ACT is a reflection of:

- Dual career families
- Many young couples specifically move to the ACT to work, and
- Many such couples do not have extended family support networks and thus need to rely on public and/or private childcare, and

These conditions often make childcare venues on the route to work the most accessible and thus, the most popular.

In terms of the implications to aquatic leisure provision, the childcare information suggests that locations that reflect workforce catchment areas and transit corridors between work and home warrant serious consideration. It also suggests that opportunities for the co-location of these and aquatic venues should be pursued to ensure efficient community servicing with improved accessibility to vital water safety programming for children which can be offered during or post care. Other social and health services appropriate to parents and carers could also be co-located.

The review of the **retail centres hierarchy** found that it strongly reflects the aquatic facilities hierarchy recommended earlier in this report and suggests co-location opportunities at both the Group/ Multi-suburb and higher Town/District levels. While some aquatic provision already exists at both levels of the hierarchy, most of the sites do not have the capacity to accommodate development to the desired level or to support the recommended mix of facilities. The analysis has concluded that while District-level provision has been achieved to a considerable degree at the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) in Belconnen, the new Gungahlin aquatic leisure venue will not offer the same range of opportunities.

Further, it found that there are no District- or lower level aquatic facilities at all in Weston while the Phillip Pool facilities in Woden are outdated and do not offer the full complement of recommended elements and are on a site which would almost certainly be incapable of accommodating them. Finally, it was found that neither of the Lakeside or Active Leisure venues in Tuggeranong could be classified as offering a District-level mix of opportunities although between them they come close and if redeveloped to complement each other, they have the capacity to do so.

The analysis of the issue of the **workforce consumer** has suggested that provision to gain the support of this market could most probably be successful in Civic and to a lesser extent, in Gungahlin, Woden and Tuggeranong.

Data presented in section 8.4 indicated high levels of **residential and commercial land releases** in several districts of the ACT. The notably high rates for Gungahlin, Molonglo and central Canberra emphasise the need for provision in these areas. A major contribution to meeting this need will be made by the new Gungahlin Aquatic leisure Centre.

Provision for the Woden/Weston/Molonglo districts will depend on an interrelationship of factors such as the potential redevelopment of the Philip Pool. The proposed 2011/12 feasibility study into a possible Molonglo Leisure Centre will explore these issues further and recommend a course of action.

The growth in inner Canberra will be most effectively met through the projected redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic.

Finally, the analysis of future employment, transport hubs and nodes suggested that new and/or upgraded and modernised aquatic leisure facilities at Belconnen, Gungahlin, Civic, Woden, and the Canberra International Airport precinct warrant careful consideration.

These conclusions have been taken into consideration in determining the hierarchical level and the location of any new and upgraded aquatic leisure provision and in the formulation of recommendations on these issues in the following Chapter.

..



## A Strategic Plan for Aquatic and Associated Provision in the ACT 2010-2030

### 9.1 Introduction

This Chapter uses the material detailed in the foregoing Chapters to present an aquatic development strategy for the ACT for the period 2010-2030. Recommendations are labelled sequentially, beginning with **R1**.

### 9.2 The Strategic Vision

**R1.** The following vision is **recommended** to guide aquatic facility development in the ACT:

To deliver sustainable aquatic and related facilities, programs and services that contribute to the recreational, sporting, educational, health, wellbeing and economic opportunities in the community.

### 9.3 The Objectives

The following objectives have been developed in keeping with the above vision and with the Sport and Recreation Services Business Plan reviewed in Chapter 2. The Business Plan objectives are listed on the left with a rationale for each one recorded on the right.

**R2. It is recommended that** the following objectives are adopted to guide aquatic leisure provision in the ACT:

Objective	Rationale
1. Develop a hierarchy of venues	To ensure, within the overall planning framework, an appropriate scale of development at each venue and community access to viable, quality aquatic leisure opportunities
2. Develop venues with facilities, programs and services which have a flexibility use capacity	To meet assessed and changing community needs at the relevant hierarchical level
3. Develop venues through consultation with industry stakeholders and the local sporting industry	To enhance participation opportunities
4. Where appropriate, develop venues through strategic partnerships with a range of other government agencies, not-for-profit bodies and commercial entities	To optimise investment opportunities and levels; to optimise the recreational, sporting, health, community wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits delivered to users and to the wider community; to maximise use; to optimise provision diversity, and to strengthen long term operational viability and sustainability
5. Develop planning, operational and management models that promote sport and recreation staff skill sets and encouraging ongoing professional development	To maximise staff and volunteer abilities to achieve all other objectives.

## 9.4 Existing Provision and its Strategic Capacity

The review and discussion of the capacity of the existing aquatic leisure provision to meet strategic needs in Chapter 5 found that:

- There is a significant number of aquatic leisure venues available to the community but there are substantive gaps in both the mix and distribution of provision
- There is a high level of private and government-owned provision of water space catering specifically for the learn to swim market for pre-school and primary aged children
- The private aquatic developers and operators tend to offer limited or provide *no* general community aquatic opportunities
- There are more privately owned and/or operated venues than public venues, this reflecting a variable and inconsistent approach to provision by successive ACT governments and their predecessors
- Of the government-owned pools, all are operated by contracted managers or management companies. Unless there are clear objectives, contract drafting and effective performance monitoring, this approach may limit the ability of the owning authority to pursue its social and wellbeing policies
- There is only a small number of venues with 50 or 25 metre indoor pools that are suitable for all year higher level learn to swim, fitness and squad training
- Older adults, those undergoing rehabilitation and people with disabilities are disadvantaged by the current provision through a lack of dedicated warm water for rehabilitation and gentle exercise opportunities. Only three venues provide aqua aerobics classes for older adults
- There is only one diving facility in the ACT, that being the outdated and non-compliant facility at Canberra Olympic pool in Civic. That said, no need for a second facility was identified
- There are limited opportunities for social, leisure and water play opportunities in the ACT.

More specifically, the review found that essentially none of the ACT venues was effectively meeting modern day markets, with a number of factors contributing to this situation. These included:

- The fact that private owners and government have not kept pace with contemporary stands of aquatics provision (with the Phillip and Civic venues being the most evident in this context)
- The management and programming policies followed by a number of owners and management groups
- The fact that a number of the venues have remained as summer-only outdoor resources (such as the Dickson and Manuka pools)
- The market specialisation of the small, private learn to swim venues
- The lack of provision of pools of a size, flexibility and depth capable of effectively meeting the needs of aquatic team sports including swimming, water polo and triathlons, and
- The policy of restricted access operated in relation to the AIS facilities.

The soon-to-be-built facility in Gungahlin is intended to be the equivalent of a District venue but there will be limits to its capacity to fulfil this role due to constraints on parking, spectator areas, change facilities, lane availability, meeting spaces and room for growth. Future developments in other parts of the city will be needed to mediate the overall level of aquatic provision across the ACT.

The above shortcomings are exacerbated by the lack of provision in a number of parts of the City and by the past closure of several venues.

As a consequence, the ACT community is not being provided with or gaining the full recreational, educational or healthy living benefits of having access appropriate to its needs. The provision that exists is only partially meeting educational needs, is incapable of fully meeting training and competition needs amongst sports people, cannot provide accessible local summer leisure and play opportunities for all residents and is severely limited in its ability to meet health program needs amongst older residents and those undergoing secondary rehabilitation programs.

## 9.5 Recommended Development Actions

### 9.5.1 Introduction

In the light of the foregoing and the findings of the previous Chapters of this report, 5 areas have been identified that warrant action if the ACT community and visitors to the ACT are to gain the optimal benefits from the provision of aquatic leisure venues across the City. These are:

1. Adoption of a strategic framework to guide the scale of developments that are undertaken and the associated levels of service, mix of facilities and sizes of sites needed
2. Upgrading and redeveloping key existing aquatic leisure venues within the context of the strategic framework to optimise the benefits delivered on a spatial basis across the ACT
3. Provision of additional venues in the future, also within the context of the strategic framework and also to ensure that equitable benefits are delivered on a spatial basis across the ACT
4. Adoption of a new funding regime
5. Adoption of a new approach to management so that what is provided is programmed, priced and promoted in a manner that delivers the optimal benefits to the ACT community.

The details on each of these areas are presented below.

### 9.5.2 Adopt a Strategic Framework and Hierarchy

**R3.** In keeping with the review and discussion in Chapter 6, **it is recommended that** the government adopts the hierarchy of venues recommended for the ACT from section 6.3. The hierarchical categories are:

1. Multi-suburb
2. District/sub-ACT
3. ACT-wide (Territory),
4. National level.

**R4.** Further, **it is recommended that** the government adopts the “Programs and the target markets” and “Venue and site sizes” associated with each level in the hierarchy as a basis for the mix of facilities to be provided, the scale of those facilities and the user and activities focus to be pursued.

The following points should be noted:

- a. As detailed in Chapter 6, all District level venues should incorporate elements of the lower level multi-suburb venues so that they effectively serve both local and district needs, and

- b. Action to provide a level 4, National, elite competition venue is not recommended in this report as the ACT market would not be sufficient to sustain provision without heavy annual subsidies

Similarly, no action is recommended with regard to a level 4, National, for water-based tourist destination (such as Queensland's Wet n Wild venues) as the size of the ACT market, the level of competition from other states and winter weather conditions mean that such a venue would not be financially viable. However, consideration should be given to the provision of significant water play/leisure features at individual District-level venues and at the one ACT-wide venue

A unique national and international standard European-style spa resort, with associated provision of health and wellness clinics and services should be considered (as detailed in the Canberra Olympic Pool redevelopment study), as this would create a unique national product. The Canberra Olympic Pool would be the most attractive and effective location for such provision.

### 9.5.3 Upgrade and Redevelop Existing Aquatic Leisure Venues

#### 1. Active Leisure Centre, Wanniasa.

Active Leisure Centre is managed by a Committee on behalf of the Education Department. The venue is constrained in terms of further development by site limitations and its integration with Erindale College.

**It is recommended that:**

**R5.** Active Leisure Centre be retained as a specialised educational venue while continuing to operate as a Multi-suburb venue for community use.

**R6.** As deemed appropriate and as indicated by on-going need and population monitoring, partnership funding be provided in association with the Education Department for further upgrading and additional facilities that support educational and community development programs eg: TAFE, adult education, multi-cultural work programs etc

#### 2. Lakeside Leisure Centre, Greenway/Tuggeranong

This venue, managed under contract for the ACT government, presently functions as Multi-suburb venue and its market reach and long term viability is being detrimentally impacted by a nearby private health and fitness provider.

**It is recommended that:**

**R7.** Lakeside Leisure Centre is designated as a District level venue to serve the needs of the Tuggeranong district and the southern suburbs of the ACT

**R8.** A partnership redevelopment program is explored with the owners of the adjoining health and fitness centre to physically integrate the two venues through a multi-use space providing a range of aquatic and dry health, wellbeing and appropriate retail services accessed through a common foyer.

Under the recommended partnership, the present dry health and fitness programs offered by Lakeside Leisure Centre would be the focus of additional and more diverse aquatics provision while additional and more targeted health and wellbeing facilities and programs would be provided by or in association with the adjoining health and fitness centre.

Pursuing this opportunity should be written into the conditions of the tender for the future management of the centre that will be released late in 2011 for implementation from July 2012.

**R9.** The mix of aquatic facilities be diversified to meet the criteria established for District level venues with this to include more social and water play opportunities as well as health-related warm water program pool(s) for learn to swim, people with disabilities and the aged.

### **3. Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre, Woden Town Centre**

This privately-owned and operated venue is set in attractive lawn areas close to the Woden Town Centre. However, with ageing infrastructure and outdoor-only pools, the venue is increasingly incapable of meeting community needs. Site constraints are potentially a significant barrier to further development.

#### **It is recommended that:**

**R10.** The venue is designated as a District level centre to serve the needs of the Woden Valley and Weston Creek districts and the south-western suburbs of the ACT

**R11.** The ACT Government initiates negotiations with the owners of the centre for the purpose of initiating a study designed to prepare a redevelopment strategy the Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre. This study should address:

- The mix of District (and Multi-suburb) level facilities required to meet community needs at an upgraded or new venue in the Woden Valley/Weston Creek districts
- The capacity of the existing pool site to accommodate the needs that have been identified
- The opportunities for a development partnership between the ACT government or others the present owners of Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre
- Alternate and optimal commercial or other uses of the present site and alternate sites for a government or multi-party partnership development of a District level venue. Alternate sites to be assessed should include consideration in association with district parkland facilities, new residential and/or retail precincts in Woden Town Centre, Education Department facilities or other co-location partners
- The opportunities for relocating the ice skating component of the venue to a more central location in the ACT, such as the Canberra Olympic Pool, as part of the redevelopment of that venue so as to reach a broader market, enhance its viability and better serve the needs of the ACT
- Ownership and funding strategies
- Design options and indicative capital costs
- Management and programming, and
- Other issues as identified that require assessment.

### **4. Manuka Pool, Kingston**

This historic pool is set in an attractive parkland environs and functions as a Multi-suburb summer-only outdoor swimming venue. Because of the historic nature of the building it would be inappropriate to modify or add to the venue. More diverse, all-year Multi-suburb and District needs will be met by the redeveloped Canberra Olympic Pool which is less than 5 kilometres to the north (see below).

#### **It is recommended that:**

**R12.** Manuka Pool is retained as a heritage, summer-only outdoor pool serving the needs of inner southern suburb residents.

### **5. Canberra Olympic Pool, Civic**

Canberra Olympic Pool occupies a major site in Civic, on the edge of the Canberra CBD adjacent to the National Convention Centre and the Reid Campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology. It offers direct access to Commonwealth Park and Lake Burley Griffin via a footbridge.

The venue is essentially in the same format as when opened in the 1960s although the 50 metre pool has been enclosed using a fabric dome. A fitness gym and consulting suites were developed over recent years as a means of diversifying the offer of the venue. The venue is managed for the government under a contract with a private management company.

A major feasibility study into the redevelopment of the pool precinct into a major leisure, health, wellbeing, educational, residential, hotel, commercial and retail precinct has been undertaken in parallel with the present strategic planning study.

That feasibility study has recommended:

- The extensive redevelopment of Canberra Olympic Pool to create a Territory level venue offering a diverse mix of aquatic facilities that support learn to swim, competition, training, diving, aquatic water play, social activities and wellness programs
- Provision of a wide range of dry fitness, health suites and related services, community support facilities, retail and cafe/social areas
- Development of a European-style health spa resort as an integral component of the project with links to surrounding hotels, accommodation and specialist health services. This would be unique in Australia and would strengthen the interstate and international tourism markets attracted by the redevelopment
- Inclusion of program spaces for the development of programming, staffing and use links with adjoining educational, conference and other organisations and agencies
- The inclusion of District and Multi-suburb facilities to meet the growing inner city population and residents from inner northern and inner southern suburbs of the city
- Consideration be given to the inclusion of modern ice skating facilities, with these essentially being relocated from the existing Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre.

In the light of the above, **it is recommended that:**

**R13.** Canberra Olympic Pool is redeveloped as a Territory /State level venue, with some unique National level components

**R14.** The elements recommended for inclusion in a redeveloped Canberra Olympic Pool in the 2011 feasibility study (as cited above) are endorsed

**R15.** Once redevelopment is initiated, the venue is re named to better reflect its new roles and capacities.

## **6. Dickson Pool, Dickson**

Dickson Pool is a very attractive and very well managed outdoor summer-only pool which attracts a clientele from a wide area of the ACT. In essence, it operates as a Multi-suburb venue but does not have the mix of facilities to effectively meet that hierarchical level. The site occupied by the pool is seriously constrained and thus has limited if any opportunities for significant further development.

Dickson Pool is less than 5 kilometres immediately north of the Canberra Olympic Pool which, as indicated in section 9.4.3.5 above, will once redeveloped, offer full Multi-suburb, District and Territory level facilities. As such, further development of the venue is not warranted.

**It is recommended that:**

**R16.** Dickson Pool is designated as a partial Multi-suburb level centre, and

**R17.** Dickson Pool is retained in its present form to meet the summer-only aquatic needs of the inner northern suburbs with funds being allocated for its regular maintenance and renewal.

## **7. Australian Institute of Sport, Bruce**

The AIS aquatic facilities are "National" level elite competition, coaching and training facilities and as such, **it is recommended that:**

**R18.** The AIS not be considered for any development funding from the ACT government.

## 8. Big Splash, Macquarie

Big Splash, in the suburb of Macquarie, is a multi-facility commercial water play venue and as such, does not have a position within the hierarchy recommended in section 9.4.2.

Given its other responsibilities, the ACT government has not seen the need or had the capacity to make a commitment to the provision of *entertainment-only* aquatic venues (although it provides aquatic play opportunities to complement other facilities). Over the coming years it can be expected that it will have higher priorities regarding other forms of aquatics provision. Further, Big Splash is less than two kilometres by road from the District level Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) in Belconnen and as such does not warrant government investment to diversify its offerings. **It is therefore recommended that:**

**R19.** No action is taken with regard to any government investment in Big Splash.

## 9. Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC)

Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC), on the corner of Eastern Valley Way and College Street, Belconnen, is the largest and most modern multi-facility commercial aquatic fitness venue in the ACT. Built with the assistance of a government grant, the venue draws from a wide catchment across the City's northern suburbs.

CISAC functions as *both* a Multi-suburb and District venue. However, limitations on the mix of facilities and a management and operational focus on dry fitness programming mean that it does not deliver the opportunities and programs that fully developed Multi-suburb and District venues should. Given this situation, the opportunity exists to negotiate further development of some elements of the CISAC facilities (such as learn to swim, warm water program facilities and more specialist health facilities), and to "unpack" the management of these through a negotiated change to the management of the various components of the venue.

In light of the above, **it is recommended that:**

**R20.** The ACT government initiates negotiations with the owners of CISAC for the purpose of:

- Confirming further facility provision needed at the venue to create a comprehensive Multi-suburb and District centre
- Conducting a planning and feasibility study into the further development of the centre, and
- Implementing a separation of the management of the aquatic and new health and wellbeing components of the venue from the wider centre so as to optimise the benefits delivered by these to the community.

The development and management framework recommended for the Lakeside pool and the adjoining private fitness centre (which is owned by the same group as CISAC), could be used as a model for these negotiations. As indicated in section 9.6, Development Priorities, this recommendation is given a high priority for action in light of the fact that the future Gungahlin Aquatic Leisure Centre will be unable to effectively meet District needs.

## 10. Deakin Pool

The Deakin Swimming Pool on Denison Street, Deakin, closed in early 2009. It is understood that the ACT Planning and Land Authority has approved the development of sections of the pool site for office purposes on condition that one or more replacement pools is provided. However, the redevelopment of both the Phillip Pool and the Canberra Olympic Pool as recommended in this report would render this condition unnecessary.

**It is recommended that** the government should:

**R21.** Review the requirement that one or more new pools is provided at the site of the former Deakin Swimming Pool as a condition for the redevelopment of part of the site for other



purposes. If possible, the requirement should be replaced with a development contribution which is directed toward either or both of the Phillip and Canberra Olympic Pool projects.

## 11. Other ACT Pools

There are several other private pools in the ACT, most being private learn to swim or fitness pools. These are generally less than 25 metres in length and have few if any support facilities other than change rooms and often limited or on-street-only car parking. The further development capacity of these venues and the limited markets they can serve renders them incapable of meeting wider community needs. As such, their presence should not be taken as an indication that there is adequate provision for a community.

On occasions there has been conflict between the owners and operators of these venues when the issue of perceived competition from government venues arises.

**R22.** Proceed with government-funded aquatic leisure provision regardless of any private provision that may exist in the catchment of a Multi-suburb or District venue

**R23.** Seek to minimise conflict with private providers and operators by advertising future development proposals well in advance and by engaging district providers in the planning process where they may be affected by new initiatives.

### 9.5.4 Provide New Aquatic Leisure Venues

Renewed population growth, the physical expansion of the City into new residential release areas and changes in the distribution of employment opportunities across the City mean that over the coming years a number of additional aquatic leisure facilities will be required if the needs of the community are to be effectively met. These are discussed below.

#### 1. Gungahlin District

Despite the fact that proposed new Gungahlin Aquatic Leisure Centre has yet to be built, early consideration will need to be given to identifying a site for further provision within the next 10 to 15 years. This is due to:

- Population growth in the district being projected to be the highest across the City as a whole over the coming decades
- Major Gungahlin growth occurring to the east and south-east where there is no recreation provision at all at present
- Significant employment growth in Mitchell and the surrounding areas (with possible links to the major employment growth in the Airport Business Park and adjoining precincts), and
- Site constraints at the future Gungahlin Aquatic Leisure Centre that will not permit the venue to offer the full range of components expected at a District level role.

In the light of the above, **it is recommended that:**

**R24.** An assessment of appropriate sites of 2.5 to 4.0 ha. is undertaken in the urban land release program in the Kenny, Mitchell, Majura Valley districts and of sites in proximity to Majura Road, with this assessment being carried out in conjunction with other relevant community services provision agencies eg: education, health, public transport and as appropriate, commercial interests

#### 2. Molonglo

The population and residential development data discussed in Chapter 8 indicated a significant increase in the population of the Molonglo district over the coming decades as land formerly under the pine forests burned by the 2003 bushfires comes onto the residential market. Combined with the northern suburbs of Weston Creek, this population will be sufficient to support a small Multi-suburb aquatic leisure centre within 12-15 years. Ideally,

such a facility should be developed in the southern Molonglo area so that it can tap into and benefit from the existing market capacities in the suburbs of Duffy, Holder and Curtin.

**It is recommend that:**

**R25.** A feasibility study is commissioned into the development of a Multi-suburb aquatic leisure centre in the southern Molonglo area, with this to be built in the coming 8-12 years. The study should address the following:

- The mix of Multi-suburb level facilities required to meet community needs
- Alternate locations for an aquatic leisure venue
- Ownership and funding strategies
- Design options and indicative capital costs
- Management and programming, and
- Other issues as identified that require assessment.

### **3. Airport Business Park/ Queanbeyan**

The Canberra International Airport Business park has been experiencing exponential employment growth rates over recent years and this is projected to continue. This growth is occurring adjacent to the existing major employment zone in Fyshwick and within 10 kilometres of Queanbeyan.

The growing trend toward “24/7” work hours in Business Parks and industrial centres and the growing Queanbeyan population present a strong case for the development of a Multi-suburb aquatic leisure venue in this south-eastern sector of the ACT. Alternately, further provision may be made by Queanbeyan Council.

In light of the above, **it is recommended that:**

**R26.** The ACT government negotiates with the Queanbeyan City Council regarding preparation of a feasibility study into the development of a Multi-suburb aquatic leisure venue in this south-eastern sector of the ACT or in Queanbeyan City Council. Dependent on the response from Queanbeyan City Council and its future provision plans, the ACT government should consider whether to proceed with such a study itself. If commissioned, the study should address the following issues:

- The mix of Multi-suburb level facilities required to meet community and employee needs
- Optional locations for an aquatic leisure venue
- The opportunities for a development partnership with the owners and developers of the Airport Business Park or with Queanbeyan City Council
- Ownership and funding strategies
- Design options and indicative capital costs
- Management and programming, and
- Other issues as identified that require assessment.

### **4. North Western Suburbs**

Population growth is continuing, albeit at a slower pace, in the north-western suburbs of the ACT. As such, provision of a small Multi-suburb aquatic leisure venue may be warranted at some point in the future, particularly if there is further growth into Wallaroo and Yass Valley.

In the light of the above, **it is recommend that:**

**R27.** A feasibility study is commissioned into the development of a Multi-suburb aquatic leisure centre in the north-western suburbs of the ACT area. The timing of this study will be dependent on regular monitoring of the growth and characteristics of the population over the

coming years as well as information on the performance and market reach of other venues in the northern part of the ACT. A feasibility study should address the following:

- The mix of Multi-suburb level facilities required to meet community needs
- Alternate locations for an aquatic leisure venue
- Ownership and funding strategies
- Design options and indicative capital costs
- Management and programming, and
- Other issues as identified that require assessment.

### 9.5.5 Adopt a New Funding Regime

Action on the foregoing recommendations is essential if the ACT government is to provide its community with an effective set of attractive, modern and appropriate aquatic leisure venues. Such action will only be successful if an appropriate funding strategy is put into place.

Past planning and funding strategies have led to a quite disjointed pattern and mix of provision and to one which is increasingly unable to effectively meet increasingly sophisticated community needs.

A number of strategies for the future funding of aquatic leisure venues have been outlined in Chapter 7 and **it is recommended that:**

**R28.** The ACT government reviews the funding review in Chapter 7 of this report and the funding strategies available to it and adopts a clear and consistent approach to the funding of future aquatic leisure developments.

### 9.5.6 Adopt a New Management Structure

There are two elements to the successful delivery of quality aquatic leisure venues in the community; the effective management of their planning and development, and the effective management, programming and pricing of their operation once opened.

The evidence collected and assessed in the course of the present study indicates that historically, the development of aquatic leisure venues in the ACT has not been managed in an effective, integrated fashion. Facilities have tended to be developed in isolation from each other, rather than as integral parts of an overall system, and they have been developed without a comprehensive view as to the role that different mixes of facilities play in meeting community needs. This process has been exacerbated by the development of facilities by different agencies and by both private and government bodies –often in competition with one another.

Further to the above, once the facilities have been developed, they have been operated under a range of structures using a variety of different agencies. This has led to programming, marketing and pricing which does not match the needs of the community, and which is not designed to service key needs groups and sectors of the community.

Finally, more effort is needed to monitor and assess the performance of the facilities and the programs they offer and to tie the outcomes of that monitoring to strategies designed to achieve more effective forms of delivery.

Adoption of a new approach to management is critical to ensuring that what is provided delivers the optimal benefits to the ACT community.

**R29.** In light of the above **it is recommended that** the ACT government:

1. Adopts a comprehensive aquatic venues planning process
2. Adopts a new, more effective management structure through a review and evaluation of the strategies detailed in Chapter 7
3. Develops a more detailed and on-going needs monitoring program and makes more rigorous use of the CERM indicators as part of this process, and

4. Develops an ACT-specific performance monitoring process to measure and assess both the outputs and outcomes of the delivery of facilities and programs through aquatic leisure venues.

## 9.6 Strategic Plan Review Timing and Process

A planning and feasibility study is only as useful as the information on which it is based and the interpretations of that information. The present study has been prepared in the light of information collected over the 2009-2011 period with this covering the characteristics of the ACT population, information on patterns of urban, retailing, education, transport and community services development, and the development of aquatic leisure venues in the ACT over the 1990-2010 period. The study has also used projections as to future leisure needs and future aquatic provision trends and needs.

It is almost certain that some elements of the information on which the conclusions and recommendations of this report have been based will have changed within 5 years. It is also probable that changes will have occurred in terms of wider planning and provision needs, processes and arrangements. Finally, it can be hoped that at least some of the recommendations of the present report will have been acted on. As a consequence of these actions, it is almost certain that there will be changes in the nature, scale and location of aquatic leisure needs and provision opportunities in some or all areas of the ACT community. As such, it is critical that the conclusions and recommendations of the present report are reviewed and evaluated. This should be done on a five-yearly cycle.

In light of the above, **it is recommended that:**

**R30.** The ACT government undertakes a review of any changes in aquatic leisure provision across the ACT, in community needs and aspirations, in demographics, urban, retailing, education, transport and community services development and other relevant factors on a five yearly basis and prepared a revised strategic development plan in the light of the findings of that review.

## 9.7 Development Priorities

It is evident that the recommendations provided above do not all need to be pursued at the one point in time. Some have greater urgency than others given ageing infrastructure and facilities while others will require time and population growth before they will be warranted.

In order to give some general guidance to priorities for action, Table 9.1 summarises the overall set of recommendations from section 9.5 with regard to each existing and proposed venue and allocates an indicative time line to it. It is recognised that these are only indicative priorities as the availability of resources, wider community events, changing patterns or trends in needs and economic conditions may well change the recommended program of action.

Recommended Action	Pending Assessment	Immediate	Within 5 years	Within 10 years
<b>R1.</b> Adopt the strategic vision for aquatic facility development in the ACT				
<b>R2.</b> Adopt the objectives for aquatic facility development in the ACT				
<b>R3.</b> Adopt the recommended hierarchy of aquatic leisure venues (and the recommended designations of each venue)				
<b>R4.</b> Adopt the “Programs and the target markets” and “Venue and site sizes” associated with each hierarchical level as a basis for the mix, scale and users of facilities and the activities provided				
<b>R29.</b> Adopt a new and more effective management and operational structure for all government-owned aquatic leisure venues				
<b>R28.</b> Adopt a clear and consistent approach to the funding of future aquatic leisure developments				
<b>R13-15.</b> Proceed with the redevelopment of the Canberra Olympic Pool in Civic as recommended in the concurrent feasibility study for the venue				
<b>R24. – 27:</b> Reserve sites in each of Gungahlin, Molonglo, the Airport Business Precinct and the north-western suburbs (in association with other agencies wherever possible) for the provision of new pools over the coming years				
<b>R8.</b> Initiate a partnership redevelopment of Lakeside Leisure Centre with the owners of the adjoining health and fitness centre to physically integrate the two venues through a multi-use space				
<b>R11.</b> Negotiate with the owners of Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre to commission a feasibility study into the redevelopment of the Phillip Pool and Ice Skating Centre at the existing or another site and in the existing or another format				
<b>R20.</b> Initiate negotiations with the owners of CISAC for the purpose of creating a comprehensive Multi-suburb and District centre under a management regime similar to that recommended for Lakeside Leisure Centre				
<b>R30.</b> Undertake a review and revision of the research and recommendations of the present study.				

Table 9.1: Indicative priorities for action