

A rejuvenated aquatic centre

We are seeking

To rejuvenate Warrnambool's aquatic centre, AquaZone, which is approaching end-of-life and struggling to meet the demands of a growing city.

Warrnambool's much loved and well utilised community aquatic centre is reaching end of life.

The 55-yard outdoor pool, opened in 1962, has costly maintenance issues and plant and equipment for which some spare parts have to be custom machined.

The indoor pools and fitness spaces – completed in 2002 - do not meet the needs of a growing city nor contemporary accessibility requirements.

AquaZone receives more than 200,000 visits annually and is used not only by many of Warrnambool's 36,000 residents but also by residents in neighbouring Moyne Shire. The recent closure of Port Fairy's pool has added demand on AquaZone. Essential learn-to-swim classes are delivered in the indoor and outdoor pools while a swimming club, schools and those recovering from injury also rely on AquaZone.

In 2024 Warrnambool City Council adopted a new Aquatic Strategy that identified a staged approach to providing a fit-for-purpose aquatic centre for Warrnambool. The strategy, which received strong community support, indicated a preference for a redeveloped facility on the current site along Botanic Road, a geographically central city location.

Without investment, the facility will continue to deteriorate. The region risks the loss of one of its most important health, wellbeing and social connection facilities. With no comparable public aquatic centres nearby, disruption or closure would have profound social and community impacts.

Benefits of the upgraded facility include:

- Provision of facilities that respond to the identified needs of the community, current and future.
- Increased patronage, participation and health and well-being outcomes. An increase in visits per head of population of 2.9 to 8.6 visits per head of population.
- Access to a competition level 50m pool in South West Victoria which will strengthen the capacity of sporting and swim clubs to increase participation and boost opportunity for competitive swimming success.
- All-abilities access to the region's premier aquatic facility.

- Enhanced efficiency and financial performance. Projected net performance improvement of \$532,000 per annum.

Stage 1 Core aquatic, entry and fitness works - \$54.7 million

Construction of the new 50-metre pool, plant, and spectator seating, along with a new entry, foyer, café, dry-fitness areas and upgraded change facilities - addressing ageing infrastructure and significantly enhancing accessibility.

Funding model

- Victorian Government \$21.9m
- Australian Government \$21.9m
- Warrnambool city Council \$10.9m

Stage 2 - \$20.7 million - Indoor Pool and Fitness Centre Revival

Delivery of a new warm water pool, spa, sauna and additional program rooms to support rehabilitation, health and wellbeing activities, and expanded community programming.

Funding model

- Victorian Government \$8.3m
- Australian Government \$8.3m
- Warrnambool City Council \$4.1m

In early 2026 Council endorsed a business case for the redevelopment of AquaZone. It found a benefit to cost ratio of 0.55, an extremely conservative figure because many of the social and community benefits (including fostering stronger social connections and inclusivity) associated with the investment could not be quantified.

Funding is sought to deliver this much-needed social infrastructure for our city and region. While the redevelopment can be staged, Council is keen to limit construction cost escalation and progress the full redevelopment as soon as possible.



Contact

Andrew Mason
Chief Executive Officer
Warrnambool City Council

✉ amason@warrnambool.vic.gov.au
☎ 5559 4800