

Shire of Collie

Indoor Pool Working Group Meeting

Notes from the meeting of the Indoor Pool Working Group held on 30 November 2022, commencing at 4.03 pm.

1. Welcome and Attendance

Cr Joe Italiano welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attendance

Members

Cr Joe Italiano	Shire of Collie Elected Member – Meeting Chair
Cr Michelle Smith	Shire of Collie Elected Member
Stuart Devenish	Shire of Collie Chief Executive Officer
Beth Peters	Collie Heated Indoor Pool Supporters (CHIPS)
Ann Briggs	Collie Kids in Need
Rod Latham	Swimming Club
Pamela Anderson	Community representative
Maureen Lasisz	Community representative
Natasha Putland	Research Officer for Jodie Hanns MLA (from 4.06pm)

Administrative Support

Nicole Wasmann	Shire of Collie Director Corporate Services
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Apologies

Judith Towler	Community representative
Jodie Hanns	Collie Preston MLA
Scott Digney	Underwater Hockey
Silvia Chiera	Community representative

2. Previous Meeting

Notes from the previous meeting held 16 November 2022 were reviewed.

3. Report

a. Benefits

Additional information with regards to benefits for respiratory factors and for people with special needs was discussed at the last meeting. The following information is to be included:

Swimming helps maintain healthy lungs and is a great form of exercise for people with asthma. Exercising in warm humid air helps to alleviate asthma symptoms.

The hydrostatic pressure of water can have a soothing and calming effect on people with sensory issues. Participating in aquatic activities in a heated pool can be less stressful and when physical exercise is not of an intensity to increase body temperature, warm water enables people with special needs, and their carers, to be able to stay in the water for longer.

Ann Briggs presented the following information and it was agreed to also incorporate this into the report:

Health benefits of a heated pool have been well documented in the past, warm water helps your circulatory system by promoting blood flow while in the water. It relaxes muscles and joints allowing more free movement within the warm water. For many arthritis sufferers swimming in warm water is proven to reduce pain in joints and back.

Swimming uses almost all the muscles in your body. It's a resistance exercise that builds muscle and strength for the whole body.

When in water, your body automatically becomes lighter so you do not have the pressure on your joints like other activities such as running.

Respiratory conditions such as asthma, COPD and other chronic respiratory conditions benefit greatly with access to an indoor heated pool. Collie sits geographically in a basin which in certain conditions takes longer the air too clear.

Relieves stress somehow a warm pool makes everything a little better.

Swimming is great exercise whether swimming laps or water aerobics.

Physical activity in later years of life is essential to promote a healthy ageing process and independent functioning. Swimming has been shown to help prevent or manage many chronic diseases, as well as improving overall physiological and psychological health.

Children who learn to swim at a young age have been shown to reach many developmental milestones earlier than the normal population. As well as achieving physical milestones faster children can also improve their visual- motor skills and mathematical related tasks by swimming.

The ability to access a heated indoor pool within our community would be advantageous for all of the above conditions also promoting a more active independent lifestyle for all residents especially our ageing residents.

Many residents travel to access heated indoor pools in other towns, however many residents that would benefit from this facility do not have the ability to travel, severally disadvantages this group within our community.

Action:

- Shire staff to update draft report benefits with the additional information.

b. Specification Requirements

The following information was noted:

The Health Department has advised that patron numbers are currently restricted to 330 at any one time (commensurate with number of sanitary facilities). If the existing sanitary facilities were also to be used for a new pool, the total number of patrons across all facilities could not exceed 330. The sanitary facilities must be no more than 90m from any water body.

c. Location

A map of the existing facility with dimensions was presented.

Given the proposed specifications of 6 lanes and 25m in length with additional program pool, it was determined that southern side of the existing facility (where the current radio station is located) is the most suitable site with a stand-alone facility.

d. Financial Considerations

The following information was provided:

- Current pool has an annual operating deficit of over \$400k per annum.
- The previously proposed 16m pool had an estimated operating deficit of \$330k per annum (possibly underestimated following comparison with other local governments who operate indoor heated pools).
- The potential impact of capital and operational costs on rates. The Shire's annual rates are \$6.78m. An operating loss of \$400,000 would equate to an increase of 5.5% in rates. This is in addition to any loan repayments for capital funding i.e. a loan of \$5m over 15 years would have annual repayments of \$475k which would equate to 7% of rates.
- The need to improve the Shire of Collie's Financial Health Indicators which are currently poor. This is also included in in the Working Group's Terms of Reference.
- The condition of the Shire's existing infrastructure assets and the need to focus on renewal (i.e. Roche Park, footpaths) rather than new assets, along with provisioning for long term liabilities.

Discussion included:

- The community need for the facility.
- The need to undertake the feasibility at this stage.
- Other Shire and community facilities and assets which receive funding and the worthiness of an indoor pool for funding.
- Previous low Shire rate increases that have not matched the increases of local government costs.
- That Council recognises the benefits of an indoor pool, however is also aware of the need to be responsible in terms of fitting it into the budget. Past decisions of Council have been to not proceed "at this point in time".
- The potential high use of the facility and associated income which would help offset costs.
- The need to identify accurate costings.
- Collie has nominated to host 2025 Country Championships.

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The meeting agreed to seek the support of the State Government for use of the existing grant funds to undertake preliminary designs and obtain cost estimates for the proposed facility.

Actions:

- Subject to the approval of Council, Shire staff to seek the permission of the State Government to use the funds for design and cost estimates.
- If State Government approval is received, Shire staff to seek quotes and engage organisations to undertake design and provide costings.

4. Other Business

a. Community Consultation

Pam Anderson offered to undertake further research to demonstrate the level of need in the community and the amount of use the pool would receive. It was agreed that further community research could be undertaken concurrently with obtaining costings. Pam to coordinate with the support of the Shire Library.

Action:

- Pam and Library staff to coordinate consultation.

b. Keeping Community Informed

Discussion was held regarding whether the community should be kept informed of the process being undertaken. It was suggested an article should be included in the Collie Bulletin.

5. Closure and dates for future meetings

Meeting closed at 5.06 pm. The next meeting to be held following the receipt of further costings. Communication via email to continue in the interim.