

Bayside City Council Aquatic Strategy 2026-2036





Prepared by **LARCAN**

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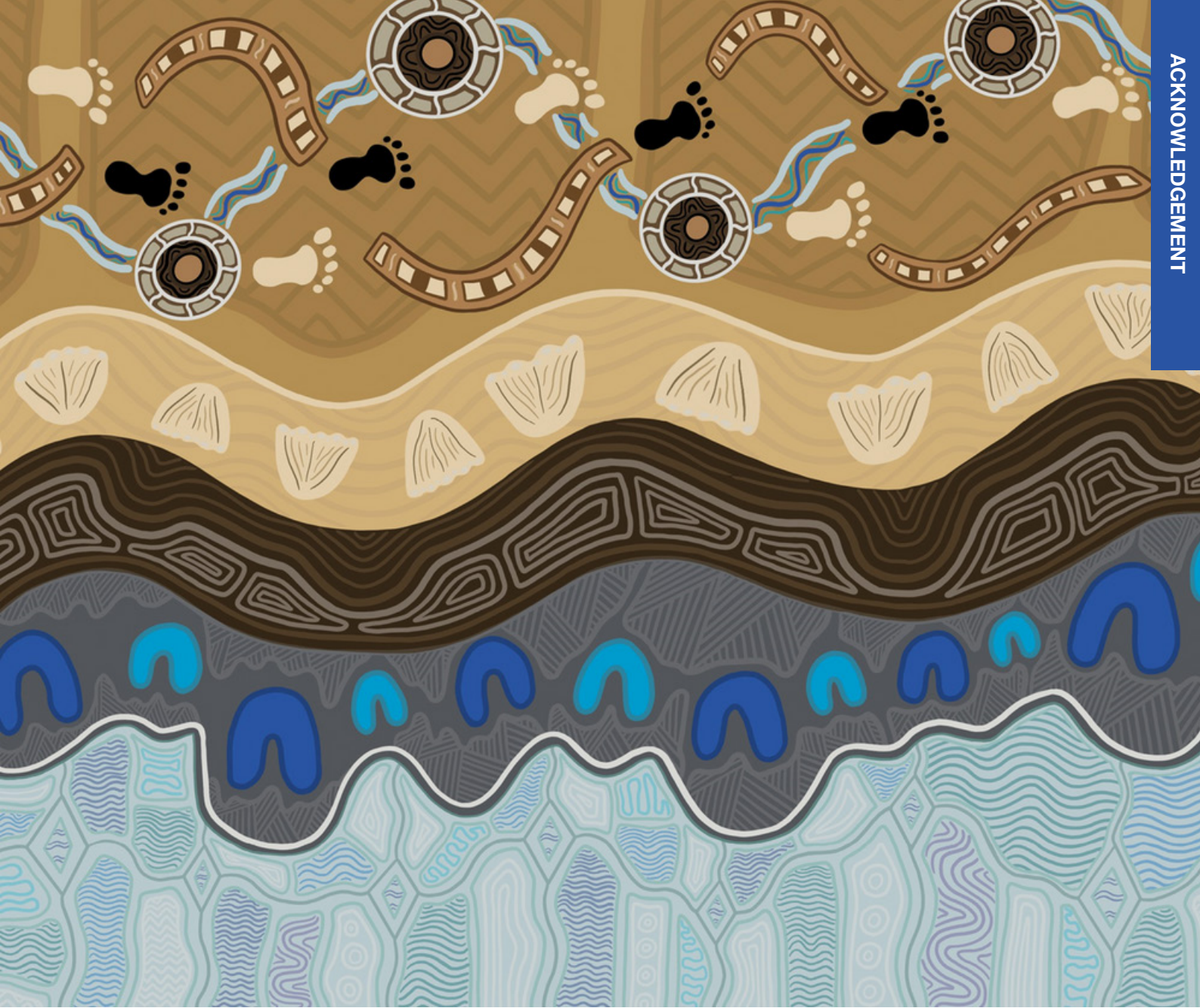
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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Bayside City Council proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture.

Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.

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Executive Summary

The Bayside Aquatic Strategy 2026 – 2036 includes key directions that inform aquatic facility provision for the Bayside community for the next ten years and beyond. The strategy considers the existing aquatic facilities in Bayside, Middle Brighton Baths (MBB) and Sandringham Family Leisure Centre (SFLC) as well as determining future facility developments required to meet Bayside community needs for the long term.

The vision statement for the Aquatic Strategy is focused on bringing a unique but defined future direction for Aquatics in Bayside. The vision is that Aquatics in Bayside is a destination for wellness and connection for our local community and our visitors.

Our leisure spaces embody Council's overarching vision: love where we live. Aquatics in Bayside is unique and future focused and we are known as the wellness destination that aligns to our community profile and one that celebrates our iconic landmarks and origins.

- The strategy was developed considering a broad range of background information, data analysis and engagement including:
- Strategic context of the Aquatics Strategy including the broader framework of Council ensuring integration with existing strategic objectives and deliverables as well as the national and state landscapes for enhancing meaningful engagement and participation in wellbeing initiatives.
- Literature review of past studies, engagement and action plans of Council.
- Analysis of the existing community profile and key demographics as well as future population forecasts to ensure aquatics provision is future fit.
- Extensive community and stakeholder engagement with the wider community, facility providers, internal Council stakeholders, facility users, neighbouring Councils and the State Government.
- An operational review of the existing Bayside aquatic facilities, Middle Brighton Baths and Sandringham Family Leisure Centre including utilisation, asset needs and constraints and opportunities.
- Review of the existing facilities in the regional catchment area and competitors to understand market needs and the adequacy of the existing aquatic facilities for Bayside and understanding service gaps and future needs.
- A review of the management model of both Bayside aquatic facilities to ensure adequate governance and operations of the facilities.
- Review of industry trends and insights in a national and global landscape to ensure Bayside facilities align with future needs and expectations.
- A range of case studies were reviewed from aquatics infrastructure developments and unique partnerships that provide insights for funding models and tailoring facility deliverables to defined community needs.
- Following details analysis short-, medium- and long-term objectives were developed to form the Recommendations of the strategy and include:
 - A short-term focus on optimising Middle Brighton Baths and Sandringham Family Leisure Centre's accessibility, inclusion, transport and asset need to extend the useful life and safe activation of the facilities for the community.
 - A reimagined management model to enhance the user experience and preservation of both existing aquatic assets.
 - A medium-term focus on planning for the future needs of the existing facilities including the redevelopment of the SFLC, revitalisation of Middle Brighton Baths and new facility provision for the community.
 - The long-term focus on revitalisation of the Middle Brighton Baths facility, bringing the iconic site back to its core origins of a health and wellness focused facility by adding a modernised component to the existing heritage facility, whilst continuing to embrace its unique destination event and catering facility through a Masterplan process.
- Consider SFLC redevelopment options and undertake associated feasibility, including the suitability of the site for a new aquatic facility development, expanding on the existing sites aquatic provision and integration with the existing leisure services offered.
- A new district level aquatic facility development in Bayside that is a stand-alone facility meeting the defined community and service needs of the local and regional catchment area for future generations. The new development will be wellness focused on design and facility components and include a range of complimentary core services for the community.

In addition to the Aquatic Strategy development, a detailed community and stakeholder engagement report and background report has been developed as a suite of documents that support the strategy.

1. Strategic Context

The Aquatic Strategy is shaped by, and aligned with, strategic priorities and objectives at the national, state and local levels. This alignment ensures the strategy integrates key policy directions already established across government to support healthy, active and connected communities.

At the national level, the National Sporting Strategy 2024–2034 and the Australian Sport Participation Strategy emphasise the importance of creating safe, welcoming, inclusive and enjoyable leisure experiences for all Australians, and articulate a shared vision for active and connected communities.

From a Victorian State Government perspective, both the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027 and Active Victoria 2022–2026 highlight the significance of increasing participation in recreation across all ages, responding to climate change, and supporting new ways of being active in contemporary community settings. The Victorian Government also stresses the importance of delivering high-quality, inclusive and accessible infrastructure.

Locally, Bayside City Council’s strategic planning framework provides a strong foundation for the Aquatic Strategy to contribute to community wellbeing, reflect the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, and ensure sustainable long-term access to aquatic and leisure infrastructure. The Aquatic Strategy will be closely aligned with the key goals and themes of the Council Plan 2025–2029.

• FEDERAL •

Sport Horizon

(National Sport Strategy 2024-2035)

Play Well

(Australian Sport Participation Strategy)



Goal 1: Our People

Safe, inclusive and active community with opportunities for connections and wellbeing

- Theme 4: Community feel & direction
- Theme 8: Access and Inclusion
- Theme 10: Tourism, commercial and economic opportunities



Goal 2: Our Place

A desirable and well-planned community for generations to come

- Theme 2: Increase and enhance open space
- Theme 9: the built environment



Goal 3: Our Promise

Transparent governance, sound financial management and excellent customer service

- Theme 6: Promoting Innovation
- Theme 8: Access and Inclusion

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027

Active Victoria 2022-2026

• STATE •

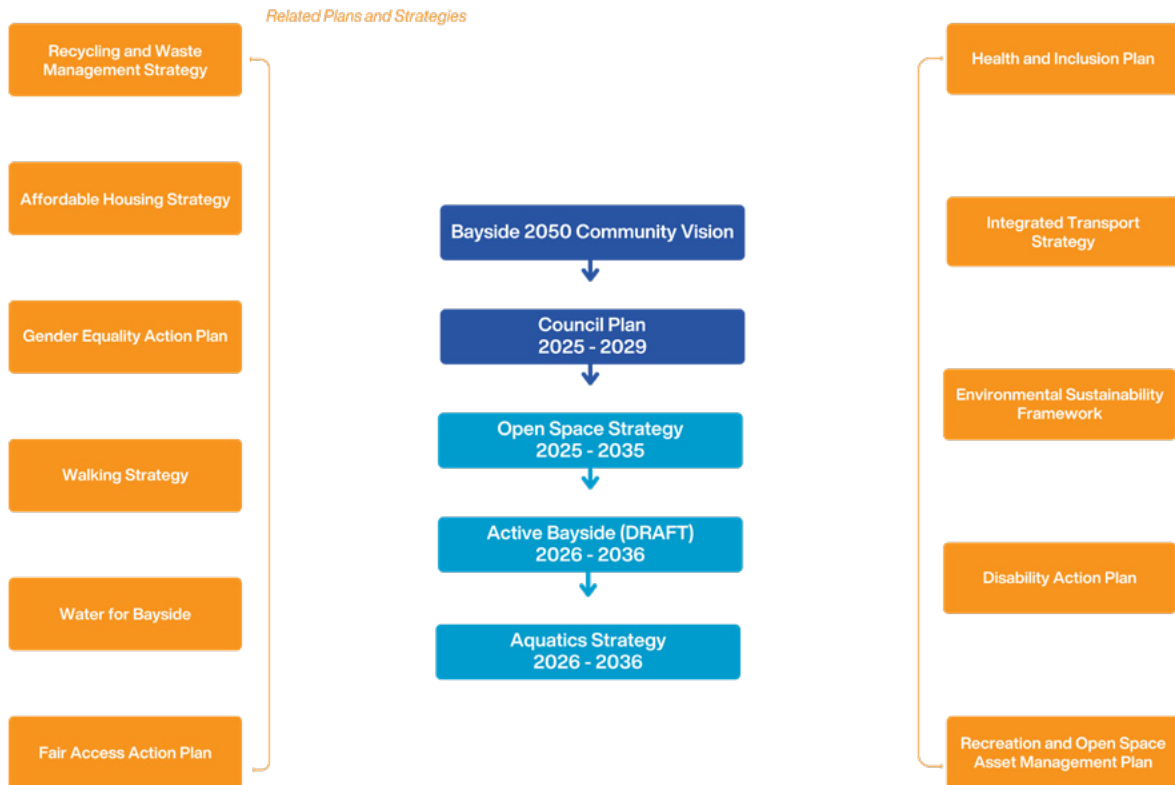
1.1 Strategy Purpose

The purpose of the Aquatic Strategy is to establish a long-term vision for aquatic and leisure service provision in Bayside. It considers the current aquatic facilities and infrastructure alongside emerging community needs, as well as national and global trends in aquatic service delivery, to ensure that future provision meets demand over the next 10 years and beyond.

The Strategy identifies key strategic directions and an action plan for aquatic service delivery in Bayside, providing a clear pathway for enhancing community wellbeing through accessible, sustainable and high-quality aquatic facilities.

1.2 Local Strategic Framework

The Bayside Aquatic Strategy will form part of Council's existing integrated planning framework which includes key strategies and plans to support the delivery of the Bayside 2050 Community Vision. The Aquatic Strategy has been developed to deliver key objectives of Council to realise a diverse, healthy and liveable place for Bayside.



1.3 Aquatic Strategy Development

The Aquatic Strategy has been informed by a range of key research and engagement processes to inform the overarching directions of the strategy. This includes:



The Aquatic Strategy is supported by the following additional reports directly linked to the strategy:



Background Report



Engagement Report

2. Our Community

Summary

Bayside is located 16km south-east of Melbourne along the coastline of Port Phillip Bay. The municipality is characterised by its foreshores, parks, open spaces and retail centres. The council encompasses nine suburbs: Beaumaris, Black Rock, Brighton, Brighton East, Cheltenham (part), Hampton, Hampton East, Highett (part), and Sandringham. Residents of Bayside enjoy the leafy surrounds of the area and have previously identified the proximity to the beach, access to open space and a strong sense of community as key factors for living in Bayside.



2.1 Community Profile

CURRENT PROFILE

Population
106,118

Bayside has an ageing population
43%
are aged over 49

Median age
44
Years old

Compare to Greater Melbourne
36
Years old

Ranked **#2**
SEIFA index of LGA's
in Victoria

51%
of residents report
sedentary behaviour

42%
of residents are either
overweight or obese

64%
engage in physical activity
4 or more days a week

Arthritis & Cancer
are the leading long term
health conditions

FUTURE POPULATION

Bayside population is expected to increase to **131,275** by 2046

Population growth is forecast for the **CENTRAL SUBURBS** of Bayside

The **FOUR SUBURBS** that will have the highest rate of **POPULATION GROWTH** are:

- CHELTENHAM
- HIGHETT
- HAMPTON EAST
- HAMPTON
- BRIGHTON

Bayside future population will increase in **YOUNG FAMILIES** and the **AGEING POPULATION**

Forecast migration by age shows the **GREATEST INCREASE** of growth is people aged **5-9** & **40-44** Years

With an **OVERALL DECREASE** in population growth for ages **20-29** Years

*The Victorian Government's Suburban Rail Loop project encompasses a station at Cheltenham. The project aims to improve transport and create more homes. Specifically, the associated Cheltenham Draft Structure Plan sets out to manage greater supply of housing. This project ultimately aims to increase population growth above previous forecasts.

3. Our Facilities

Summary

Facilities Overview



Sandringham Family Leisure Centre (SFLC)

SFLC is located at 166 – 188 Tulip Street Sandringham, was built in 1979 and has undergone many alterations in response to community needs and to meet the varying trends of the recreation industry including an upgrade of the aquatic facilities in 2007. 4 new stadium courts were added in 2024.

The original SFLC building is reaching end of life, with an estimated remaining lifespan of 5 years.

Centre Facilities

- 25m indoor swimming pool
- 8 Basketball courts (original 4 courts and an addition of 4 new courts)
- Cafe
- Sports Medicine facilities
- Gymnasium
- Group Fitness
- Cycling Room
- Changerooms with spa & sauna
- Child Care

Centre Programs

- Learn to swim lessons
- Aqua aerobics
- Recreational swimming
- Basketball
- Pickleball
- Group fitness
- Personal training
- Reform Pilates
- Cycling classes
- Physiotherapy
- Allied health
- Child care.

Memberships

- Learn to Swim enrolments **1100**
- Health Club Members **2,500**
- Registered Basketball players & coaches **9,512** per season
- Childcare **120** students per day

Visits

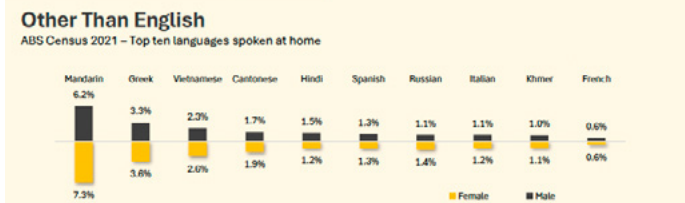
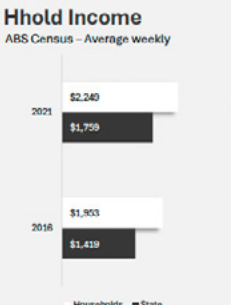
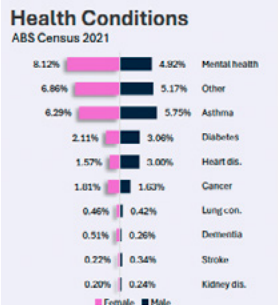
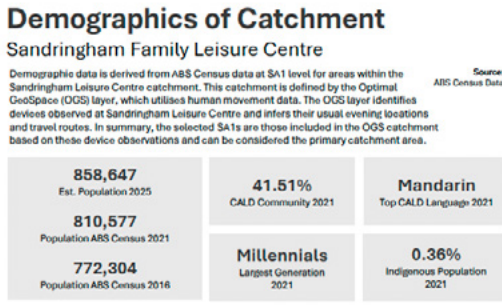
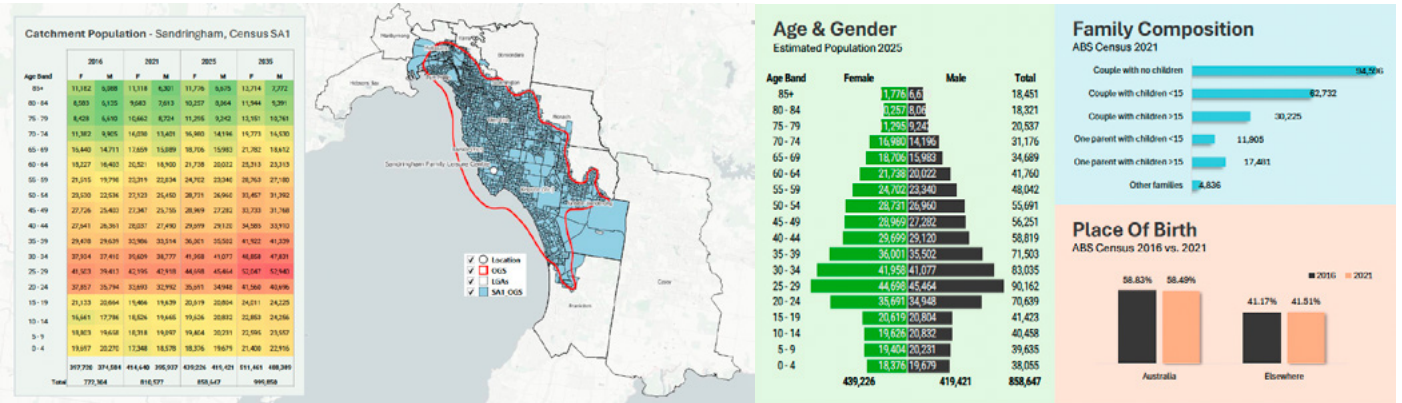
- 1.3 Million annually**
- Learn to swim 16%
- Health Club 9%
- Stadium 66%
- Child care 5%
- Physio 4%

Management model

Leased to six individual lessees

Where visitors come from

Sandringham, Black Rock and Beaumaris attract the greatest visitors, followed by Hampton East, Highett, Cheltenham, Mentone and Parkdale. Visitation is drawn from a large region mainly due to basketball. 90% of visitors reported they arrive by car.



Summary

Facilities Overview



Middle Brighton Baths

Middle Brighton Baths is located at 251 Esplanade, Brighton. The Middle Brighton Baths is a historic saltwater swimming facility and is known as one of the last remaining sea baths in the state.

With remedial works, the Baths could have a 20+ year lifespan.

Centre Facilities

- Private beach
- Boardwalk
- Private sea bath
- Gym
- Steam Room
- Ice Bath
- Cafe
- Event centre

Centre Programs

- Swim squad
- Run Club
- Gym
- Group fitness
- Personal training
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Meditation
- Kids parties.

Memberships

Health Club Members
850

Where visitors come from

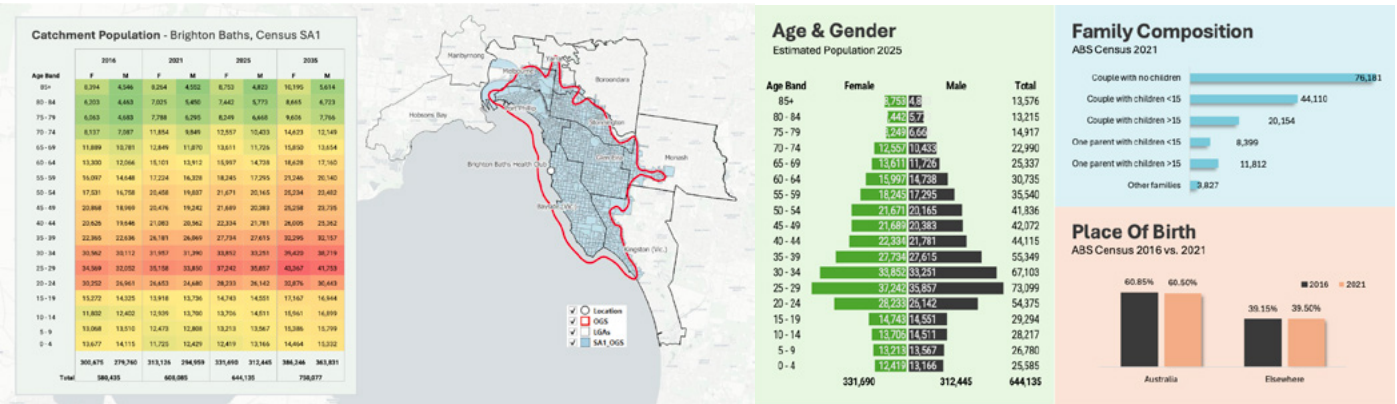
Visitors come predominantly locally from Brighton and Brighton East. 79% indicated they arrive by car, whereas, 21% arrive by bike or walking.

Visits

430,000 annually
Sea Baths & Gym 35%
Café & Event Centre 65%

Management model

Leased to one individual lessee



Demographics of Catchment

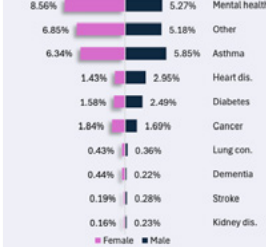
Brighton Baths

Demographic data is derived from ABS Census data at SA1 level for areas within the Brighton Baths catchment. This catchment is defined by the Optimal GeoSpace (OGS) layer, which utilises human movement data. The OGS layer identifies devices observed at Brighton Baths and infers their usual evening locations and travel routes. In summary, the selected SA1s are those included in the OGS catchment based on these device observations and can be considered the primary catchment area.

644,135 Est. Population 2025	39.50% CALD Community 2021	Mandarin Top CALD Language 2021
608,085 Population ABS Census 2021	Millennials Largest Generation 2021	0.35% Indigenous Population 2021
580,435 Population ABS Census 2016		

Health Conditions

ABS Census 2021



Hhold Income

ABS Census - Average weekly



Other Than English

ABS Census 2021 - Top ten languages spoken at home



What facility users said

SFLC

In early 2025, BlueFit conducted a customer feedback survey for pool users at SFLC, receiving 304 responses. The insights highlight strong community appreciation for programs and staff, alongside clear facility-related issues and opportunities for improvement.

<p>What's Working Well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly, supportive staff and strong instructor quality. • High satisfaction with Learn-to-Swim and squad programs. • Warm-water conditions suitable for lessons and rehabilitation. • Strong local community feel and welcoming environment. • Good value for money, especially for families and older adults. 	<p>What Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change rooms and bathrooms need major upgrades (cleanliness, odour, broken fittings). • Ageing facility overall—flooring, lighting, ventilation, pool surrounds. • Cleanliness inconsistencies across entire centre. • Mixed views on water and room temperatures. • Slow maintenance response and poor communication about repairs. • Lane availability and schedules hard to find online.
<p>Current Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking pressure from broader site activity leading to cancellations. • Dual stadium entrance further congests traffic. • Accessibility limitations (lack of ramps, warm accessible change spaces, hoists) • Ageing infrastructure impacting comfort and safety 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major refurbishment of change rooms and amenities • Enhanced cleaning and maintenance standards • Addition of warm-water or hydrotherapy pool • Improved digital communication (real-time lane and maintenance updates) • Better parking and access management • Continued community engagement to build confidence in upgrade plans

**Refurbishment of pool deck and change rooms was completed at SFLC between April – November 2025. Centre re-opened with changes after feedback was received on the facility.*

Middle Brighton Baths

Feedback collected throughout the community engagement sessions in 2025 provided a clear picture of how the Middle Brighton Baths is performing, the value it delivers, and the key opportunities to enhance access, safety and user experience.

<p>What's Working Well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic foreshore location offering a unique ocean-based swimming and wellness experience. • Strong member loyalty with a highly engaged community and year-round participation. • High usage in warmer months, particularly for ocean swimming, fitness classes, and wellness programs. • Strong sense of community connection, with the site acting as a social and wellbeing hub. • Complementary role in Bayside's broader aquatic and leisure network through outdoor, nature-based activity. 	<p>What Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility limitations, including lack of permanent ramps and handrails for safe water entry. • Ageing change rooms and showers, reducing comfort and usability. • Lighting improvements needed for safety and extended operating times. • Maintenance delays affecting flooring, access points, and general amenity upkeep. • Weather exposure impacting user comfort and increasing operational pressures.
<p>Current Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking pressure during peak times, deterring casual visitors. • Antisocial behaviour after hours, creating safety concerns for staff and patrons. • Infrastructure fatigue, with ageing components requiring more frequent and complex maintenance. • Seasonal variation, with lower winter participation and higher strain on facilities in summer. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility enhancements, including permanent ramped entry and handrails for inclusive participation. • Modernisation of amenities, such as upgraded change rooms, showers, and flooring. • Improved lighting and safety measures, particularly around the foreshore interface. • Expanded wellness programming, including community events, off-peak sessions, and therapeutic offerings.

4. Regional Aquatic Profile Benchmarking & Market Demand

Summary

Aquatic facility benchmarking shows that there is an adequate supply of regional aquatic and leisure facilities in the regional catchment area, inclusive of Bayside City Council, Glen Eira City Council, City of Kingston and City of Port Phillip. Based on the existing limited year-round aquatic facility provision in Bayside, the state of current infrastructure, defined service needs considerate of demographic make-up, population increases, industry trends and community engagement insights there is a demonstrated need to enhance the local provision of aquatic facilities in Bayside to service existing and future populations. This includes access to district and/or major aquatic facilities within the Bayside Local Government Area that are inclusive of complimentary wet and dry spaces that meet defined service gaps and Bayside demographic needs within the local and regional catchment area.

User demand on existing facilities Middle Brighton Baths and SFLC aquatic and wellness spaces, as well as regional and major aquatic facilities in the catchment network being at or nearing capacity demonstrates a viable market demand for facility provision, with a carefully considered service mix and facility location. In addition, the impacts of the State Government Suburban Rail Loop on population growth and housing developments that may impact and exceed current population growth estimates. In addition, Waves Leisure Centre is coming to end of life in eight years and has demonstrated high utilisation from Bayside residents currently. The Mordi Leisure Centre new development is due to open in late 2026 and is expected to have an impact on the southern part of Bayside in terms of catchment use of the facility, which is currently serviced by the SFLC.

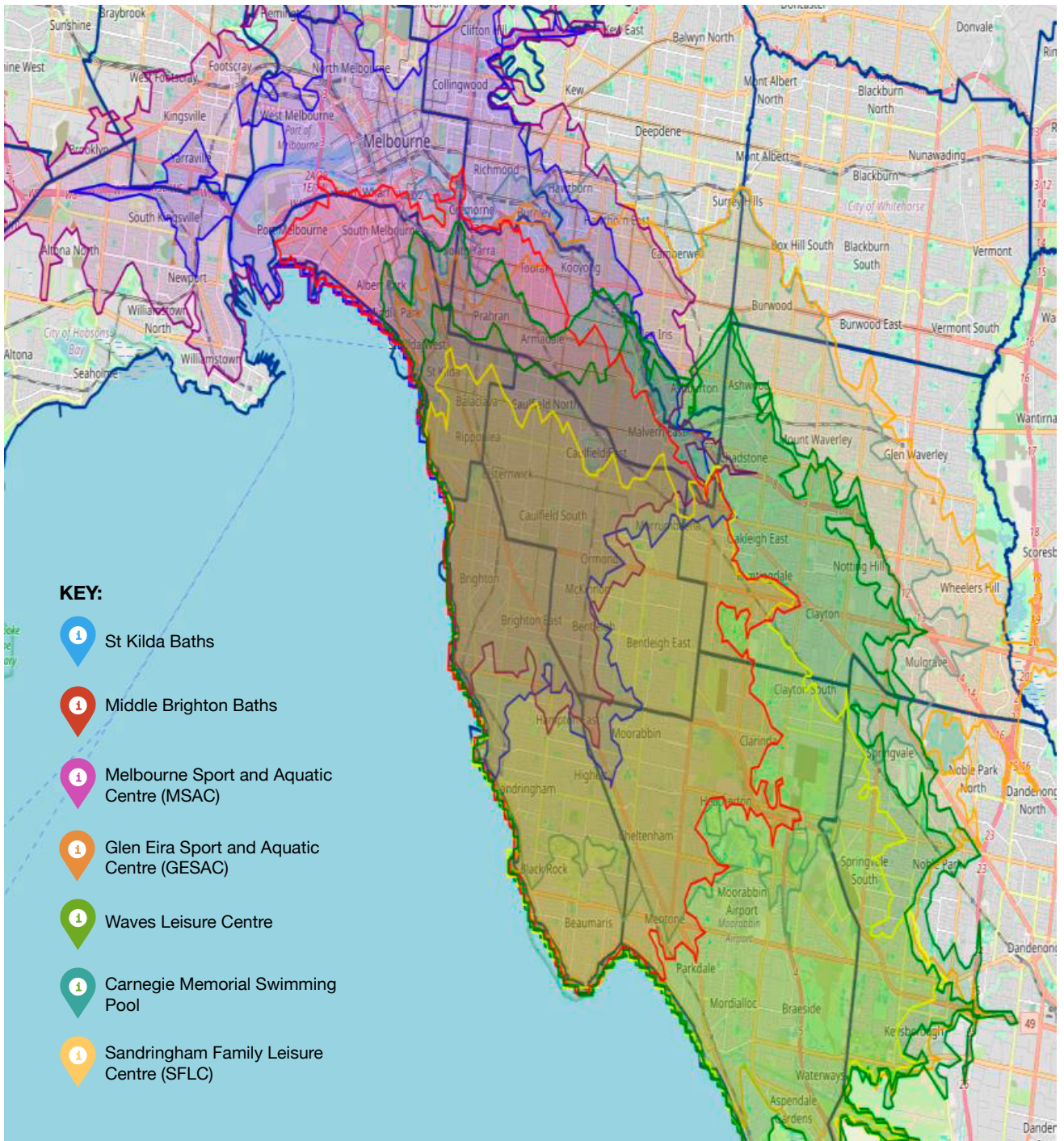
4.1 Overview of Regional Catchment Aquatic Provision

Regional Summary of Facilities: Facilities within a 20-minute drive time radius of Bayside LGA



4.2 Use of the Regional Aquatic Facility Network - Catchment Maps

The map below shows 20-minute drivetime isochrones for all the District, Major and Regional Facilities across Bayside, Glen Eira, Kingston and Port Philip. Facilities servicing Bayside catchment include:



20-minute drivetime is a common industry catchment measure to establish direct competitor sites. It shows considerable overlap between the isochrones, at its most dense in Bayside.

4.3 Benchmarking

The Royal Life Saving Society of Australia State of Aquatic Facilities Report 2025 provides insights into facility benchmarking and serving population needs. The report found that all the major capital cities (with the exception of Darwin) provide relatively fewer public pools than regional cities. Major cities need to build more aquatic facilities in growth areas and account for densification.

The current Australian national benchmarks for aquatic facility provisioning are*:

- Capital cities: 1 aquatic facility per 19,353 population
- Regional cities: 1 aquatic facility per 12,327 population
- National average (including regional): 1 aquatic facility per 12,826 population

*Source: Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) State of Aquatic Facilities Report 2025

Aquatics Recreation Victoria (ARV) - Facility Benchmark Guidelines

Description	Catchment Population Estimate	Typical Facility Components
Rural	Under 10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of community facility • Shared water, shallow areas
Local	10,000-40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited program water combined with leisure water • Limited dry facilities
District	40,000-70,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program pool and leisure water • Large gym • Additional amenities
Major	70,000-100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More extensive program and leisure water • Consideration of 50m pool and complementary warm water pools • Increased gym and dry program space • Secondary services - cafe
Regional	100,000 > 150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor 50 and multiple pools • Wellness / health club • Secondary services (café, creche)

	Bayside LGA Current Pop: 106,118 4 – Rural 1 - Local 1 – District 6 total aquatic facilities	Bayside Regional Catchment Current Pop: 520,000 16 – Rural 1 - District 2 - Major 3 – Regional 22 total aquatic facilities in region
Australian National Benchmark for Aquatic Facilities (Capital Cities) 1:19,353	Current Pop: 1:17,686 Future Pop: 1: 22,212	Current Pop: 1: 23,636
ARV Guidelines for Facility Provision Rural: under 10,000 pop Local: 10,000-40,000 pop District: 40,000-70,000 pop Major: 70,000-100,000 pop Regional: 100,000 >150,000 pop	Facility type catchment range: 90,000-150,000 Meets ARV Guideline	Facility type catchment range: 370,000 – 480,000 Does not meet ARV Guideline

4.4 Benchmark Findings

Based on the Australian national benchmarks for aquatic facility provision, Bayside local government area and the regional catchment do not meet guidelines based on facilities per population. Based on ARV guidelines for aquatic facility provision, Bayside local government area does not meet the guidelines for aquatic facility provision however meets the regional catchment benchmark needs given the number of State, Regional and Major aquatic facilities located in neighbouring LGA's, given these facilities meet the needs of large populations.

4.5 Local Market Demand for Aquatic Facilities and Services

Middle Brighton Baths and SFLC are performing above benchmark for utilisation demonstrating local market need amongst the regional catchment network of aquatic facility provision.

Regional and major aquatic facilities within Glen Eira, Kingston and Port Philip Councils areas are highly utilised and near capacity at peak times for established sites i.e. GESAC, Waves - based on engagement insights shared by each Council.

Program pools are highly utilised and account for a significant, if not the most significant form of revenue for facilities in the region. This is further enhanced where flexible design has been applied such as moveable floors.

Warm water pools are highly utilised with some facility such as GESAC at capacity during peak times.

There is high demand and use for spa and sauna facilities within all aquatic facilities catering to this offering.

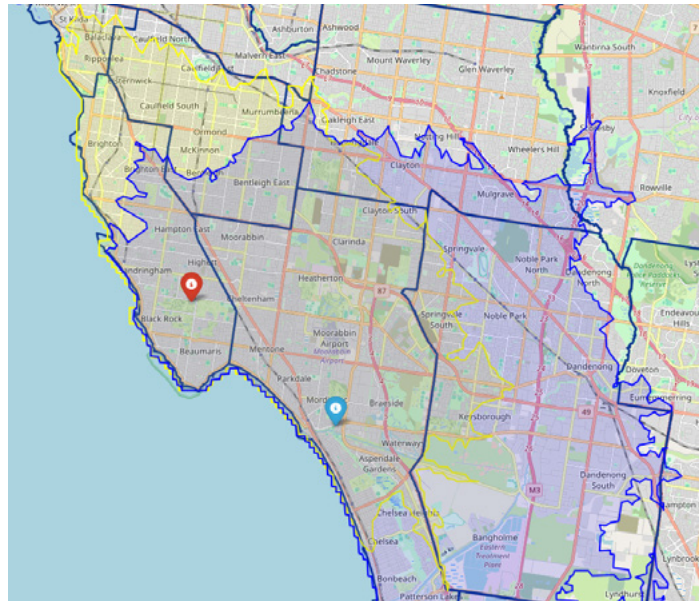
Regional facilities with differentiated offerings perform well in the regional catchment i.e. Wave pool at Waves Leisure Centre, full service offering and facility size at GESAC which has 10,000 health club members and facility offerings for Teens unique to the region, Carnegie Memorial Pool appeals to outdoor pool users and those seeking wellness and lifestyle-based offerings.

4.6 Influencing Factors

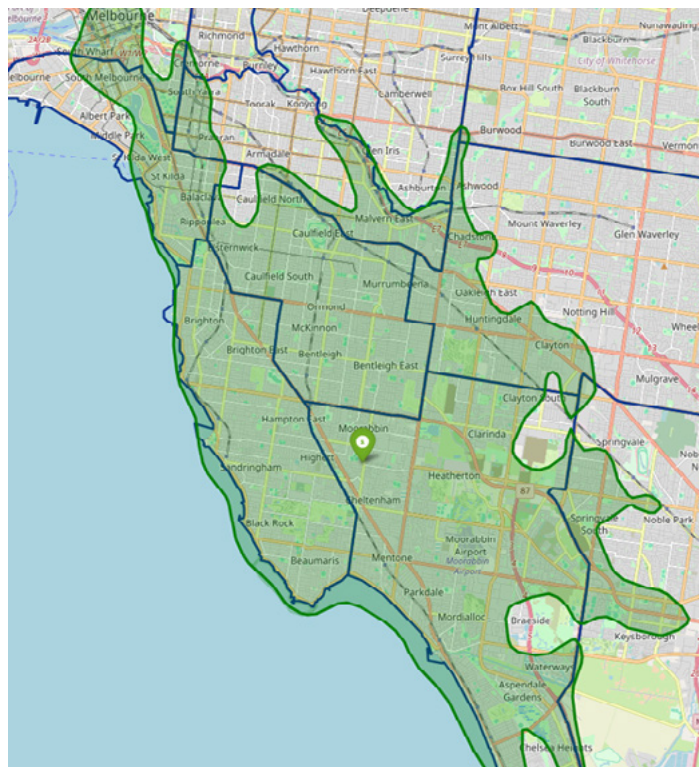
Mordi Aquatic Centre is a regional aquatic centre due to open in late 2026, with catchment use considered to be largely in the south of the Bayside LGA, where SFLC is located. It is expected the facility will impact demand for aquatics and gymnasium facilities at SFLC.

KEY:

- New Mordi Centre due to open late 2026
- SFLC
- Yellow boundary is SFLC 20-minute Isochrone of SFLC
- Blue boundary is 20-minute Isochrone of Mordi Centre



Waves Leisure Centre, which is a regional centre, is coming to end of life in 8 years. The below graphic shows significance of catchment to Bayside City Council. Bayside residents also utilised Waves Leisure Centre most out of all aquatic and leisure centres in the regional catchment area. City of Kingston is currently undertaking feasibility on Waves and future planning beyond the assets end of life, which will also be dependent upon the recommendations and facility development included in the Bayside Aquatic Strategy.



4.7 Aquatic Facility Service Summary

There is an adequate provision of outdoor pools in the regional catchment, when also considering the presence of the Bay and Middle Brighton Baths facility which is considered an outdoor facility. There is also a range of private pools, 8516, in Bayside residences catering to outdoor pool provision.

There is an adequate provision of 50 metre pools in the regional catchment, including GESAC, Carnegie Memorial Pool and the Mordi Aquatic Facility currently being constructed.

There is an inconsistent provision of warm water pools with adequate accessibility to service the needs of older adults and use for rehabilitation activities.





There is a lack of provision of public wellness and lifestyle-based facilities and services including Spa, Sauna, Hot and Cold therapies and immersive experiences in the catchment. This also includes health club-based spaces that are focused on diversity of users and emerging dry fitness offerings.

5. Industry Insights and Directions

5.1 Impact of Aquatics Facilities

Aquatic facilities are critical social infrastructure that deliver measurable outcomes across health, safety, community connection, participation, and local economies. For Bayside, the network anchored by the SFLC and the Middle Brighton Baths underpins drowning prevention and water safety, supports lifelong physical activity, facilitates rehabilitation and active ageing, and strengthens social cohesion. In Bayside, the importance of aquatic provision is amplified by the municipality’s unique demographic profile, health needs, coastal identity, and strong support for a culture of active living.

The Impact of Aquatic Centres

 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #4a90e2; margin-top: 10px;">Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces stress and improves physical and mental health Supports rehabilitation & mobility Essential for swimming competency & water safety Low-impact exercise for all ages and abilities 	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #4a90e2; margin-top: 10px;">Social and Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive, intergenerational gathering places Strengthens social connection and belonging Safe environments for children and families Warm-water programs support chronic health conditions Provides safe heat-resilient spaces 	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #4a90e2; margin-top: 10px;">Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drives local visitation & precinct activation Supports jobs and small businesses Reduces healthcare system costs Reduced employee absenteeism 	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #4a90e2; margin-top: 10px;">Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate-resilient recreation option Increasing use of renewable & efficient systems Supports coastal and environmental stewardship
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Royal Life Saving Australia research shows that public aquatic facilities support more than 130 million hours of vigorous physical activity each year, delivering an estimated \$22.14 in health-care savings per visit — over \$2.35 billion annually per facility — by reducing chronic disease and physical inactivity. Beyond the economic benefits, aquatic facilities also strengthen community cohesion, improve water-safety outcomes, and enhance social wellbeing.

5.2 National Trends

Shift from traditional 50m outdoor pools to diversified indoor aquatic hubs

- Across Australia, councils are reassessing the viability of traditional 50-metre outdoor pools. Many are ageing, expensive to maintain, under-utilised in winter, and increasingly challenged by climate impacts. The trend is toward providing indoor, multi-purpose complexes with learn-to-swim, health clubs, leisure water, warm water, and multi-purpose rooms that support year-round participation.

Strong demand for learn-to-swim and year-round access

- Learn-to-swim remains the highest-demand aquatic service nationally, driven by drowning-prevention priorities and parental expectations. Councils are responding by adding dedicated LTS pools, indoor program pools and warm water pools to support safety, skill progression and all-season use.

Warm water therapy emerging as a key community need

- Older Australians, people living with chronic health conditions and rehabilitation clients are generating strong demand for hydrotherapy and low-impact aquatic exercise. Warm water spaces are increasingly now starting to be considered core infrastructure rather than specialist additions.

Wellness facilities integrated into aquatic centres

- Following European trends, Australian centres are incorporating saunas, steam rooms, spas, and wellness programming.

Multi-use social and recreational spaces expected as standard

- Modern aquatic facilities now include café spaces, co-working zones, community rooms and outdoor recreation areas to increase dwell time, social connection and community activation.

Sustainability at the forefront of planning and redevelopment

- Energy-efficient plant systems, solar installations, electrification, heat recovery, water-saving technology and high-performance building envelopes are becoming essential due to rising energy costs and climate pressures.

Redevelopment of ageing assets widespread across councils

- Across Australia, councils are replacing end-of-life pools, particularly outdoor 50m seasonal pools, with modern, multi-functional aquatic and wellbeing centres. Most are funded through a mix of council contributions, loans and state/federal grants, supported by strong community advocacy and evidence of ageing infrastructure.

Increasing importance of data, social impact measurement and business cases

- Councils are now shifting towards participation analytics, benchmarking, social value methodologies to measure impact and outcomes and to detail business cases to justify investment and secure funding.

More locally, across Bayside and neighbouring municipalities, there is a clear pattern of major aquatic redevelopments, with councils such as Kingston, Glen Eira, and Greater Dandenong all progressing significant new centres or full replacements of ageing assets. These projects are driven by strong demand for learn-to-swim programs, warm-water therapy, and more contemporary wellness and social spaces that reflect changing community expectations.

Local facilities are also reaching end-of-life, prompting feasibility studies, masterplans, and investment planning across the region. Shared challenges are emerging, including limited available land for new developments, high capital costs, increasing car-parking pressures, and strong public expectations for high-quality, accessible, modern aquatic environments. Collectively, these trends point to growing community reliance on aquatics for health, social connection, and year-round activity.

5.3 Global Trends and Insights

Social Sustainability, Inclusion and Community Connection

Globally, facilities are shifting from traditional sport-centric models to community-orientated, socially inclusive environments.

- Universal design enabling equitable access for all ages and abilities.
- Growth in gender-neutral changerooms and inclusive amenities.
- Facilities as social hubs, with cafés, co-working areas, lounges, and multi-use community spaces.
- Increasing focus on ageing populations, accessibility upgrades, gentle exercise spaces, and warm-water programming.
- Designing pools to encourage conversation and connection (shallower, warmer leisure water).

Health, Safety and Wellbeing as Core Outcomes

Global practice is moving beyond “swim and gym” to broader health and wellness outcomes.

- Growth in health and wellbeing programs aligned to community health risks.
- Spa, sauna and wellness facilities become major revenue generators, sometimes surpassing gyms.
- Expansion of rehabilitation, aqua fitness, mindfulness sessions, and inclusive programs for seniors and people with disability.
- Pools increasingly recognised for their role in drowning prevention, heatwave resilience, and mental health support.

Evolving Programming and Facility Mix

Internationally, the functional role of pools is being redefined.

- Shift from sport, performance and competition to participation, progression, play and physical literacy.
- Multi-functional spaces enabling lifestyle-focused activity.
- Warm-water pools, aqua play, additional programming spaces, meeting rooms and integrated allied health emerging as key components.
- Flexible, modular designs enabling changing needs, future reuse, and seasonal adaptation.

Digitalisation and Smart Facility Management

Technology is increasingly used to improve safety, efficiency and customer experience.

- Anti-drowning technology is becoming standard in new builds.
- Self-entry and check in, resulting in a reduction in customer service staff.
- Robotic pool deck cleaners reducing staff time and improving hygiene.
- Virtual aqua aerobics and virtual fitness classes enhancing off-peak utilisation and continuity of service.
- Digital tools to track utilisation, improve customer engagement, optimise water/energy use and enable data-driven decision-making.

Economic Sustainability and Value Measurement

Globally, Councils and operators are shifting focus to long-term sustainability and measurable impact.

- Improved lifecycle planning and reduced deferred maintenance.
- Understanding and communicating social value (Social Return on Investment).
- Reframing aquatic centres from “subsidised” to value-generating community infrastructure.
- Aligning business planning with regional supply/demand to avoid duplication and overbuilding.

Environmental Sustainability Leading Global Priorities

Environmental sustainability must improve and evolve in aquatic facility design.

- Prioritising adaptive reuse of existing facilities over new builds.
- Designing for energy efficiency, including high-performance building envelopes.
- Transitioning to renewable energy, heat recovery and low-carbon technologies.
- Reducing resource use through practices such as mandatory pre-swim showers, no-shoe pool deck policies, and low-chlorine systems.
- Integrating facilities into active transport networks, linking to walking and cycling paths.
- Emerging use of EV charging infrastructure powered by recovered heat or renewable energy generated through aquatic plant operations.

5.4 Benefits of Integrated Wellness

Benefits of Integrated Wellness

Enhances Community Wellbeing



- Promotes relaxation, stress reduction and mental clarity.
- Supports rehabilitation, pain management and gentle movement.
- Provides quiet, restorative spaces that complement busy aquatic halls.

Supports Healthy Ageing



- Warm-water therapy improves mobility, balance and chronic condition management.
- Accessible wellness zones encourage participation from older adults and people with disabilities.

Attracts New User Groups



- Appeals to non-swimmers, older adults, corporate wellness seekers, and health-referral clients.
- Expands participation beyond traditional aquatic users.

Aligns with Global Best Practice



- Reflects international shifts toward holistic health, prevention and lifestyle support.
- Matches trends seen in Germany, Scandinavia and the UK where wellness is now a core anchor of aquatic precincts.

Builds Social Connection



- Wellness lounges, spa zones and relaxation areas become social hubs.
- Encourages multi-generational engagement and community belonging.

Boosts Physical and Emotional Recovery



- Spa, sauna and steam facilities aid muscle recovery and alleviate fatigue.
- Ideal for swimmers, fitness users, and local sporting clubs.

Drives Stronger Financial Sustainability



- Wellness services generate higher yield per square metre than traditional fitness.
- Provides year-round revenue less impacted by weather or seasonal demand.
- European evidence shows wellness integration significantly improves centre profitability.

Strengthens the Value Proposition of Aquatic Facilities



- Creates a premium, multi-purpose destination.
- Positions the centre as a hub for health, wellbeing, recovery and social connection.

5.5 Case Study Learnings

Across Australia, metropolitan LGAs facing land scarcity, ageing infrastructure, and major capital investment needs have undertaken large aquatic redevelopments. These case studies provide highly relevant insights for Bayside’s future planning.

Funding Models & Partnerships

Key Learnings

- Most projects relied on multi-source funding, combining Council, State and Federal Government, and in some cases private or commercial partners (e.g., Sydney Airport for Botany).
- Strong advocacy, clear community need, and alignment with State priorities were critical to securing funding.
- Some Councils utilised loan schemes (e.g., SRV’s Community Sports Infrastructure Loans Scheme).
- Successful facilities articulated clear social, health, and economic benefits, strengthening their business cases.

Relevance for Bayside

- Bayside’s future aquatic facilities will likely require a hybrid funding model, supported by a rigorous business case demonstrating health, wellbeing, sport, tourism and economic outcomes.
- Clear alignment with State priorities (health, participation, community resilience, sustainability) will increase funding feasibility.
- Partnerships — including commercial, institutional (e.g., schools), and neighbouring LGAs — could unlock alternative funding streams and cost-sharing opportunities.

Responding to Ageing Infrastructure

Key Learnings

- In every case, redevelopment was triggered by end-of-life facility conditions, functional obsolescence, or non-compliance.
- Councils prioritised major redevelopment over piecemeal repair due to escalating maintenance costs.

Relevance for Bayside

- Both SFLC and Middle Brighton Baths face major long-term infrastructure issues.
- Case studies reinforce that beyond remedial repairs, major redevelopment is typically more cost-efficient and future-proof.
- Clear forward planning is required to prevent asset failure, service interruption, or cost blowouts.

Facility Mix: Modern, Multi-Use & Community-Led

Key Learnings

- Contemporary centres include a diversified aquatic mix.
- Strong focus on wellbeing, rehabilitation, allied health, and social spaces.
- Universal design and accessibility features are now expected (e.g., Changing Places, inclusive changerooms).
- Sustainability and carbon-neutral operations are central in modern aquatic planning.

Relevance for Bayside

- The case studies highlight emerging practices that may offer useful direction for Bayside's future aquatic planning, particularly relating to:
 - » Warm-water program space to meet the needs of an ageing population
 - » Family-friendly and socially oriented spaces
 - » Integrated allied health and wellbeing services
 - » Universal and gender-inclusive access design
 - » Environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient systems
- These learnings also correspond with characteristics evident in Bayside's community, including an older demographic profile, high levels of physical activity and participation, and strong expectations for high-quality coastal and wellbeing amenities.

Community Demand and Participation

Key Learnings

- All case studies were driven by strong community advocacy, ageing assets, and need for upgraded services.
- Councils prioritised facilities that support all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.
- Learn-to-swim demand was a major driver for indoor pools

Relevance for Bayside

Local evidence indicates strong and sustained demand for learn-to-swim programs and warm-water access, particularly among priority cohorts.

- This aligns with Bayside's demographic profile, which features a high proportion of:

- » Young families requiring lesson pathways
 - » Older adults seeking rehabilitation and gentle exercise
 - » Highly active coastal residents with strong participation in wellness and leisure activities
- These trends reinforce the value of community-informed design principles within Bayside's aquatic strategy, ensuring future facilities reflect local needs, expectations, and usage patterns.

Sustainability & Environmental Performance

Key Learnings

- Strong shift toward geothermal heating, solar, high-performance building envelopes, and reduced chemical use.
- Scarborough's geothermal challenges highlight the need for thorough assessment, fallback systems and future provisioning.

Relevance for Bayside

- Bayside's coastal environment and climate commitments require:
 - » Carbon-neutral ambition
 - » Resilient systems
 - » Alternative energy strategies
- The strategy should consider lifecycle risk, not just initial sustainability options.

Critical Importance of Parking and Access

Key Learnings

- Parking was the most universal complaint across all redevelopments.
- Even high-performing facilities suffered reputational damage from inadequate access planning.

Relevance for Bayside

- SFLC already experiences severe congestion — case studies show this issue will intensify without intervention.
- Future options for any chosen location must include:
 - » Expanded parking
 - » Active transport integration
 - » Improved traffic flow
 - » Shared precinct planning

Multi-Council Partnerships & Shared Access

Key Learnings

- The Albury–Wodonga “Two Cities One Community” model demonstrates the value of joint infrastructure planning.
- Mount Alexander & City of Greater Bendigo partnership shows cross-LGA solutions for transport barriers and facility access.

Relevance for Bayside

- Bayside could explore partnerships with:
 - » Glen Eira
 - » Kingston
 - » Port Phillip
- Particularly critical due to land scarcity and the need for large capital investment.



6. Engagement Insights

Summary

Engagement was undertaken from 21 October to 25 November 2025, using a multi-channel approach to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness. Activities included an online community survey, community pop-in sessions, advisory and committee presentations, key stakeholder round tables, and one-to-one discussions with facility operators at SFLC and Brighton Baths. Neighbouring Councils were also engaged including City of Kingston, City of Port Philip and Glen Eira City Council as well as the State Government – Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJIR). Promotion reached more than 40,000 households through Council's digital, printed and in-person channels.

A total of 268 community survey responses were received by 9 November 2025, with a further 316 participants contributing through drop-in community sessions. Most respondents live within Bayside and actively use local aquatic or leisure facilities.

The key themes emerging from the engagements include:

- 81% of respondents believe it is very important that Council continues to own and invest in aquatic facilities.
- 79% support major redevelopment or replacement of existing centres over minor upgrades.
- Affordability, cleanliness and accessibility were consistently ranked as top community priorities.
- Participants emphasised the need for family-friendly amenities, warm-water programs, improved accessibility, sustainable design and adequate parking.
- Across stakeholder and internal Council engagement, there is alignment that Sandringham Family Leisure Centre is nearing end-of-life with considerable maintenance costs and issues and requires clear direction for renewal, while Middle Brighton Baths remains valued but constrained by access, wellness space, maintenance and infrastructure issues.
- Neighbouring Councils and State Government agencies highlighted the importance of a complementary, regionally aligned approach to aquatic and leisure planning, noting growing demand for warm-water programs, significant pressure on indoor court space, ageing regional aquatic assets and limited capital funding availability, reinforcing the need for Bayside's future provision to be strategically positioned, financially sustainable and responsive to identified service gaps.

6.1 Community Survey Insights

6.1.1 Demographic and Facility User Profile Summary



Age group that represents the highest percentage of the respondents is 35 to 44 years (39.2%) followed by 45 to 54 years (37.7%).



The majority (60.4%) of respondents were female.



The predominant postcodes where respondents lived were Brighton (17.5%), followed by Brighton East (14.6%), and Beaumaris (14.2%)

6.1.2 Non User Feedback

Non-users (17%) most cited the following barriers:

- Location (39%)
- Crowding (27%)

6.1.3 Facility User Feedback: Middle Brighton Baths

The Middle Brighton Baths facility accounts for about (16 %) of aquatic users. The survey showed strong representation from Brighton, Black Rock and Hampton suburbs. Typical users are adult swimmers and fitness members; however families were under-represented.

Barriers/Constraints:

- Accessibility (ramps & handrails)
- Amenities (cleanliness, size of change rooms)
- Security and youth behaviour concerns
- Parking limitations.

Participation Trends:

- Year-round core membership with winter decline (~15 % reduction); high morning use.

Motivations:

- Physical health (72%)
- Mental wellbeing (58%)
- Connection to the Bay (44%)
- Social community (32%)

Primary Activities:

- Lap swimming (46%)
- Ocean swimming (31%)
- Fitness classes (18%)
- Rehabilitation (9%)

6.1.4 Facility User Feedback: SFLC

Users of the SFLC facility represented the largest share (34 %) of aquatic users. Majority of respondents were from Brighton East, Sandringham and Beaumaris suburbs. Predominantly, families and school-aged children use the pool for recreation, swimming lessons, or club programs.

Barriers/Constraints:

- Crowding
- Dated change rooms
- Limited warm-water space
- Maintenance delays
- Parking shortage

Participation Trends:

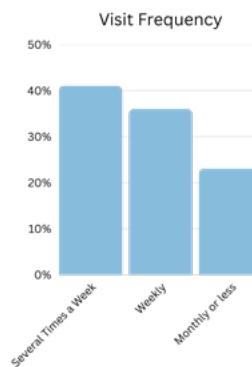
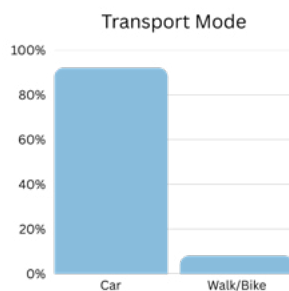
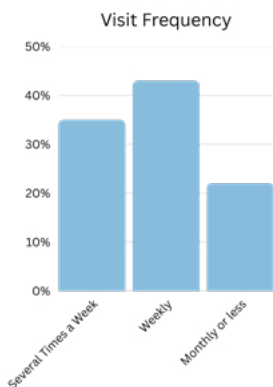
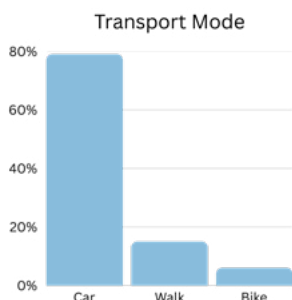
- Heavy use during afternoons/weekends
- Schools and clubs drive weekday demand

Motivations:

- Health & fitness (65 %)
- Social/family connection (42 %)
- Convenience of location (39 %)

Primary Activities:

- Learn-to-swim (38%)
- Lap swimming (29%)
- Aqua fitness (24%)
- Rehabilitation (14%)






6.1.5 Community Priorities and Expectation for Bayside Aquatic Facilities






WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OUR COMMUNITY

Sandringham Family Leisure Centre
Users prioritise access and family-friendly amenities.

		
62% Affordability	39% Parking	31% Warm-Water Access

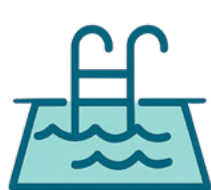
Brighton Baths
Users focus on accessibility and amenity.

		
36% Accessibility	49% Cleanliness	33% Safety & Bay Access

6.1.6 Community Feedback – Future Aquatic Facility Development

Community feedback strongly supports major investment in Bayside’s aquatic facilities to ensure they remain modern, accessible, and fit-for-purpose over the long term. When asked about Council’s role, 81 per cent of respondents said it is very important that Council continues to own and invest in local aquatic facilities, with a further 79 per cent supporting major redevelopment or replacement over minor upgrades.

Key themes related to new development provision included:



New or upgraded aquatic centre



Warm-water or hydrotherapy pool



Sustainable design



Upgraded changerooms



Affordability

6.2 Community Drop-in Sessions

Four community pop-in sessions were held to gather feedback on the level of support for future investment in Bayside's aquatic facilities. The sessions were conducted alongside the Recreation Strategy engagement and invited participants to provide their feedback on the state of aquatic facilities in Bayside as well as their appetite for future investment in existing facilities or new developments. A total of 316 community members participated in drop-in sessions at Dendy Park, Brighton Baths, Hampton Market and Sandringham Family Leisure Centre.


Key Themes

- Strong community endorsement for Council to invest in major upgrades or new aquatic facilities.
- Preference for outdoor, beach-style or salt-water options that reflect Bayside's coastal setting.
- Family-friendly and child-focused features seen as essential inclusions.
- Desire for natural design integration that complements the environment.
- Emphasis on long-term financial sustainability and maintenance affordability.
- Strong demand for a hydrotherapy or warm-water pool within Bayside to support rehabilitation, older adults and people living with disability.
- Perception that Sandringham Family Leisure Centre (SFLC) is outdated and underutilised, with many residents travelling to neighbouring facilities such as GESAC, Waves and Carnegie for better amenities and program variety.
- Awareness of existing Council facilities is low—many residents did not know SFLC included a pool or was a Council-owned asset.
- High community value placed on learn-to-swim, family and kids' programs, with requests for more flexible scheduling, smaller class sizes, and additional family-friendly features (e.g. wave machine, inflatables, indoor/outdoor play areas).
- Calls for modern, high-quality facilities that include features such as saunas, steam rooms, and lap lanes for multiple age groups.
- Environmental sustainability and coastal integration were recurring themes, including protecting and enhancing the Bay, adding showers or facilities along the foreshore, and designing more natural or eco-conscious pools.
- Mixed opinions on investment levels—most support major upgrades or new facilities, while a small number preferred focusing on affordability (e.g. subsidising swimming lessons or using private and school pools).
- Expectation that new developments should be accessible, affordable, and financially sustainable, balancing community demand with operational cost management.
- Recognition of population growth and service demand, with residents noting Bayside's future needs may require more than one upgraded or new facility.

6.3 Facility Provider Insights


6.3.1 SFLC

**FACILITY PROVIDER FEEDBACK
SANDRINGHAM FAMILY LEISURE CENTRE**




What's Working Well

- Strong Community usage and participation



Challenges

- Maintenance and parking issues
- Outdated infrastructure




Opportunities Ahead

- Modernise and upgrade facility
- Improve collaboration


6.3.2 Brighton Baths

**FACILITY PROVIDER FEEDBACK
BRIGHTON BATHS**




What's Working Well

- Health club engagement and retention
- Community use in Summer



Challenges

- Aged infrastructure
- Accessibility of facility
- Limited amenities



Opportunities Ahead

- Additional amenities
- Bike storage
- Facility maintenance program

6.4 Council Insights

6.4.1 Existing Aquatic Facility Provision- key themes

Constraint

- Ageing facilities with SFLC almost at end of life
- Maintenance costs
- Middle Brighton Baths seasonal based
- Layout, poor aesthetics, access points and geothermal issues at SFLC
- Parking and traffic at SFLC
- Current Management Model
- Poor Accessibility
- High energy use and costs
- Industrial area that impacts SFLC site
- Portion of community not aware there are Council aquatic facilities
- Cost impact of aged facilities
- Parking and traffic impacts to local residents
- Heritage constraints at Baths
- No unified approach to service provision at SFLC

Opportunities

- Council own SFLC land
- Maintaining SFLC as an activity hub given benefit of complimentary services
- Improve accessibility
- Developing goals and directions for both facilities
- Accountability of lessees
- Partner initiatives with neighbouring Councils for service gaps
- Improve service offerings
- Improve use of services and growth via alternate management model
- Celebrate unique heritage site at Middle Brighton Baths
- Interim investment in sites to cater to immediate community needs

6.4.2 Future Developments

Constraint

- Existing aquatics provision in region
- Capital and operational cost
- Limited funding avenues
- Time to construct new facilities
- Land access
- Current Management Model
- Poor Accessibility
- High energy use and costs
- Industrial area that impacts SFLC site
- Portion of community not aware there are Council aquatic facilities
- Cost impact of aged facilities
- Parking and traffic impacts to local residents
- Heritage constraints at Baths
- No unified approach to service provision at SFLC

Opportunities

- Align facility and services to defined community need
- Outcome on warm water
- Central location for new facility
- Community access to their own major facility
- Improve environmental outcomes
- Sustainable developments
- Robust business model to inform new site
- New partnerships and innovation
- Hub for other services i.e. aged care and youth

6.5 Neighbouring Councils

Neighbouring Councils were engaged to understand local facility demand and performance, the appetite for partnership and collaboration with Bayside, and upcoming developments, including how capital funding had previously been secured. All Councils expressed openness to collaborating on future facility provision and supporting Bayside residents to access services not currently available within Bayside. However, each Council also indicated that their own aquatic provision sufficiently meets the needs of their local communities. Opportunities for partnerships were strongest in relation to indoor courts and multi-purpose facilities, with co-located or shared-use arrangements viewed most favourably.

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP	CITY OF KINGSTON	GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL
<p>Key Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient existing aquatic provision via MSAC and open water access. Higher priority for indoor court space and general recreation renewal. Privately leased St Kilda Baths limits Council involvement or data access. Complex funding environment for foreshore infrastructure. Potential partnership opportunity around indoor sport infrastructure, rather than aquatic. Current strategic review underway that may inform future alignment opportunities for indoor sports. 	<p>Key Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waves Aquatic Centre is heavily utilised but nearing end of life. Feasibility on future options underway. The new Mordialloc Aquatic Centre was designed to meet southern-LGA demand and will strongly influence regional facility distribution. Funding local and federal based. Kingston is highly open to cross-boundary partnerships and believes regional aquatic planning should be complementary, not competitive. Significant stadium shortages exist, presenting potential collaboration areas. The Suburban Rail Loop and future high-density development may reshape demand patterns across both LGAs. 	<p>Key Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong existing aquatic provision supported by two major aquatic centres, GESAC and Carnegie. Highly utilised facilities and financially sustainable sites. Clear focus on wellness programming, particularly at Carnegie, offering a point of difference from larger centres. High utilisation of warm-water pools, with GESAC at capacity during peak times. Openness to partnerships for warm-water access as an interim measure for Bayside residents. Growing demand for court space, with limited land available for expansion.

6.6 State Government

As part of the Bayside Aquatic Strategy, engagement with the State Government sought to:

Understand any future state-led developments that could influence aquatic and recreation provision within Bayside over the next 10+ years.

Explore potential funding opportunities and alignment with broader state initiatives, particularly for aquatic and leisure infrastructure.

Key Themes:

- State Projects: No major State Government aquatic or recreation developments planned for Bayside.
- Funding Landscape: Limited funding available for aquatic facilities; focus has shifted toward smaller-scale, community-need-driven projects.
- Eligibility Challenges: Bayside’s affluence and existing facility provision reduce competitiveness for SRV funding.
- Private Leases: Facilities with commercial lease arrangements (e.g., Brighton Baths) are unlikely to qualify for SRV funding.
- Strategic Direction: Council encouraged to be data-driven and prioritise community need over aspirational facility expansion.
- Indoor Court Demand: Strong recognition of court shortages across Victoria; potential for future cross-council collaboration.
- Tourism Opportunities: Potential exists to pursue tourism-related grants via other departments for projects like Middle Brighton Baths revitalisation.

7. Key insights & gap analysis

Community Needs Summary

LOCATION



- Low Aquatic provision compared to population size.
- Uneven facility distribution, with most aquatic services concentrated in the southern end of Bayside LGA.
- Future imbalance expected, as the new Mordialloc centre (2026) will further strengthen provision in the south.
- Reduced regional access due to possible Waves’ closure (reaching end of life), increasing pressure on central and northern Bayside.
- Clear geographic gap in aquatic access for residents in the central and northern suburbs.
- The future Victorian Government’s Suburban Rail Loop project encompasses a station at Cheltenham.

DEMOGRAPHICS



- Older population growing faster than state averages.
- 43% are aged over 49 years.
- Insufficient warm-water and hydrotherapy capacity to meet current and forecast needs of ageing residents.
- Limited accessible changerooms and mobility-friendly design, creating barriers for seniors and people with chronic conditions.
- Demand for adolescent programming increasing, with limited current options for teens beyond lap swimming and squad.

EXISTING FACILITIES



- SFLC has strong membership numbers with 1.3M visits per year and 430,000 visit Brighton Baths annually.
- SFLC has extensive maintenance issues, poorly designed layout, no longer fit for purpose and has an estimated lifespan of 5 years.
- Brighton Baths requires remediation to extend its lifespan to 25 years.
- Extreme congestion and significant car parking pressures at SFLC.
- Parking pressures at Brighton Baths.

POPULATION GROWTH



- Bayside LGA is forecasted to grow by 28,920 people by 2046.
- Cheltenham is expected double in population. By 2046.
- By 2046 there will be an extra 10,452 children aged 5-9 years.
- There will be an extra 15,866 adults aged 35-44 years by 2046 which will show an increase in families with children.

HEALTH



- High prevalence of Arthritis, cancer and heart disease.
- 42% of residents are either overweight or obese.
- Highly sedentary lifestyles -51.5% of residents reporting sitting for at least five hours per day.
- 10,000 residents have pension concession cards.

FACILITY GAP



- Under provision of warm water pools in Bayside LGA. Neighbouring LGA Warm water pools close to capacity.
- Wellbeing facilities, high in demand and low in local supply.
- Limited accessibility and mobility-friendly facilities, creating barriers for seniors and people with chronic conditions.
- High proportion of young families drives strong need for learn-to-swim, child-friendly water spaces and year-round indoor availability.
- Expansion of rehabilitation, aqua fitness, mindfulness sessions, and inclusive programs for seniors and people with disability.
- Flexible working spaces- 43% of residents work from home.

INDUSTRY & GLOBAL TRENDS



- Shift from traditional 50m outdoor pools to diversified indoor aquatic hubs.
- Facilities are shifting from traditional sport-centric models to community-orientated, socially inclusive environments
- Increasing focus on ageing populations, accessibility upgrades, gentle exercise spaces, and warm-water programming.
- Designing pools to encourage conversation and connection (shallower, warmer leisure water).
- Environmental sustainability must evolve.
- Reframing aquatic centres from “subsidised” to value-generating community infrastructure.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT



- To create a healthy and active Bayside.
- By 2050, Bayside aims to lead as a diverse, healthy, and liveable community.
- The community will be inclusive, safe, and accessible.
- Provide opportunities to enhance community well-being and resilience by increasing social connection, actively maintaining inclusive spaces, and promoting mental health literacy.
- Promote, encourage and support walking to establish a walking culture.
- Improve the integration of cycling with land use development, public transport and other key amenities.
- Providing great places for people to recreate in, and to be socially connected.

THE COMMUNITY SAID



- It is very important that Council continues to own and invest in aquatic facilities.
- 79% support major redevelopment or replacement of existing centres over minor upgrades.
- SFLC top 3 priorities: Affordability, parking and warm water access
- Brighton baths top 3 priorities: Accessibility, cleanliness, safe bay access
- Top 5 future development priorities: New Aquatic Centre, Warm water or hydrotherapy pool, sustainable design, upgraded change rooms, affordable.
- Biggest challenges: Parking, outdated infrastructure, maintenance, accessibility

NEIGHBOURING LGAS



- Most LGA neighbours have undergone recent aquatic redevelopments.
- Neighbouring LGAs rated a shortage of indoor stadium courts as their biggest gap.
- 3 neighbouring LGAs said they had an appetite to partner on indoor stadium courts.

8. Guiding Principles of Strategic Objectives



1. Community Wellbeing

Facilities that enhance physical activity, mental health, safety and social connection across all ages and abilities.

2. Inclusive & Equitable Access

Universally accessible, gender-safe, culturally welcoming and affordable aquatic services for all community members.

3. Sustainability & Climate Resilience

Low-energy, low-carbon, water-efficient infrastructure that supports Council’s environmental commitments and long-term climate readiness.

4. Customer Experience Excellence

Modern, clean, safe and high-quality environments supported by an effective management model, great staff, strong communication, digital innovation and contemporary programming.

5. Sustainable Business Model

Plan the right facility mix to support long-term financial stability and community value, reducing operating losses and strengthening economic benefit.

6. Asset Stewardship & Lifecycle Planning

Maintain well-functioning, safe and reliable aquatic facilities through proactive maintenance, renewal planning, and long-term asset management frameworks.

7. Strategic Partnerships & Regional Collaboration

Working with neighbouring LGAs, schools, health providers and sporting bodies to expand access, share resources and complement—not duplicate—regional services.

8. Future-Ready, Adaptable & Innovative Facilities.

Plan beyond like-for-like replacement by delivering flexible, multi-purpose and scalable facilities that incorporate emerging technologies, anticipate demographic change and lead with innovative design and programming.

9. Data-Driven Planning & Evaluation

Decisions guided by community needs, demographics, visitation trends, operational data and social impact measurement.



10. Strengthening Bayside’s Identity & Place

Aquatic spaces that celebrate the coastline, attract visitors, activate public places and reinforce Bayside as a vibrant, healthy, connected and distinctive destination.

9. Key Strategic Directions for Aquatics in Bayside

Vision statement

Aquatics in Bayside is a destination for wellness and connection for our local community and visitors. Our leisure spaces embody the community vision: love where we live. Aquatics in Bayside is unique and future focused and we are known as the wellness destination that aligns to our community profile and celebrates our iconic landmarks and origins.

<p>Focus Area</p>	 <p>BRIGHTON BATHS</p>	 <p>SANDRINGHAM FAMILY LEISURE CENTRE</p>
<p>Future Vision</p>	<p>Restore the site’s historic wellness focus by celebrating its heritage character while introducing a modernised wellness and lifestyle offering. This will revitalise the facility and position it as a destination for both locals and visitors.</p>	<p>Re-imagine the site to deliver sustainable and expanded health and leisure services that become a destination for the local community and its visitors.</p>
<p>Key Directions: Short Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve compliance and safety through targeted facility upgrades. • Strengthen inclusivity through improved infrastructure and accessible equipment. • Increase visibility and communication of the facility’s wellness outcomes. • Clarify and align maintenance responsibilities and priorities across all parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the operational efficiency of the facility by transitioning to a contemporary and coordinated management model. • Extend end of life of the asset by delivering a focused maintenance program.
<p>Key Directions: Medium to long Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a facility plan for Middle Brighton Baths. • Enhance the Middle Brighton Baths facility to improve the scale, range and diversity of health and wellness initiatives offered. 	<p>Undertake a feasibility review of the site to inform future needs of a new development and integrate findings into a business case to support the planning, funding and development of a new facility.</p>

Future Aquatic Centre Development: Key Directions and Priorities

Key Priority Areas

The below summary of key priority areas have been developed integrating the bespoke needs of the community as well as economic viability of a large multi-purpose centre, as identified within this Aquatic Strategy. These include:

- Facilities and services to support an ageing population.
- Facilities that address gaps in provision i.e. warm water pools, splash park.
- Facilities and services that support young families and teens.
- A facility that is fully accessible and inclusive to meet the diverse and changing community needs and expectations.
- A facility of size and scale to meet the demand and visitation needs of the local community and region.
- Replacement and extension of existing aquatics provision in the local community.
- Facilities and services that are intergenerational and enable the community to connect and realise health and wellbeing outcomes, year-round.
- Clearly defined and complimentary offering of services through facility design that promote improved wellbeing that is differentiated from sites in the regional network (20-minute drive time) supporting visitation from the local community and wider region.
- Aligned to global and national trends in how leisure is provided in the modern era.
- Facilities and services that support a viable business and reduce the financial burden of major assets to the Council.
- Alignment of facility purpose and outcomes intended for users, which can be used to support capital funding.
- A modern asset that is climate resilient and sustainable and can respond to the future population needs for the next 50+ years.

In addition to the defined community needs the development priorities integrate the key principles of aquatic and recreation facility developments that promote health and wellbeing outcomes, industry best practice and site relevance in the leisure landscape, compliance to relevant legislation, guidelines and access and inclusion principles.

Key Principles of New Development

The key principles to be integrated in a new development include:

Health and Wellbeing



- Rehabilitation and mobility
- Fitness
- Mental Health
- Essential skills (water safety and awareness)

Social and Community



- Intergenerational spaces
- Community connectivity
- Social connectivity
- Meet local expectations

Safety and Compliance



- Compliance to building codes, key legislation and industry guidelines i.e. GSPO
- Amenities and design support public health and safety
- Child safe spaces

Access and Inclusion



- Non-intimidating spaces
- Gender inclusivity design principles
- Compliance to accessibility and equity legislation
- Parking and way finding prioritising safety principles
- Intuitive way finding

Environment and Sustainability



- Sustainable design and systems including integration of renewable energy
- Climate resilient – coastal location

Modernisation



- Adaptable/flexible spaces
- Aligned to surrounding environment
- Align with national and global trends and best practices

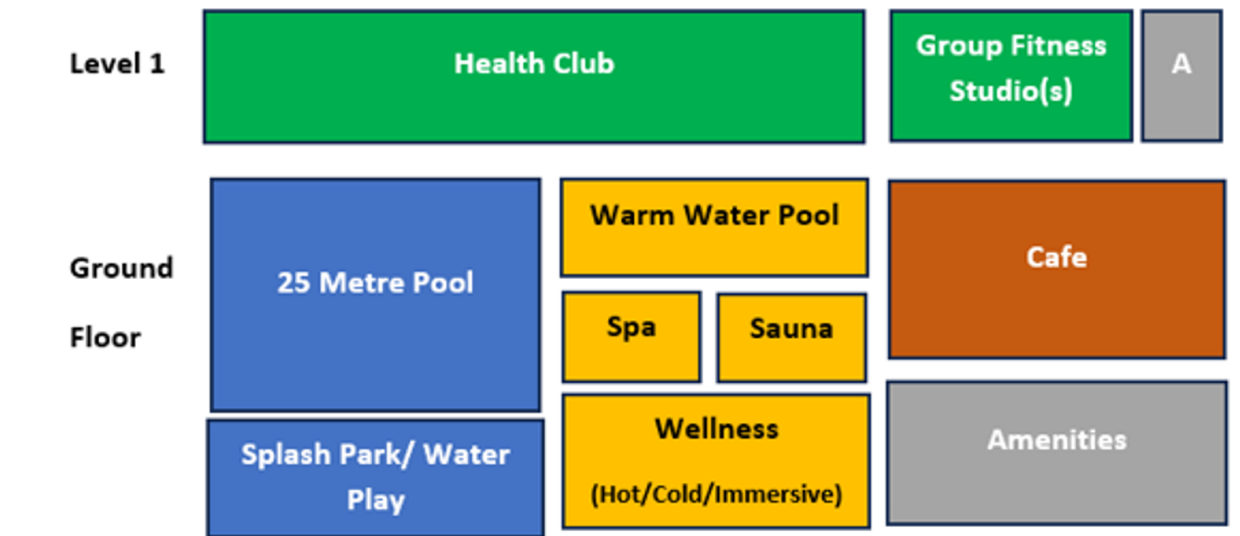
Economic



- Facilities align to local needs and market gaps to drive local and district visitation
- Design principles support efficient and effective operations and overall financial sustainability
- Meets future needs and growth

High Level Facility Concept Model

The model below represents a minimum requirement for facility components of a new development to support the community needs outlined and align to the design priorities and principles of a new facility.



Key Features

- Focused facility components to meet and address diverse community needs and demographic.
- Wellness focused facility to address immediate needs and differentiate the asset in the regional context.
- Defined 'zones' – wet and dry, public participation, wellness and lifestyle area to maximise user experience and diversity of users at the site.
- Adaptable spaces including moveable floors and multipurpose program rooms to respond to user group needs and changing trends in wellness and ensure economic viability of the asset.

Location for New Development

A detailed site assessment is required on short listed sites to evaluate their suitability and feasibility to accommodate the future aquatic centre development. Following high level assessment of a range of sites throughout the Local Government Area, existing site Sandringham Family Leisure Centre (SFLC) and Brighton Golf Course (BCG) precinct have been determined as the most suitable options as the location for the new development. Other sites identified were assessed against a high-level framework to determine their eligibility for a secondary and detailed site review.

All other options were eliminated in conjunction with Council, due to constraints with site size, accessibility limitations, lack of connectedness to transport network and zoning or ownership limitations. Through initial assessment, both SFLC and BCG are feasible options to be considered in further detail.

Key consideration of each site include:

Site	Assessment Score	Key Advantages	Key Limitations
Site 1 (SFLC)	78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing site infrastructure • Place making opportunity within sport and commercial precinct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on current users and service interruption • Construction implication/costs due to re-development of existing site (brownfield site)
Site 2 (BCG)	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility and location to catchment • Construction method/cost (greenfield site) • Larger site to facilitate optimal layout and potential for future expansion (if needed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on existing users (reduction/loss of golf driving range)

Following concept modelling and detailed location assessment, it is proposed the concept and location agreed moves to business case.

10.Strategy Objectives and Action Plan

- Strategic Objective One: Enhance the Quality, Capacity and Capability of Services and Facilities
- Strategic Objective Two: Inclusive, Accessible Facilities That Support Community Wellbeing
- Strategic Objective Three: Sustainable, Resilient and Future-Ready Aquatic infrastructure
- Strategic Objective Four: Partnership and Regional Collaboration to Enhance Community Outcomes






TIMELINE AND PRIORITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Immediate 1-12 months Short Term 1-3 years Medium Term 4-7 years Long Term 8-10 years








Strategic Objective 1: Enhance the Quality, Capacity and Capability of services and facilities



Through strong governance practices ensure Bayside’s aquatic facilities operate as vibrant, active community hubs by enhancing the quality, capacity and capability of services. Improve community engagement and satisfaction through consistent service standards and streamlined operations.

CATEGORY	THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE
Facility Operations 	Strengthen Management of Lessees	<p>Council to implement a Contract Manager who will manage and oversee the all lessees at SFLC and Brighton Baths. Adherence to Lease obligations to be audited and managed accordingly, particularly in relation to maintenance, cleanliness and open hours.</p> <p>Implement a KPI and reporting structure with each lessee which covers areas such as maintenance, cleanliness, customer satisfaction, sustainability, visitation and program outcomes.</p>	Immediate
Facility Operations 	Improved accountability for lessee maintenance obligations	<p>Convene an initial maintenance coordination meeting with all lessees to clarify maintenance expectations, review responsibilities under each lease, and jointly develop an agreed action plan outlining required works, timeframes and accountability.</p> <p>Council’s Contract Manager (once in place) will implement monthly inspections and follow ups, and ensure obligations are met through a clear and consistent reporting and escalation process.</p>	Immediate
Facility Operations 	New Management Model for SFLC	<p>Embed a revised contemporary management model for the facility that focuses on the integration of services and drives financial and operational efficiencies for Council and the community.</p> <p>The management model should be considered as part of the existing operation and for future facility redevelopment options. The model should focus on outcomes that align to Council’s key strategic goals and enhance activation of the site.</p>	Short - Medium Term

Strategic Objective 2: Inclusive, Accessible Facilities That Support Community Wellbeing



Provide aquatic services that are welcoming, inclusive and accessible for everyone regardless of age, ability, gender, cultural background or financial circumstance. Facilities and programs will support healthy, active lifestyles, promote social connection, and help the community to age well in line with Bayside’s broader wellbeing commitments.



CATEGORY	THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE
 <p>Accessibility</p>	Car parking plan for SFLC	Undertake a detailed car parking and traffic management study for SFLC to address current congestion and improve safety and access. The plan should analyse peak-period vehicle movements, internal circulation, pedestrian safety, and conflicts between aquatic users, basketball patrons and other site visitors.	Immediate
 <p>Sustainability and Access</p>	Enhance Bike Parking, End-of-Trip Facilities, and Micro-Mobility Options	Prepare a precinct-specific Active Transport Strategy for SFLC and Middle Brighton Baths to improve safe and efficient arrival by walking, cycling, and public transport. The strategy should address access routes, wayfinding, lighting, safety, bike storage, and interface with broader Council transport plans.	Short Term
 <p>Sustainability and Access</p>	Active Travel Promotion	Introduce community engagement initiatives—such as active travel maps, “Walk/Ride to the Pool” campaigns, incentives, and partnerships with schools and basketball clubs—to encourage mode shift from private vehicles to active or public travel.	Immediate
 <p>Sustainability and Access</p>	Enhance Bike Parking, and Micro-Mobility Options at Brighton Baths	At Brighton Baths, install more bike parking and sheltered storage (where feasible). Explore opportunities for e-bike charging, shared micro-mobility zones, and improved facilities to support cyclists and pedestrians to access Brighton Baths.	Short Term
 <p>Sustainability and Access</p>	Improve accessibility at Middle Brighton Baths foreshore	Develop and implement an accessibility upgrade plan for the Middle Brighton Baths foreshore and water-entry points. This should include improved pathways and gradients, installation of accessible ramps and handrails, consideration of a beach-access mat or similar seasonal solution, and modifications that enable safe, independent access for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, or with reduced balance.	Short Term
 <p>Accessibility</p>	Increase access to public lap swimming at SFLC	Develop a clear and equitable scheduling model that allocates lanes between Learn-to-Swim, squads, programs, and public lap swimming, ensuring accessible times during non-LTS periods and across daytime hours. Establish baseline access standards (e.g., a minimum of two public lanes available always) and embed these requirements within lessee performance agreements. Actively promote public and recreational swimming times through improved communication channels to increase awareness and usage.	Immediate
 <p>Programming & participation</p>	Increase provision of equipment hire for Bay activities	Enhance and further activate aquatic and recreation opportunities at Middle Brighton Baths and the surrounding foreshore precinct with increased equipment provision and facilities including equipment hire to increase participation opportunities.	Medium Term

<p>Programming & participation</p> 	<p>Enhance awareness of aquatic facilities available in Bayside</p>	<p>Improve the promotion of Bayside’s aquatic facilities through a coordinated marketing and communications campaign that promotes all aquatic facilities, programs and services across the municipality. Include branding, key messages, seasonal promotions and consistent digital presence.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
<p>Programming & participation</p> 	<p>Enhance program offerings for marginalised communities across SFLC and Brighton Baths</p>	<p>Work with lessees to strengthen the inclusive culture at SFLC and Middle Brighton Baths by expanding equipment provision and program offerings for marginalised and under-represented groups. Develop tailored aquatic, wellness and fitness programs for people with disability, culturally diverse communities, older adults, women and girls, and residents facing financial or social barriers.</p>	<p>Medium - Long Term</p>

Strategic Objective 3: Sustainable, Resilient and Future-Ready Aquatic Infrastructure




Plan, manage and invest in aquatic assets responsibly through clear lifecycle planning, timely maintenance, accessibility improvements and long-term renewal strategies. Apply sustainable design principles, reduce environmental impact, and ensure new and existing facilities remain safe, resilient, and financially viable for future generations.

CATEGORY	THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE
Asset Management 	Address critical asset items at SFLC	Develop a comprehensive Asset Improvement Plan for SFLC that identifies and prioritises critical maintenance, safety, and compliance requirements and follows key recommendations within the asset audit report for the site delivered as part of the SFLC facility review. The plan should establish a forward maintenance schedule that enables the facility to operate reliably for its predicted remaining five-year lifespan, ensuring the centre remains safe, functional and serviceable while Council progresses medium-term actions relating to future aquatic facility development.	Short Term
Asset Management 	Accessibility and Facility Renewal Plan for the Middle Brighton Baths	Prepare an Accessibility and Facility Renewal Plan for the Middle Brighton Baths that prioritises upgrades to improve access, safety, and user experience—such as accessible water entry, compliant changerooms, pathways, lighting and amenities. The plan should outline targeted renewal works required to ensure the facility remains functional, inclusive and fit-for-purpose over the next 10–15 years and follows key recommendations within the asset audit report for the site delivered as part of the MBB facility review.	Medium Term

<p>Aquatic Infrastructure</p> 	<p>Develop a New Aquatic and Wellness Facility in Bayside</p>	<p>Develop a Business Case for a new aquatic and wellness facility that meets the identified community needs and gaps, is sustainable economically and environmentally and aligns to Councils broader strategic objectives and plans. The Business Case should consider a viable concept model and location with cost benefits demonstrated and a range of funding options considered to support the capital requirements.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
<p>Aquatic Infrastructure</p> 	<p>Develop a masterplan for the Middle Brighton Baths</p>	<p>Develop a masterplan for the Middle Brighton Baths that will create a long-term vision that positions the precinct as a signature coastal, wellness and tourism destination for Bayside.</p> <p>The masterplan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long-term vision for the precinct, incorporating community needs, heritage values, coastal character, and strategic opportunities linked to major State Government initiatives, including the SRL. • Define a future identity for the Baths that enhances Bayside’s coastal tourism appeal. • Quantify the tourism uplift potential • Short-, medium- and long-term actions, capital requirements, staging logic and interdependencies to guide future planning, investment decisions and funding applications. 	<p>Short / Medium Term</p>

Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships and Regional Collaboration to Enhance Community Outcomes

Work collaboratively with neighbouring LGAs, schools, health providers, sporting groups, government agencies and the private sector to improve access to aquatic and wellness opportunities. Partnerships will expand service capacity, support regional alignment, improve warm-water access, and unlock funding and shared-resource opportunities.

CATEGORY	THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE
Access and Inclusion 	Improve Access to Warm Water Through Regional Partnerships	Collaborate with adjacent municipalities (e.g., Kingston, Glen Eira, Monash, Port Phillip, Greater Dandenong) to explore shared access arrangements for warm water pools, hydrotherapy, and program pools while Bayside’s provision remains limited. Track resident participation, travel patterns, program demand, and partnership performance to assess effectiveness and inform future facility planning and investment.	Immediate
Access and Inclusion 	Strengthen access to aquatic, leisure and wellbeing services.	Develop, negotiate and formalise structured partnership agreements with neighbouring LGAs and key education providers to strengthen regional access to aquatic, leisure and wellbeing services. Establish clear partnership objectives, governance structures and evaluation measures to ensure partnerships deliver mutual benefit, maximise regional capacity, and improve community access to services not currently available within Bayside.	Short - Medium Term
Recreation Infrastructure 	Undertake feasibility on SFLC future needs and redevelopment options for the site.	Undertake a feasibility study on the future purpose of the SFLC site, determining future site uses that meet community and regional network needs, given the existing site is coming to end of life. Following detailed feasibility, the agreed direction should move to business case for detailed design, planning and investment analysis that drives the best outcome for the community.	Medium Term