

MINUTES

Kingborough Aquatic Facility Steering Committee

Meeting No. 2024-1

Thursday, 5 September at 5.30pm

Kingborough



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Kingborough Aquatic Facility Steering Committee held at the Kingborough Council Chambers, on Thursday 5 September 2024 at 5.30pm.

		PRESENT	APOLOGY
Chairperson	Cr Kaspar Deane	✓	
Deputy Chairperson	Cr David Bain	✓	
Members:	Damien Bones		X
	Kennedy Clarke		X
	Peter Hickman	✓	
	Brad Johnson	✓	
	Rachel Lane	✓	
	Nathan Langdon	✓	
	Selena Palmer	✓	
	Amanda Punch		X
	Kylie Ramsey	✓	
	Alex Sommer	✓	
Council Officers:			
Chief Executive Officer	Dave Stewart	✓	
Director Governance, Recreation & Property Services	Daniel Smee	✓	
Special Projects Manager	Dan Kaimatsoglu	✓	
Operations Manager, Kingborough Sports Centre	Sean Kerr	✓	
Community Engagement Officer	Vanessa Weldon	✓	

1. Introductions

- Cr Deane advised that the formation of this committee was due to recommendations from the sport and recreation survey that showed clear demand for an aquatic facility.
- Introductions were provided by each committee member.

2. Financial context (D. Stewart – Council CEO)

- Council is currently in a challenging financial position.
- Deficits have been recorded for 12 of the last 14 years.
- A \$1.1million deficit was recorded last year.
- Asset network is putting pressure on the budget with increased depreciation costs.
- Council is servicing the debt for the community infrastructure constructed in Kingston Park.
- Council is working to extinguish debt as quickly as possible.
- The majority of Council's expenditure over the next four years will be on asset renewal, rather than new projects.
- Council is working through a strategic asset management plan alongside a long-term (10year) financial management plan.

- An aquatic centre isn't currently factored into either of those plans.
- Aquatic facilities are known to lose money in their operation. There is a need to plan for those costs and the impacts on budgets.
- Council needs to be responsive on what the community is looking for, but we also have a responsibility that rates, fees and charges are at a level that we expect.

3. **Background (D. Smee)**

- Several reports regarding an aquatic facility have been presented to Council over the years.
- In the 1990s a facility was designed and costed.
- Any community engagement has invariably showed strong support from the community in support of a facility.
- The health & wellbeing benefits of aquatic facilities have been well documented.
- The stumbling block for Council has always been funding - principally the capital cost of construction but also the ongoing operational cost (including depreciation).
- The most recent [feasibility study](#) was published in 2021 at a cost of \$50,000 (paid for by the State Government).
- Given the big increase in construction costs, the figures in the Feasibility Study are now out of date.
- The Kingborough Sport & Recreation Strategy developed last year was based on the information received from the community, including specific sport & rec clubs and school students. The need for an aquatic facility in Kingborough was a dominant theme in the consultation results.
- The formation of a steering committee was a recommendation of the feasibility study, and this was subsequently adopted as an action in the Sport & Recreation Strategy.
- Council has endorsed both the Strategy and the formation of a steering committee to progress the potential development of an aquatic facility.
- The role of this committee as outlined in the [Terms of Reference](#) will be to explore design options, scope the project and identify funding opportunities.

4. **[Kingborough Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study](#) (S. Kerr)**

- The study found there was a strong demand for an aquatic facility.
- To satisfy the brief, a 25m pool with adjustable floor plus play pool was proposed.
- The cost estimate for the project was \$40 million in capital costs and operational deficit of \$706,000 per annum.
- It was proposed that the facility be located as part of the Kingborough Sports Centre to take advantage of economies of scale (ie existing reception, café and office facilities).
- P. Hickman noted that the proposal was similar to the one conducted for an aquatic facility in Batemans Bay without the adjustable floor and play space. This project was costed at around \$45 million, but also included a theatre, café and gym.

5. **Glenorchy Feasibility Study (D. Smee)**

- Refer to [attached report](#).

- Study looked at several different options to either replace or revitalise the existing pool, with the preferred option an outdoor pool with an indoor facility as well.
- Cost projected at around \$70 million.
- Projected loss of \$350,000 per annum (excluding depreciation).
- The referenced study provides some useful information in terms of designs, costs, operating revenues and where they might come from.
- The Council has formally resolved to commit to the project based on obtaining capital funding from the Federal Government.

6. Role & Scope of Committee (Cr Deane)

- There is a need to gauge the extent to which the community is prepared to pay for an aquatic facility.
- Different designs will need to be tested and continual checking in with the community with current information.
- The Committee was invited to share their initial thoughts on the matter, with the following points made:
 - R. Lane: the pool needs to be 50m. This is needed for swimming water polo.
 - S. Palmer: 50m allows you to stage events. We struggle for any facility that can
 - P. Hickman: Communities can't afford the running and construction costs of 50m pools.
 - S. Palmer: Sources of revenue outside the actual aquatic centre should be considered, e.g. a retail element with a sporting hub.
 - D. Smee: The basis of the Glenorchy Council report is that the gym will make
 - B. Johnson: The report was not supportive of the 50m pool. Targets lots of activities, but competitions are incongruous with the 25m 1.9 depth.
 - N. Langdon: It needs to be determined if the facility will be for sports or recreation. It sounds like trying to do a hybrid may not be affordable.
 - K. Ramsey: A 50m would allow for a significantly higher group of users. Swimming lessons in a 25m pool allows for 5 or 6 people per lane, whereas 10 people is achievable per lane in a 50m pool. There would probably be a high demand for master swimmers in this area. Master swimmer programs can use the pool at times outside the other time demands.
 - Number of lanes used within Hobart and Clarence are maxed out. There are consistent users in addition to school users.
 - R. Lane: The depth of the pool is also important for sports – needs 2.2 (national depth is 2.4).
 - D Smee: The Hobart Aquatic Centre was originally designed as a facility to host National events but no longer meets high level competition standards. The most profitable elements are learn-to-swim and leisure areas, not lap swimmers.
 - S. Palmer: Swimming Tasmania has clubs that are amateur clubs and masters that we support. We lose people at a certain age group if they don't have the facility for sports. You have to have a facility that offers diversity for club participation as well as community needs. No swimming clubs have club headquarters. Work also needs to be done with the high schools to encourage pathways and opportunities

7. Next steps

- Cr. Deane: We need to get to a point where we can discuss proposals with the community, including costs and where funds would come from.
- B. Johnson: The premise for this committee is to represent the community need. Let's make sure we ground ourselves on what Kingborough actually needs.
- Cr. Deane: We need to communicate where the funds would come from.
- D. Smee: The starting point could be developing high level principles of what we want the facility to be. What are the questions we need to ask and what information is needed to make informed decisions.
- K. Ramsey: suggested talking to other city councils about their facilities would be beneficial.
- Cr. Deane: suggested that committee members research facilities and bring ideas back to the next meeting. Innovative models that reduce operating costs need to be explored.

8. Next meeting date

Thursday, 3 October at 5.30pm, Kingborough Civic Centre.