Mt Barker set to make a splash

The Mount Barker District Council has unveiled concept plans for the first stage of its multi-million dollar Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre for community feedback.

The concept is proposed to deliver a premier modern indoor facility for year-round swimming and recreation that will allow for future expansion as population continues to increase in the region.

The concept, (estimated at $28-30million), will be located on Bald Hills Road, as part of a larger recreation and leisure hub, which also incorporates the new Regional Sports Hub. The Federal Government has already committed $10million towards the project, however more assistance is required.

The concept plans for Stage 1 feature an indoor 10-lane 25 metre competition and lap pool, an integrated learn to swim, leisure and children’s pool, fitness centre, meeting rooms, creche, kiosk/café, change rooms, toilets and amenities and car parking.

Mayor Ann Ferguson says Stage 1 of the proposed centre seeks to cater for as many different ages, interests and abilities as possible, creating a facility to support health and wellbeing and which meets the diverse aquatic needs of the region.

“This is an exciting opportunity for the community to contribute their thoughts on the creation of a truly regional facility that will bring people together through swimming and recreation all year round,” Mayor Ferguson says.

“With a lap pool for recreational and competition swimming, along with a pool for children and families, gym, café and more, this facility will be a drawcard for people of all ages from across the Hills and beyond. A development of this calibre will further cement Mount Barker’s growing reputation as an exciting and progressive place to live, work and invest.”

The design allows for future expansion, including indoor sports courts, expanded aquatic leisure facilities, an outdoor 50m pool and indoor warm water therapy pool.

Although not currently included within Stage 1, Council’s preference is that a dedicated warm water therapy pool is included and it will pursue the development of a business case to support this option. The warm water therapy pool would provide for a range of activities including water-based therapies, classes, and swimming and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities or sensory issues.
“We strongly encourage people who would use a warm water therapy pool – including health providers – to take part in the consultation process so that we can gauge the local demand for such a facility and lobby State and Federal Governments for funding to allow its inclusion in Stage 1,” Mayor Ferguson says.

Feasibility work has been undertaken to establish the need for the facility, which is driven by the popularity of swimming and the significant population growth occurring in the region. Its design and operation will seek to optimise the facility’s financial performance in order to limit its net operating expenditure.

“We know that building something of this magnitude is a big undertaking – especially for a council that is already under pressure to provide a significant number of new infrastructure projects to keep pace with our district’s growth,” Mayor Ferguson says.

“That’s why we are pursuing all possible funding avenues in order to minimise the financial impact on Council and our ratepayers. Council cannot build this alone, and securing external funding will be critical if this project is to go ahead.”

The proposed centre will replace Mount Barker’s aging Mountain Pool, which will be closed after 60 years of serving the community well.

**Community consultation on the Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre concept begins on 9 September and runs until 7 October 2019.**

For more details, or to sign up to receive email updates visit [mountbarker.sa.gov.au/aquatic](http://mountbarker.sa.gov.au/aquatic)

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