

### **3.3 REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE**

Author: Ruth Robles McColl - Senior Project Manager, Assets & City Services

---

#### **SUMMARY**

1. Council is committed to providing accessible, high quality and contemporary facilities that support our community to be active, engaged and healthy.
2. In 2020 an independent review of Olympic Leisure Centre (OLC) confirmed declining performance and identified some of the contributing factors through a comparative and industry situational analysis. It also highlighted some of the issues and constraints in terms of its future role as a facility to provides Aquatics in Banyule.
3. OLC is currently closed and has been since April 2020 due to emergency works needed to repair essential safety elements and leaking pools as well as Covid-19 restrictions.
4. Council has developed a Draft Aquatic Strategy to guide future direction and decision making around its aquatic facilities to ensure that future provision of facilities and services offered address current and future demands and needs of the Banyule community.
5. Council now has a unique opportunity to be proactive in its response to determine the future use, role and priorities for OLC.
6. The current state of the facility, community desire for other services and facilities, and the strategic direction outlined in the Draft Aquatic Strategy presents Council with an opportunity to re-imagine and upgrade OLC to be more in-line with community aspirations including what the community wants and needs today and into the future.
7. To do this successfully, Council is committed to genuinely involving and engaging with the community and key stakeholders by undertaking a co-design process that provides a clear and supported direction for the future of OLC.
8. This project involves three main components. These components are interconnected and happening simultaneously yet have separate outcomes.
  - Short term: Activation of Olympic Village Precinct
  - Short to medium term: Re-imagining OLC Co-design Process
  - Long term: Heidelberg West Key Partners Collaborative Working Group
9. Following the community engagement process, Council will receive a report that outlines the key findings and presents Council with a feasible, outcomes orientated plan for the reimagining of Olympic Leisure Centre.
10. Project principles, aligned with the Banyule Community Vision, will be used to guide the Reimagining project:
  - Sustainable & connected
  - For everyone
  - Flexible
  - Transformational
  - Predictive & proactive
  - Collaborative

## REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the Heidelberg West community has a long history of engagement and consultation on a range of issues and projects and the co-design approach for this project leverages off the existing data.
2. Endorse a community engagement plan that involves:
  - a. a co-design process to re-imagine Olympic Leisure Centre (OLC) with the community and key stakeholders;
  - b. call for Expressions of Interest from community to join the Reimagining OLC Co-design Team, to be convened by the ward Councillor with an invitation extended to all interested Councillors to attend;
  - c. the establishment of a Key Partners Collaborative Working Group to support the Olympic Leisure Centre project and to start exploring and planning longer-term possibilities for Heidelberg West;
  - d. the Key Partners Collaborative Working Group be convened and Co-Chaired by the ward Councillor and Mayor with an invitation to be extended to all interested Councillors; and
  - e. a series of activation activities for the Heidelberg West community commencing in January 2022
3. Endorse the Olympic Leisure Centre (OLC) Reimagining Project Principles:
  - a. Sustainable & connected
  - b. For everyone
  - c. Flexible
  - d. Transformational
  - e. Predictive & proactive
  - f. Collaborative
4. Approve bringing forward \$200,000 from the 2022-2023 capital works budget to the 2021-2022 budget to support the reimagining co-design process including engagement and activation activities in the Olympic Village Precinct, engagement of local community facilitators, and draft concept plans.
5. Receive a report in early 2022 following the community engagement process that outlines the key findings and presents Council with a feasible, outcomes orientated plan for the redevelopment of Olympic Leisure Centre.
6. Notes the Draft Aquatic Strategy currently does not include the Olympic Leisure Centre as part of the Aquatic Facilities for Banyule and will be finalised following conclusion of the Olympic Leisure Centre reimagining project.

### COUNCIL PLAN

- This report is in line with Banyule's Council Plan key direction to "Support a connected, inclusive and involved community".

## **REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

### **BACKGROUND**

- Council is committed to providing accessible, high quality and contemporary facilities that support our community to be active, engaged and healthy.
- There are currently four aquatic and recreation facilities within the Banyule municipality.
- All facilities are owned by the Council, with different management arrangements are in place across the four sites:
  - Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre, operated by Council, is well utilised and reaching capacity and needs further redevelopment to meet the needs and expectations of the community.
  - WaterMarc is a regional facility operated by Belgravia on a contractual arrangement and is well utilised but has some capacity for further use.
  - The Watsonia Pool is a Council owned facility leased to a not for profit operator as a learn to swim facility.
  - Olympic Leisure Centre, operated by Council, is reaching the end of its useful life as an aquatics facility and has declining participation. The Centre is currently closed for emergency repairs.
- Council has developed a Draft Aquatic Strategy to guide future direction and decision making around its aquatic facilities to ensure that future provision of facilities and services offered address current and future demands and needs of the Banyule community.

### **KEY ISSUES**

#### **Olympic Leisure Centre**

- The Olympic Leisure Centre (OLC) located at 15 Alamein Road, West Heidelberg has operated as a recreational facility for residents of Heidelberg and Heidelberg West areas for nearly 70 years. The Centre is managed by Banyule Leisure Facility Management (BLFM –Council's in-house management team).
- Council now has a unique opportunity to be proactive in its response to determine the future use, role and priorities for OLC.
- Council recognises the value that local community voices bring to development of projects in their neighbourhood; and is committed to a genuine process of working with community to build understanding, strengthen relationships and inform decisions.
- The Heidelberg West community has a long history of engagement and consultation on a range of issues and projects.
- Research and community feedback have indicated that the traditional leisure centre model is not really working, and the community wants to see other services, and programs incorporated into this area.
- Some ideas from the community have included spaces for library services, informal gathering and meeting spaces, co-working spaces and access to computers and Wi-Fi, youth spaces, women's only spaces as well as continuing activity-based programs like basketball, exercise classes, gym workouts, women's only classes and mum's and bubs classes.

## **REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

- Council has heard this feedback over the past few years and more recently during the Shop 48 Review and Banyule Community Vision consultation.
- In 2020 an independent review of OLC confirmed declining performance and identified some of the contributing factors through a comparative and industry situational analysis. It also highlighted some of the issues and constraints in terms of its future role as a facility to provides Aquatics in Banyule.
- OLC is currently closed and has been since April 2020 due to emergency works needed to repair essential safety elements and leaking pools as well as Covid-19 restrictions.
- The Draft Aquatic Strategy (Attachment 1) recommends a hierarchy that does not include Olympic Leisure Centre as an aquatic facility. This is being recommended for a number of reasons including the centre operating well below industry standards, driven by:
  - low usage of the pools and low membership numbers;
  - poor quality and outdated facilities that are in desperate need of upgrade;
  - increasing operational costs;
  - competition from other nearby centres; and
  - a community preference for other spaces like a library, meeting rooms, co-working spaces, youth spaces etc.
- With the centre needing to be upgraded, the pools at the end of their life and the community wanting something different, Council has an opportunity to re-imagine and upgrade OLC to be more in line with what the community wants and needs today and into the future.
- To achieve this, Council is proposing to not replace the pools at OLC, and to work with the community and key stakeholders to deliver an upgraded facility that is driven, valued and well-utilised by the local community.
- Taking cues from what has worked in the past, the OLC facility will be reimagined for the needs of our Heidelberg West community today, and for long-term benefit.
- Council values the community and its diversity, and the proud history of advocating for what they need. This project will see the next chapter of OLC narrated through co-design with the community.

## **Community Engagement**

- The current state of the facility, community desire for other services and facilities, and the strategic direction outlined in the Draft Aquatic Strategy presents Council with an opportunity to re-imagine and upgrade OLC to be more in-line with community aspirations including what the community wants and needs today and into the future.
- To do this successfully, Council is committed to genuinely involving and engaging with the community and key stakeholders by undertaking a co-design process that provides a clear and supported direction for the future of OLC.
- The proposal is to involve the Heidelberg West community in a co-design approach to discover what the future of OLC could look like and will test assumptions of need and value along the way.

## **REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

- In line with social sustainable procurement principles, Council will train and employ local community facilitators to support the project.
- Council also plans to activate the Olympic Village Precinct in the summer school holidays (January) and possibly beyond, to support people to be active, engaged and connected while OLC is closed and while the re-imagining process is underway.
- A staged, multifaceted communications and engagement plan has been developed.

The key features are:

- A co-design process to re-imagine the Olympic Leisure Centre with the community and key stakeholders with the establishment of a community OLC Co-design Team, chaired by the Ward Councillor
- The establishment of a Key Partners Collaborative Working Group to support the Olympic Leisure Centre project and to start exploring and planning longer-term possibilities for Heidelberg West
- Activation activities for the Heidelberg West community commencing in January 2022 that support the reimagining process.

### **Re-imagine OLC Community Co-Design Team membership**

- The Ward Councillor would have the official role of Convenor of the group. Banyule Community Health would be a member of the team, as a support and Key Partner of the project
- Recruitment for the team would happen throughout October and early November. Key Council staff, Banyule Community Health and community groups could assist in the recruitment process to ensure a diverse group of voices are included in the process.
- The team would be made up of up to 20 participants and selected to represent the different groups and communities in Heidelberg West. For example: the group should include members to represent:
  - People with diverse backgrounds
  - Indigenous community
  - Users or members of OLC
  - Young people 16-24 years (eg: young people who use the basketball courts)
  - Older people (60-84 years)
  - Parents or carers with dependents
  - Older workers/ retirees
  - Local business owners
  - LGBTIQ+ community
  - People with a disability

## **REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

- Co-design sessions will be planned from November – January.
- Each session would be attended by an architect/s and communications/ advocacy staff with feedback gained in the sessions to inform draft concept designs to be developed in February, as well as advocacy materials to be presented to the Key Partners Collaborative Working Group.

### **Key Partners Collaborative Working Group**

- Council has strong, willing organisational partners in the Heidelberg West community and has forged enduring trust-based relationships. We will collaborate with our partners to unlock long-term community value.
- In addition to the OLC project, Council is also in the process of exploring and planning longer term possibilities for Heidelberg West. To map out, plan and realise these longer-term possibilities, Council is looking to establish a collaborative working group with key partners, local service providers and agencies.
- The **Key Partners Collaborative Working Group** is proposed to be convened by the Ward Councillor and the Mayor.
- The goal of the working group is to respond to community feedback and input and work collaboratively to make things happen and capitalise on opportunities within the precinct and beyond.
- The Re-imagining OLC would be the first project this collective group would collaborate on.
- **Attachment 2** *Re-Imagining Olympic Leisure Centre Engagement and Communications Plan Summary* provides a detailed overview of the key engagement activities.

### **Reimagining Olympic Leisure Centre Project Principles**

- The following principles are aligned with the Banyule Community Vision and will be used to guide the Reimagining project.
  - a. **Sustainable & connected** - in harmony with the natural environment, interfaces with the public realm, supports economic and social prosperity, and is delivered in a financially responsible way.
  - b. **For everyone** - upholds the rights of everyone, creates opportunities to participate, improves access experiences for all and promotes equity.
  - c. **Flexible** - adaptable to meet changing needs; supports intergenerational use; used for multiple purposes; unlocks opportunity for use; promotes innovative uses over time.
  - d. **Transformational** – designed to build community wealth, celebrate culture and history, support people to discover their potential.
  - e. **Predictive & proactive** - proactively responds to the diversity of communities & emerging community need; strives to uplift health, wellbeing & liveability over the long term; achieves ongoing safety and quality standards; integrates new technology to improve useability.

## REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd

- f. **Collaborative** – we will pursue initiatives that aspire to achieve significant, community-wide progress on complex, systemic issues by enlisting and engaging key partners to work together toward a shared vision.

### Draft Aquatic Strategy

- The Draft Aquatic Strategy proposes the following recommendations and will be finalised and adopted post a co-designed and reimagined OLC.

#### Recommendation 1:

- The Strategy recommends the following aquatics facility hierarchy for Banyule:

<b>Banyule Facility</b>	<b>Service Hierarchy</b>
Watsonia Pool	Local Facility
Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre	Major/Municipal
WaterMarc	Regional
Olympic Leisure Centre	Not part of aquatic hierarchy. OLC to be reimagined in line with identified community need

#### Recommendation 2:

- A detailed feasibility and planning study for the Olympic Leisure Centre be undertaken in consultation with the local community to determine the future role, use and priorities for the Centre.

#### Recommendation 3:

- Council reviews Stage Two of the Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre redevelopment to prioritise the following components:
  - Program water for learn to swim and warm water therapy and rehabilitation activities.
  - Interactive leisure water/aqua play equipment.
  - Spa and sauna.
  - Extension of health and wellness areas.

#### Recommendation 4:

- Council work in collaboration with Belgravia Leisure to identify opportunities to increase usage and participation at the WaterMarc facility.

#### Recommendation 5:

- Council undertakes a review of the fees and charges for the use of all aquatic and leisure centres to ensure they encourage participation.

#### Recommendation 6:

- Council continues to develop and implement a 10-year asset management plan including universal design considerations for all aquatic centres.

## **REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

### Recommendation 7:

- Council continues to identify opportunities to include environmentally sustainable design initiatives in the development of facilities in recognition that our aquatic and leisure centres are a key focus to support Council in achieving its organisational carbon neutrality by 2028.

## **SUPPORTING REPORT DETAILS**

### **Legal Consideration**

- There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.

### **Human Rights Charter**

- In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
- It is considered that the subject matter promotes and advocates for the rights of the individual and the community from all backgrounds and abilities by the provision of information and an accessible, transparent co-design community engagement approach.

### **Sustainable Procurement Outcomes**

- This project proposes a positive outcome through the employment of local community facilitators during the community engagement period.
- This will provide mutual benefit by tapping into local talent for the project outcomes as well as providing valuable skills training in facilitation and engagement.

### **Financial Implications**

- This project will provide Council and community with a clear direction on options and considerations for the future of Olympic Leisure Centre.
- The report recommends Council bring forward an allocation of \$200,000 from 2022-2023 budget to the 2021-2022 budget to support the stakeholder engagement, co-design process and planning.
- The funds will be used for the co-design process including:
  - Training and employment of local community facilitators
  - Activation activities in the Olympic Village Precinct in January 2022
  - Establishment of the OLC co-design team and Key Partners Collaborative Working Group
  - Architectural design services for draft concept plans
- Once the outcome of the co-design process is finalised, in planning for future long-term budgets, Council would look to potentially commit \$10 million to the project.



**REIMAGINING OLYMPIC LEISURE CENTRE cont'd**

**Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

- The *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.
- Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	DRAFT Banyule Aquatic Strategy	
2	Reimagining Olympic Leisure Centre Community Engagement Summary	