



Proposal to repurpose Tuncurry Pool

Engagement Outcomes Report



Introduction

This report provides a summary of community and stakeholder consultation that was undertaken between 9 July and 20 August 2017 to gain community feedback on the repurposing of the Tuncurry Pool.

This report is presented in six sections:

1. Introduction and background
2. What were people engaged on? Including the objectives of engagement and opportunities
3. Who did we engage with? Including key stakeholders and participants
4. How did people have their say? Including a summary of engagement activities, communication and advertising, level of engagement and level of influence
5. What people said? Summary of key themes and statistics on the outcomes of the engagement
6. Next steps? Outline of how this information will be used to influence the decision

Project background

The Tuncurry pool is located on Point Road, Tuncurry. It is a 17-metre pool built as a result of community fundraising in 1971/72.

It neighbours the Tuncurry Memorial Hall and skate park and sits centrally within the Tuncurry Recreation precinct. Other facilities in this area include the Wallis Lake foreshore, local businesses, Lone Pine Memorial and Children's playgrounds.

On 28 June 2017 Council agreed to undertake community engagement regarding the future use of the Tuncurry Pool and canvas alternate options for use such as a water based play facility.



Figure 1: Aerial image of Tuncurry Recreation Precinct

What were people engaged on?

Engagement objectives

The objectives of the engagement with the community on the repurposing of the Tuncurry Pool were to:

- Gain community input that will assist in creating an interactive, water play space for families with small children
- Ensure the active play precinct meets the needs of all ages
- Build a connection between existing and new facilities
- Ensure that the completed facility meets the needs and desires of users
- Understand the existing uses of the pool and the impact of its removal
- Address or provide alternatives where possible

Repurposing opportunities

There were a number of opportunities identified during the project development that were explored as a part of the engagement project. These included:

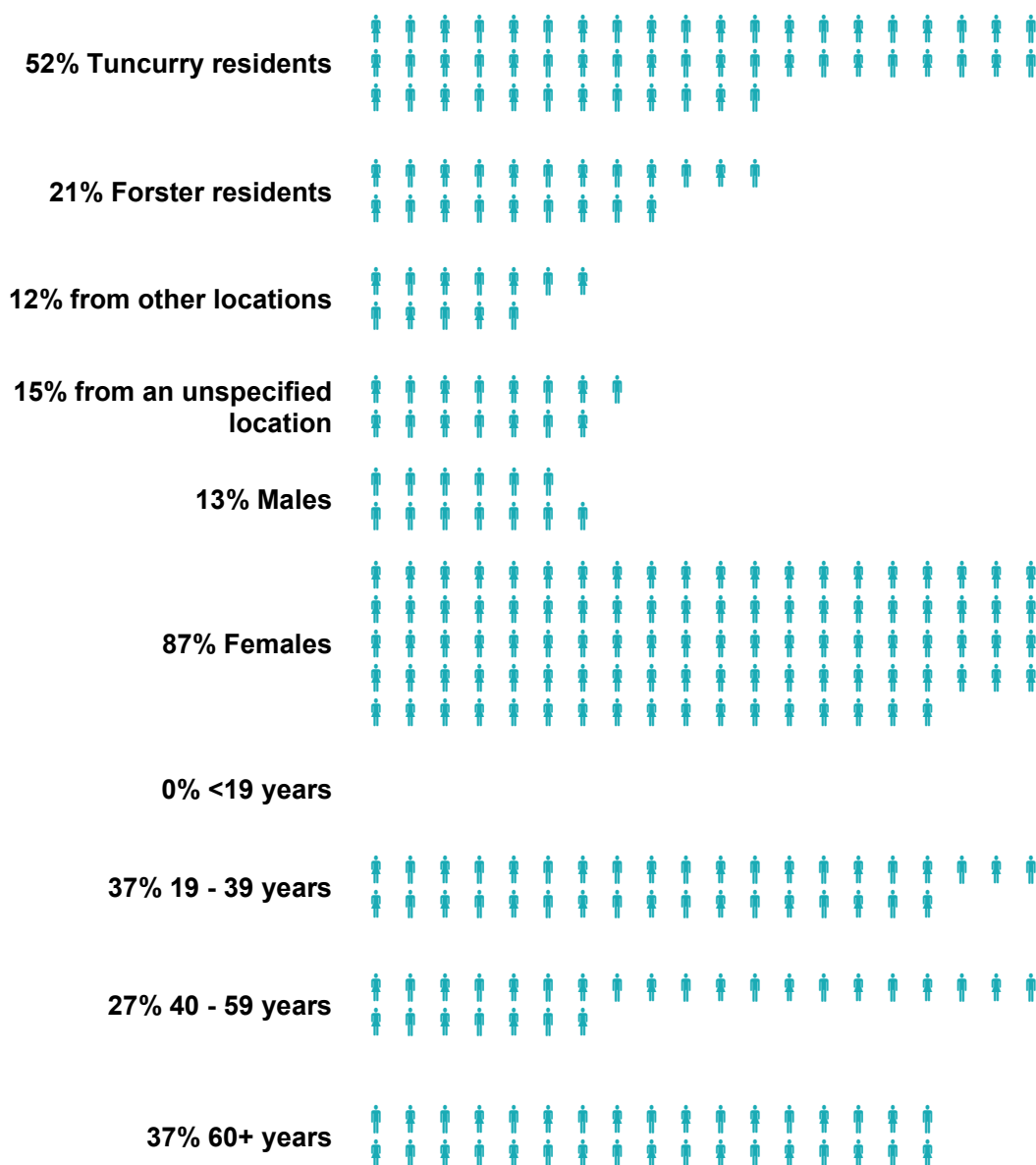
- Utilisation of existing pool infrastructure that is still in good working order and meets safety and operation standards
- Current expenditure and value for money of the existing facility
- Community connection to the current facility
- Provision of a community facility that isn't already available
- Complimenting and building upon existing usage of the precinct
- Improving the inclusiveness of the area, so it is accessible to people with a disability or limited mobility
- Repurposing to allow use all year round



Figure 2: Ideas from local school children

Who did we engage with?

As a part of the consultation, we utilised an online engagement hub where participants registered to be notified on outcomes of the engagement. This enabled us to collect some basic demographic information, and build a profile of participants. Of the 261 participants who engaged on the site, 14.2% registered. This, combined with hard copy surveys, and some of the focus group participants provided the following profile.



Key stakeholders

We contacted key stakeholders directly to ensure they were aware of the engagement, seek initial feedback and link in with opportunities to discuss the project and concepts further.

We also had a number of one-on-one conversations with key stakeholders to discuss in detail the implications and opportunities for their facility, organisation or business.

Key stakeholders involved included:

- Existing pool users
- Families
- Older people
- Tourists/visitors and tourism operators
- Tuncurry Memorial Hall
- Forster Neighbourhood Centre
- Skate park users
- Community leaders
- Local businesses, including those in close proximity and Tuncurry Main Street businesses.
- Local residents
- Users of local parks and reserves



Figure 3: Ideas from local school children

How did people have their say?

The range of engagement activities undertaken provided a variety of ways for the community to share their opinion and ideas, and generate community conversations. By providing a range of face-to-face and online engagement opportunities we were able to get input from a broad cross section of the community, including key interest groups, stakeholders and hard to reach groups. Targeted activities enabled us to get input from those who would not normally get involved, which included people with disabilities, low income families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and young people.

Face-to-face engagement	Online and electronic engagement	Communications
3 pop-up engagements held at community events and parks	238 participated in online survey	1000+ flyers distributed
2 focus groups with hard to reach populations	934 visits to project page on Council's website	Print, radio and TV coverage
12 responses to hard copy survey	516 visits to online engagement hub	Promotion in school newsletters
3 presentations to key stakeholder groups	468 views of online video	
60+ children participated in school workshop	105 likes, shares or comments on MidCoast Council's Facebook	
8 people with disabilities participated in design workshop	28 Email correspondence with key stakeholders	
	88 downloads of Frequently Asked Questions	
	7 ideas contributed to the online brainstormer	
	69 participated in online quick poll	
	5 participants asked a question online	
		Submissions
		4 submissions received

Engagement activities

The following activities were used to seek input and build awareness of the community consultation on the repurposing of Tuncurry Pool between 9 July and 20 August 2017.

Online engagement hub

For the purpose of the Tuncurry Pool engagement we utilised an online engagement platform - Engagement HQ. This provided us with the opportunity to create an online engagement hub that provided a number of ways for people to provide feedback on the proposal.

The online hub provided a central place for information on the project, including key documents, key dates, photos of similar water play spaces in other locations and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).

Additional to this the online hub provided a number of tools for participants to engage with, depending on the level of feedback they wanted to provide. The online survey was the primary means for people to provide feedback on the repurposing of the pool; however other tools were utilised to gain feedback, which included two quick polls, brainstorming and Question and Answer (Q and A).

The Engagement HQ platform provides analytics of on the usage of the site, offering greater insight into the level the engagement from each participant. The portal showed:

Engaged	Informed	Aware
261 participated in survey, quick poll, brainstormer or asked a question	371 read FAQ's, viewed images, viewed key dates, visited multiple pages and participated in an online engagement tool.	516 visited at least one page

As shown above, almost half of the participants who visited the page did not leave a comment. This may indicate that these participants are generally satisfied with the proposal.

Survey

A survey was available on the online engagement hub, as well as in hard copy. The purpose of the survey was to build an understanding of the current usage of the pool, support for the opportunity to repurpose into a water play space and seek ideas for other improvements to the surrounding space around the existing pool.

Appendix 2 provides a copy of survey data.

Quick poll

Two questions were provided in the quick poll tool on the online engagement hub. These provided a quick and easy way of participants to provide their opinion on the repurposing of the Tuncurry Pool.

The questions posed in the two quick polls included:

- Do you like the idea of repurposing the Tuncurry Pool into a water play area?
- Does Forster Tuncurry have enough facilities for children and families?

Brainstorming tool

The brainstorming tool was a part of the online engagement hub and asked people for ideas for both the water play area and the recreation precinct as a whole.

We posted two topics within the brainstormer tool, including:

- What would you like to see in a water play area? Tell us your idea how we can make the space fantastic?
- Tell us your big ideas to make Tuncurry Recreation Precinct a place you would like to go.

Q and A

The Q and A tool enabled people to ask questions related to the repurposing of the pool. As well as providing a response to the question, we published this on the online engagement hub for others to see.

Community pop ups

As a part of our face to face engagement we hosted three community pop ups, including a stall at the Forster Town Market on 9 July, and Tuncurry Market on 22 July, and a standalone pop up in Lone Pine Park on 15 July.

These pop ups involved a display showing a map of the area, photos of similar facilities in other areas and details on how to have a say. Flyers were also distributed at the stalls, which encouraged people to go online to have a say.

Focus groups and presentations

We hosted a number of small group focus groups or presentations with key stakeholder groups. This was an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the issues and needs and desires of community members. Groups participating in a facilitated session included:

- Tuncurry Memorial Hall
- Active seniors groups
- Disability Groups
- Homebase Youth Service
- Supported playgroups

Engagement with hard to reach groups

To ensure we received feedback from community members who might have limitations in participating in the engagement, we undertook specific activities to ensure these groups views were captured. These included:

- Distribution of flyers and email invitations to local preschools to participate
- Distribution of a short blurb to the local primary schools to be included in their school newsletter
- Water play space design workshops with people with disabilities and children
- Meeting with Homebase Youth Service and distribution of flyer and surveys
- Discussion group at supported playgroups targeting low income families

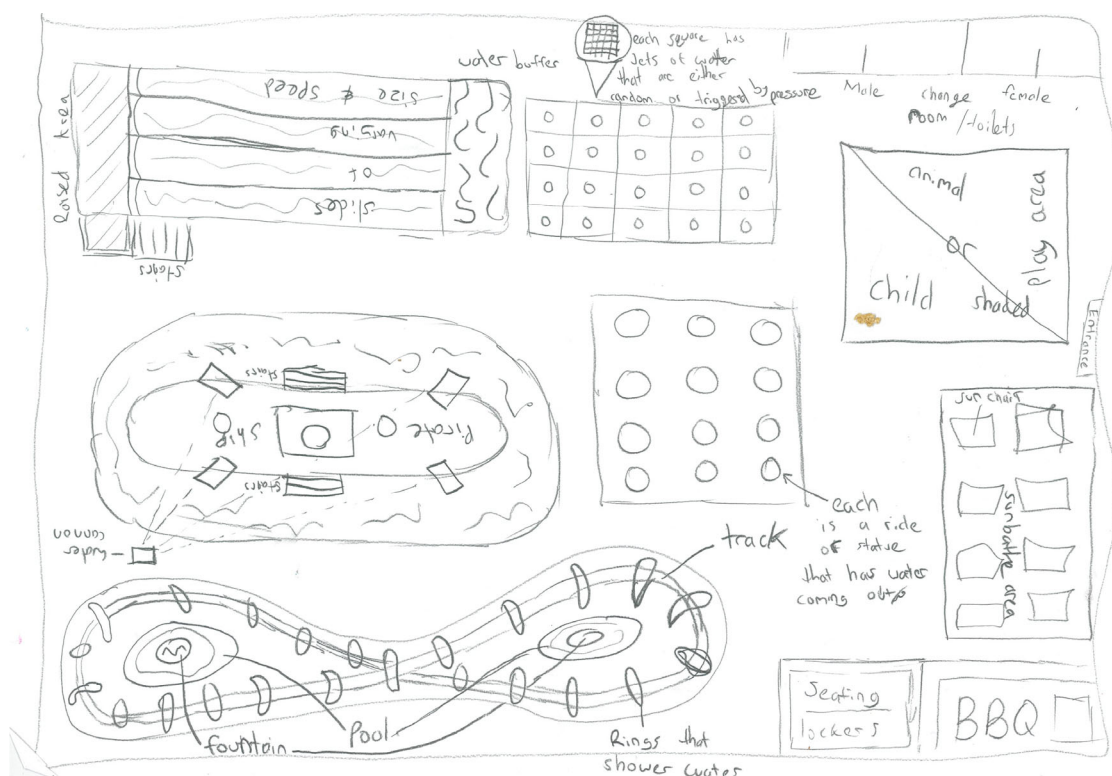


Figure 4: Design submitted from disability workshops

Communication and advertising

We utilised a number of communication channels to get the word out to the community. These included:

- Have your say page on Council website
- Media, radio and TV coverage
- Static displays
- Flyers and posters

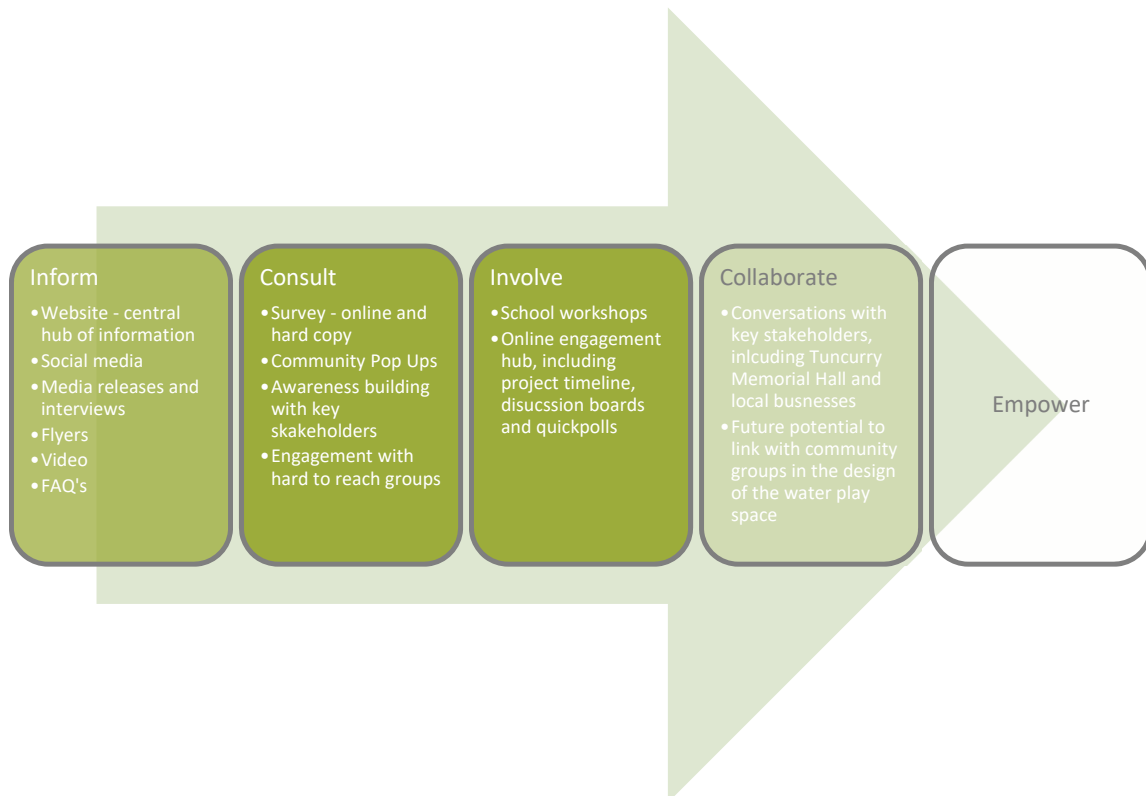
- Social media
- Advertising in local print media
- Online video
- Promotion in local school and preschool newsletters
- Email and phone correspondence

Level of Engagement

As outlined in MidCoast Council's Community Engagement Policy we utilise the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) five-point framework for measuring the level of community engagement for each project.

Within this scale, this project achieved a Consult /Involve level of engagement. At this level our commitment to the community was to listen to and acknowledge the communities concerns regarding the removal of the pool and then seek ideas in the design of the new facility.

This report outlines how the community's input influenced the outcome and where we were not able to address issues raised, it outlines why this is the case. The diagram below shows the levels of engagement and the activities undertaken within each level.



Level of influence

As the current pool facility is not sustainable and does not meet current safety and operational requirements, the decision to keep the existing facility was not open for consultation. Therefore the consultation focused on understanding the impact of the change of use from a pool to water play area or similar.

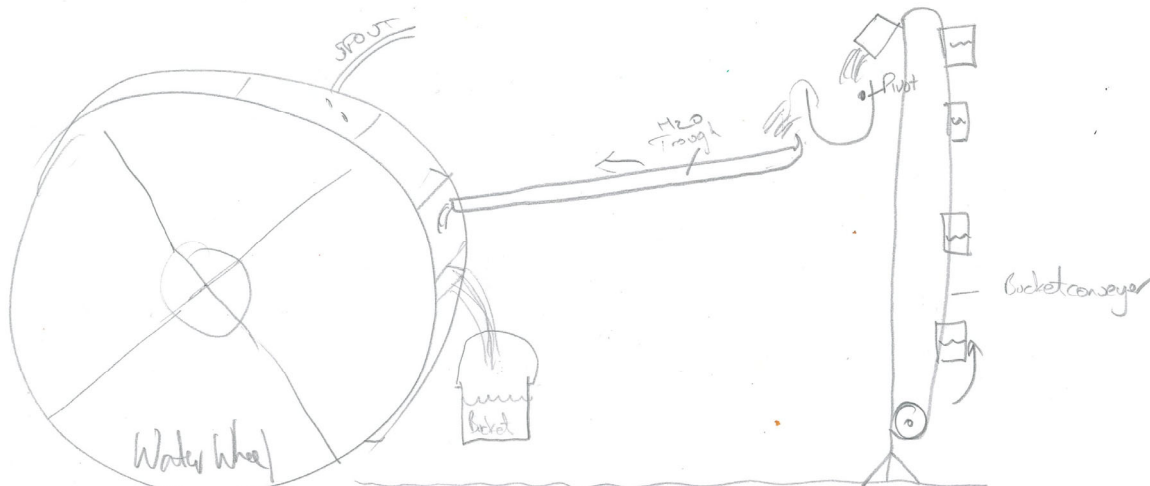
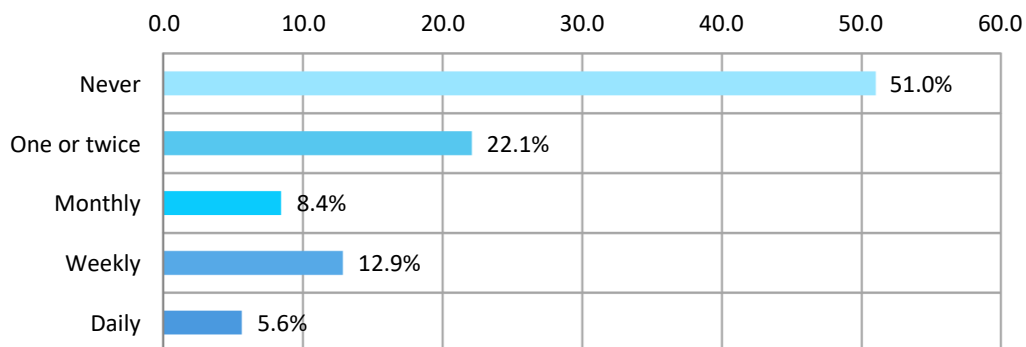


Figure 5: Design submitted from disability workshops

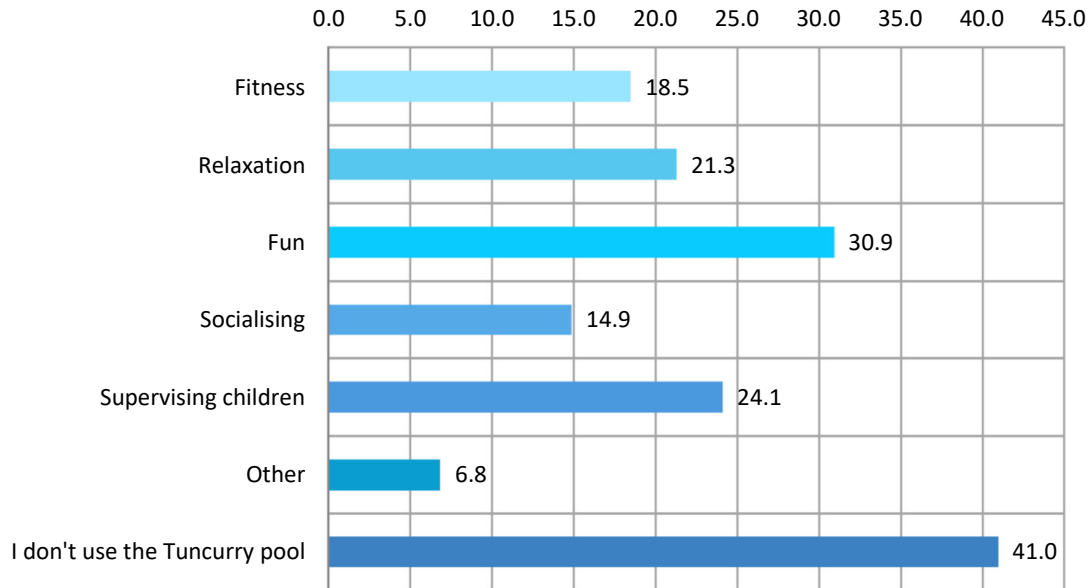
What people said...

How people currently use the space

In all of our conversations with the community throughout the engagement process, it was evident that usage of the Tuncurry Pool facility is low. This is demonstrated in the response to the survey question 1 - How often have you used the Tuncurry pool in the last season?



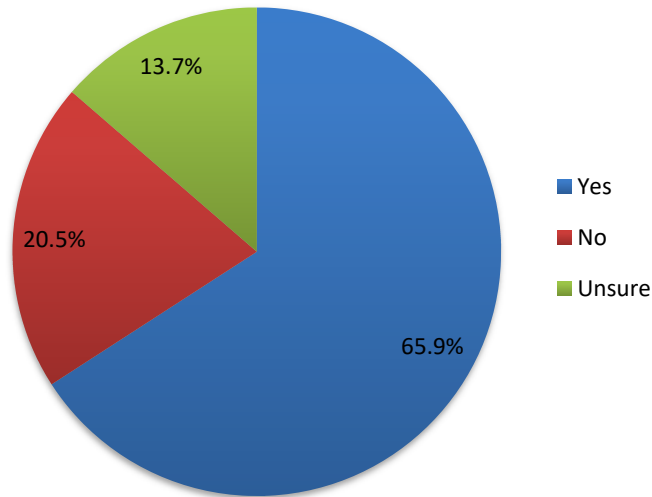
We also asked why people like to use the Tuncurry Pool. See below for the response to question 2 - If you have used the pool what was the reason/s for your visit?



This was also raised at a number of the community pop ups. These conversations enabled us to get a deeper understanding of the specific uses of the pool, including:

- Informal rehabilitation pool for older people
- Informal usage for exercise and aqua aerobics
- Small, quiet pool, that is good for teaching children how to swim
- Proximity to home - able to walk there or don't have to drive over the bridge, particularly during peak periods
- Utilised by people who are not confident swimmers
- Free enclosed pool facility
- Alternative to ocean, particularly for those who don't like the beach or on days when it's too rough for swimming due to weather.

To better understand the impact of the repurposing of the pool into a water play space, we asked people if they would use other pool facilities in the Forster/Tuncurry area for the same purpose. Of those asked, 65.9% said they would, as shown below.

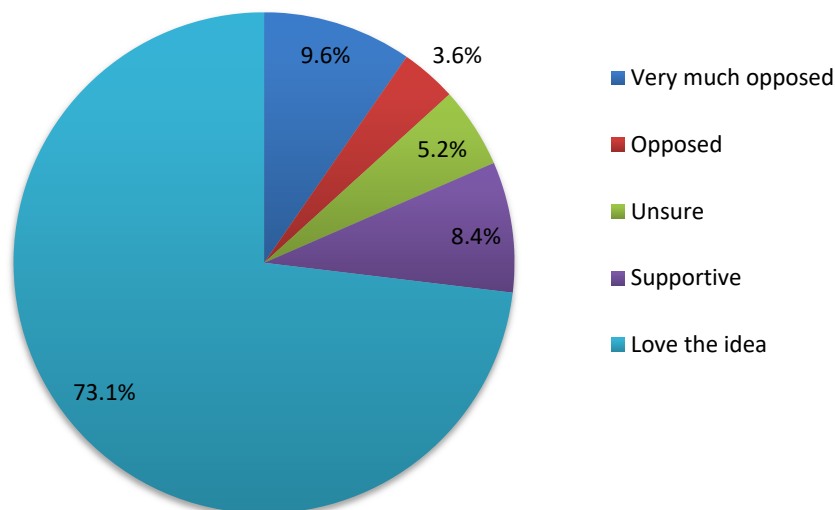


Of the 20.5% who said no, the main issues they had with the other facilities included:

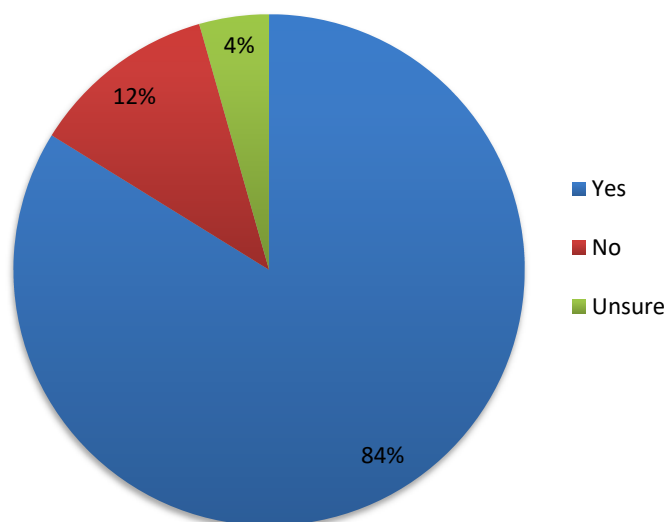
- Safety
- Don't like saltwater
- Cost
- Other facilities too busy
- Proximity to home
- Don't like Aquatic Centre
- Parking is difficult at other facilities
- Different experiences to the Tuncurry Pool
- Don't like sand
- Stability of floor
- Cleanliness of other pools
- Proximity to other facilities
- No shade (Excluding Aquatic Centre)

How people felt about repurposing the pool

The community were overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal to repurpose the pool into a water play area. This is demonstrated by the response to question 8 - How supportive are you with the idea of repurposing the Tuncurry pool into a water play space?



The quick poll also demonstrated a similar level of support for the question - Do you like the idea of repurposing the Tuncurry Pool into a water play area?



Benefits

In analysis of the reasons as to why participants gave this level of support, almost half of participants mentioned the need to create more quality facilities for children in the Forster Tuncurry area. The participants felt that a water park would provide a unique facility for families, as well as other community members to enjoy, which would have significant benefits to the community. Some of the benefits raised included:

- Provision of a safe water play facility, where parents can supervise children while playing
- Alternative to the ocean in poor weather
- Facility would be suitable for all ages, not just children
- Boosting the economy through increased tourism, as this facility would make the area more attractive to holiday makers and day trippers
- Encouraging people to utilise Tuncurry, which will have flow on to local businesses
- Socialisation for children and families, improving the sense of community and wellbeing
- Provision of outdoor facilities that encourage an active healthy lifestyle
- Provision of a shaded facility, something not currently provided in the Forster Tuncurry area
- Provision of a free, year round community facility
- Accessibility for all abilities, including people in wheelchairs and mobility issues

Many participants expressed that they felt the current pool is run down and uninviting and the water park would be a good way to achieve value for money, by utilising existing resources. Many participants also saw a linkage between the water play area and the surrounding facilities, including the Skate Park, playground, community hall and foreshore.

There were a number of people who mentioned they travel outside the area specifically to utilise water park facilities, like the one in Nambucca. This demonstrates the potential for the water play area to act as a draw card for visitors and the desire for this kind of facility in the Forster Tuncurry area.

There was a sense of excitement in some of the participant's comments, as there is nothing like this available in the Forster Tuncurry region that can provide a fun activity for the whole family to enjoy. Many of the comments in the survey pleaded with Council to make this happen and encouraged Council to think outside the box on this project to create a unique facility that can be an asset to the community.

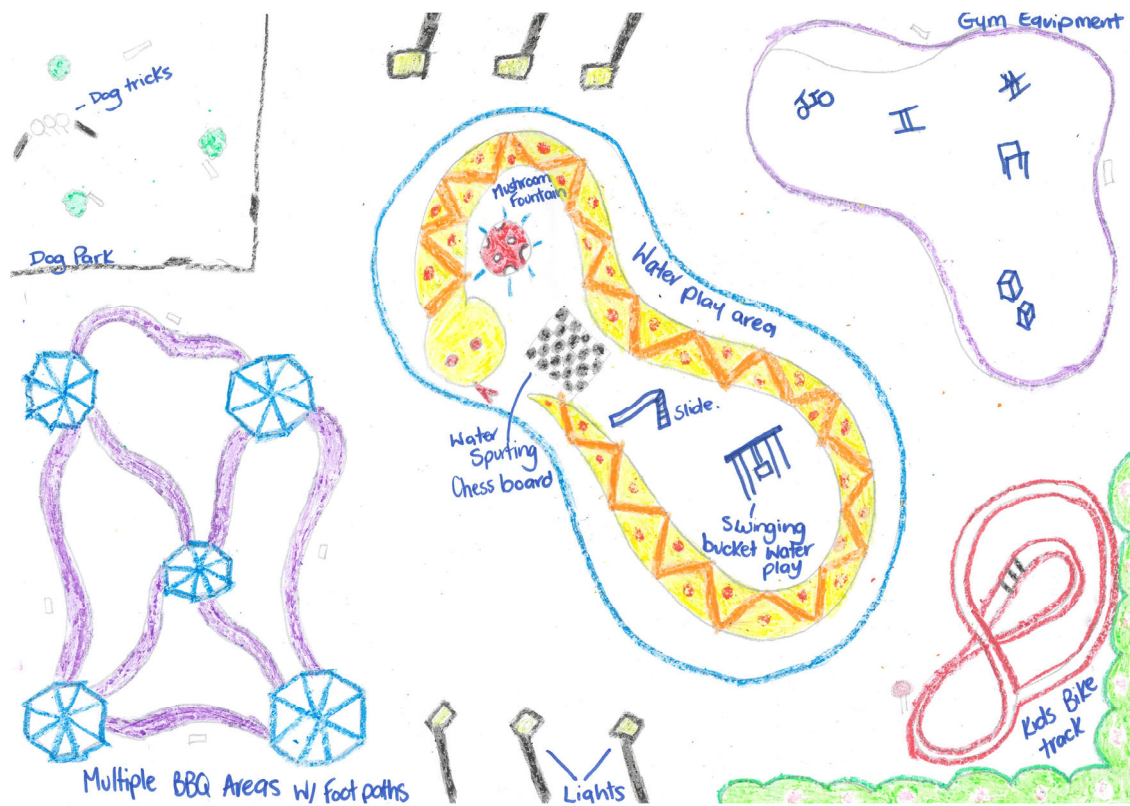


Figure 6: Design submitted from disability workshops

Alternate views

Opposition to the proposal of a water play area included the reasons below:

- Current users are happy with the existing pool and do not see the need to change
- Many older people utilise the current pool for swimming, exercise and rehabilitation and the alternatives available will not meet this need
- Some people do not like swimming in the ocean and use the Tuncurry pool as an alternative
- The incorporation of a water play area would put an additional strain on parking
- Resourcing should be concentrated on older people, as they make up a higher proportion of the population
- A lack of trust in Council to follow through on proposal
- A fear parents will leave their children unsupervised in the park
- The existing location is unsuitable for a water play facility, as next to skate park
- Council expenditure should be concentrated on Forster Main beach

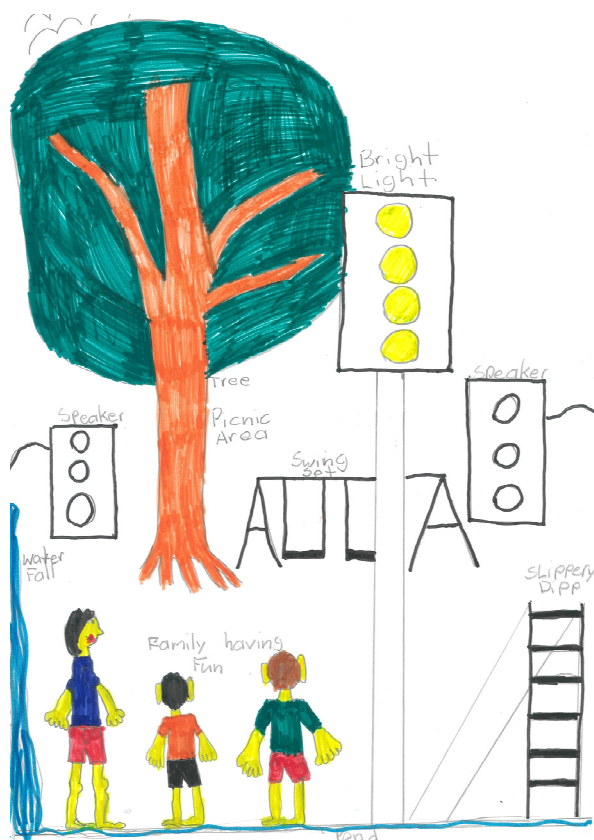


Figure 7: Design submitted from disability workshops

Safety

Safety was a common theme among both those for and against the repurposing of the pool. Many expressed their support, as the water play area provides a facility for their children to play, while supervised, but without the need for parents to get in the water.

Alternatively many expressed that the existing pool provides a safe option to ocean swimming, due to issues with saltwater, sand and imbalance from currents and waves.

Cost

Cost was another common theme between those both for and against the repurposing of the pool. For those in support, many expressed that the facilities available to families in the area have a cost associated with them. These facilities are commonplace in caravan parks; however these are not accessible to locals.

Those opposed expressed that this was the only free pool available in the area and the cost of other pools including the Aquatic Centre and rehabilitation pool is prohibitive for older people.

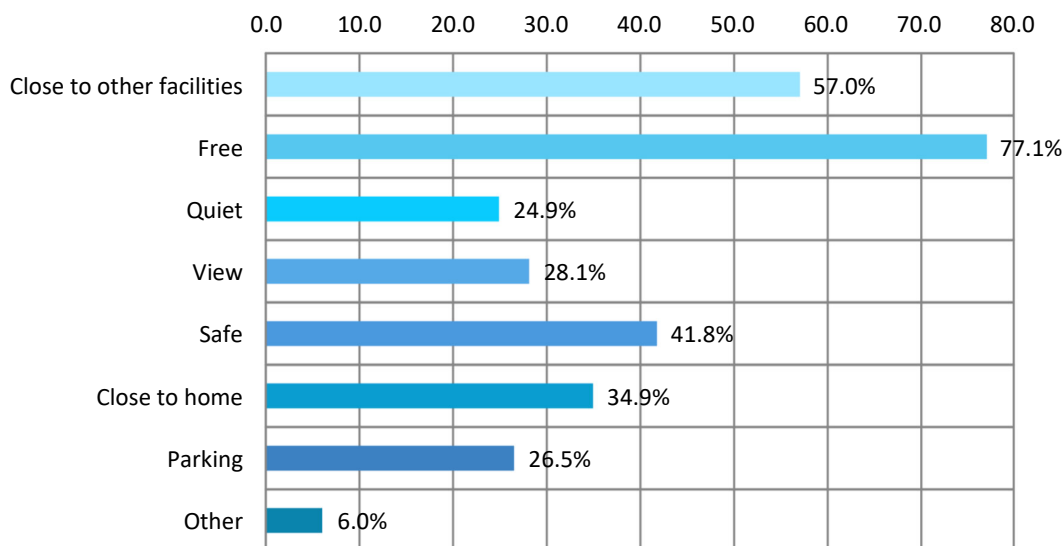
Inclusion of both pool and water play area

There was also a small portion of participants who expressed a desire for Council to consider the combination of a pool and water play area, so that the needs of the various user groups can be met.

Improvements for Tuncurry Recreation Precinct

Regardless of whether participants were supportive of the proposal to repurpose the Tuncurry Pool or not, the community saw lots of opportunity in building upon the surrounding precinct.

To understand what people already like about the existing space we asked in the survey - What do you like most about the Tuncurry recreation area? Participants answered the following (please note: more than one response could be provided for this question):



Some of the ideas provided by participants to improve the precinct included:

- Water play area
- Barbecue, picnic facilities
- Shade
- Educational bike track
- Café/kiosk outlet
- Landscaping, gardens and trees
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Seating
- Toilets, including upgrading existing and additional in Lone Pine Park
- Family friendly environment
- Creation of a party zone, incorporating water play area, picnic facilities and community hall
- Connected foreshore walkway around from bridge, along Point Road
- Footpaths and safe pedestrian linkages between Fazio Park and Lone Pine Park
- Increased parking for cars and boat trailers
- Public art and sculptures
- Opportunity to showcase Aboriginal heritage
- Improved playground facilities, including toddler area, natural play and climbing equipment, shade and fencing
- Additional playground equipment like swings, slides and zip line
- Upgrade existing skate park, including separate area for beginners and advanced, and BMX track
- Upgrade waterfront for swimming and boating
- Disabled access to existing and new facilities, including water play area.
- Community garden
- Fenced leash free area
- Include a pool in water play design
- Combined ball court for basketball, volleyball and netball

Many people also suggested other locations that have great recreational facilities, which will help in generating a plan for improvements for the area. The locations suggested include:

- Darling Harbour
- Speers Point
- Tamworth
- Maitland
- Gloucester
- Wauchope
- Lambton Pool
- Gold Coast
- Sydney Olympic Park
- Cairns Esplanade
- Lizard Log Park



Figure 8: Word Cloud of improvement suggestions for Tuncurry Recreation Precinct

What's next?

The engagement data contained in this report will be used to inform key staff, management and Councillors on the outcomes of the consultation for the repurposing of Tuncurry Pool. From this a decision will be made as to whether the pool will be repurposed into a water play area or another alternative.

The ideas for additional improvements to the Tuncurry Recreational Precinct will be used to create a future plan for that area.

A copy of this report will be made publicly available on Council's website, as well as distributed to those participants who expressed an interest in being kept informed on the project.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tuncurry Pool repurposing Engagement Plan

Appendix 2: Survey data

Appendix 3: Submissions