

Item No: C1023(1) Item 26
Subject: CALLAN POINT SWIM SITE
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RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the report.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

This report supports the following strategic directions contained within Council's Community Strategic Plan:

4: Healthy, resilient and caring communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has identified the Callan Point site as an activation site which enjoys an existing catchment of people using the Bay Run, Leichhardt Oval and LPAC precinct as well as Callan Park and King George Park

West Callan Point is both the most culturally sensitive and naturally well-connected location on the Iron Cove foreshore to re-establish Leichhardt Tidal Baths. In addition, the swim site is specifically identified by the NSW State Government in the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan.

A detailed analysis and design process is underway which will inform the public consultation and construction phase of the project.

BACKGROUND

Inner West Council and its predecessors have been a member of the Parramatta River Catchment Group since its formation. The mission statement of the catchment group is to make Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.

In our Community Strategic Plan, one of Council's primary Environmental directions is that "waterways are healthy and the community is water-sensitive, treating water as a precious resource". In line with this strategic direction and the wishes of our community, Council has set an objective to "identify and plan for new river swim sites" and, even more specifically "reinstate Leichhardt tidal baths".

At the Council Meeting held on 30 October 2018, Council resolved the following in part:

THAT Council:

2. *Notes that the Parramatta River Catchment Group and Council will use the National Health and Medical Research Council 2008, Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water and NSW Health guidelines as the risk and evidence based approach for confirming a swim site in Callan Park;*

3. *Notes that the preferred site to investigate for swimming in Callan Park is the Callan Park Seawall site as the Callan Park Beach site is not recommended for activation as a swimming site due significant Aboriginal and ecological heritage in the surrounding area; and*
4. *Considers at the next quarterly review an allocation of funding...to support chemicals in water and sediment testing to inform the decision-making process for swim site activation at the Callan Park Seawall site.*

At the Council Meeting held on 12 September 2023, Council resolved the following:

1. *That Council thank Council officers and the Parramatta River Catchment group for their work in developing plans for the Callan Park Tidal Baths.*
2. *That Council note the support of Maritime NSW and the Environmental Protection Agency for the location of the Callan Park Tidal Baths following two years of extensive water quality testing, environmental impact research, river depth and floor quality testing.*
3. *That Council note the commitment of \$2 million to the project from the NSW Government.*
4. *That Council receive a report to the October 2023 Ordinary meeting outlining the process and timeline for planning, approval and delivery of the Callan Park Tidal Baths.*

Council has identified the Callan Point site as an activation site which enjoys an existing catchment of people using the Bay Run, Leichhardt Oval and LPAC precinct as well as Callan Park and King George Park. The nearest river swimming site is Dawn Fraser baths, which are approximately 25 minutes away to the north-east. The activation of Callan Point would contribute to the Premier's Priority aim for Greener Public Spaces by increasing the proportion of urban homes within 10 minutes' walk of green, connected public spaces.

These early resolutions of Council have led to an understanding that west Callan Point is both the most culturally sensitive and naturally well-connected location on the Iron Cove foreshore to re-establish the Leichhardt Baths. In addition, the swim site is specifically identified by the NSW State Government in the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan.

A detailed analysis and design process is underway which will inform the public consultation and construction phase of the project and is detailed below.

DISCUSSION

Technical Work on the Swim Site Project so far

Since the 2018 resolution of Council the following preparatory work has taken place;

- Water Quality – Beachwatch monitoring was implemented in 2018 and will be used to inform a range of community engagements including apps, hotlines and signs which update swimmers on the safety of the water following heavy rain events in real-time based on accurate data.
- Chemicals and Sediments – in 2021 and again in 2022 a chemical and sediment contamination assessment concluded that the site and design concepts are acceptable for bathing.

- Site Analysis a Bathymetry (topography of sea floor) Survey shows the planned site has suitable depths for swimming.

Technical Work underway

The site will need to comply with the National Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water, which are non-mandatory standards designed to protect the health of humans from threats posed by the recreational use of coastal, estuarine and fresh waters. The signage will be designed in accordance with Australian Standard AS2416–2002 (Design and Application of Water Safety Signs) and best-practice recommendations of the Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Guide. This standard covers the signposting of hazards and prohibitions related to places where water sports or recreational activities take place, or where there are other activities close to bodies of water such as rivers. Similar signs have been erected at Lake Parramatta swim site and Barangaroo swimming area.

The need for a shark enclosure at the site has been identified. Feasibility and risk analysis of this element of the proposal is ongoing.

Owners Consent – In Principle

NSW Maritime have provided in principle owners consent and information to assist with a constraints analysis, including a high voltage submarine cable to the western side of the site, and rowing lanes and adjacent support crew layover areas used by competitive rowers. The need to provide an adequate clearance away from this important historic and ongoing use of Iron Cove has been included as part of the brief to Council's design consultant

In providing this in principle approval, Maritime requires Council to return future detailed plans for ongoing consultation and approval.

Consultation

While high level concept plans have been prepared, more detailed plans are in development for engagement purposes with the following groups;

Sydney Water Working Group

In order to identify and manage risk in throughout the life cycle of the project, the environment team from Inner West Council are an active member of the swim site Activation Technical Working Group. The Group is convened by Sydney Water and has provided assistance in the development of the proposal to date and will continue to do so. It consists of senior staff members from other Sydney metro Councils as well as representatives from:

- NSW Health
- Beachwatch
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment (Contaminants and Risk)
- NSW EPA
- University of NSW
- The Parramatta River Catchment Group

Greater Sydney Parklands Authority

In August this year, Senior staff from Council met with executive and management-level staff from the Greater Sydney Parkland Authority, which now has jurisdiction over Callan Park. This meeting follows more than two years of incidental communication with the authority regarding the project. The GSP are currently rolling out a major works program at Callan Park and will

work with Council to ensure the development of the swim site and the works by GSP are harmonised.

Local Aboriginal Community

In 2018 Council identified the significance of Callan Park beach to our Aboriginal community. In addition, the Parramatta River Group has undertaken a study of the important places and stories along the Parramatta River foreshore which includes an account of the Callan Park area and the beach and rock carvings specifically. Council's team will continue to consult with our Aboriginal community on appropriate designs, including landscaping, interpretive and educational signage, and naming of the site.

Community

The Inner West community have been informally communicating their ideas about the proposal for some time given that it appears in the adopted Greater Sydney Parklands in the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan, as well as the Parramatta River Group's plans for the overall catchment. The community is largely positive about increased opportunities to swim on the river, with two main areas of concern that are sometimes raised being:

- Safety – water quality, rubbish in the river, sharks
- Could have an impact on other river activities – rowing, fishing, boating

Scoping Plan

Based on the work detailed above, a preliminary plan was developed to assist consultation with public authorities and refine the scope of the project. This preliminary plan prioritises accessibility as a driving design element and includes:

- A 50m jetty to allow access to swimmable water
- A set of 6 suspended 50m swimming lanes in the deeper water area
- An accessible swim platform
- Remedial works to the sea wall

Access will need to be provided through Callan Park and the design of an accessible pathway is under consideration. Subject to agreement with GSP, ecologically-sensitive native landscaping and other inclusions such as public art could be provisioned. A plan of this preliminary design is included at *Attachment 1*.

Process and Estimated Timeline

The construction of the swim site can proceed by way of a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) process under the SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure). Works within Callan Park are limited to an access path and landscaping and may be facilitated with GSP agreement under the adopted Landscape Structure Plan.

Council has recently appointed a consultant team including *Civille*, the environmental and engineering design consultancy currently working on the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Plan, to complete the detailed design for the swim site. The designs produced will inform the community consultation phase of the project, including during the REF assessment. *Civille* will also complete a detailed quantity survey during the design process.

Civille's work is due to be completed before the end of the calendar year 2023, with preliminary consultation plans potentially available prior. Based on this timeframe, a draft schedule for the project is below.

Date	Milestone
September – October 2023	Concept designs development with Council and identification of key stakeholders and approval requirements.
November - December 2023	Community engagement on project and engagement of aboriginal strategic reference group to advise on naming of site, artwork etc (using current concept design included in <i>Attachment 1</i>)
December 2023 - February 2024	Finalising concept design development and commissioning REF. Consultation of design with Transport for NSW, Greater Sydney Parklands and other key stakeholders.
March 2024	Report to council on Community engagement, updated concept designs with cost estimates, Part 5 approval and Key stakeholders (Transport for NSW, Greater Sydney Parklands and other key stakeholders)
March – May 2024	Detailed design phase and ongoing community and stakeholder engagement
May - 2024	REF Approval (Part 5 approval)
September 2023 – May 2024	In Principal approval – agreement for construction & operations with Transport for NSW and Greater Sydney Parklands
June – July 2024	Construction procurement
August 2024 – March 2025	Construction period (Subject to approvals and final design scope)
April 2025	Construction completed (8-month window)
April 2025	Opening Event

Figure 1: draft swim site delivery schedule.

Agreement on scheduling and access will need to be reached with the Greater Sydney Parklands Authority prior to confirmation of this draft schedule to ensure that:

- Council has permission to access the site for construction across Callan Park lands;
- Council has at least an in-principle agreement for an access pathway to the swim site over the Callan Park lands; and possibly more formal agreements will be required; and
- The timing does not disrupt or clash with the significant program of works underway at the Callan Pak foreshore by the NSW State Government.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Preparation of design and construction details are within allocated budget. As part of this package of information a QS report will be commissioned on the final design in order to provide an assessment of the full cost of the project.

ATTACHMENTS

- [1.↓](#) Callan Park Preliminary Swim Site Design

Attachment 1 – Callan Park Preliminary Swim Site Design



Figure 1: Photo montage – Callan Park Preliminary Swim Site Design

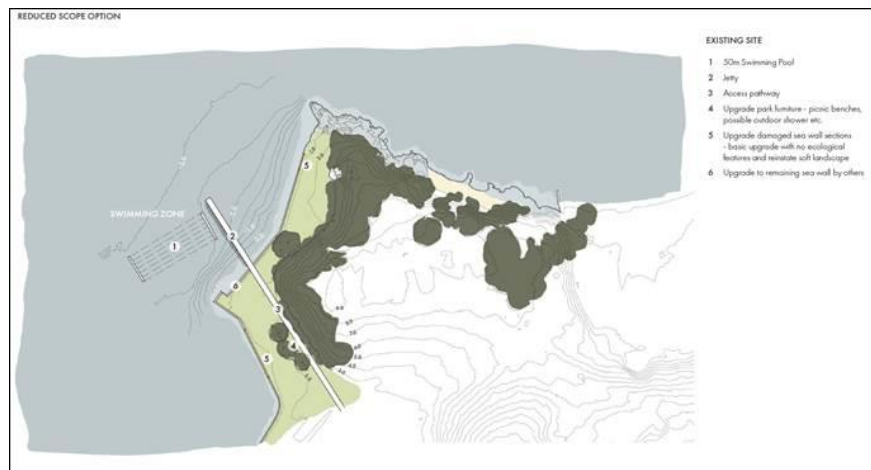


Figure 2: Early concept plan – Callan Park Preliminary Swim Site Design