

# Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre

Fact sheet – September 2019



## What is the Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre?

Mount Barker District Council is proposing to build a Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre on land it owns on Bald Hills Road.

It will be a premier modern indoor sports and recreation facility that will also become a community meeting point and visitor attraction, as well as a significant addition to the Bald Hills Road regional sports precinct.

Stage 1 is proposed to include:

- A 10-lane 25m competition capable lap pool
- An integrated learn to swim, leisure and children's pool
- Fitness centre
- Meeting rooms
- Creche
- Kiosk/café servicing both the centre and adjacent walking trail
- Change rooms, toilets and associated amenities
- New access road and car parking
- New plant and equipment

Concept designs have been created for the facility and Council wants to hear the community's feedback before it progresses to the detailed design phase.

## What are the future stages and when will they be built?

The concept features future staged development opportunities including a 50m outdoor long-course swimming and events pool; an outdoor children's water park with splash pad and waterslide; a warm water therapy pool and indoor sports courts. The timing of these elements will be dependent on future demand and funding availability.

## How much will it cost and who will fund it?

The preliminary cost estimate for Stage 1 of the project is in the order of \$28-30 million. The Federal Government has already committed \$10 million to the project and Council is actively pursuing other funding sources including State and Federal Government grants and commercial leasing or operating arrangements.

A business case and cost benefit analysis have been prepared for the project to provide greater detail on costs and funding opportunities. Council estimates the centre will have an annual operating expenditure consistent with the existing Mountain Pool facility, driven by increased revenue that would significantly offset the costs of operation. Annual costs relating to depreciation and borrowing costs will be refined as construction costs and the extent of external funding is better understood.

## How will the centre benefit the Mount Barker district?

The Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre will provide a state-of-the-art recreation facility, community meeting point and visitor attraction with many benefits including:

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- Year-round accessible sport and recreation for a wide range of users of all ages.
- Multi-purpose use including learn to swim, competitive swimming and training, recreational swimming.
- A facility that encourages increased physical activity and wellbeing.
- A regional destination that will draw visitors to our city and wider region, delivering a positive flow-on economic impact.

## Why not upgrade Mountain Pool?

The Mount Barker Mountain Pool is an ageing facility (over 60 years old) and has reached the end of its life. The pool structures and associated plant and equipment are out of date and cannot cater for our growing community. The site itself is not large enough to economically accommodate a modern facility. Mountain Pool's unusual length (33 and one-third yards) also means it is not ideal for competition swimming. It is expensive to run and can only operate for a limited time of the year due to constraints around minimum temperatures required for operation.

Further planning and community consultation will be undertaken to understand how best the ex-Mountain Pool site can meet the needs of the community into the future.

## Why a 25m pool, not a 50m?

An indoor 50m pool is estimated to cost as much as an additional \$400,000 a year to operate and up to \$5 million in additional construction costs.

Council is committed to building an aquatic facility that will be accessible to all in our community and is conscious that over investment in one component puts at risk the ability to provide facilities for other segments of the community, such as the warm water therapy pool. The concept design for Stage 1 includes a 10-lane 25m competition and lap swimming pool which will cater for local swimming clubs and can host club-level competitions as well as recreational swimming and classes.

The site chosen and total design scheme proposed allows for an outdoor 50m pool to be developed in future stages as population and demands assist its viability.

## Will the warm water therapy pool go ahead?

Council is exploring the option to include a dedicated, standalone warm water therapy pool as part of Stage 1 of the Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

This facility would cater for a range of uses including water-based therapies, rehabilitation, aquatic classes, and swimming lessons and recreation for people including those with disabilities or sensory issues in a quieter environment that could be separated off from the main pool complex.

Council is working hard to incorporate a broad mix of facilities within the centre design to cater for the needs of all community members. It is Council's preference to include the warm water therapy pool in Stage 1 and it is actively pursuing external funding opportunities to secure as many facilities as possible. However, if the required funding is not available, it may have to defer the warm water therapy pool until a later stage.

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## Why was the location chosen?

The Centre will be located on Bald Hills Road, opposite the Laratinga Wetlands. It will sit within Mount Barker's Regional Hub a precinct that will ultimately accommodate the regional sports hub, aquatic centre, 18 hole golf course (existing), wetlands (existing) and a range of other possible uses including complementary leisure, community, commercial, accommodation and education activities.

The extension to the linear trail will connect directly into the Centre (extending from Laratinga Wetlands underneath Bald Hills Road) and a proposed regional adventure playground is also planned for adjacent the new facility, creating a unique and significant community precinct.

The location is well placed to not only serve the city of Mount Barker, but is also well positioned for convenient access from the freeway, being only several minutes from the recently completed Bald Hills Interchange.

## Have your say

Your feedback is important to help shape the detailed design of the Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre. You can take part by completing our online survey and signing up to receive email updates at: [mountbarker.sa.gov.au/aquatic](http://mountbarker.sa.gov.au/aquatic).

Comments can be made in writing and delivered by mail to: Regional Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Facility, PO Box 54, Mount Barker, South Australia, 5251; or by email to [aquatic@mountbarker.sa.gov.au](mailto:aquatic@mountbarker.sa.gov.au).

A community drop-in information session will be held at the Mount Barker Central Shopping Centre on Saturday, 21 September from 10am-1pm.