

## **8 TUNCURRY POOL**

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<b>File No. / ECM Index</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Reserves - Tuncurry Swimming Pool Parks &amp; Reserves - Landscaping Major Design</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>27 March 2019</b>
<b>Authorising Director</b>	<b>Paul De Szell - Director Community Spaces and Services</b>

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### **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report details the results of community engagement undertaken in relation to the Tuncurry Recreation Precinct inclusive of the Tuncurry Pool and provides recommendations for future management and development.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the Engagement Outcome Report for the proposal to repurpose Tuncurry Swimming Pool.
2. Supports the results outlined in the Engagement Outcome Report and formally closes the Tuncurry Swimming Pool after the 2019 / 2020 summer swimming season with the view to repurposing the site to accommodate a wet play park.
3. Engages a consultant to provide a conceptual design and costs for the provision of a family friendly, regional recreational area inclusive of a wet play park.

### **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Council has been allocating \$70,000 annually from general revenue to undertake major repairs to the Tuncurry Swimming Pool facility.

Council has undertaken necessary repairs to the infrastructure of the facility to allow the pool to remain open pending a decision on the longer term viability of the pool. There is currently \$275,669 available for seed funding the redevelopment of the site.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no Australian Standard for Public Swimming Pools. Council manages public pools within the guidelines of Practice Note 15 ( NSW Department of Health) and the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (Royal Life Saving Society of Australia)

Tuncurry Swimming Pool was constructed in 1971/72 from funds raised by the community.

The pool is 17 m in length and 9 m in width and has a number of inherent design issues that are not compliant with the best practice design for public pools.

The design issues with the pool could compromise public safety, placing Council at risk with regard to public liability.

The design issues can only be rectified by a complete reconstruction of the pool cell.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

A: Proposal to repurpose Tuncurry Pool – Engagement Outcomes Report

Attachment A has been circulated in hard copy to the Councillors and Senior Staff, however this Attachment is publicly available on Council's website.

## BACKGROUND

Tuncurry Swimming Pool was constructed in 1971/72 from funds raised by the community through the Tuncurry Town and Waterfront Committee and gifted to the Manning Shire Council to be managed as a public swimming pool. The swimming pool has served the community well since its construction in the early seventies.

Council identified a number of issues with Tuncurry swimming pool during the 1990's, with questions being raised regarding management and supervision issues, running costs, liability issues and longevity of the facility. A report was presented to Council (1996) relating to the pool dosing and circulation system, and structural issues with some associated facilities recommending the closure of the pool. Public support for the pool to remain open resulted in Council providing the funds to rectify the immediate structural and dosing issues, which satisfied the then, current health requirements for public pools.

The future of Tuncurry Swimming pool has been questioned on a number of occasions since the 1996 report. Council also commissioned Safety Audits for Tuncurry, Tea Gardens, Stroud and Bulahdelah Swimming Pools through Royal Life Saving Society in 2008 and a Building Condition Report for Tuncurry Swimming Pool in 2011 to determine the liability to Council regarding the age and condition of the facilities.

The outcome of these two reports was presented to Council in November 2013.

The report highlighted the ongoing costs in keeping Tuncurry pool open, with an estimated \$450,000 to be spent on the facility, in addition to the ongoing annual maintenance costs, which currently sits at \$63,000.

The report also provided information from the Royal Lifesaving Society which identified inherent design issues with the pool shell that could compromise public safety. The majority of pools have a straight edge at the perimeter of the pool then graduate to greater depth, then becoming shallow.

The anomaly with Tuncurry pool is a constructed raised beam (hob) on the floor of the pool, at either end, which changes the depth of the water within close proximity to the end vertical wall.

The resolution from the report was that Council:

*'Reopen the Tuncurry Pool for 2013/14, allocate the \$45,000 required to open the pool and that a further report be provided on accurate ongoing costs and usage of the pool'.*

Council has undertaken continued maintenance to the pool and improved some public liability issues by way of signage, WH&S issues and improvements to the circulation / pump system. It should be noted that the pool is only 17m in length and 9.1 m in width. The only access point to the pool is a set of stairs at the shallow end of the pool, with no provision of access at the deep end of the pool

The bather load capacity for Tuncurry pool is 56 people.

Council does not formally hire out Tuncurry pool for organised groups because of the restrictive size of the pool.

MidCoast Council is responsible for:

- Two aquatic centres
- Two 50m swim complexes
- Seven pools
- Two ocean baths
- Five river baths

- One netted enclosure (Tuncurry Rock pool)

One Aquatic Centre, River Baths, Ocean Baths and Rock Pool are located in Forster Tuncurry that provide an alternate venue to the Tuncurry Pool should the pool be repurposed to a wet play park. Further information is provided in the Engagement Outcomes Report (see Attachment A).

The opening of Nahiack Public Swimming Pool and Wet Play Park in 2015 has highlighted the popularity of the alternate water play facility located at the pool. The Nahiack Wet Play Park is a 12 m by 12 m square area and contains a number of splash activities.

This has proven to be very popular with the greater community with people traveling from neighbouring towns to visit the facility.

This provided the catalyst to look at alternate facilities that could be provided at the Tuncurry Pool site that are not duplicated in the area and provide the broader community with a family oriented regional water experience, whilst removing the liability and structural issues associated with Tuncurry Pool.

A report was presented to Council in June 2017 advising of the issues with Tuncurry Pool, the longer term costs associated with the pool and the limited use of the pool as a public facility.

The recommendation from the report stated:

1. *That Council undertake community engagement in relation to the future use of this pool*
2. *That alternate options for the use of the site including but not limited to its conversion into a water based play facility that provides inclusive activities for younger people be canvassed with the community.*
3. *That at the conclusion of the engagement period a further report is provided to Council which outlines the input gained from the community in relation to the future use of the site.*

## **Community Consultation**

Council staff recognise the importance the facility has held within the community and targeted a broad cross section of people to ensure that the information provided to Council was as reflective of the whole community as possible and embarked on the consultation process by:

- Attending a pop up conversation hub in Lone Pine Park, Tuncurry
- Attending the local Markets
- Online participatory budgeting tool
- Engagement with hard to reach audiences e.g. schools
- Meeting with key stakeholders
- Council also utilised social media such as Facebook, and Council's web page.
- Local newspaper
- School and preschool newsletters

Discussion was not limited to the Tuncurry Swimming pool and included feedback for the recreation precinct that includes the skate park, Lone Pine Memorial Park and the Tuncurry boat ramp.

The intent is to develop this area as a family oriented space that provides recreation activity for all ages throughout the calendar year.

The precinct is currently serviced by two small toilet facilities attached to the swimming pool amenities, and does not have an equal access facility available to the public. The closest equal access toilet is located in John Wright Park.

Should the pool be closed and replaced with a wet play park, the amenities would be refurbished to allow for equal access to accommodate public use within the Tuncurry Recreation Precinct. This is not currently possible while the pool is in situ because of the risk associated with the facility and access when the pool is closed through the winter season.

A complete copy of the Engagement Report to repurpose Tuncurry Swimming Pool is provided as Attachment A.

### **Snapshot of Results from Community Consultation:**

How often have you used Tuncurry Pool in the last season?

- Daily - 5.6%
- Weekly - 12.9%
- Monthly - 8.4%
- Once or twice - 22.1%
- Never - 51%

Would you use other existing pools for the same purpose i.e. Tuncurry Rock pool, Forster Ocean Baths, Little Street Baths, Great Lakes Aquatic Centre

- Unsure - 13.7%
- No - 20.5%
- Yes - 65.9%

How Supportive are you with the idea of repurposing the Tuncurry pool into a water play space

- Very much opposed - 9.6%
- Opposed - 3.6%
- Unsure - 5.2%
- Supportive 8.4%
- Love the idea - 73.1%

### **Ideas from the Community for Improvements to the space:**

- Barbecue, picnic facilities
- Café outlet
- Landscaping
- Shade
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Educational bike track
- Seating
- Toilets
- Family environment
- Footpaths
- Water area

There was a general feeling throughout the consultation process that the facility should be free and that there is not a great deal of facilities available for young children in the Forster Tuncurry area.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN**

The project proposal is aligned with MCC's 18/19 Operational Plan.

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Council currently has \$275,699 with an additional \$70,000 provided in the 2018/19 budget in reserve for future repairs to the existing pool facility.

The following table provides an estimate for alternative options to assist with the decision making process regarding this project:

<b>Options</b>	<b>Indicative Cost</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Replace Tuncurry Pool shell	\$400,000	The question regarding this option is "what size pool does Council replace the existing shell with? Nabiac, by comparison is a 25m pool, with an access ramp. Should Council replace like for like then the facility remains restrictive with design issues	Public currently using the pool will maintain the service
Repurpose Tuncurry Pool to a Wet play Park	\$400,000 approximate, depending on the size of the facility	Public currently using Tuncurry pool no longer have this service available	Council reduces the risk of an unsupervised body of water The facility could remain open all year The facility is equal access friendly Provides greater recreational value to the broader community Preferred outcome from Community Survey
Keep Tuncurry Pool as is and continue to repair on a needs basis	\$70,000 annual maintenance Cost + \$81,000 Operating Cost	This will not address the design issues and liability issues that are associated with Tuncurry pool	Public currently using Tuncurry Pool will maintain the service
Refurbishment of the amenities	\$190,000	Should the pool remain open the cost of the refurbishment would be reduced as the area would still need to remain secure	Should the pool close the facilities will be opened up and refurbished to accommodate equal access, remove internal showers and provide equal access toilet facilities available all year.
Replacement of security Fence	\$8,000	Should the pool remain open the perimeter fence will need replacing	

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the Engagement Outcome Report for the proposal to repurpose Tuncurry Swimming Pool.
2. Supports the results outlined in the Engagement Outcome Report and formally closes the Tuncurry Swimming Pool after the 2019 / 2020 summer swimming season with the view to repurposing the site to accommodate a wet play park.
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