

Buloke Aquatic Strategy

Final Report – July 2014



Final Report by

InSynch Consultancy Group

to Buloke Shire Council

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Local context

With farming communities at its centre, Buloke Shire is Victoria's true agricultural heartland.

The Shire covers more than 8,000 square kilometres of the Mallee region in the states northwest, stretching between Lake Tyrrell, Victoria's largest salt lake, and the northern reaches of the picturesque Avoca River.

Buloke Shire Council serves the communities of Wycheproof, Charlton, Donald, Birchip and Sea Lake, as well as the smaller townships of Berriwillcock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem.

Agriculture, specifically grain production, is the primary source of income and employment in the area. Other forms of farming, education, retail, community service sectors and light industry also provide employment and income.

The shire shares its municipal boundaries with the shires of Loddon, Northern Grampians, Gannawarra, Yarriambiack, Swan Hill and Mildura.

Figure 1: Buloke location map



1.2 Project background

Buloke Shire has seven outdoor pools, located in Charlton, Wycheproof, Berriwillock, Sea Lake, Birchip, Watchem and Donald. All of these pools have toddlers' pools and range in length from 20m to 34m. Donald and Birchip are solar heated and have an average pool temperature of between 26 and 29 degrees, with the average for the other pools ranging from 22 to 24 degrees.

These facilities are currently operated by Buloke Shire Council. Council manage and maintain the pools while a range of other community and user groups use the pool, both in and out of pool opening hours through a formal hire agreement, and organise programs and swimming lessons.

Council introduced a fee free structure in 2010/11 to increase the accessibility of the pools and to offset some logistical issues of staff collecting money while being the only lifeguard to supervise the pool.

A technical assessment of the pools was undertaken by Dennis Hunt and Associates in 2008 to inform Council of the condition of the pools. Council have spent significant funds on the maintenance and improvement of the outdoor pools since this audit, with more than \$3 million of improvements at these facilities (including government grants).

Council currently has a financial monitor reviewing all of its services and has commissioned this study to understand the need for aquatic provision in the shire, how other Council's are managing their pools and the cost to maintain the outdoor pools for the next 10 years.

1.3 Project methodology

The following tasks were undertaken in the preparation of this Aquatic Strategy:

- Analysis of aquatic and leisure industry trends and local attendance data;
- Review of available previous facility condition audits;
- Technical assessment of each pool with associated 10 year capital and maintenance costs;
- Review of relevant local and regional demographic and population data;
- An overview of outdoor pool operations for the past three financial years;
- Detailed community and stakeholder consultation process;
- Development of a facility and service matrix for each pool;
- Development of a hierarchy structure for outdoor pools and definition of the role of each facility;
- Identification of future aquatic needs for residents of Buloke shire;
- Preparation of a draft Aquatic Strategy.

SECTION 2: PROJECT CONTEXT

2.1 Local policy context

A number of local and regional strategic plans, policies and support documents have been reviewed as part of the development of the Buloke Shire Council Aquatic Strategy, including:

- Buloke Shire Council – Draft Council Plan 2013 – 2017
- Buloke Shire Council – Discussion paper – what savings can Council make to reduce rates?
- Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan - Northern Region
- Buloke Shire Council Recreation Plan – Final Report June 2005
- Buloke Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 - 2017
- Buloke Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy 2013 – 2019
- Charlton Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010
- Donald Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010

The following provides a summary of local policy and regional strategic context gathered through a review of available literature that will influence development of the aquatic strategy.

Buloke Shire Council – Draft Council Plan 2013-2017

The Buloke Draft Council Plan defines Council's strategy, direction and the framework within which it will make its decisions about resource allocation over the four year period. The goals, strategic objectives and priorities detailed in the Plan are under five themes: our community; our economy; our built environment; our natural environment; and our people and organisation.

Themes of relevance to the Aquatic Strategy are:

- Our people, particularly the strategies to:
 - *“Continuously review services to ensure they are meeting community needs and are being delivered efficiently and in a cost effective manner”*
 - *“Working with communities and other stakeholders in planning for and making decisions about the future”*
- Our built environment and the strategy to *“maintain and improve the condition of Council owned assets to ensure essential services are provided and the community has access to quality public facilities”*. Priorities set out to achieve the strategy include *“continue the development of and implementation of a plan to protect, maintain and manage Council assets, including...swimming pools...”* and to *“continue to implement Council's Strategic Swimming Pool Upgrade program”*. Challenges identified that link to this strategy include:
 - *“balancing the demand for maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure with long-term financial capacity”*; and
 - *“the impact of a slowly declining population on the capacity to maintain the number and variety of sports and recreation facilities within the Shire”*.

Affordability of rates is a significant consideration for the duration of the plan. Council acknowledges the program set out in the plan needs to be funded from rates and other available

revenue sources. Forward projections have been made, however Council recognises external influences that can impact on these projections over the duration of the plan. Council strongly encourages the community to get involved and share their ideas.

Included in the 10 year financial plan is a program of rolling capital works over the four years including “*upgrade of swimming pools with a focus on water quality management and water conservation*”.

Core values that Council bases its decisions on include:

- Financial security and the need to manage the Shire’s finances carefully with consideration to current community needs and long-term asset management responsibilities
- Asset based approaches with the priority being on maintenance and improvement of current assets not on new facilities. This will include exploring ways to better use existing assets and “*...how a number of facilities can be rationalised to better reflect demand and usage patterns*”.

Discussion paper – What savings can Council make to reduce rates?

The discussion paper attached to the draft Council Plan (2013-2017) explores rates affordability and calculation, Council’s financial sustainability, financial management and prosperity in the local context and Council’s financial responsibilities.

Of relevance to the Aquatic Strategy, the paper highlights:

- the increased costs local government has incurred over the past decade, in particular the impact “*...increased costs and increased expenditure on infrastructure renewal, infrastructure upgrades and new facilities*” has had;
- “*...the reality that no-one wants to pay more in rates but Council has no alternative if it wishes to continue to provide the services it does and to continue to invest in and maintain community infrastructure such as roads, recreation reserves, etc*”;
- the need for Council to “*...develop and adopt clear and honestly measured financial targets that reflect both capacity and affordability [to pay rates]...and that some expenditure...may need to be spread out over a longer period of time...and some new expenditure put off indefinitely unless new sources of revenue can be found*”;
- that it is “*...Council’s expenditure, changes in the number of rate assessments and the extent to which the value of an individual property increases...*” that drive rates prices. It is highlighted that Council has limited ability to raise revenue from sources such as parking fees, developer contributions, asset sales and large scale aquatic and recreation facilities;
- that previous reports exploring the Shire’s financial sustainability have included the “*...call for more financial support from other levels of government on the basis of geographic size [of the Shire]...and the impact of a slow but consistent decline in population*”;
- the lack of transport options and alternatives and the reality that it is “*...undoubtedly one of the factors contributing to long-term population decline*” in the Shire;
- the availability and security of water across the Shire. It is acknowledged that Council is a “*significant water user...[using water for]...road making, to fill and maintain swimming pools, to water recreation reserves and parks, to maintain streetscapes and to fill and maintain recreational lakes*”; and

- Councils limited funds for capital projects and that *“decisions on priorities needs to be carefully considered”*.

Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan - Northern Region

The Northern Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan is a collaboration between key industry and community groups, local, state and federal governments and regional bodies. The Plan identifies important issues affecting the region's economy, environment and way of life and presents a framework for how the bodies will work together to improve the way projects that will make a difference to the region are identified, prioritised and supported.

The Plan has seven strategic directions with identified priority actions and key initiatives. Of significance to this Aquatic Strategy are the strategic directions:

- *‘strengthening settlements and communities, especially small towns’*. Included in the strategies for achieving this strategic direction is *“improving community connectedness, health and well-being, and reducing instances of social disadvantage”*
- Improve infrastructure and the strategic direction to *“improve public and community transport services which will assist in connecting communities and addressing personal mobility issues”*.

This particular strategic direction has been identified as a priority to account for: the change to settlement patterns, with larger regional centres experiencing population growth and smaller communities declining; an ageing population across the region; economic change and restructure; a need to improve health and wellbeing outcomes; and to respond to disadvantage.

The plan highlights the risk of communities becoming disadvantaged by distance due to a lack of transport options and by a limited range of services. It outlines that *“there is a need to improve public and community transport. High dependence for personal mobility on cars presents an increasing challenge with ageing and contracting populations in more remote rural areas. Opportunities exist to develop public or community transport services that allow older people (and others without access to cars) to travel to larger centres to access commercial or social services that are not available in their local community.”*

The plan also discusses that *“ongoing effort is required to ensure [sport and recreation] infrastructure and programs are provided to ensure our communities can enjoy healthy lifestyles and strong community connections. This can be achieved through community planning, leadership development, youth empowerment and providing flexible funding models for delivering on initiatives derived from community planning”*.

Buloke Shire Council Recreation Plan – final report June 2005

The inaugural ten-year Buloke Shire Council Recreation Plan aims to *“ensure the recreation, leisure, and sporting needs of the community can be met now and into the future”*. The Plan was developed by: reviewing policy and trends in sports and recreation provision and participation; demographic profiling; development of an inventory of existing sport and recreation facilities (including aquatics provision) in the Shire; and stakeholder consultations.

Key issues and recommendations emerging from the development of the plan are categorised under four headings: Council's role in resourcing and supporting sport and recreation; management of facilities; increasing participation; and community connectedness and the value of recreation. Of relevance to this Aquatic Strategy are:

Council's role:

- Securing water where possible and redeveloping lakes as key recreational environments for local residents
- Development of partnerships with relevant organisations to further enhance sport and recreation opportunities in Buloke, through the shared use of resources
- Discussions with public transport companies / school bus companies regarding developing regular bus services to leisure facilities in neighbouring communities.

Management:

- Establishment of planning frameworks for the development of new recreational opportunities or when considering the upgrade of existing facilities
- The plan proposes a series of capital works developments for a ten year period to ensure that facilities are adequate to meet the needs of users and to ensure that facilities are able to meet relevant legislation and guidelines. The plan has been mindful of the limited resources available to contribute to such developments
- The consultants preparing the plan *“support the directions and recommendations made in the Street Ryan Aquatic Strategy (2000) in relation to keeping all pools open in Buloke Shire. It states swimming pools are clearly seen by residents as valuable community assets, and whilst it is recognised that they are not financially viable, they provide a social hub for each town and township and contribute enormously to community connectedness. At the same time, the report recognises that whilst many communities in Buloke would like to have an indoor heated pool in their town; such a facility is not financially viable”.*

Social connectedness and value of recreation:

- Lack of water, lack of green spaces and lack of recreational opportunities available to the Buloke community were identified as key issues during consultations. *“Lakes in particular were identified as key recreational facilities that people valued. Not only are lakes used for activities such as swimming and water skiing, they are used for a whole variety of other leisure purposes such as fishing, yabbing, boating, walking around, driving to, bird watching, picnicking and even just contemplation / reflection. People of all ages, as well as visitors, are drawn to the lakes for their leisure participation.”*
- In addition to lakes, there are a number of other facilities that are seen as vitally important in *terms of community connectedness; these include swimming pools, parks, playgrounds and community meeting places / halls”.*

The plan emphasises the significant impact leisure activities has in rural communities – often the activity is secondary to the social connections.

Council has a series of planning principles that form the basis of an operational planning framework. Of relevance to the Aquatic Strategy are:

- Sustainability – *“developments which are sustainable from participation, longevity, economic and environmental and social perspective will be considered by Council... It is*

important to recognise the maintenance of community cohesion and community morale contributes significantly to social sustainability”.

- Development of partnerships – *“to obtain the best outcomes; reduce the risk of duplicating facilities, programs or services; and to maximise the use of limited resources, it is important for Council to develop and foster suitable partnerships”*
- Diversity of choice – *“...it is important to offer a variety of different opportunities wherever possible so that all sections of the community have the opportunity to meet their individual recreation needs and gain the benefits associated with participation in physical activity”*
- Value of investment – *“new proposals must consider best value principles and value for investment, to ensure that the ratepayer’s investment can be justified and falls within what is considered to be reasonable costs for a similar initiative”.*

Based on the consultations and an audit of existing facilities, the plan lists a series of potential works for across the Shire including:

- Development and reestablishment of lakes, which are a *“valuable community asset in terms of recreation, tourism, environment and economic development”*
- *“Existing [swimming] pools should be retained and maintained. Hours of operation are based around availability of lifeguards. Council support for volunteer lifeguard training should be examined. The size and financial capacity of the shire is not seen as capable of supporting the development nor operation of an indoor heated pool complex”*
- Recognition of township core recreation services and the role they play in community connectedness

The plan provides a number of policies and planning frameworks for Council to consider *“to ensure that leisure services are delivered in a fair and equitable manner across the whole Shire.”* Of relevance to the strategy:

- Development of physical infrastructure and facilities – Council needs to ensure the facility is: *needed by the community, viable from a development and whole of life cost; appropriate and fits within Council’s broader planning framework; accessible to all members of the community; sustainable from an economic, social, participatory and environmental perspective*
- Key considerations for the rationalisation of facilities – *lifespan of the facilities; number of users; safety and compliance with OH&S, legislation and regulations; financial viability; trends for those types of facilities; and public benefit / recognised value of the facility (i.e. heritage). A checklist has been developed to assist in the decision making of facility rationalisation.*

A review of current facilities confirmed the “difficulty faced by rural shires with large land areas and limited population in maintaining and improving recreation facilities within a number of small population centres. The residents of the towns and the surrounding area serviced by them have a reasonable expectation for certain facilities at a standard which is available to the general populace”.

Buloke Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017

The Buloke Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a strategic tool that identifies local health and wellbeing needs, issues and priorities. The plan details objectives to guide Council

planning and to identify stakeholder collaboration opportunities to achieve the key health and wellbeing priorities. It details Council's commitment to work in partnership to create a healthy community where people:

- Have access to a range of opportunities that help them stay active and healthy
- Feel supported to make decisions that determine their own health and wellbeing
- Feel that they can contribute to community decision making
- People are recognised and valued for their contribution to the community.

Preventable health conditions identified amongst the Shire's population include a higher than average incidence of diabetes when compared with the state; a shortage of affordable and accessible oral health services; food security; mental health conditions, including from a lack of social connectedness and abuse of alcohol and drugs; sexual health; accessibility limitations, including public transport barriers; and violence prevention.

Health priorities identified in the plan of relevance to the Aquatic Strategy include:

Health priority 1: To grow and maintain safe, accessible and supportive environments for the community and the particular objective *“to further strengthen service partnerships within the Buloke Shire”*.

Health priority 2: To support local initiatives that will provide an economic benefit to towns and communities and the goal *“to seek opportunities for funding to strengthen transportation links between townships and regional centres”*.

Health priority 3: To promote and encourage healthy and active lifestyles and the objective *“to provide infrastructure that supports both active and passive recreational activities”*.

Buloke Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy 2013 – 2019

The Buloke Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy is in response to the ageing population within the Shire. The strategy outlines a six-year strategic direction for Council, together with community and key stakeholders, to promote and enhance opportunities for all residents to age positively. The strategy will guide planning, resource allocation, partnership development and community participation.

The strategy follows the World Health Organisations framework for active ageing and age friendly cities (renamed communities in Buloke Shire), which includes housing; social participation, respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; community support and health services; outdoor spaces and buildings; and transportation.

The consultation process used to develop the strategy included resident surveys and forums and interviews with relevant service providers. The two main challenges emerging from the consultation included improved transport options and more localised health services. The consultations influenced the strategy objectives, which are:

- Transport - including an increased need for sustainable and flexible transport options
- Access to services, information and infrastructure – including that *“it is Council's responsibility to ensure that the planning and implementation of renewed community buildings and accessible footpaths are a priority”*
- Promoting an independent lifestyle – including supporting ageing residents to stay as independently as possible in their own homes; providing volunteering opportunities and

social leadership; accommodating diversity; celebrating and promoting the benefits of older people in the community

- Partnerships and advocacy – including improved collaboration between local and visiting health services, Council advocacy, provision of safety programs.

Strategic actions detailed in the plan and of relevance to this strategy include:

- Ensuring “*all new and refurbished buildings, footpaths or other infrastructure meet the standards for access and mobility*”; and
- Ensuring “*seniors have access to “healthy ageing and lifestyle resources”*”.

Charlton Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010

The Charlton Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan provides conceptual design and construction elements for the site around the pool. The design presented has prioritised the visual amenity of the site to enhance patronage and respect for the whole facility. Existing facilities have been incorporated into the plan to provide an adaptable and practical overall plan that can be implemented in stages and with consideration to budget. Design features include additional artificial shading to compliment tree planting, seating, barbeque areas and a water tank.

Donald Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010

The Landscape Master Plan for the Donald Swimming Pool provides concept drawings for the visual amenity of the area surrounding the pool. As much as possible, the master plan has incorporated existing facilities into the vision for the site. Natural and artificial shade options are a feature of the plan, including two shade structures to be used as separate family-friendly and teenage zones. Other features include repair of existing paving, relocation and addition of seating, car park improvements and a wheelchair ramp.

2.2 Regional facility provision

Existing indoor and outdoor pools were reviewed across Buloke and surrounding municipalities. The following table provides a summary of existing facilities by municipality.

Table 1: Existing local government provided aquatic and leisure centres

Facility Component	Buloke Shire	Gannawarra Shire	Loddon Shire	Yarriambiack Shire	Northern Grampians Shire	Swan Hill Rural City
Outdoor 25m Pool	7	5	5	8	1	4
Outdoor 50m Pool					1	1
Toddlers Pool	7	5	5	7	2	5
Indoor 25m Pool					1	1
Warm Water Pool		1				

Note: The numbers in the table refer to the total number of identified facility components currently provided within each Shire’s portfolio of facilities. The indoor pool in Northern Grampians shire is only 15m and outdoor 25m pools vary from 20m to 34m.

A mix of facilities is currently available across the region although they are predominantly outdoor 25m pools with toddler's pools.

The following table provides an overall summary of indoor and outdoor pools against 2012 municipal population figures and land area. Facility to population and facility to land area ratios are used as a comparative guide only to ascertain an average level of provision across the region. They are not used as a performance benchmarks or goal that Councils must work towards.

Table 2: Local government facility to population and land area provision ratios

LOCAL COUNCIL FACILITIES	Indoor Pools	Outdoor Pools	Total No. of Facilities	Total 2012 Population	LGA Area (m2)	Population to Indoor Pools	Area (m2) to Indoor Pools	Population to Outdoor Pools	Area (m2) to Outdoor Pools
Buloke Shire	0	7	7	6,925	8,000			989	1,143
Gannawarra Shire	1	5	6	11,467	3,735	11,467	3,735	2,293	747
Loddon Shire	0	5	5	7,957	6,696			1,591	1,339
Yarriambiack Shire	0	8	8	7,498	7,326			937	916
Northern Grampians Shire	1	2	3	12,196	5,728	12,196	5,728	6,098	2,864
Swan Hill Rural City	1	5	6	22,275	6,115			4,455	1,223
Regional average	0.5	5.3	5.8	11,386	6,267	11,832	4,732	2,727	1,372

Notes: Population figures have been taken from Victoria in Future 2012.

Table 2 figures highlight that Buloke has a high provision of outdoor pools relative to its population, with only Yarriambiack being higher, with provision of outdoor pools to area in Buloke shire being slightly lower than the regional average.

SECTION 3: MARKET AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

This section of the report provides a summary of the key trends in local and regional demographic and population change, and in aquatic and leisure participation.

3.1 Population overview

3.1.1 Loddon Mallee regional population

The population of Loddon Mallee is projected to grow by 22.4% between 2011 and 2031, which is consistent with Regional Victoria (23.7%) but less than Victoria (30.3%).

By 2031, it is expected there will be 394,336 people living in the region, which is an additional 72,053 residents. Population growth of Loddon Mallee is only expected to make a small contribution to the growth of Regional Victoria to 2031 (0.3%).

Buloke, Gannawarra and Loddon shires are projected to decrease in population during this time, with the City of Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges Shire expected to experience the largest percentage growth in the region by 2031.

Table 3 below provides a summary of the Loddon Mallee regional population projections to 2031.

Table 3: Loddon Mallee regional population projections 2011 – 2031

Local Government Area	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Buloke (S)	6,925	6,919	6,779	6,640	6,519
Campaspe (S)	38,981	40,305	41,890	43,771	45,541
Central Goldfields (S)	12,792	13,257	13,467	13,721	13,988
Gannawarra (S)	11,467	11,570	11,479	11,377	11,288
Greater Bendigo C	105,563	113,948	122,602	131,357	139,837
Loddon (S)	7,957	7,896	7,772	7,686	7,627
Macedon Ranges (S)	43,241	47,340	51,279	55,172	58,944
Mildura (RC)	54,666	57,936	60,325	62,493	64,288
Mount Alexander (S)	18,416	19,269	20,090	20,986	21,854
Swan Hill (RC)	22,275	22,999	23,524	24,024	24,448
Loddon Mallee Total	322,283	341,439	359,206	377,227	394,336
Regional Victoria	4,137,432	4,137,432	4,483,604	4,808,836	5,118,447
Victoria Total	5,621,210	6,067,702	6,500,653	6,924,141	7,326,564

Source: Victoria in Future 2012

3.1.2 Buloke population projections

Buloke Shire is located in North-west Victoria, is predominantly a rural area where land is used regularly for agricultural purposes, and is one of Victoria's most sparsely populated municipalities.

In 2011, 6,925 residents lived in the Shire, with an even distribution across the north (encompassing Birchip, Sea Lake and Wycheproof) and the south (encompassing Donald, Charlton and Watchem). In the 20 years to 2031, the Shire is expected to have a decline in population of 406 people, most of which (98.5% or 400 people) is expected to occur after 2016. Similarly to the current population distribution, the decline is projected to be evenly spread across the north and south.

The following table provides a summary breakdown of population projections for Buloke Shire for 2011, 2016, 2021, 2026 and 2031.

Table 4: Buloke Shire Council population forecasts 2011 – 2031

Buloke Shire Council Population Areas	Population Projections					Change between 2011- 2031	
	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change	% Change
Buloke Shire – North*	3,355	3,352	3,282	3,214	3,158	-197	-6%
Buloke Shire – South**	3,570	3,567	3,498	3,426	3,361	-209	-6%
Buloke Shire Total	6,925	6,919	6,780	6,640	6,519	-406	-12%

Source: Victoria in Future 2012

*Buloke Shire – North SLA includes Birchip, Sea Lake, Wycheproof

**Buloke Shire – South SLA includes Donald, Charlton, Watchem

3.1.3 Buloke population trends

Population data available at an individual township level shows a trend of declining populations, which is consistent with Shire wide projections of overall population decline. Between 2006 and 2011, with the exception of Sea Lake, all larger townships in the Shire (with available data) decreased in size. Charlton experienced the largest decline, 1,052 residents in 2006 to 943 in 2011 (109 less people); Donald declined by 53 people (1,367 to 1,314); Wycheproof by 49 people (686 to 637); and Birchip declined from 681 people to 640 (41 less people). Sea Lake increased by six people (609 to 615).

Over the same period (2006 to 2011), Birchip was the only town that had a growth in children aged 0 to 4 years, from 31 children to 44, an additional 13 children. All townships had less people aged 5-17 years living in them in 2011 than in 2006, with the largest decline in Charlton, down from 173 to 136 (37 less people). Birchip was the only town to experience decline in people aged 18-24 and people aged 55-64 years, down by 11 people (41 to 30) and 18 people (113 to 95) respectively. Sea Lake had a growth of 13 residents aged 25-34 years (from 56 to 69), the only

town in the Shire to experience growth in this age category. People aged 35-54 and 65-74 years declined or had minimal growth in all towns, whereas the change in the over 75 year olds varied across the Shire with increases in Wycheproof (108 to 132), Sea Lake (79 to 86) and Birchip (90 to 93), and decreases in Donald and Charlton of 43 (from 215 to 172 people) and 20 (from 147 to 120 people) respectively¹.

Data was not available for Watchem and 2011 data was not available for Berriwillock, therefore no comparison is possible.

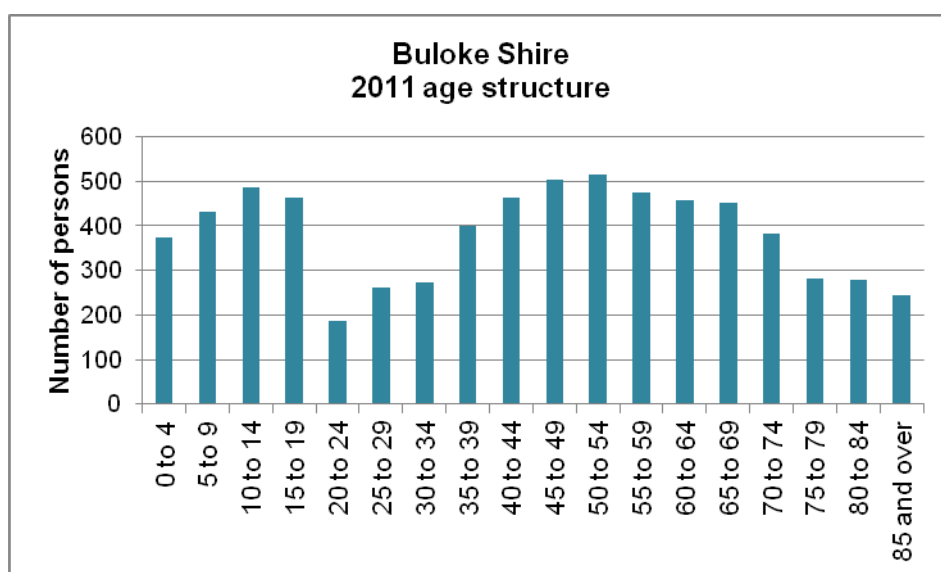
3.2 Demographic overview

The following provides an overview of key Buloke Shire demographic characteristics and the potential implications for the Buloke Aquatic Strategy. Data used to compile the demographic overview has been sourced from *Victoria in Future 2012* and from the *2011 ABS Census data*.

3.2.1 Age profile

Figure 2 below provides a breakdown of the age structure within the shire in 2011.

Figure 2: Buloke Shire Council 2011 population age structure



In 2011 the median age of Buloke Shire residents was 48, which is older than Regional Victoria (41 years) and Victoria (37 years).

The Shire is projected to have an ageing population, with the percentage of older people aged 70 years and over increasing from 17% of the population in 2011 to 27% by 2031; an additional 594 people. The growth will be spread relatively evenly across the north (44%) and south (56%) of the Shire. The over 70 year old age category, along with the 20-24 year olds, are the only age

¹ Towns in Time 2011

categories expected to increase between 2011 and 2031, all other ages are expected to experience a decline of varying degrees.

The largest declining age category expected between 2011 and 2031 is the 40-54 year olds, down from 21% (1,480) to 16% (1,011) in 2031, (469 less people). People aged 50-54 years, in particular, will decline more in the south of the Shire compared with in the north, down from 8.2% of its population to 5% (125 less people), compared with 6.6% to 4.6% (76 people) in the north.

The number of residents aged 55-64 years will decrease by 97, the largest decrease predicted to be amongst the 55-59 year olds. The percentage of residents in this age category will remain consistent between 2011 and 2031 (20%). Despite the overall decrease, the north of the Shire is predicted to have a very small increase in 60-64 year olds, with an extra 6 residents (6.3% of its population to 6.9%).

Residents aged 25-39 years accounted for 13% (934) of the population in 2011, which is projected to be consistent in 2031 (13%, or 818 people). As with most other age categories, despite this consistent proportion, the total number of residents will decline (down by 116 people); people aged 35-39 years will decline the least. Interestingly, despite an overall decline in the number of people in this age category, the north of the Shire will have an increase of 49 in the number of 30-34 year olds (up from 3.5% of its population to 5.3%), meaning the Shire's south will contribute 113% to the overall decline.

There will be a small growth of residents aged 20-24 years between 2011 and 2031 (8 people) across the Shire, which is attributable to the expected increase of 23 people in this age category in the Shire's south; the Shire's north will decline by 16 people.

Aside from a growth in 20-24 year olds, the percentage of other young people is expected to decline. 10-19 year old residents comprised 14% (951) of the population in 2011, which is projected to decline to 12% (782) by 2031, 169 less people. The Shire's north will contribute 79.3% of this decline (134 less people).

5-9 year olds made up 6% (430) of the population 2011. This proportion is expected to remain the same by 2031 (6%, 369); yet there will be 61 less children. The decline will be consistent across north and south of the Shire.

Children aged 0-4 years accounted for 5% (373) of the population in 2011; by 2031 this proportion is expected to decline to 4% (277) or 96 less children; 67% (65) of which will be in the Shire's south. As discussed above, Birchip was the only town to experience growth between 2006 and 2011 in children in this age category. No forward data was available to predict if this trend will continue.

3.2.2 Household structure and income

Households in Buloke Shire are more likely to comprise couples with no children (49.2%) who fully own their home (55.8%), than across Regional Victoria (26.9% and 37.3% respectively).

In 2011 there were 3,260 private dwellings in the Shire, with the average number of people per household 2.3. Of the dwellings, 867 comprised people who live alone, 74% of whom were people aged 55 years and over.

Of the 1,692 families in the Shire, 5.4% (91) were one-parent families, which is lower than Regional Victoria (10.5%) and 27.1% (458) were couples with children aged 15 years and under.

In 2011, the median weekly household income was \$742, the average rent was \$100 and the median monthly mortgage repayments were \$737. Of households repaying a mortgage, 96.6% had repayments of less than 30% of their household income.

3.2.3 Employment and individual income

In 2011 2,833 Buloke Shire residents were in the labour force, which was 54% of people in the working age population (15 years and over) and comparable to Regional Victoria (59%). Of those in the labour force, 96% were employed, leaving an unemployment rate of 4%, slightly less than Regional Victoria (5.2%). Of people unemployed and looking for work, 66% were seeking full time work.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry employed 822 (30.1%) residents in 2011, the largest sector of employment in the Shire. Other top industries of employment were health care and social assistance (11.7%), education and training (8.3%) and retail trade (7.7%).

Buloke Shire residents aged 15 years and over were most likely managers in 2011, with 894 (33%) citing this as their occupation. Other occupations reported by residents were professionals (13%), labourers (12%) and technicians and trade workers (11%).

The median weekly personal income for Buloke Shire residents was \$406.

Residents of Buloke Shire are more likely to participate in voluntary work than Regional Victoria, 43% compared with 23.4%.

3.2.4 Education

In 2011 24.7% of Shire residents aged 15 years and over reported Year 12 or equivalent as their highest level of education completed, which is less than Regional Victoria (36%). Residents were more likely to have completed year 9 or below (including not attending school) as their highest level of school than residents across Regional Victoria (25% compared with 18.5%).

Buloke Shire residents were however more likely than others in Regional Victoria to have a Bachelor degree, 15.4% (351) compared with 12.7%. In 2011, 42.8% of Shire residents aged 15 years and over reported having a certificate level qualification, the most common being a Certificate III or IV.

3.2.5 Cultural diversity

The majority of Buloke Shire residents listed Australia as their birthplace in 2011 (94.2%), which was higher than Regional Victoria (84.5%). Of people born overseas, the most common country of birth was the United Kingdom (113 people), followed by New Zealand (46), India (39) and the Philippines (24).

3.2.6 Need for assistance

In 2011 there were 429 residents (7%) who required assistance with their core activities, which was higher than Regional Victoria (5.7%). Of people requiring assistance, 21.4% (92) were aged less than 55 years, 36.1% (155) were aged 55-74 years and 42.4% (182) were aged over 75 years.

3.2.7 Transport

In 2011 89% (2,337) of Buloke Shire households reported owning a motor vehicle, with 7% (176) reporting no motor vehicle and 4% (101) choosing not to answer the census question pertaining to this data. Of those households who owned a motor vehicle, 35.4% (827) had one motor vehicle and 25.5% (597) had three or more. These trends were consistent with Regional Victoria, where 6.4% of households had no motor vehicle and 87.5% had one or more motor vehicles.

3.2.8 Internet connection

In 2011, less Buloke Shire households had internet access than Regional Victoria, 59.5% compared with 68.4%. Of Shire households with access, 90.9% had broadband access.

3.2.9 Summary of demographic factors as they apply to outdoor pool provision and usage

Although 46% of all user survey respondents were over the age of 50 (29 were aged 50 to 69, 23 were 60 to 69 and 12 were over the age of 70), 68% of them stated that they used the pool more than 15 times during a pool season meaning that this age group are regular users of the outdoor pools, which is not in line with broader industry trends. 48% of these people lived in Donald which is a heated pool and the Donald Dolphins is targeted specifically for this age group. 17% lived in Charlton, which is not solar heated but has an average water temperature of 25² which is quite high for an unheated outdoor pool, and 16% lived in Birchip, which is solar heated and runs specific programs to encourage this age group through the Business and Learning Centre. All other pools recorded much lower percentages of these age groups.

The older median age group and decline in population, particularly from 0 to 45 years would be contributing to and will continue to mean a decline in outdoor pool attendances. 45% of the population in 2011, increasing to 52% by 2036 will be over the age of 50 and while some of these people use outdoor pools, a significant percentage are unlikely to, particularly if there is no solar heating at the pool they wish to attend. Projections will also mean that there will be fewer children doing swim lessons, less young people, less families coming to the pool and more people over the age of 50.

642 people over the age of 55 lived alone in 2011, this is likely to increase as this age group increases, leading to possible social isolation and mobility issues. Having accessible programs and some kind of social engagement for this age group will be important. Given that a large percentage of this age group are less likely to utilise the outdoor pools, and may not drive, particularly for long distances organised transport to indoor facilities will be important.

3.3 Leisure participation trends

The following information provides an overview of the leisure and recreation participation trends likely to influence the provision and use of outdoor pools in Buloke shire.

² Information provided by Council officers

3.3.1 Adult participation in recreation and leisure activities

Participation information sourced through the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) defines participation as both organised and non-organised activities engaged by persons aged 15 years and over. In 2010, there were 3,648,000 adults in Victoria who participated in a sport or physical activity – an estimated participation rate of 83.4% of the adult population. This is an increase of 0.8% since 2009.

This comprised 1,833,700 males and 1,814,300 females with participation rates being slightly higher for males (85.1%) than females (81.7%). The Victorian rate of 83.4% was higher than the national average of 82.3% with the participation rate for adults declining with age. The national rate has decreased by 0.3% since 2009.

Victorian participation data showed that since 2001, overall participation has remained relatively stable. Victoria experienced a decrease across the population until 2003 only to increase and continue to maintain a healthy participation rate of low 80's, with the exception of 2007 where the rate was 79.7%, through to 2009.

The top ten physical activities in Victoria in 2010, with reference to the total participation rate, were walking – including bush walking (41.2%), aerobics/fitness (24.7%), swimming (13.5%), running and cycling (12.7% each), golf (7.3%), tennis (6.8%), AFL football (5.4%), basketball (4.8%) and yoga (4.3%). The increase in the popularity of yoga has seen netball reduced to number 11.

Swimming ranked as the third most popular physical activity in both Victoria and nationally, while aerobic and fitness activities (both ranking as the second most popular physical activity) rated slightly higher in Victoria with 24.7% than nationally (23.5%).

In 2010, the total participation in non-organised physical activity was higher than in organised physical activity with 70.8% and 40% respectively.

Other statistical influences of note include:

- Although 83.4% of adults in Victoria participated in sport or physical activity at least once, the weekly participation rates show a different trend.
- Less than half of adults in Victoria (48.7%) participated in a sport or physical activity three or more times per week - the recommended amount to achieve health-enhancing benefits. This is slightly higher than nationally (47.7%).
- More females (53.5%) than males (46.5%) participated in a sport or physical activity three or more times per week.
- People aged 55 to 64 years and 65+ had the highest rate of participation in a sport or physical activity participating five times a week or more, with 30.9% and 29.9% respectively.
- National data showed that the median frequency of participation was 2.5 times per week with females participating more regularly than males (3.0 and 2.2 respectively), except for the 65+ age group where both males and females participated 2.2 times per week.

3.3.2 Children's participation in recreation and leisure

In 2009, there were 1,717,800 children aged 5 to 14 years in Australia who participated in an organised sport or physical activity - a participation rate of 63.6% of the total population of children respectively.

This comprised 970,900 males and 746,900 females nationally - participation rates were higher for males (70.1%) than females (56.8%). The participation rate for boys increases with age while girl's participation increases until the age of 11 and then declines between 12 to 14 years.

Swimming rated one of the most popular organised leisure activity by children aged 5 to 14 years nationally, with a participation rate of 18.5% overall. Swimming was most popular amongst females with 19.8% compared to second most popular amongst males with 17.2% participation³.

³ ABS 2009

SECTION 4: EXISTING FACILITY PROVISION

4.1 Council outdoor pools

Council currently owns and operates the following outdoor pools:

- Charlton Outdoor Pool
- Wycheproof Outdoor Pool
- Berriwillock Outdoor Pool
- Sea Lake Outdoor Pool
- Birchip Outdoor Pool
- Watchem Outdoor Pool
- Donald Outdoor Pool

All of the outdoor pools have a main pool, which range in length from 20m to 34m, and include a toddler's pool. Although most of the pools do have an office and kiosk area, the majority of them are currently unused (Birchip and Charlton are the only pools that operate kiosks. Birchip is operated by the Pool Committee with an honour system in place and Charlton hired out to a private person to operate).

4.2 Benchmarking of outdoor pools

Benchmarking of outdoor pools was undertaken across a range of municipalities in regional Victoria that have outdoor pools in rural and regional settings, including Loddon, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Yarriambiack, Southern Grampians, Baw Baw, South Gippsland, Wellington, East Gippsland and Latrobe.

4.2.1 Season length

The outdoor pool season length in Buloke is similar Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Latrobe and Wellington, with pools opening between the first and last week in November and closing between the 11th March and the 31st March.

Pools in East Gippsland and South Gippsland open at the beginning of December and close anywhere between mid March and mid April, pools in Loddon open between mid November and early December and close on the 11th March, and pools in Southern Grampians open on the first week in December and close on the 11th March.

4.2.2 Opening hours

The majority of Council's have a cold weather policy in place which restricts the operating hours or closes the pool on cooler days, based on the weather forecast the previous evening. These temperatures range from 23 to 28 between different Council's. Loddon Shire is trialling a new system this where the hours that the pool is not open due to cooler weather are banked up to be used on hot days.

There was a significant variance in the range of operating hours, but all pools opened for at least two hours in the afternoon on weekdays (after school) with longer hours on weekends and school holidays (ranging from three hours per day to six hours per day). The majority of Council's had different opening hours at different pools with reduced hours at pools in their smaller towns.

4.2.3 Price of entry

All other towns benchmarked did charge an entry fee into their pools with fees generally varying between \$2.50 and \$5.60 for an adult swim and \$1.50 to \$3.90 for a child swim (the surrounding shires to Buloke generally charged a lower rate than some Council's in Gippsland). All pools offered a season pass membership option.

Baw Baw shire introduced fees again this year to their outdoor pools, based on a motion passed by Council. While there has been no significant backlash to Council about this decision, Council officers will look at the attendances for this pool season with interest given that their move to free swimming had a significant impact on increasing attendances. They only run one of their pools as low patronage with the remainder having two lifeguards on site at all times.

4.2.4 Management models

A number of different management models were identified from the benchmarked facilities, below is a summary of each of them.

Council management

This is the model that Buloke currently operates under where the facilities are directly managed by Council and Council retains all responsibility for staffing, operating and maintaining the facilities.

Outsourced management

A number of Council's have outsourced the management of their outdoor pools to either a professional management group or an incorporated Committee of Management under a management agreement. The contract length is generally three years with at least one option for extension. Under this model the management group or Committee of Management takes on all responsibility for staffing and operating the facility and there is generally a split in maintenance responsibilities between Council and the other party.

Voluntary Community Committee

Yarriambiack have all of their outdoor pools managed by local voluntary community committees. Each community committee determines the hours of operation and season length based on the needs of the community and what is realistic for the community to service.

Council pays a subsidy to each committee to manage the pool and the committee is responsible for staffing and daily operations and maintenance of the facility. Council pays insurance for each pool, some staff training costs, major maintenance and capital upgrades and provides support to each of the committee's for both the start and end of the pool seasons. In addition, Council has Lifesaving Victoria undertake an audit of each facility each two years to ensure that the pools are operating in line with industry guidelines.

Council made the decision to go down this path during amalgamation to reduce the cost of running their outdoor pools. Their subsidy for the seven outdoor pools was \$220,000 for the 2012/13 pool season.

4.3 Outdoor pool attendance

This section provides an overview of trends in visitation for Council's outdoor pools between 2008/09 and 2012/13.

4.3.1 Outdoor pool attendances

Table 5: Casual attendance figures for Council's outdoor pools

Casual attendances	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Donald Outdoor Pool	3,071	6,147	7,613
Charlton Outdoor Pool	1,590	4,207	3,619
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	2,611	3,095	4,563
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	2,482	2,323	4,166
Birchip Outdoor Pool	2,156	3,118	5,281
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	1,083	1,217	1,941
Watchem Outdoor Pool	531	922	1,268
Total	13,524	21,029	28,451

A breakdown of casual and group attendance figures is only available from 2010/11. **Table 5** shows that casual attendances at all outdoor pools have increased significantly between 2010/11 and 2012/13 with a 55% increase in 2011/12 and a further 35% increase in 2012/13.

Table 6: Average daily attendance for Council's outdoor pools (based on casual attendances)

Average daily attendances	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Donald Outdoor Pool	41.3	60.9	69.8
Charlton Outdoor Pool	35.7	36.3	33.2
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	23.9	35.2	41.9
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	21.4	22.3	38.2
Birchip Outdoor Pool	30.2	29.7	48.4
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	12.1	10.0	18.1
Watchem Outdoor Pool	5.8	10.2	11.7

Table 6 provides an overview of the average daily attendances at the outdoor pools between 2010/11 and 2012/13. The average daily attendance has reduced at all pools, with the exception of Charlton, as the pools have been open for more days each season.

Table 7: Group attendance figures for Council's outdoor pools

School/group attendances	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Donald Outdoor Pool	1,600	3,070	3,795
Charlton Outdoor Pool	400	770	1,005
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	620	1,540	1,950
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	950	1,060	1,525
Birchip Outdoor Pool	650	2,600	2,745
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	45	45	580
Watchem Outdoor Pool	400	100	540
Total	4,665	9,185	12,140

Group attendance figures reflected in **Table 7** include visits out of pool opening hours. As the figures show, Donald and Birchip pools have the highest group usage figures. This is due to organised activities and classes at these pools as well as school groups. Group usage has increased at all of the pools over this three year period.

Table 8: Total attendance figures for Council's outdoor pools

Total attendances	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Donald Outdoor Pool	7,558	5,975	4,671	9,217	11,408
Charlton Outdoor Pool	4,799	4,361	1,990	4,977	4,624
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	3,208	2,378	3,231	4,635	6,513
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	3,387	3,294	3,432	3,383	5,691
Birchip Outdoor Pool	3,615	3,380	2,806	5,718	8,026
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	2,160	1,832	1,128	1,262	2,521
Watchem Outdoor Pool	1,102	829	931	1,022	1,808
Total	25,829	22,049	18,189	30,214	40,591

As is the case with all outdoor pools, attendance figures fluctuate each year based on weather. The low numbers in 2010/11 were due to a cold and wet summer with Donald and Charlton particularly impacted by floods which saw them closed for extended periods. The pools were closed for 318 days across the seven sites and recorded only 18,189 attendances, a reduction of 3,860 attendances from the 2009/10 season.

While the improved for the 2011/12 season, Council faced problems staffing the pools at the end of the pool season with the pools being closed for 156 days due to staff shortages and days under 22 degrees across the seven sites. Total attendances for this season were 30,214, which is an additional 12,025 visits from the previous season.

The 2012/13 season provided better weather and, with only two pools closed for one day each across the shire, recorded a total of 40,591 attendances across the seven pools.

In 2012/13 Donald recorded 28% of overall attendances, followed by Birchip (20%), Wycheproof (16%), Sea Lake (14%), Charlton (12%), Berriwillock (6%) and Watchem 4%).

4.4 Outdoor pool financial performance

This section looks at the financial performance of these facilities between 2010/11 and 2012/13. Council introduced a free swimming policy in 2010/11 at all of their outdoor pools so the following figures are expenditure only.

No formal breakdown of expenditure per facility was available so the following assumptions have been made in determining a breakdown of costs per site:-

- Wages were determined by looking at the number of hours and days open at each facility as well as hot days at Birchip and Donald where there was an additional junior lifeguard
- Actual water and sewerage costs per site were provided by Council so these costs were attributed to each site
- All other expenditure was divided by seven

4.4.1 Expenditure analysis

Table 9 following provides an overview of expenditure at each of Council's outdoor pools between 2011/12 and the 2013/14 budget figures.

Table 9: Expenditure at existing outdoor pools

Expenses	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14*
Donald Outdoor Pool	\$ 63,299	\$ 84,086	\$ 82,062
Charlton Outdoor Pool	\$ 58,922	\$ 97,063	\$ 86,510
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	\$ 58,441	\$ 78,924	\$ 72,068
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	\$ 58,290	\$ 87,322	\$ 77,480
Birchip Outdoor Pool	\$ 62,456	\$ 84,379	\$ 73,219
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	\$ 55,304	\$ 77,167	\$ 68,144
Watchem Outdoor Pool	\$ 55,414	\$ 73,694	\$ 65,132
Total	\$ 412,126	\$ 582,634	\$ 524,614

* **Note:** 2013/14 figures are budget figures.

The significant differences between 2011/12 and 2012/13 were that the 2011/12 figures did not include electricity, water, insurance, superannuation and garbage costs of approximately \$96,267, and depreciation and internal plant charges increased by \$42,840.

The 2013/14 budget had reduced slightly from previous years actual figures, predominantly due to staffing costs. This is because the number of days the pools were closed was only two across all of the pools in the 2012/13 season, which is uncharacteristically low.

4.4.2 Subsidy per visit for each pool

Table 10 below provides an overview of the subsidy per visit at Council's outdoor pools 2011/12 and 2012/13, this is the amount that Council pays per visit to operate each pool. It provides a snapshot of the ratio between centre visits and net performance.

Table 10: Subsidy per visit for outdoor pools

Subsidy per visit	2011/12	2012/13
Donald Outdoor Pool	\$ 6.87	\$ 7.37
Charlton Outdoor Pool	\$ 11.84	\$ 20.99
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	\$ 12.61	\$ 12.12
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	\$ 17.23	\$ 15.34
Birchip Outdoor Pool	\$ 10.92	\$ 10.51
Berriwillock Outdoor Pool	\$ 43.82	\$ 30.61
Watchem Outdoor Pool	\$ 54.22	\$ 40.76

As the above table shows there is a significant variance in the subsidy per visit between the various sites, with Donald being the lowest in 2012/13 at \$7.37 and Watchem being the highest at \$40.76 per visit.

4.5 Other aquatic facilities used by Buloke residents

4.5.1 Indoor pools in other shires

Information collected during this project suggests that residents of Buloke shire were using several aquatic facilities in other shires with Horsham Leisure Centre and Swan Hill Leisure Centre recording 26 and 22 members from Buloke respectively. It is anticipated that there would be additional casual usage at these pools, as well as the warm water pool at Kerang.

At the time of consultation Mallee Health Services were conducting a weekly bus service from Charlton, Birchip, Wycheproof, Donald and Nullawil to the hydrotherapy pool at Bendigo Health. This service had 10 to 20 regular participants, of which approximately 70% were from Buloke shire.

There is a warm water pool in Ouyen that people from Sea Lake may wish to use. Mallee Track Health Services were not currently running a bus service between Sea Lake and Ouyen at the time of consultation as it has not been identified as a need, but they were open to operating such a service in the future if the need arises.

4.5.2 Private pools

While the number of background pools within the shire is unknown, Council provided information that 41 private pools have been issued with a building permit within the shire between 2006 and 2013.

SECTION 5: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This section of the report provides an overall summary of consultation tasks undertaken throughout the project consultation phase that was delivered in September and October 2013. It provides a summary of overall community feedback about aquatic provision within the shire.

5.1 Consultation overview

Table 11 provides an overview of consultation methods, key stakeholder groups and number of responses for each group.

Table 11: Summary of project consultation undertaken

Stakeholder	Consultation method	Number of responses
Current pool users	Surveys, street stalls	204
General community	Surveys, street stalls	158
Schools	Phone calls	10
Community groups and organisations	Phone and meetings	17
Councillors	Forum	7
Council Staff	Surveys and meetings	27
Youth	Surveys and meeting	47
Neighbouring Council's	Phone calls	5

5.2 Community and stakeholder survey findings

5.2.1 Survey responses (pool users)

204 survey responses from users of Council's swimming pools were received and analysed during the project consultation process. The following figures and tables provide an overview of key findings related to these surveys.

Figure 3: Gender breakdown of pool users

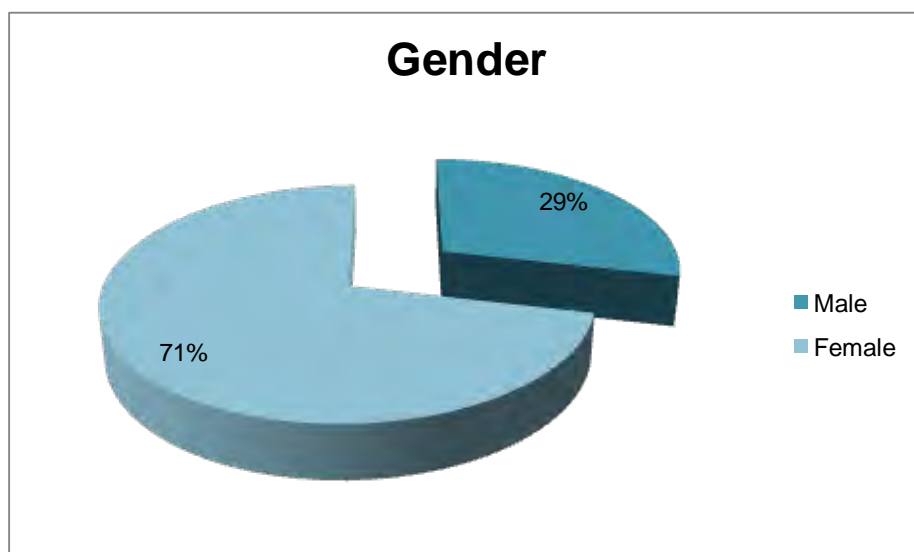


Figure 3 shows that nearly three quarters of members and users that completed the surveys were female.

Figure 4: Age breakdown of pool users

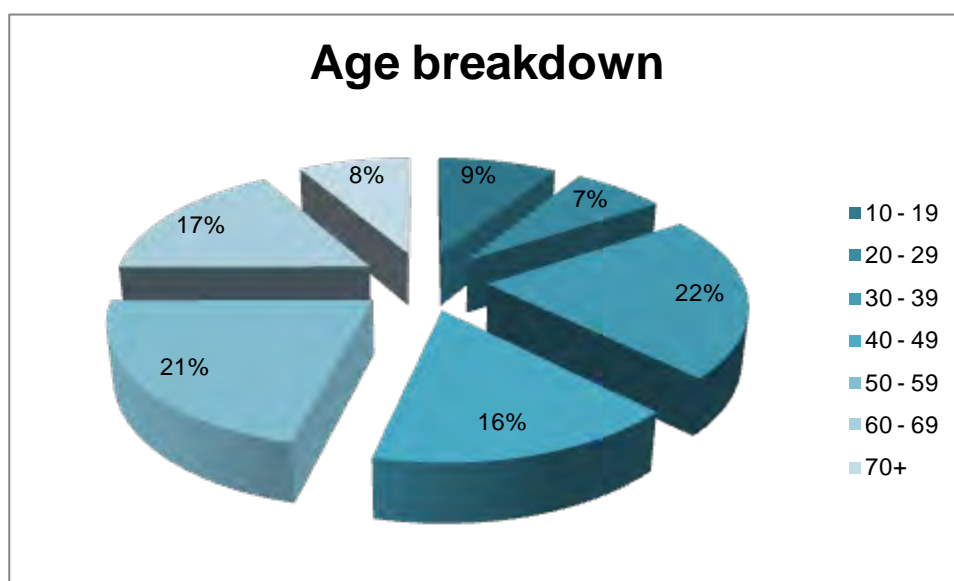


Figure 4 below shows that a diverse cross section of age groups was achieved through the survey process with a significant 46% of surveys being received from people over the age of 50, with 25% being over the age of 60 and 8% being over the age of 70. This cross section is important as it will help to ensure that the recommended aquatics provision for the shire will cater for a wide cross section of the community.

Table 12: Town of residence for pool users

TOWN	TOTAL	%
Donald	60	29%
Sea Lake	32	16%
Birchip	31	15%
Charlton	28	14%
Berriwillock	17	8%
Wycheproof	17	8%
Watchem	13	6%
Other	6	3%
TOTAL	204	100.0%

Table 12 shows that 74% of overall survey respondents lived in Donald, Sea Lake, Birchip and Charlton. These figures are consistent with pool attendance statistics provided for the 2012/13 pool season.

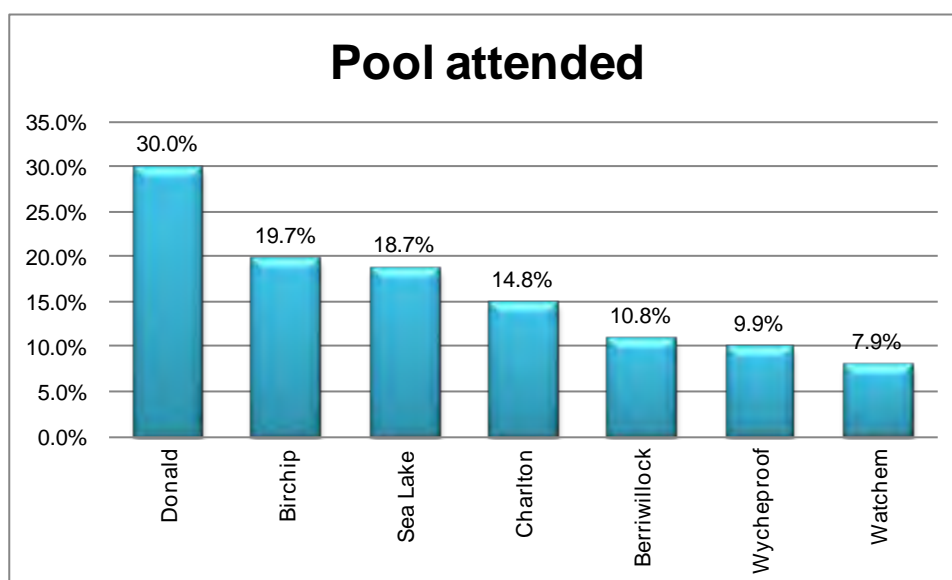
Figure 5: Main pool attended by pool users

Figure 5 shows that the responses correlate quite closely with town of residence data above in **Table 12**.

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for the above question.

Slightly more respondents used the pool on weekdays than weekends (52.1% and 47.9% respectively).

47.4% of respondents drive to the pool, 35.5% walk, 12.5% cycle, 2.8% get a ride with someone and 1.7% get the school bus there.

Attending the pool with family was the most popular choice (40.3%), followed by with friends (22.1%), by themselves (17.2%), with a club or team (9.7%) and with school (9.2%).

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for the above two questions.

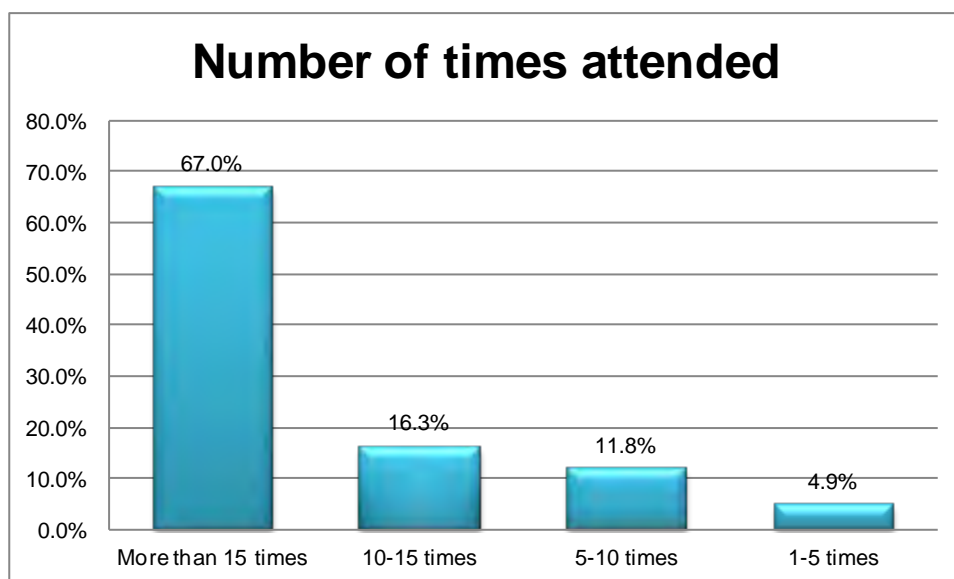
Figure 6: Number of times you attended the pool in a pool season

Figure 6 shows that a significant 83.3% of respondents used the pool/s more than 10 times during the pool season, with only 4.9% using them less than five times.

The top five things that respondents reported liking most about going to the pool were 'social' (22%), 'exercise' (20%), 'cooling down' (15%), 'fun' (8%) and *bringing the kids*' (7%).

Table 13: Main activity undertaken by pool users

What do you do there?	Response count	Response percent
Use the pool for recreation/fun	163	37.1%
Lap Swim	82	18.7%
Use the toddlers pool	58	13.2%
Swim lessons	57	13.0%
Aqua aerobics	44	10.0%
Take part in a club activity	29	6.6%
Other	6	1.4%
Total	439	100.0%

Table 13 shows that 'using the pool for recreation and fun' and 'lap swimming' were the two most common things that survey respondents did at the centre (55.8% of all respondents), followed closely by 'use the toddler's pool' and 'swim lessons' with 13.2% and 13% respectively.

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for this question.

Figure 7: Current operating hours

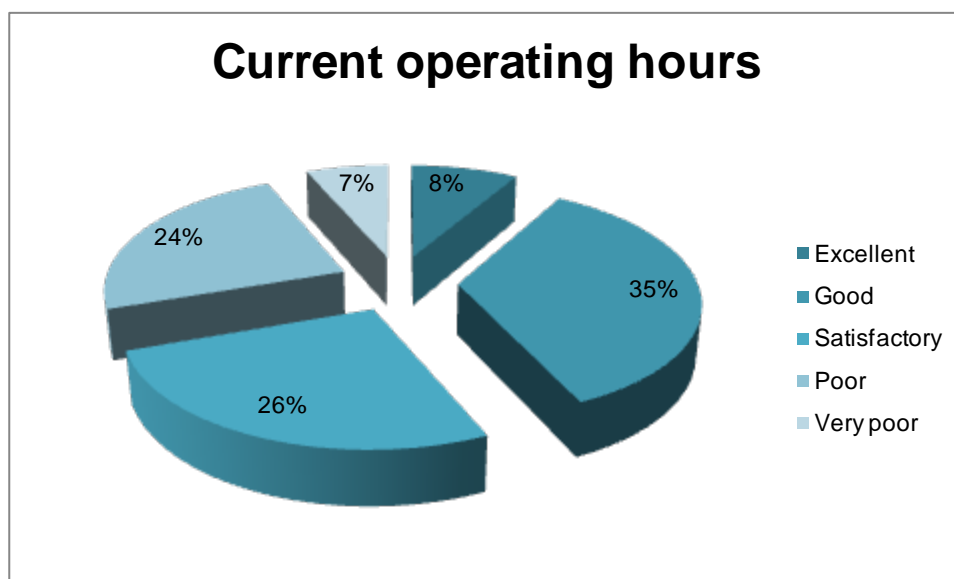


Figure 7 shows that 43% of people responded that the current operating hours of the outdoor pools were excellent or very good with 31% stating that they were poor or very poor. Of these 31% (67 respondents), 52% of them commented that they would like the pool to be open later, 33% would like the pool to open earlier, 12% would like a longer swimming season and 2% would like the kiosk open while the pool is open.

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for this question.

Table 14: What would encourage pool users to attend more?

What would make you attend more?	Total	%
Increased opening hours	56	28%
Longer season	19	9%
Heated pool	18	9%
Diving board	12	6%
Kiosk	12	6%
Cleaner facilities	10	5%
More events	10	5%
Swim lessons	10	5%
Shade	8	4%
Weather	7	3%
If I had more time	7	3%
Water slide	5	2%
Grassed area	5	2%
Better health	5	2%
Free entry	5	2%
BBQ facilities	4	2%
More pool equipment	4	2%
Roped off lanes	2	1%
Toddler pool	1	0%
Live closer	1	0%
TOTAL	201	100.0%

Table 14 outlines the key things that would encourage people to attend the pools more with the top two reasons being longer opening hours (28%), and a longer season (9%). These responses were in line with the previous question about opening hours. Following these responses were a heated pool (9%) and diving board and kiosk with 6% each. It should be noted that 23% of respondents did not answer this question.

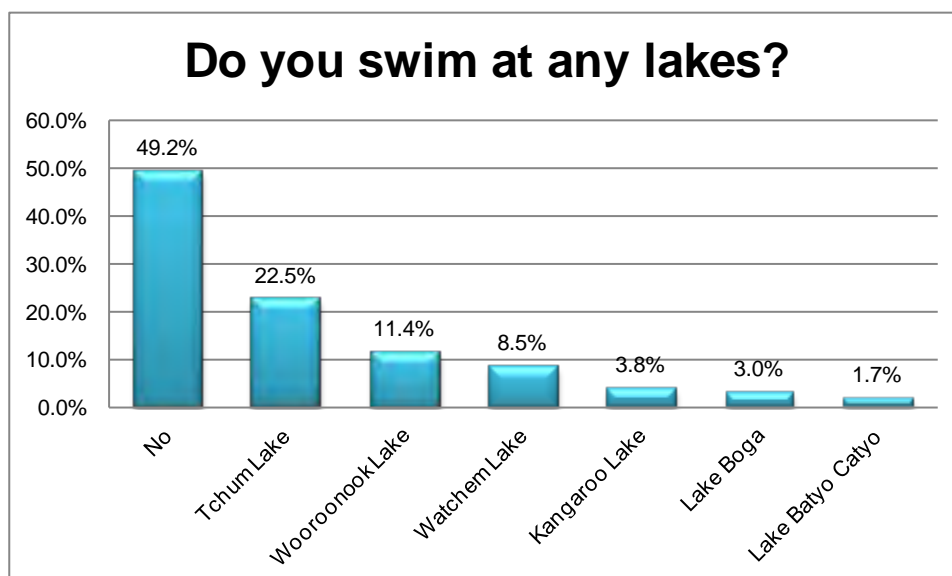
Figure 8: Do you swim at any lakes?

Figure 8 shows that 51.8% of survey respondents swam at lakes as well as the pools with the most popular lakes being Tchum Lake (53 respondents), Wooroonook Lake (27 respondents) and Watchem Lake (20 respondents).

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for this question.

Of the respondents that swam in the lakes, 27.9% swam there more than 15 times last summer, 14% between 10 and 15 times, 24.4% between five and 10 times and 33.7% between one to five times. 88% of respondents living in Berriwillock and Sea Lake also stated that they would swim in Green Lake if it was full and 100% of residents from Watchem currently swim in Watchem Lake.

30.5% of respondents stated that they swam in pools outside of Buloke Shire with 23.9% swimming in these pools more than 15 times in the past 12 months, 14.9% between 10 and 15 times, 20.9% between five and 10 times and 40.3% between one and five times.

The most popular pools were Horsham (22% or 18 respondents), Swan Hill (13% or 11 respondents), Bendigo (12% or 10 respondents), Warracknabeal (5% or 4 respondents) and Mildura and Woomelang both at 4% or 3 respondents each.

73% of respondents stated that existing range of aquatic facilities (including lakes) did meet their current needs. **Table 15** provides an overview of responses from people that said that the existing range did not meet their needs with key responses being 'water in Green Lake' (20), 'longer opening hours' (14), 'heated pool' (6) and 'longer season and upgraded facilities' (5 each).

Table 15: If the existing aquatic facilities do not meet your needs, what would be required to meet your needs?

What would be required to meet your needs?	Total	%
Water in Green Lake	20	30%
Longer opening hours	14	21%
Heated pool	6	9%
Longer season	5	8%
Upgraded facilities	5	8%
Cleaner facilities	4	6%
Diving Board	3	5%
Kiosk	2	3%
If the pool was closer	2	3%
More events & activities	2	3%
Better public transport	1	2%
Indoor pool	1	2%
Swim Lessons	1	2%
TOTAL	66	100.0%

5.2.2 Survey respondents (non users)

Extensive advertising of the consultation process was undertaken across the shire to ensure that all residents were aware of and able to participate in the process. In addition to online surveys, hard copy surveys were distributed to Council offices in Wycheproof, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Birchip, and to pool committees in each of the towns to distribute. The consultation process

was advertised in key newspapers and community newsletters in smaller towns and street stalls were held in Charlton, Wycheproof, Sea Lake, Birchip and Donald. The street stalls were very successful in obtaining non user feedback regarding the pools with 85% of overall non user results coming from these.

158 survey responses were received and analysed during the project consultation process for non users. The following figures and tables provide an overview of key findings related to these surveys.

Figure 9: Gender breakdown of non users

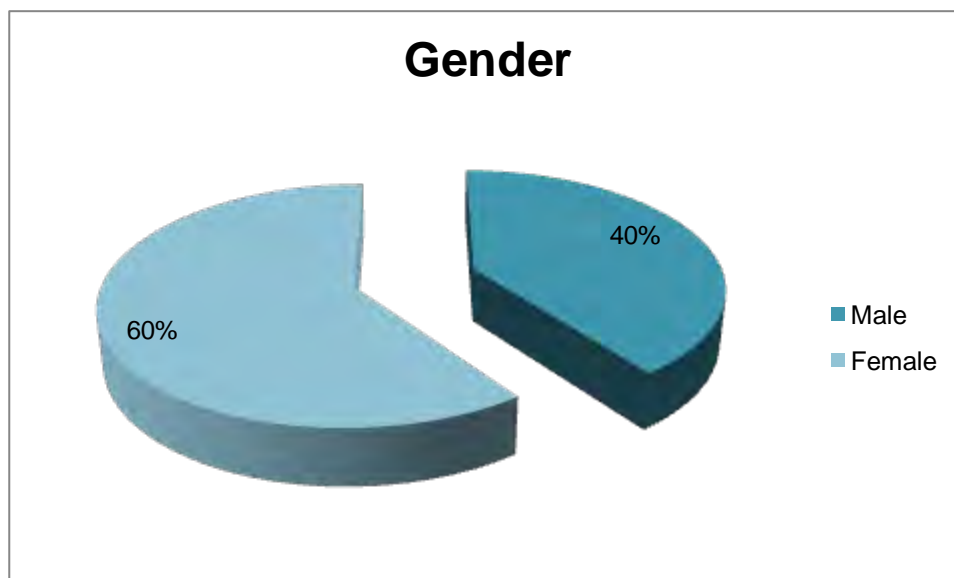


Figure 9 shows that more females than males that completed the non user surveys.

Figure 10: Age breakdown of non users

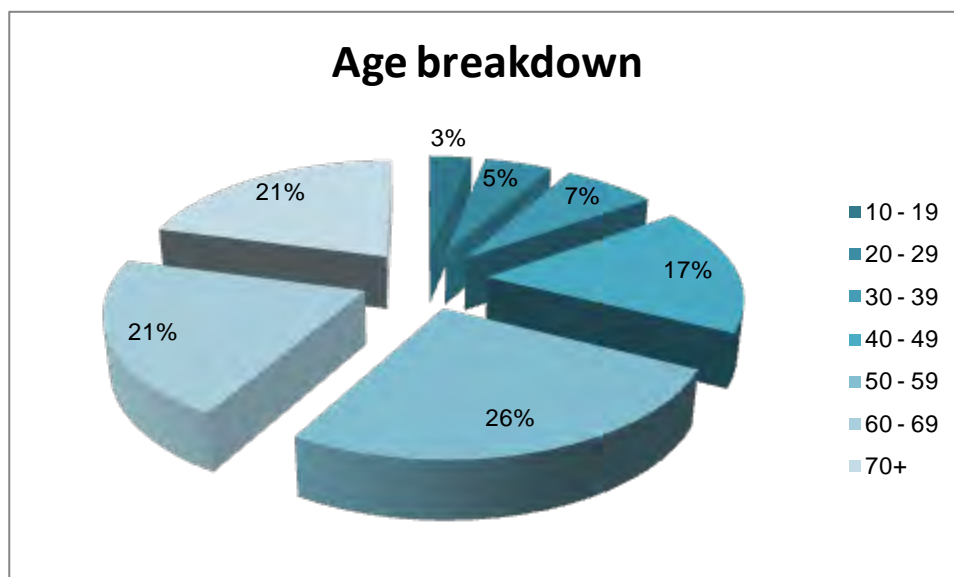


Figure 10 shows that a significant 85% of respondents were over the age of 40.

Table 16: Town of residence for non users

Town	Total	%
Charlton	33	21%
Donald	31	20%
Sea Lake	27	17%
Wycheproof	18	11%
Birchip	17	11%
Watchem	6	4%
Other	17	11%
No comment	9	6%
TOTAL	158	100.0%

Table 16 shows that Charlton, Donald and Sea Lake had the highest number of responses to the non user surveys with Berriwillock being the only town with a pool that did not have any responses. 6% of respondents did not comment on this question.

Table 17: Why non users do not attend Council aquatic and leisure facilities

Why don't you use Council's outdoor pools?	Total	%
I have no interest	71	38.2%
Not enough time, too busy	31	16.7%
Opening hours	18	9.7%
Water temperature	13	7.0%
I have my own pool	12	6.5%
I can't swim	9	4.8%
I would prefer to swim in the lake	8	4.3%
I have trouble getting there	5	2.7%
Age	5	2.7%
Location	4	2.2%
Other	10	5.4%
TOTAL	186	100.0%

Table 17 shows that the main reason non users did not use the existing Council facilities was a lack of interest, followed by a lack of time, the opening hours, the water temperature and having their own pool.

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for this question.

Table 18: What would encourage non users to use Council's Outdoor pools?

What would encourage you to use Council's outdoor pools?	Total	%
Nothing	108	64%
Longer opening hours	12	7%
Heated pool	11	6%
Earlier opening hours	7	4%
More classes	7	4%
More time	5	3%
If I lived closer	4	2%
Longer season	3	2%
Swim lessons	2	1%
Cleaner facilities	2	1%
BBQ facilities	2	1%
Better fitness	2	1%
Water slide	1	1%
Weather	1	1%
Water in Green Lake	1	1%
Unsure	1	1%
Dont like the youth	1	1%
TOTAL	170	100.0%

Table 18 explores what would encourage people to attend the pools with 64% (108 people) saying 'nothing', 11% referring to longer or earlier opening hours and 6% a heated pool.

It should be noted that multiple responses were received for this question.

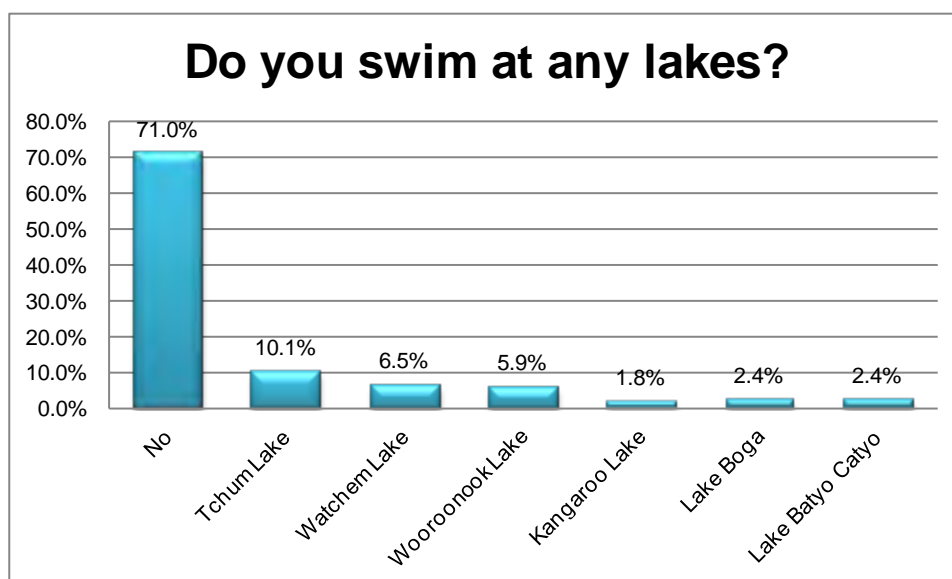
Figure 11: Do you swim at any lakes?

Figure 11 on the previous page shows that only 29% of non user survey respondents swam at lakes with the most popular lakes being Tchum Lake (17 respondents), Watchem Lake (11 respondents) and Wooroonook Lake (10 respondents).

Of the 37 respondents that swam in the lakes, 32.4% swam there more than 15 times last summer, 10.8% between 10 and 15 times, 18.9% between five and 10 times and 37.8% between one to five times. 74% of respondents living in Sea Lake also stated that they would swim in Green Lake if it was full and 83% of residents from Watchem currently swim in Watchem Lake.

Only 8.3% (13 respondents) of non user respondents stated that they swam in pools outside of Buloke Shire with these pools listed as Horsham, Swan Hill, St Arnaud, Mildura, Bendigo, Tatura and Boort.

74.4% of non users stated that the existing range of aquatic facilities (including lakes) do meet their current needs, with 54% of respondents that stated that aquatic facilities did not meet their needs being related to the need for more water in the lakes, particularly Green Lake. Other responses included a heated or indoor pool (6), longer opening hours and season length (4) and better maintenance (2).

5.2.3 Survey respondents (youth)

Specific youth surveys were developed for young people between 12 and 19 and distributed to young people throughout the shire by Council's Youth Development officer. 49 survey responses were received from young people, this provided a profile of where they live, what pool they used, who they went with, how they got there and how many times they used the pool last year. Unfortunately other questions, such as what they like about the pool, why they don't go, what would encourage them to go or whether they use the lakes were not answered by more than 90% of respondents.

Responses were received from young people in Sea Lake (20), Birchip (15), Donald (13) and Charlton (1) with 83% of respondents being female. The pools they attended correlated to the town they lived in.

51.2% of respondents used the pool on the weekend with the majority of them attending the pool with friends (44%) or school (29.6%). 15.4% of young people went with their family and only one person said that they went by themselves.

Only three respondents attended the pool more than 15 times in a season, with 19.5% attending between 10 and 15 times, 43.9% between five and 10 times and 29.3% attending between one and five times.

42.7% of young people walked to the pool, 30.3% get the school bus, 25.8% drive and 1.1% get driven there.

5.3 Group stakeholder consultation findings

5.3.1 Pool committees

There are active pool committees in Charlton, Berriwillock, Birchip, Watchem and Donald. The specific roles that each committee takes on varies between town and town but they are an advisory

committee and their role generally is to conduct fundraising to raise money for equipment needed at the pool and to organise community events at the pool.

Key findings/comments from all of the committee's included:-

- Youths don't go to the pools as much now that the diving boards have been taken out, they go to the river or lakes instead
- More people have their own pools now
- A lot of people use the lakes now they have water in them
- Reintroducing fees to attend the pool would have an impact on attendance

Charlton pool committee

The committee at Charlton acknowledged that they had not been very active since the floods and while they would like some new pool equipment, they hadn't done any fundraising. They were planning to organise regular bbq's at the pool during the 2013/14 season.

Vic Swim, private swim lessons and aqua classes are all highly valued by the community although they were unable to source an aqua instructor last season which meant that classes were unable to run.

They felt that a change to opening hours so that the pool was opened between 10am and 11am to cater for young families, and then having the pool open later at the end of each day (rather than in the heat of the day) would suit the needs of the community better, but did understand the challenges that this would cause around staffing.

A key priority for the committee was an accessible entry to the pool to enter through the new building.

Berriwillock pool committee

The committee commented that their role had diminished over time and their key role now was to support the lifeguards, organise fundraising activities and a local Christmas party at the pool. They said that the pool is a social hub for the town with many farming families in the area, it is highly valued and social gatherings often include a swim in the pool and bbq in the park.

The aqua program and Vic Swim lessons are highly valued by the community with approximately 15 people attending each aqua class and between 12 and 15 children attending Vic Swim last season.

They made similar comments about the changes to operating hours as the Charlton committee but acknowledged that this would be too difficult to organise lifeguards for split shifts.

They felt that weekend attendances would reduce if Green Lake had water in it but weekday attendances would not be impacted.

Birchip pool committee

The committee at Birchip are very active, recently fundraising for a new shade structure. Birchip is the only pool that runs a kiosk. This kiosk is organised by the committee with an honour system in place.

They work closely with the Business and Learning Centre who organise aqua aerobic classes at the pool and were very interested in setting up a model for voluntary lifeguards to introduce early morning swimming, similar to Donald.

Both the aqua classes and private swim lessons are highly valued by the community.

The Birchip pool is a very social place with lots of families having dinner and bbq's at the pool, particularly on a Friday night.

Watchem pool committee

As part of the consultation consultants met with both the Watchem Pool Committee and Watchem Lake Committee as these are both seen as important community assets and are both highly valued by the community.

The pool committee acknowledged that the community is lucky to have the pool and while the toilet block is an issue that they would like to see rectified, they understand that it's a lot of money for Council to spend on so few people.

They would like an improved sprinkler system and a bbq to promote social interaction but commented that there are community bbq's at the fire station that could be used at the pool for this purpose.

Vic Swim and private lessons are highly valued by the community. Although Vic Swim didn't run the previous season, there were approximately 40 students that participated in private lessons during the summer.

It was noted that November is harvest time so is not a busy time at the pool.

The lake committee commented that the lake is used by both locals and tourists, attracting many campers during summer. At the time of consultation they were trying to obtain funding for a path from town to the lake (approximately 1km) and around the lake, as people currently walk to and from the lake on the road.

The committee did say that they thought having water in the lake does affect numbers at the pool, and they felt that more people would use the pool if the lake wasn't full.

Donald pool committee

The committee at Donald are very active. They have a volunteer lifeguard system in place, through a hire agreement with Council, that allows them to run early morning swimming Monday to Friday between 5.30am to 7.30am, morning swimming on weekends between 10am to 11am and evening swimming on Tuesday night 7pm to 8pm. Last season they had more than 50 people sign up for these sessions and they charge \$20 per person per season with the money going towards training for the volunteer lifeguards.

They would like to be able to access the pool from mid October to March and open later than 7pm, particularly on hot days and felt that people would be happy to pay to keep the pool open later.

Some key priorities for the committee were permanent shade near the competition starting area, additional seating, interactive water play and a small playground.

They felt that the pool meets the needs for the community well and that while the Donald Dolphins would like the water to be warmer, the swim club would not.

5.3.3 Schools

10 primary and secondary schools within the shire were interviewed as part of this project. All of these schools currently use Council outdoor pools for a combination of activities including swim lessons, water safety, fun days and school carnivals.

Eight out of the 10 schools said that they would still use the pool if fees were reintroduced as swimming was an important part of their curriculum but they believe that both school and out of school usage of the pools has increased since fees were abolished and they saw it as a real benefit to local families to have their children access these facilities at no additional charge.

The majority of schools were happy with the booking system, working in with other schools to arrange times. One school suggested that Council could send out a booking calendar to the schools to assist in this process, and another commented that the amount of time it takes for the teacher to get the key from Council and then return it cuts into the actual swimming time. They would like to see the school have their own key, as was the case in the past.

Seven of the 10 schools said that the overall facilities offered at the pools were excellent with schools in Wycheproof and Birchip commenting that they were only satisfactory.

5.3.4 Community groups and organisations

A number of community groups and organisations were spoken to as part of the consultation process with key responses including:-

Donald swimming club

The Donald swim club have approximately 70 to 90 members from Donald and Birchip. They use the pool between 4.30pm to 7.30pm on Tuesday nights, organising a lifeguard for last half hour when the pool is closed. The club is split into juniors (approximately 50 to 70) and seniors but it is skill based rather than age based.

They would like to be able to access the pool from mid October to help their members train for swim meets as they feel that their members are disadvantaged by the late start to training. The club competes in at least two swim meets per season but feel that they would be able to compete in more if they were able to train earlier in the season.

They run a swimming competition at the Donald pool each year and commented that theirs is the only competition where competitors and spectators don't have to pay to enter. They organise external catering to be based at the pool for these events.

Donald dolphins

The Donald Dolphins are a group of older adults, aged between 64 and 84, that attend aqua aerobic classes at the Donald Pool. These classes are run through East Wimmera Health Services two mornings per week with key reasons for participating including injury rehabilitation,

mobility and social interaction. 36 people attended these classes in the 2012/13 season with average class numbers of between 10 and 20.

The instructor also runs gentle exercise and chair based exercise through East Wimmera Health Services and cross training sessions on Monday evenings. She mentioned that she would like to run a circuit class for the Donald dolphins out of pool season but has been unable to find a venue to take the classes.

Local Health Services

East Wimmera Health Services currently service the Charlton, Birchip, Wycheproof, Donald and Nullawil areas. They run a weekly bus service, as part of their Planned Activity Groups, to cater for people that have a need for warm water. The cost for this service is \$12 per person and there is a booking system in place with approximately 10 to 20 people attending each week, of which approximately 70% of this are from Buloke shire. Bus stops for this service are at Charlton and Wycheproof. This service is predominantly used by people over the age of 65 but there are people as young as 40 that use this service for injury rehabilitation. The service is only for patients and is not open to the public. Going forward, the way the services has been run may need to change as the income received does not cover the cost and voluntary drivers may need to be considered.

East Wimmera Health Services were rebuilding the Charlton hospital at the time of the consultation and the question of inclusion of a hydrotherapy pool at the hospital was raised as part of the conversation. Due to significant capital and ongoing operational costs this was unfortunately not something that they were considering.

Mallee Track Health Service did not currently offer any form of assisted transport to Buloke residents to access the Ouyen hydrotherapy pool at the time of consultation. They said that this had not come up as a community priority to date but that they were open to looking into a similar system to East Wimmera Health Service should the need arise. This would obviously be based on funding restraints.

5.3.7 Council staff

Meetings were held with officers from key areas in Council and surveys were received by 22 Council staff. In addition to this a Councillor briefing was held. Feedback on the project included:-

Councillors

A councillor forum was conducted at the beginning of the consultation process. Some of the issues facing Council in relation to the pools included the operational cost of running the pools, the ability to staff them, particularly at the end of the pool season when students go back to university, risks associated with managing pools and being compliant with regulations.

Councillors agreed that the pools were important community assets but acknowledged the significant ongoing cost to manage seven pools and asked about the different management models used by other Council's and whether there was another model which was more cost effective for Council that would meet regulations.

Council staff

A focus group was held with key Council staff in recreation, community services, youth and age and disability services. Feedback received in this meeting was that staff didn't believe that the outdoor pools are currently meeting the needs of residents due to the nature of the facilities and the limited times that the pools are open. Staff felt that people aged from 18 to 30 tended to go to the lakes rather than using the pools while the current opening hours meant that it was often too hot for parents to take young children in the heat of the day.

The ageing population of the shire was discussed and that each of the larger pools did currently have organised activity groups which people over the age of 50 participated in.

There was a general feeling that pool attendances have dropped since the diving boards were taken out and the lakes have been full again, with comments that the pools are not the social hubs that they once were.

Recreation staff commented that there is a high degree of out of hour's use of the pools and use by schools during the day.

Increasing usage of the pools and co-location of facilities were discussed. Staff felt that changing the hours of operation to mornings (for young families and older adults) and late afternoon could increase attendance although this would create rostering issues with staff. It was also suggested that promoting healthy lifestyles could be a way to increase patronage at the pools.

Council's asset renewal strategy was discussed which limits the opportunity for co-location as new facilities are not required.

Some staff also felt that solar heating the remaining pools was not a good use of Council's money and would not significantly increase attendance.

Council's youth officer commented that young people would like to see a calendar of events for the larger pools so that they know what is on and that they would like Council to play a role in organising these events.

Pool staff

The pool superintendent had resigned just prior to the commencement of this project so unfortunately was not available to provide comment as part of this process.

Given the consultation process was conducted out of pool season it was not possible to meet with pool staff but a survey was distributed to previous pool staff with only four staff responding. The staff that responded had worked at Donald, Charlton and Berriwillock pools. The busiest time at the pools according to these staff was 3pm to 5pm on weekdays (three out of four) and 2pm to 5pm on weekends (one out of four) with families being listed as the main users. The main comments that staff had received from customers around opening hours was for the pool to be open later on hot days and in the morning, particularly on school holidays.

Council staff survey respondents

22 Council staff responded to the survey. Of these 62% used the pools themselves with lap swimming and using the pool for fun and recreation being the most popular responses. 61% of respondents said that the range of existing aquatic facilities (including lakes) met their needs, 61%

thought that the shire caters adequately for its residents in aquatics provision (including lakes) and 61% did not think that Council could sustain all of its swimming pools going forward.

5.4 Key consultation themes

A number of key themes became evident through the analysis of consultation data, these include:-

- The outdoor pools are highly valued by local communities but attendances have reduced due to a number of reasons such as changing demographics, removal of the diving boards and opening hours
- The lakes are also highly valued with 51% of pool users and 31% of non users swimming at the lakes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that pool numbers have decreased since the lakes have been full
- There is a desire by some people for opening hours to change so that there is a morning swimming session and the pools are open later in the day, particularly on hot days
- Young people are not attending pools like they used to
- Residents of Buloke are accessing indoor pool facilities in other shires
- Existing aquatic facilities (including the lakes) meet the needs of nearly three quarters of all survey respondents (both pool users and non users) with the key thing being required to meet their needs being '*water in Green Lake*'
- A high percentage of the pool non users have no interest in the outdoor pools (68% of respondents that do not use the outdoor pools said that nothing would encourage them to)

5.5 Public consultation of draft report

Council released the draft report for public consultation for six weeks during April and May. This process was advertised in local newspapers and on Council's website with copies of the draft strategy available for review via Council's website and at Council offices.

Only two responses were received during this time, one in relation to Donald Outdoor Pool and the other in relation to Wycheproof Outdoor Pool. Key comments from this feedback included:-

- '*...the pools are a very important social hub*'
- '*The quality of lifeguards is a really important factor in pool use and user satisfaction...*'
- There may be opportunities for the community or Pool Committees to be more involved in the pool operations '*but Council needs to be realistic about the expectations placed on community members to volunteer...*'
- Two responses were received regarding the introduction of a cold weather policy – '*if a cold weather policy is introduced communication would be important so that people know in advance when the pool would be closed*' and '*with solar heating a cold weather policy should not be necessary. It is the water temperature that is relevant, not the air temperature*'

- *'The Donald model seems to be working quite well and should be copied elsewhere. If communities do not support their pools this should be considered when funding is allocated'*
- The desire to extend the season and hours at Donald in line with Donald Swimming Club submissions and feedback about solar heating not being required on hot days

SECTION 6: CONDITION OF FACILITIES

Dennis Hunt and Associates undertook an assessment of all pools as part of this project. These assessments included:-

- Condition assessment
- Disabled access and facilities assessment
- Occupational health and public safety assessment
- BCA building assessment, and
- RLSSA facility review.

This section of the report looks at the condition of each of Council's outdoor pools, identifies key OH&S and EPA issues at each site along with anticipated compliance costs and projected 10 year maintenance and capital costs, as recommended in Dennis Hunt's report.

It should be noted that capital and maintenance costs included in this section exclude allowances for CPI adjustments, GST, design/documentation, builder's preliminaries, builder's margin and supervision.

6.1 Charlton Outdoor Pool

6.1.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Unsafe/loose unsupported cabling and dosing feeds within the plant room
- Balance tank requires identification as a confined space and provision of safe access
- Fire extinguisher in acid store needs to be tagged and mounted close to plant room switchboard
- Labelling above chemical storage and to the door of the acid store
- The discharge of backwash water to the adjoining land and river does not meet EPA regulations

6.1.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 19**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 20**.

Table 19: Charlton Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 50,600
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ 5,400
TOTAL	\$ 56,350

6.1.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 20 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$3,150 identified for Year 1.

Table 20: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Charlton Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 297,450	\$ 1,690	\$ 299,140
Year 2	\$ 12,600	\$ 3,990	\$ 16,590
Year 3		\$ 6,140	\$ 6,140
Year 4		\$ 10,490	\$ 10,490
Year 5	\$ 400	\$ 3,990	\$ 4,390
Year 6		\$ 2,490	\$ 2,490
Year 7		\$ 5,290	\$ 5,290
Year 8		\$ 4,540	\$ 4,540
Year 9		\$ 11,290	\$ 11,290
Year 10		\$ 2,490	\$ 2,490
TOTAL	\$ 310,450	\$ 52,400	\$ 362,850

6.1.4 Total cost over ten year period for Charlton Outdoor Pool

Table 21 outlines a total cost of \$419,200 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$41,920.

Table 21: Total 10 year cost for Charlton Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 56,350	\$ 362,850	\$ 419,200

6.2 Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

6.2.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Unsafe discharge of backwash water to pool area lawns which does not meet EPA regulations
- Risk associated with partial wall collapse or dislodgement of loose bricks in the plant room and hypo storage
- The sodium hypo storage installation is recommended to be removed to provide sufficient space for safe storage (on pallets or shelving) of dry chemicals including improvements to labelling
- Dry chemicals should not be stored on the plant room floor due to wet conditions
- Electrical leads and chemical feed lines require additional support and conduiting for safer operations within the plant room
- Pool lighting requires replacement along with unenclosed lamps along with an inspection of the poles for internal corrosion
- The unenclosed light fittings need to be sealed
- The balance tank requires identification as a confined space and provision of safe access thereto
- Risk of tripping at pool entry at the water meter. A safe cover and backflow valve is required
- Fire extinguisher is required adjacent to the electrical switchboard
- Testing and logging is required of all RCD's

6.2.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 22**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 23**.

Table 22: Wycheproof Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 10,200
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 400
RLSSA guidelines	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 10,600

6.2.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 23 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$2,250 identified for Year 1.

Table 23: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 642,650	\$ 2,870	\$ 645,520
Year 2	\$ 6,500	\$ 7,570	\$ 14,070
Year 3	\$ 29,000	\$ 3,570	\$ 32,570
Year 4		\$ 13,670	\$ 13,670
Year 5		\$ 4,970	\$ 4,970
Year 6		\$ 3,570	\$ 3,570
Year 7		\$ 6,770	\$ 6,770
Year 8		\$ 6,470	\$ 6,470
Year 9		\$ 11,570	\$ 11,570
Year 10		\$ 4,170	\$ 4,170
TOTAL	\$ 678,150	\$ 65,200	\$ 743,350

6.2.4 Total cost over ten year period for Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Table 24 outlines a total cost of \$753,950 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$75,395.

Table 24: Total 10 year cost for Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 10,600	\$ 743,350	\$ 753,950

6.3 Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

6.3.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Unsafe discharge of backwash water to storm water which does not meet EPA regulations
- The hypo delivery arrangement and liquid storage does not comply with the code. This includes undersized overflow, no spill tray and no vehicle containment
- Unenclosed lamps and fittings need to be enclosed and replaced

6.3.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 26**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 26**.

Table 25: Berriwillock Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 45,300
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 45,650

6.3.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 26 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$600 identified for Year 1.

Table 26: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 16,850	\$ 1,890	\$ 18,740
Year 2	\$ 6,300	\$ 11,490	\$ 17,790
Year 3	\$ 43,000	\$ 1,190	\$ 44,190
Year 4		\$ 6,940	\$ 6,940
Year 5		\$ 4,140	\$ 4,140
Year 6		\$ 8,990	\$ 8,990
Year 7		\$ 1,890	\$ 1,890
Year 8		\$ 4,290	\$ 4,290
Year 9		\$ 6,190	\$ 6,190
Year 10		\$ 9,590	\$ 9,590
TOTAL	\$ 66,150	\$ 56,600	\$ 122,750

6.3.4 Total cost over ten year period for Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Table 27 outlines a total cost of \$168,400 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$16,840.

Table 27: Total 10 year cost for Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 45,650	\$ 122,750	\$ 168,400

6.4 Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

6.4.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Pool lighting requires replacement along with unenclosed lamps. Cable entries to pool light poles present a trip hazard
- Power cables and chemical feed lines in both the main plant room and toddlers plant shed require securing and conduiting
- Above and below floor balance tank requires identification as a confined space
- The discharge of backwash water to storm water does not meet EPA regulations

6.4.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 28**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 29**.

Table 28: Sea Lake Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 15,100
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ 600
TOTAL	\$ 16,050

6.4.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 29 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. No urgent maintenance was identified for Sea Lake Outdoor Pool.

Table 29: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 45,950	\$ 3,970	\$ 49,920
Year 2	\$ 7,800	\$ 3,520	\$ 11,320
Year 3	\$ 2,700	\$ 6,720	\$ 9,420
Year 4		\$ 11,120	\$ 11,120
Year 5		\$ 4,620	\$ 4,620
Year 6	\$ 1,300	\$ 5,070	\$ 6,370
Year 7		\$ 6,220	\$ 6,220
Year 8		\$ 4,220	\$ 4,220
Year 9		\$ 10,020	\$ 10,020
Year 10		\$ 5,720	\$ 5,720
TOTAL	\$ 57,750	\$ 61,200	\$ 118,950

6.4.4 Total cost over ten year period for Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Table 30 outlines a total cost of \$135,000 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$13,500.

Table 30: Total 10 year cost for Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 16,050	\$ 118,950	\$ 135,000

6.5 Birchip Outdoor Pool

6.5.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- The plant room is cramped and unsafe with unsupported dangling cables, chemical feeds and overloaded unsupported power board. Support and conduiting of the leads and feed lines along with provision of additional power outlets is recommended
- Pool lighting poles require replacement if floodlighting is to be used
- Unenclosed light fittings in change rooms and plant room need to be sealed
- The balance tank needs to be treated as a confined space and suitably identified
- The discharge of backwash water to the adjoining land and river does not meet EPA regulations

6.5.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 31**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 32**.

Table 31: Birchip Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 51,800
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 52,150

6.5.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 32 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$500 identified for Year 1.

Table 32: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Birchip Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 77,050	\$ 8,010	\$ 85,060
Year 2	\$ 234,900	\$ 3,310	\$ 238,210
Year 3	\$ 6,000	\$ 9,460	\$ 15,460
Year 4		\$ 14,410	\$ 14,410
Year 5		\$ 5,810	\$ 5,810
Year 6	\$ 4,000	\$ 6,760	\$ 10,760
Year 7		\$ 6,910	\$ 6,910
Year 8	\$ 43,000	\$ 5,910	\$ 48,910
Year 9		\$ 17,360	\$ 17,360
Year 10		\$ 6,410	\$ 6,410
TOTAL	\$ 364,950	\$ 84,350	\$ 449,300

6.5.4 Total cost over ten year period for Birchip Outdoor Pool

Table 33 outlines a total cost of \$501,450 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$50,145.

Table 33: Total 10 year cost for Birchip Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 52,150	\$ 449,300	\$ 501,450

6.6 Watchem Outdoor Pool

6.6.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Risk of injury to pool patrons due to cracked inside edge wall tiles to the main pool
- Safer handling installation and storage of chemicals within the main plant room and urgent attention to unsupported leads, feed lines and provision of additional power outlets
- Replacement of unenclosed lamps in change rooms and the plant room
- Balance tank and SW pit require identification of confined spaces and provision of safe access
- Undersized bund for sodium hypo tank. Tank does not have correct size vent or correct size overflow. Hypo pump on the wall has unsupported lead and hypo lines
- RCD's required on power circuits and replacement of the switchboard in the office
- Raised and missing bolt supporting the pool ladders
- The current discharge of backwash water does not meet EPA regulations

6.6.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 34**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 35**.

Table 34: Watchem Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 12,900
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ 6,450
TOTAL	\$ 19,700

6.1.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 35 outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$2,250 identified for Year 1.

Table 35: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Watchem Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 86,950	\$ 6,660	\$ 93,610
Year 2	\$ 46,000	\$ 4,660	\$ 50,660
Year 3	\$ 270,500	\$ 19,010	\$ 289,510
Year 4		\$ 4,660	\$ 4,660
Year 5		\$ 4,660	\$ 4,660
Year 6	\$ 12,000	\$ 21,160	\$ 33,160
Year 7		\$ 4,460	\$ 4,460
Year 8		\$ 5,060	\$ 5,060
Year 9		\$ 20,110	\$ 20,110
Year 10		\$ 3,160	\$ 3,160
TOTAL	\$ 415,450	\$ 93,600	\$ 509,050

6.6.4 Total cost over ten year period for Watchem Outdoor Pool

Table 36 outlines a total cost of \$528,750 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$52,875.

Table 36: Total 10 year cost for Watchem Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 19,700	\$ 509,050	\$ 528,750

6.7 Donald Outdoor Pool

6.7.1 OH&S and EPA issues

The following safety items were evident at the time of the inspection:-

- Risk of tripping and toe entrapment at pool entry and around concourse (especially to the clay paver surfaces)
- Damaged valve cover outside the plant room within the lawn
- Risk of slipping on grassed embankment at end of entry stairs
- Unenclosed lamps in pool lights and plant room need replacing
- Loose cords and feed lines in plant room require elimination
- Balance tank requires identification as a confined space and provision of safe access
- The discharge of backwash water to the adjoining land and river does not meet EPA regulations

6.7.2 Compliance costs

Capital costs associated with making the building compliant with access standards, BCA requirements and RLSSA guidelines are outlined in **Table 37**. All OH&S costs have been included in the 10 year maintenance and capital program costs in **Table 38**.

Table 37: Donald Outdoor Pool capital costs associated with compliance issues

Component	Preliminary Estimated Costs
Disabled access and facilities	\$ 16,000
OH&S regulations and safety	<i>Refer to maintenance and capital program</i>
BCA requirements	\$ 350
RLSSA guidelines	\$ 12,500
TOTAL	\$ 28,850

6.7.3 Ten year maintenance and capital program

Table 38 on the following page outlines the 10 year maintenance and capital costs as identified by the audit. These costs include urgent maintenance of \$3,800 identified for Year 1.

Table 38: 10 year maintenance and capital costs for Donald Outdoor Pool

Year	10 year maintenance and capital program	Cyclical Maintenance	Total
Year 1	\$ 44,300	\$ 2,290	\$ 46,590
Year 2	\$ 46,500	\$ 5,990	\$ 52,490
Year 3		\$ 11,490	\$ 11,490
Year 4		\$ 10,090	\$ 10,090
Year 5		\$ 6,290	\$ 6,290
Year 6		\$ 9,590	\$ 9,590
Year 7		\$ 3,590	\$ 3,590
Year 8		\$ 7,890	\$ 7,890
Year 9		\$ 16,090	\$ 16,090
Year 10		\$ 3,890	\$ 3,890
TOTAL	\$ 90,800	\$ 77,200	\$ 168,000

6.7.4 Total cost over ten year period for Donald Outdoor Pool

Table 39 outlines a total cost of \$196,850 over the 10 year period, which averages out to an annual cost of \$19,865.

Table 39: Total 10 year cost for Donald Outdoor Pool

Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total
\$ 28,850	\$ 168,000	\$ 196,850

6.8 Summary

There are a number of OH&S and EPA requirements at each pool which require Council's immediate attention. In addition to this, \$12,550 in urgent maintenance was identified which should be attended to as soon as possible.

All pools currently discharge their backwash water in a way that is in breach of EPA requirements and may attract fines of between \$7,000 and \$345,000 per site. All pools, with the exception of Watchem, need to discharge their backwash water to sewerage which will mean that Council will need to enter into a trade waste agreement with the local water authority as required by the Water Act (1989).

Given there is no sewerage to connect to in Watchem, Council will have no choice but to discharge the water to the environment. To do this within EPA guidelines Council will need to treat the water to ensure that there are no detectable levels of chlorine before discharging the water, and install a

drip irrigation system to ensure a low pressure discharge. The water must be then discharged over a land surface so that some level of filtration by soil particles can occur and the water must be discharged at a rate to prevent 'nuisance conditions' such as odour or mosquito breeding areas⁴.

Water will need to be discharged between each backwash and should be discharged out of pool opening hours. Roejen Services suggested that the water be treated by UV prior to discharge and that the salinity level of the water (total dissolved solids) also needs to be tested and at an acceptable level (less than 1,000) prior to discharge. Rain water can be used to dilute the pool water if the total dissolved solids are higher than 1,000.

The audit also found that current lighting at the outdoor pools was insufficient for safe use after dark. It was recommended that light poles at each pool be removed in the short to medium term due to the risk of internal corrosion causing structural issues and the poles becoming an OH&S risk.

Table 41 provides an overview of the total cost to Council for the seven outdoor pools over the 10 year period as recommended by the Dennis Hunt & Associates report, which is \$2,703,600. This equates to an average annual cost of \$270,360. 67% of this overall cost is required for Wycheproof (28%), Watchem (20%) and Birchip (19%).

Table 40: Total 10 year cost for outdoor pools

Centre	Compliance	Maintenance and capital	Total centre cost
Charlton Outdoor Pool	\$ 56,350	\$ 362,850	\$ 419,200
Wycheproof Outdoor Pool	\$ 10,600	\$ 743,350	\$ 753,950
Berrillock Outdoor Pool	\$ 45,650	\$ 122,750	\$ 168,400
Sea Lake Outdoor Pool	\$ 16,050	\$ 118,950	\$ 135,000
Birchip Outdoor Pool	\$ 52,150	\$ 449,300	\$ 501,450
Watchem Outdoor Pool	\$ 19,700	\$ 509,050	\$ 528,750
Donald Outdoor Pool	\$ 28,850	\$ 168,000	\$ 196,850
TOTAL	\$ 229,350	\$ 2,474,250	\$ 2,703,600

Table 41 on the following page provides an annual breakdown of capital, maintenance and compliance costs as recommended by the Dennis Hunt & Associates report. This table shows that 84% of the total 10 year cost (\$2,227,840) required for the outdoor pools is recommended by Dennis Hunt & Associates in the first three years.

⁴ EPA Victoria

Table 41: Yearly cost for outdoor pools

Year	Capital	10 year maintenance	Cyclical maintenance	Compliance	Total cost per year
Year 1	\$ 762,500	\$ 448,700	\$ 27,380	\$ 229,350	\$ 1,467,930
Year 2	\$ 124,500	\$ 236,100	\$ 40,530		\$ 401,130
Year 3	\$ 309,000	\$ 42,200	\$ 57,580		\$ 408,780
Year 4		\$ -	\$ 71,380		\$ 71,380
Year 5		\$ 400	\$ 34,480		\$ 34,880
Year 6	\$ 12,000	\$ 5,300	\$ 57,630		\$ 74,930
Year 7		\$ -	\$ 35,130		\$ 35,130
Year 8		\$ 43,000	\$ 38,380		\$ 81,380
Year 9		\$ -	\$ 92,630		\$ 92,630
Year 10		\$ -	\$ 35,430		\$ 35,430
TOTAL	\$ 1,208,000	\$ 775,700	\$ 490,550	\$ 229,350	\$ 2,703,600

Council has spent approximately \$3.2 million on the outdoor pools since the 2008 Dennis Hunt & Associates condition assessment. They have spent more than \$1m of their capital budget to match government grant funding to improve these facilities.

Council has a capital allocation of approximately \$85,000 for the 2014/15 financial year. This amount includes \$27,500 for thermal pool blankets that is required to match government funding. This leaves just \$57,500 to spend on all seven pools.

SECTION 7: FUTURE AQUATICS PROVISION

This section of the report looks at future aquatics provision for the municipality that will best meet the needs of all residents and is in line with Council priorities. It provides a facility hierarchy for Council, defines the roles of different outdoor pools and looks at possible future developments for each of the pools.

7.1 Facility hierarchy

The following table provides an overview of the facility hierarchy that has been developed as part of the strategy including existing provision for each category.

Table 42: Facility hierarchy and existing provision

Classification	Description	Provision
Regional/ municipal	Regional/municipal facilities in this context provide indoor aquatic facilities	Buloke Shire does not have any regional/municipal facilities
District	A district facility is one that meets the needs of the town it is located as well as the surrounding catchment. The catchment for each facility will vary depending on the services offered and drive times to the facility	There are a number of district pools that service Buloke residents, these include Donald, Birchip, Sea Lake, Wycheproof and Charlton
Local	A local facility is one that meets the needs of the town it is located in	There are two local pools in Buloke, these are in Berrwilllock and Watchem

7.2 Future provision

The table below outlines the recommended provision for each of the categories as identified in **Table 42**.

Table 43: Facility hierarchy and future provision

Classification	Future provision
Regional/ municipal	Buloke Shire should rely on the provision of regional/municipal facilities in other municipalities
District	Council should look at the provision of existing district facilities and how they can meet the needs of residents within forward capital and maintenance budgets
Local	It is not recommended that Council further develop or spend significant funds on any local facilities

7.3 Role of Council facilities

Council's outdoor pools play an important role in each of the local communities, providing social connection and a community resource for people to cool off, play, learn to swim, participate in programs or attend social events.

7.4 Role of other aquatic facilities

Indoor aquatic facilities in other municipalities play an important role for residents of Buloke Shire with 31% of pool user respondents and 8% of pool non user respondents indicating that they swim at pools outside of Buloke Shire.

These facilities, and working with local health services to provide organised transport and programming at these facilities will continue to be important for residents in Buloke into the future, particularly with an ageing population and no ability for Council to build an indoor facility within the shire.

7.5 Facility and service matrix

A facility and service matrix has been developed for each outdoor pool based on current use and identified future needs of each community.

7.5.1 Charlton Outdoor Pool

A future need for this pool as identified by previous consultation is solar heating. All of the programs and services listed below have been held at the Charlton Outdoor Pool.

Table 44: Charlton Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 34m pool	School lessons	School aged children
	School carnivals	School aged children
	School fun days	School aged children
	Aqua aerobics	Adults
	Mothers groups	Adults
	Lap swimming	12 - 60 years
	Netball club	16 - 45 years
	Swimming lessons	5 - 12 years
	Pool inflatable/fun days	4 - 18 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children

7.5.2 Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Solar heating has also been identified as a need at Wycheproof. The addition of solar at this pool would enable aqua aerobic classes to be held and would make the pool more attractive and accessible for people over the age of 50.

Table 45: Wycheproof Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 33m pool	School lessons	School aged children
	School carnivals	School aged children
	School fun days	School aged children
	Squad	8 - 50 years
	Aqua aerobics	Adults
	Lap swimming	12 - 60 years
	Pool inflatable/fun days	4 - 18 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children

7.5.3 Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

No new program requirements were identified for Berriwillock.

Table 46: Berriwillock Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 20m pool	Aqua aerobics	Adults and older adults
	Swim lessons	5 - 12 years
	Family day	Babies - 80 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children

7.5.4 Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Solar heating has been identified as a need at Sea Lake. The addition of solar at this pool would enable aqua aerobic classes to be held and would make the pool more attractive and accessible for people over the age of 50.

Table 47: Sea Lake Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 34m pool	School lessons	School aged children
	School carnivals	School aged children
	School fun days	School aged children
	Aqua aerobics	Adults
	Lap swimming	12 - 60 years
	Swim lessons	5 - 12 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children

7.5.5 Birchip Outdoor Pool

The Birchip Outdoor Pool already runs a broad range of programs that meet the needs of the community. Early morning swimming was the key future need identified.

Table 48: Birchip Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 25m pool	School lessons	School aged children
	School carnivals	School aged children
	School fun days	School aged children
	Aqua aerobics	Adults and older adults
	Early morning swimming	12 - 60 years
	Swim lessons	5 - 12 years
	Pool inflatable/fun days	4 - 18 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children
Kiosk	General use	Toddlers - 80 years

7.5.6 Watchem Outdoor Pool

No new program requirements were identified for Watchem.

Table 49: Watchem Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 26m pool	Swim lessons	5 - 12 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children
Infants pool	General use	Babies

7.5.7 Donald Outdoor Pool

The Donald Outdoor Pool already runs a broad range of programs that meet the needs of the community. Early morning swimming was the key future need identified.

Table 50: Donald Outdoor Pool facility and service matrix

Component	Service/Program	Target Audience
Outdoor 34m pool	School lessons	School aged children
	School carnivals	School aged children
	School fun days	School aged children
	Aqua aerobics	Adults and older adults
	Lap swimming	12 - 60 years
	Squad training	8 - 80 years
	Swimming competition	8 - 80 years
	Swimming lessons	5 - 12 years
	Pool inflatable/fun days	4 - 18 years
	Recreational use	Babies - 80 years
Toddlers pool	General use	Babies and young children

7.6 Possible future developments

This Section outlines the future needs at each outdoor pool based on research, consultation findings, the Dennis Hunt and Associates report recommendations and the proposed facility hierarchy and future provision as outlines in **Sections 7.1** and **7.2**.

7.6.1 Charlton Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Charlton Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash to sewer
- Accessible ramp entrance to main entry (new building)
- Toddler's pool plant room
- Shade shelter along the south side of the pool to allow future solar installation
- Solar heating

7.6.2 Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Wycheproof Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash to sewer
- New change rooms, plant room and office
- Solar heating
- Toddler's pool plant room

7.6.3 Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Berriwillock Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash to sewer
- Plant room upgrade

7.6.4 Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Sea Lake Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash water to sewer
- Additional shade shelter to allow for solar heating installation
- Solar heating

7.6.5 Birchip Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Birchip Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash to sewer
- Hot water system for change rooms
- Toddler's pool plan room

- Commercial grade vinyl liner
- Plant room upgrade

7.6.6 Watchem Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Watchem Outdoor Pool include:-

- Installation of UV system to treat backwash water
- Plant room upgrade

7.6.7 Donald Outdoor Pool

Identified needs for the Donald Outdoor Pool include:-

- Change backwash water to sewer
- Hot water system for change rooms
- Toddler's pool plant room
- Repairs to concourse

7.7 Development Costs

Development costs have been prepared for each pool based on the development needs identified in **Section 7.6. Tables 51 to 57** on the following pages provide a total cost recommended by the Dennis Hunt and Associates report and a total cost based on the findings from this Aquatic Strategy.

It should be noted that all costs included in this section are indicative and exclude allowances for CPI adjustments, GST, design/documentation, builder's preliminaries, builder's margin and supervision.

7.7.1 Charlton Outdoor Pool

Table 51 on the following page provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Charlton Outdoor Pool.

Table 51: Development costs for the Charlton Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
Accessible ramp entrance to main entry (new building)	\$ 41,000	Not specified	Yes	\$ 50,000
Fencing to the surrounds or between the toddler's and main pool	\$ 4,500	Not specified		
Separate toddler's pool plant	\$ 45,000	1	Yes	\$ 45,000
Install barb wire to fence to improve security	\$ 4,700	1		
Enclosing plant room to minimise vandal access	\$ 12,000	2		
New shade shelter along the south side of the pool that will allow solar installation			Yes (long term)	\$ 50,000
Solar heating	\$ 72,000			\$ 72,000
TOTAL COST	\$ 205,200			\$ 243,000

7.7.2 Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Table 52 provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Wycheproof Outdoor Pool.

Table 52: Development costs for the Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
New change rooms, plant room and kiosk	\$ 470,000	1	Yes	\$ 470,000
Hot water unit for new building	\$ 7,000	1		
Solar heating	\$ 72,000	1	Yes	\$ 72,000
Separate toddler's pool plant	\$ 45,000	1	Yes	\$ 45,000
TOTAL COST	\$ 620,000			\$ 613,000

7.7.3 Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Table 53 on the following page provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Berriwillock Outdoor Pool.

Table 53: Development costs for the Berriwillock Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
Unisex accessible toilet and shower added to existing toilet block	\$ 30,000	Not specified		
Hot water system for change rooms	\$ 6,500	1		
Build supervisors office	\$ 25,000	3		
Upgrade plant room	\$ 18,000	3	Yes	\$ 18,000
TOTAL COST	\$ 105,500			\$ 44,000

7.7.4 Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Table 54 provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Sea Lake Outdoor Pool.

Table 54: Development costs for the Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
Hot water system for office	\$ 1,800	1		
Upgrade flooring in office	\$ 2,500	2		
Install benches and cupboards in office	\$ 2,000	2		
Additional shade shelter to allow for solar heating installation			Yes	\$ 50,000
Solar heating			Yes	\$ 72,000
TOTAL COST	\$ 32,300			\$ 148,000

7.7.5 Birchip Outdoor Pool

Table 55 provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Birchip Outdoor Pool.

Table 55: Development costs for the Birchip Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
Replace benches and cupboards in kiosk	\$ 12,000	1		
Hot water system for change rooms	\$ 6,500	1	Yes	\$ 6,500
Replace external walls of plant room with larger steel building	\$ 18,000	1	Yes	\$ 18,000
Separate toddler's plant room	\$ 45,000	2	Yes	\$ 45,000
Commercial grade vinyl liner	\$ 180,000	2	Yes	\$ 180,000
Unisex accessible toilet and shower added to existing toilet block	\$ 30,000	Not specified		
TOTAL COST	\$ 317,500			\$ 275,500

7.7.6 Watchem Outdoor Pool

Table 56 provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Watchem Outdoor Pool.

Table 56: Development costs for the Watchem Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Toddlers pool plant room (install as separate plant)	\$ 45,000	1		
Remove small old shade structures to the north and south of the pool	\$ 500	1		
Plant room upgrade	\$ 18,000	2	Yes	\$ 18,000
Concourse repair to paving to the SW of the toddler's pool	\$ 13,000	2		
New change rooms and office building (including unisex accessible toilet and shower and baby change facilities)	\$ 260,000	3	Recommend obtaining a structural integrity test	
Solar electric hot water with new building	\$ 6,000	3		
Replace pump room	\$ 12,000	6		
Provision of fencing to the surrounds or between the toddler and main pools	\$ 3,500	Not specified		
Installation of UV system to treat backwash water			Yes	\$ 12,000
TOTAL COST	\$ 358,000			\$ 30,000

7.7.7 Donald Outdoor Pool

Table 57 provides a breakdown of probable development costs for the Donald Outdoor Pool.

Table 57: Development costs for the Donald Outdoor Pool

Component	Dennis Hunt report		Aquatic Strategy	
	Cost	Year	Included	Cost
Change backwash to sewer	\$ 26,000	1	Yes	\$ 26,000
Remove stair to east embankment external to the entrance. Install fence above stair to channel entry to the north and south footpaths	\$ 3,000	1		
Hot water system for change rooms	\$ 600	1	Yes	\$ 600
Repairs to concourse	\$ 2,800	1	Yes	\$ 2,800
Separate toddler's pool plant	\$ 45,000	2	Yes	\$ 45,000
Provision of fencing to the surrounds or between the toddler and main pools	\$ 9,500	Not specified		
TOTAL COST	\$ 86,900			\$ 74,400

7.7.8 Total Development Costs

Table 58 provides an overview of the total proposed development costs for the outdoor pools. It should be noted that this is based on capital projects and this amount excludes maintenance and OH&S issues identified in the Dennis Hunt & Associates report.

Table 58: Total proposed development costs for all outdoor pools

Total proposed development costs	Cost
Dennis Hunt & Associates	\$ 1,725,400
Aquatic Strategy	\$ 1,427,900

Table 58 shows that the Aquatic Strategy recommendations are \$297,500 less than those in the Dennis Hunt & Associates report. The possible development recommendations in this section have been made in line with facility hierarchy and future provision recommendations in Section 7.1 and 7.2 and take into account Council's financial restraints. These development scenarios include solar heating at two of the pools that were not included in the Dennis Hunt & Associates recommendations.

7.7.9 Development Cost Assumptions

These costs were derived using:-

- Advice from industry specialists
- Costs included in the Dennis Hunt and Associates report (where relevant)
- Similar studies and development works

7.8 Management considerations

7.8.1 Low patronage pools

Council's outdoor pools are currently run as low patronage facilities, with the exception of hot days at Donald and Charlton. By definition a low patronage pool is one that consistently has fewer than 25 patrons in the water at any one time and only one lifeguard rostered on. Under Lifesaving Victoria guidelines for low patronage pools if there is an increase in consistent patronage above 25 persons a second lifeguard must be rostered on.

Many rural Council's operate their outdoor pools under the low patronage model to reduce staff costs but this model does place significant responsibility on the lifeguard, and also on Council to ensure that there are processes in place so that patrons are removed from the pool if the lifeguard has to leave pool deck for any reason. Another important element of low patronage pools is to ensure that an emergency support system is in place in case of an incident, this may include a direct telephone link to emergency services or a siren that can be used to call local qualified community members.

Under the current management model, Council is responsible for all risks associated with running swimming pools. Some other Council's have looked to minimise their risk exposure, by outsourcing

the lifeguard and management component of the pools to contractors such as YMCA or Belgravia Leisure.

7.8.2 Comparison of various management models

A number of different management models were identified in Section 4.2.4. Each of these models has associated risks/considerations and benefits, refer to **Table 59** on the following page for an overview.

Table 59: Comparison of management models

Management model	Risks/considerations	Benefits
In-house	Onus on Council to ensure processes are in place for safe management	Ability to make changes as necessary without considering contract/agreement
	High wage rates means a high overall operational cost	More favourable employment conditions for staff
	Ability to source adequate staff	
	May have limited industry networks	
Outsourced (contractor)	Council still needs checks in place to ensure that the pools are being managed within industry guidelines	Less resources required at a Council level
	May seek variations for any changes to the contract	Contractors will have organisational processes in place
	Ability to source adequate staff	Possible access to other staff through the organisation
	Will charge a management fee	Lower wage rates
		Industry experience and networks
Outsourced (Committee of Management)	Council still needs checks in place to ensure that the pools are being managed within industry guidelines	Less resources required at a Council level
	Finding and keeping active committee members	May be more cost effective than Council or contractor management due to volunteer support
	Ability to source adequate staff	Greater community engagement
	Less likely to have industry knowledge and expertise	Community capacity building
	Dependant on volunteers and their skills/experience	May be more proactive with fundraising and events
	Potential to become a political lobby group	May be able to provide more flexible opening hours
Voluntary committee	Council still needs checks in place to ensure that the pools are being managed within industry guidelines	Most cost effective model
	Not a legal entity so would report to Council	Greater community engagement
	Council would still assume responsibility for OH&S and risk management	Community capacity building
	Could require significant Council resources to manage (dependant on volunteers on committee)	May be more proactive with fundraising and events but not a legal entity so cannot apply directly for grants
	Ability to source adequate staff	
	Less likely to have industry knowledge and expertise	
	Dependant on volunteers and their skills/experience	

7.9 Transport

Although transport did not come up as a significant barrier to accessing aquatic facilities as part of the consultation process, the ageing population and distance for residents to access indoor aquatic facilities is likely to mean that more organised bus services may be required going forward.

The need to improve public and community transport was also identified in the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan. This plan said that *'opportunities exists to develop public or community transport services that allow older people (and others without access to cars) to travel to larger centres to access services that are not available in their local community'*.

SECTION 8: FUNDING SOURCES

Council has been extremely successful in obtaining grant funding for the pools previously, having attracted more than \$2.1 million over the past five years for a range of different projects including change room upgrades, pool liner installation, pipe work and concourse upgrade, shade structure and solar heating.

Council will have a continued need to apply for external funding for future development at the pools with one of the challenges being the amount required by Council to match government funding.

Below are the two current key sources of funding that are available to Council for future pool projects.

8.1 Seasonal Pool Renewal Program

The Seasonal Pool Renewal program is an annual Sport and Recreation Victoria program through their Community Facilities Funding Program. Under the program criteria maximum grants of up to \$200,000 will be provided with a funding ratio for Buloke of \$2 from SRV to every \$1 of local funding.

The objectives of the Seasonal Pool Renewal program are:-

- To encourage local government's ability to renew and modernise small aquatic and leisure centre's in small rural and regional Victorian towns and in the interface municipalities where access to indoor aquatic centre's is significantly limited
- To encourage a greater range of aquatic recreational opportunities accessible to all

Proposals that focus on increasing participation and access to aquatic activities will be highly regarded under this category, for example:-

- Increasing the amount of leisure water and aquatic play facilities at a venue
- Water and energy conservation infrastructure initiatives
- Raising water temperature levels
- Improving amenity of facilities through better change areas and shelter or shade
- Improving accessibility to swimming pools and change facilities

8.2 Local Government Infrastructure Program

The Local Government Infrastructure Program (LGIP) component of the Regional Growth Fund aims to provide regional and rural councils with certainty to plan for and build new infrastructure or renew assets.

The LGIP has the flexibility to support a range of local Council initiatives including roads, bridges, new community assets such as halls and theatres, sporting grounds, grandstands, pools, libraries, and upgrading existing facilities. In order to ensure the maximum degree of certainty, each Council will be allocated a notional four-year total for projects nominated from its forward Capital Works Plan.

Through a straightforward allocation of funds direct to all regional Councils, greater certainty will be provided to plan and deliver key infrastructure projects already scheduled as part of existing Local Government Forward Capital Works Plans.

Council may choose to allocate funds from their LGIP allocation in 2014/15 to the outdoor pools.

SECTION 9: AQUATIC STRATEGY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report provides an overview of key findings and recommendations in relation to future aquatics provision within the shire.

9.1 Overall findings

Consultation clearly showed that the outdoor pools are valued community assets to each town, as are the lakes within the shire.

While Council has spent considerable funds maintaining and upgrading their outdoor pools over the past five years (more than \$3 million), they are ageing facilities that require significant funds for Council to continue operating them. Council has been successful over this period of time in obtaining government grants to upgrade the facilities and will have a continued need to apply for external funding for future development at the pools. One of their biggest challenges will be finding the amount required by Council to match government funding.

The Dennis Hunt & Associates report identified \$2.7 million of maintenance, capital and compliance costs over the next 10 years at the seven pools. This cost does not include upgrades such as solar heating at the larger pools that will help to meet community needs.

The shire had a higher than average median age in 2011 and is projecting an ageing population with 52% expected to be over the age of 50 by 2036. While there are older adults accessing the pools at Donald, Birchip and Charlton, the other pools current do not meet the needs for this age group with cooler water temperatures. Solar heating at Wycheproof and Sea Lake has been identified as a need as this is the only way that Council's outdoor pools can begin to meet the needs of the ageing population. The need for organised transport to indoor aquatic facilities is also expected to increase with the population change.

Council's Draft Council Plan (2013-2017) mentions challenges that Council faces in '*balancing the demand for maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure with long term financial capacity*', and '*financial security and the need to manage the shire's finances carefully with consideration to current community needs and long-term asset management responsibilities*'.

The plan acknowledges that affordability of rates is a significant consideration with a declining population and rate base.

9.2 Operational recommendations

9.2.1 Operational cost savings

In addition to the cost of maintaining and upgrading facilities, the operating cost of these facilities has increased significantly and will continue to do so under the existing management model.

There are a number of things that Council could consider to reduce the operational cost of the outdoor pools, these include:-

Change of management model

Council could consider a change of management model to reduce the cost of operating the pools. The model that would provide the greatest operational cost savings each year would be a voluntary community committee model similar to Yarriambiack. This management model could provide Council with significant operational cost savings each year, and would also enable communities to tailor the hours of operation to community needs, in line with what is realistic to staff.

There are several considerations for Council if looking to adopt this model, one of which is the ability to secure and retain the right volunteers in each community to oversee the operation of the outdoor pools. Given that it would be a voluntary committee, Council would retain responsibility for the operation of the pools and also for the volunteers. This means that Council would also assume any risk if the pools were not operated within industry guidelines and would still retain responsibility for OHS and risk management.

If Council were to consider this model it would be imperative that volunteers were given sufficient training, that correct processes are in place at each pool, and that Council has measures in place to assess and audit each facility both prior to and during the pool season to mitigate any risks.

It should be noted that changing to this management model will only provide operational savings to Council, the maintenance and capital costs identified in this report would remain with Council.

Changes to opening times and conditions

If Council did not wish to change the management model, they could look at:-

- Increasing the cold weather policy from 22 to 24 degrees. Based on the 2012/13 season Buloke had 6 days of more than 22 degrees and less than 24 degrees. The cost to operate all pools is approximately \$1,000 per hour so based on an average of a four hour day for 6 days per season, Council could achieve cost savings of approximately \$24,000
- Reducing the operating hours at Berriwillock and Watchem to two hours per day on weekdays and four hours per day on school holidays and weekends. This has the potential to save Council 238 hours at the two pools over a pool season which is a cost saving of approximately \$32,700
- Reducing the season length at the unheated pools so that they open on the first weekend in December. The cost savings for this would vary each season depending on opening dates, and would change if pool's were to install solar heating, but could provide Council with approximately \$24,000 of cost savings (based on existing hours)

9.2.2 Operating hours

One of the key consultation themes was the desire for pools to open for longer or at different hours (either in the morning or later on hot days). Both of these present staffing challenges under the current management model and would increase the cost to Council to operate the pools. There are two possible options that Council could consider to meet this need without increasing operational costs, they are:-

- Pool committees could introduce a voluntary lifeguard system (similar to the one Donald has in place) and could organise morning and 'hot night' swimming through this system with a formal pool hire agreement in place. This would be the preferred model as it puts the

onus back on the community and does not create any additional responsibility for Council staff

- Council could look at introducing a system similar to the system that Loddon is trialling this season where hours not used due to cold weather can be banked and used for extended hours on hot days. This system would obviously reduce cost savings that could be achieved by increasing the cold weather policy to 24 and may also create challenges for Council around staffing

9.2.3 Operational triggers

Due to the age and increasing cost of operating the outdoor pools it is recommended that Council consider implementing triggers that will enable Council to review the future operation of any outdoor pool if any of the following occur:-

- Council is not able to achieve compliance with public safety, water quality, OH&S or EPA requirements within the proposed maintenance and capital works budget
- Breakdown of pool filtration, pool shell or critical infrastructure
- Legislative changes that require additional investment beyond current projections

It is recommended that once one of these triggers occurs, Council undertake a detailed review of the facility, and make a recommendation to Councillors regarding the future viability of the pool. This may include closure of a pool. This review should include OH&S, EPA, maintenance and legislative requirements, cost, attendances and other services available to the community.

9.2.4 Pool lighting and safe supervision

Current lighting at all outdoor pools was found to be insufficient for safe use after dark. These lights should not be used and the lighting poles should be removed in the short to medium term due to the risk of internal corrosion which may cause structural issues. Unenclosed lamps on pool lights should be removed in the short term to rectify OH&S risks.

Donald currently runs early morning swimming sessions from 5.30am to 7.30am. This falls outside of civil twilight, which is defined as when the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon. In the morning this is known as dawn, in the evening it is called dusk. This is the limit at which twilight illumination is sufficient, under good weather conditions, for terrestrial objects to be clearly distinguished; at the beginning of morning civil twilight, or end of evening civil twilight, the horizon is clearly defined and the brightest stars are visible under good atmospheric conditions in the absence of moonlight or other illumination. In the morning before the beginning of civil twilight and in the evening after the end of civil twilight, artificial illumination is normally required to carry on ordinary outdoor activities⁵.

In line with civic twilight times for December, January and February⁶, early morning swimming times at Donald could continue to begin at 5.30am during December but should be moved to a

⁵ <http://www.sunrisesunset.com/definitions.html>

⁶ <http://museumvictoria.com.au/planetarium/discoverycentre/rise-and-set-times/?StartDate=29-Dec-2013>

6am start in January, 6.30am start in February (until 23rd) and 7am start from February 23rd until the season finishes on March 11th.

Any other pools that look to introduce early morning swimming should also adhere to these times.

If communities are looking at increasing hours on hot days civic twilight hours mean that they should not stay open past 8.45pm from 24th November to 4th December, 9pm from December 5th until January 31st, 8.30pm during February and 8.15pm in March (until 11th March).

9.2.5 Pool committees role

The increased costs for Council to operate and maintain the outdoor pools will create a challenge for them to find sufficient funds to operate all pools within industry and legislative guidelines. For smaller improvements at the pools that may not be a priority for Council, with their limited funds, the pool committees should take on the responsibility for fundraising, as Birchip have done in the past with solar heating, watering system and more recently a shade structure. All fundraising by pool committees should be done in consultation with Council's planning priorities for that pool.

The pool committee should also play a key role in programming and community events for their pool.

9.2.6 Programming and events

Programming and community events at the pools provide important opportunities to maximise the use of these facilities and provide different opportunities for the community to participate. At the moment programming at each pool differs, depending on both the needs of the community and the support from the pool committee and other organisations within the town.

Birchip and Donald have an excellent model in place where they have programs supported by external agencies such as the Business and Learning Centre in Birchip and East Wimmera Health Services.

It is recommended that pool committees in each town explore opportunities to work with external agencies to organise and promote programs and events at their pool.

9.2.7 Fee free swimming

Consultation findings suggest that reintroducing fees would be likely to have an impact on attendances at the pools and would inhibit some people from being able to use the pool.

Attendances at the outdoor pools have already reduced over a number of years and are projected to further reduce in line with population projections. Given the significant cost of operating the pools and the limited other recreation facilities available in some communities, it is recommended that Council retain fee free swimming to maximise the use of these facilities by the community. This also allows the lifeguards to give their full focus to supervising the pool.

9.2.8 Safe pool supervision

If Council is to continue running these pools as low patronage, they should ensure that there is an emergency support system in place as well as a process in place to ensure that patrons are out of the pool if the lifeguard has to leave deck for any reason. Staff training and patron awareness of the new processes should be an important part of the implementation.

9.2.9 Facility audits

It is recommended that Council introduce an annual audit at each facility to assess the operational safety of the facility. If Council retains management of the pools it is recommended that an annual audit is developed internally that is based on the LSV audit. Swan Hill Rural City Council undertakes an internal audit process for their pools and has indicated a willingness to share their audit with Buloke.

9.3 Facility recommendations

9.3.1 Charlton Outdoor Pool

While Council has upgraded change facilities at Charlton there is still a need for significant work with a commercial grade pool liner, accessible entry to the new buildings and a separate toddler's pool plant room.

The pool committee would like to see some improvements to this facility in line with the landscape master plan that was completed in 2010. These changes are not part of the development priorities outlined in this report and it is suggested that the pool committee begin fundraising in line with Council priorities for this master plan.

Solar heating has also been identified as a priority but given that the average temperature is warmer at this pool than Wycheproof and Sea Lake, and there are already a number of people over the age of 50 that use this pool, it is recommended that solar heating for the cooler pools be undertaken first.

9.3.2 Wycheproof Outdoor Pool

Wycheproof is one of Council's older facilities and findings of the Dennis Hunt & Associates report were that it requires \$753,950 over the next 10 years, including solar heating, which would increase the opportunities to program this pool and help to cater for the increasing number of people over the age of 50.

Wycheproof is one of only two Council pools that does not have a pool committee, this could account for the limited programs at the facility and lack of community fundraising. It is recommended that Council explore whether there is interest for a pool committee going forward.

9.3.3 Berrivillock Outdoor Pool

Berrivillock is Council's smallest swimming pool. Identified in the facility hierarchy and future provision as one of only two local facilities in the shire, it is not recommended that significant funds be spent on this facility.

9.3.4 Sea Lake Outdoor Pool

Council has spent significant funds on upgrading this facility which is reflected in the findings of the Dennis Hunt & Associates report, as this pool has the lowest maintenance and capital requirements of any pool.

This pool is a cooler temperature than some of the pools with an average temperature of 22 degrees. The key need for this facility going forward will be a need for solar heating to cater for the increasing number of people over the age of 50.

9.3.5 Birchip Outdoor Pool

As one of only two solar heated pools in the shire, consultation results showed that this pool had significant use from people over the age of 50.

This pool is supported by the Business and Learning Centre who organises a range of programs to meet the needs of the community, and the pool committee is very active organising community events and operating a kiosk that is based on an honour system.

This pool requires a commercial grade vinyl liner and upgrades to the plant room.

9.3.6 Watchem Outdoor Pool

Watchem outdoor pool is the lowest patronage pool in the shire with the highest subsidy per visit required. The pool is highly valued by the Watchem community, as is the Watchem Lake with 100% of user respondents in the survey going to the lake as well as the pool.

A significant amount of maintenance and capital is required to ensure the ongoing safe operation of this pool, with 20% of overall maintenance and capital costs being attributed to this facility in the Dennis Hunt & Associates report.

A structural assessment of the change rooms at this facility is recommended to assess the ongoing safety of this building.

As one of the shire's two local facilities, this report does not recommend that Council spend significant funds on the facility (refer to **Section 8.7.6** and **8.8.6** for proposed development at this site) and the outcome of the structural assessment may see Council need to review this facility under the operational triggers outlined in **Section 9.2.3**.

9.3.7 Donald Outdoor Pool

The Donald outdoor pool is Council's other solar heated facility and runs a wide range of programs for the community which are supported through the pool committee, the swimming club and East Wimmera Health Services. They are the only pool to currently operate a volunteer lifeguard system and this gives them flexibility to offer increased usage of the pool to the community.

The swim club would like to access to the pool in October for training as they feel that their members are disadvantaged in the competitions due to their limited season. Council should only consider this request if the club are able to pay the additional cost of operating the pool during this time, either via increased swim club membership or the swim club charging an entry fee for their local competition.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of stakeholders consulted

Community

- Pool users
- Council staff and councillors
- General public
- Youth

Schools

- Charlton P-12
- Donald High School
- Donald Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School (Donald)
- Nullawil Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School (Sea Lake)
- Wycheproof College
- Birchip P-12
- Tyrell P-12

Government Agencies

- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Department of Human Services

Community Groups and Organisations

- Donald Dolphins
- Donald 2000
- Birchip Forum
- Charlton Forum
- Watchem Progress Association
- Advance Sea Lake

- Wycheproof Vision
- Donald Pool Committee
- Birchip Pool Committee
- Berriwillock Pool Committee
- Watchem Pool Committee
- Watchem Lake Committee
- Charlton Pool Committee
- Mallee Sports Assembly
- Senior Citizens Clubs

Neighbouring Councils

- Mildura Rural City Council
- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Loddon Shire Council
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Yarriambiack Shire Council

Appendix 2: List of documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed as part of this study:-

- Buloke Shire Council – Draft Council Plan 2013 – 2017
- Buloke Shire Council – Draft Council Plan 2013 – 2013 discussion paper – what savings can Council make to reduce rates?
- Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan - Northern Region
- Buloke Shire Council Recreation Plan – final report June 2005
- Buloke Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 - 2017
- Buloke Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy 2013 – 2019
- Charlton Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010
- Donald Swimming Pool Landscape Master Plan 2010