

Item No: C0818(3) Item 7

Subject: DRAFT LEICHHARDT PARK AQUATIC CENTRE (LPAC) MASTER PLAN

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SUMMARY

This report is seeking Council's endorsement to place the draft Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC) Master Plan on public exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. The draft master plan for Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (ATTACHMENT 1) be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days and submissions be received for a further 14 days; and
2. The results of the public exhibition and community engagement process be presented to Council recommending further action.

BACKGROUND

The Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC) was originally developed in 1960 and while the main 50m pool has not been upgraded, the Centre has received partial upgrades in 2008 and 2016. The last master plan for the Centre was developed in 2005 and Leichhardt Council had determined that it no longer reflected the needs of Council and the community. Consequently, Leichhardt Council engaged Otium Planning Group in 2016 to undertake the development of a new master plan in 5 stages, the first being community engagement. Following the merger in 2016 and change in scope of aquatic facilities across the LGA, Inner West Council concluded arrangement with Otium in early 2017 at the end of Stage 1 and brought the master plan in-house to be undertaken by specialist staff.

Project Scope

The scope of the master plan has included a review of all LPAC facilities and the context in which they are located. Specific elements of the scope include:

- The existing LPAC building including gym, cycle studios and associated fitness areas
- Layout of the administration areas, entry and cafe
- Pool facilities including the program pool 1, program pool 2, diving pool (program pool 3) and 50m lap pool
- Existing turf and recreation areas
- Seating and shade opportunities
- Access pathways and circulation to the facility from nearby streets and Leichhardt Park and internally within LPAC
- A review of car parking, access to the Bay Run, and access for maintenance vehicles to and from the site
- Public domain elements that impact the design and construction of these listed elements

Aquatic Facilities across the Inner West

The Inner West is well serviced with aquatic facilities and Council operates the following centres:

- Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre, Enmore
- Ashfield Swimming Pool, Ashfield
- Dawn Fraser Baths, Balmain
- Fanny Durack Pool, Petersham
- Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre, Leichhardt

At least 37% of the people consulted during the development of the draft *Recreation Needs Study - A Healthier Inner West*, visit an aquatic facility weekly. Aquatics facilities form part of a diverse range of recreational opportunities that respond to the modern demands of Australian communities. These facilities provide services which promote health and fitness, water safety skills and confidence, and community. They are a place for competition and play; as well places to seek relief from the summer heat. Each of Inner West's aquatic facilities has a different offering for the community and they work together to fulfill the Inner West community's aquatic recreation needs.

The draft needs study highlights that while Council already has a high provision of aquatic centres and recommends increasing capacity at existing facilities to meet future population needs, including upgrades at Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre. The recommendations of the draft LPAC Master Plan align with and support the recommendations in the draft *Recreation Needs Study - A Healthier Inner West*.

Asset Condition

In 2011, Leichhardt Council completed the LPAC Lifecycle Cost Analysis report. The scope of this report reviewed structural elements at the Centre including the 50m lap pool, diving pool (program pool 3) and children's 'mushroom' water play pool. The report outlined the following life expectancy of the assets and the current age left has been added for reference:

Asset	Condition and life expectancy (2011)	Condition and life expectancy (2018)
50m lap pool concrete control joints	5 years	2 years past life expectancy
50m lap pool walls, flood and metallic fittings	10 years	3 years
Diving pool (Program pool 3) control joints and metallic fittings	5 years	2 years past life expectancy
Diving pool (program pool 3) walls and floor	20 years	13 years
Children's 'mushroom' water play pool control joints, metallic finishes gutter and grating	6 years	Upgrades complete in 2016

Both the 50m lap pool and the diving pool (program pool 3) are past their life expectancy and require construction work to ensure continued usability.

Previous LPAC Upgrades

In 2008 and 2016 the former Leichhardt Council completed works to program pool 1 and provided a new gym facility. The scope of these projects works included:

- Cardio and weights area
- Two new group fitness studios
- Change room facilities
- Gym area administration offices
- New pathway connections
- New enclosure to the existing program and spa pools
- Refurbished pool concourses
- Re-tiling of program pool, children's 'mushroom' pool and spa pool, and upgrade of spa pool water feature
- New separate water efficient pool filtration to program pool, spa pool and leisure pool to enhance water quality
- New reconfigured female, male and unisex accessible change spaces – separated from existing change areas
- Refurbishment of existing male, female and accessible change rooms, including new finishes and fixtures.

Works in 2008 and 2016 did not address items relating to the asset condition of the 50m lap pool or the diving pool (program pool 3).

Master Plan Process

Staff worked collaboratively with Council stakeholders and the community to develop a new master plan for LPAC. Detailed site analysis reviewed site history, zoning, stormwater and drainage design, active transport connections, pathway and access networks, existing trees, existing parking, indigenous vegetation types, biodiversity and revegetation strategies, park furniture. The combination of site analysis and stakeholder input produced opportunities and constraints that were used to establish the master plan design strategies. The strategies were costed to understand financial implications of proposed upgrades and the integrated into Council forward capital budget.

Master Plan Report Structure

The draft master plan document comprises the following sections:

1. **Project context:** This section provides an introduction and background to the project including reference to existing Council policies, project objectives and project methodology.
2. **Site Analysis:** The physical characteristics of the site area and its context are described with analysis in plan, text and images. The focus is on the physical site, but also includes site and cultural history, sense of place and meaning to the community.
3. **Community Engagement:** This section provides an overview of the community engagement process and the feedback provided by the community.
4. **Design Principles:** Each of the overarching project design principles have been described.
5. **Precinct Planning:** Design outcomes for the Leichhardt Park recreation precinct are outlined to better connect existing facilities.
6. **Master Plan:** The master plan provides an overview of all proposed strategies to improve the experience of LPAC for staff and the community. The master plan section has each of the design layers included for extra detail, as well as zoned in plans for each of the precincts of work.
7. **Project Costs and Implementation:** This section outlines an opinion of probable costs for the project and articulates potential staging based on asset condition and community requests. The basis of the opinion of costs is included to understand scope and exclusions.

Proposed Improvements

The draft master plan proposes strategies that aim to improve the user experience at LPAC, while retaining items that staff the community enjoy. Some of the master plan strategies include:

- New nature based recreation zone with water play, toddler water play and water jet area. The proposed design is integrated into the foreshore setting of trees and vegetation
- Refurbished existing building (lower terrace) with community function room and hire space with outdoor seating and harbour views
- Picnic areas with BBQs, picnic settings and turf recreation spaces
- New unisex family change rooms
- New 50m, 10 lane lap pool with movable boom
- Refurbished diving pool and tower
- Enclosing of the 'mushroom' children's water play pool area with new operable roof and sliding doors – so the facilities can be used in winter as a closed area and opened for fresh air and breezes in summer
- Refurbished Program Pool 2 with new hand rails and ventilation
- Provision of spectator seating overlooking the 50m lap pool, improved shade structures, outdoor showers and new planting
- Co-location the male and female pool change rooms, toilets and showers.
- Co-location of the fitness studios
- Relocated cafe with expanded outdoor covered seating area
- Relocated crèche, reception area and administration rooms
- Renovated entry design with new landscaping and arrival sequence

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The master plans costs have been estimated to total \$15,715,270 including a 15% design budget and 20% contingency. The plans have been developed to be implemented in stages as funding becomes available. The cost breakdown of each stage and the associated costs includes:

Area of LPAC / Master Plan Strategy	Amount
Updated reception area	\$ 408,375.00
New administration area and meeting room fit out	\$ 221,751.00
Refurbish existing building, lower terrace	\$ 436,846.50
Recreation area and water play	\$ 4,143,947.85
Family change and spectator seating	\$ 1,200,555.00
Swimming pool upgrades (including new 50m lap pool)	\$ 7,314,443.37
Building and dry fitness upgrades	\$ 1,989,270.90
TOTAL (Excluding GST)	\$15,715,189.62

The master plan has been integrated into the forward capital works budget. The forward capital works budget has allowed for \$5,527,700 over the following financial years:

Financial Year	Amount
2019/2020	\$ 300,000.00
2020/2021	\$2,808,400.00
2021/2022	\$2,419,300.00
TOTAL	\$5,527,700.00

OTHER STAFF COMMENTS

The development of the master plan has been a highly collaborative process with input from all disciplines across Council including LPAC staff. Regular meetings with LPAC and Council staff has meant the development of the proposal strategies have strong ownership across Council. The internal stakeholders from across Council included representatives from:

- Development Assessment and Regulatory Service
- Trees, Parks and Sportfields
- Environment and Sustainability
- Roads and Stormwater
- Major Building Projects and Facilities
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Library and History Services
- Recreation and Aquatics, including LPAC staff
- Community Services and Culture
- Communications, Engagement and Events

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

During January and February 2018, staff undertook community engagement on the current use and future vision for the Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre. The community engagement built on the previous engagement conducted by the former Leichhardt Council through Otium Planning Group.

The engagement included interactive sessions and an online survey at Inner West Council 'Your Say Inner West' website. During the five week engagement period, the online website received 1,220 visits with 428 surveys completed. The engagement sessions also received input from respondents who completed 146 paper surveys, interactive activities and had lengthy discussions with Council staff.

The scope of the engagement included feedback on the facility including:

- Pools (50m lap pool, driving pool, program pools)
- Gym (including change rooms)
- Group fitness facilities
- Café
- Crèche
- Entry and administration areas
- Open space and recreation areas
- Pathways and circulation
- Shade
- Seating

The scope of the engagement included questions relating to the pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby parks and residential areas including the Bay Run and Leichhardt Park. The feedback highlighted:

- The majority of those that attend the centre like the character, however the existing facilities, including shade, seating, and recreational spaces within the centre could be improved;
- Generally respondents noted that the facility met their fitness and recreation needs, however the 50m Olympic swimming pool was at capacity and the program pool and hydrotherapy pool required upgrading to the ventilation systems;
- Respondents liked the diving pool for deep water aqua, but also for nostalgic purposes;

- The gym and group fitness facilities generally met the needs of the user. However there was some concern about the maintenance of change room facilities;
- Respondents noted that the car park was at capacity, and that the closing of the car park during events was an inconvenience;
- Many respondents requested upgrades to the car park to remove pot holes and provide for additional parking spots; and
- Many requested more shade options, additional informal recreation areas, additional water play areas and more recreation options for children.

The full summary of the community engagement including the process and the feedback received from the community is included as ATTACHMENT 1.

Public Exhibition

Public exhibition is proposed as the next phase of the master planning process. Public exhibition will allow the community and stakeholders a further chance to input on the draft master plan to ensure the proposed strategies meet community requests.

The public exhibition period will be for a period of 28 days from Friday 31 August 2018 until Friday 28 September 2018. All submissions will be reviewed with feedback integrated in an updated master plan. The feedback will be presented back to Council in a schedule for transparency, along with the final draft master plan. The public exhibition will be advertised via the Inner West Courier, the Your Say Inner West website, Facebook posts and Twitter.

CONCLUSION

The master plan development has followed a highly collaborative process and has established values consistent with the view of the local community, LPAC staff and stakeholders. To ensure the plans meet the needs of community it is now appropriate for the community to again have the opportunity for input through the public exhibition process.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [!\[\]\(c580b67c7cd5c9e9e19f04ff6d5093e0_img.jpg\)](#) Draft Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC) Master Plan
2. [!\[\]\(81f7c93ea32d9f7160f5d63859611838_img.jpg\)](#) Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC) Community Engagement Report