

October 2023

## Background

The draft Maribyrnong Aquatic Strategy (draft Strategy) recognises a range of both private and public facilities already exist across the City and in adjacent municipalities servicing a host of community needs from learn to swim to wellness.

This includes 19 public aquatic and leisure facilities within the western metropolitan region located within a five to 10-kilometre radius and accessible to residents.

Notably, the draft Strategy recommends while no additional facilities are required to service the existing and forecast population - relying on a sole facility requires the upgrading the existing Council-owned facility, the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC) to enhance the current offering.

Since the MAC was built in 2006, aquatic facilities have changed significantly, acting more as community destinations and meeting points for a range of physical and social activities.

The draft MAC Strategy recommends a stronger focus on therapy and wellness alongside education and recreation to better meet contemporary needs.

It is proposed to support this with additional elements such as a new dedicated Learn to Swim/Program Pool, a new dedicated warm water pool with spa and sauna, and a dedicated wellness area, as outlined in the draft MAC Master Plan.

## Methodology

From Wednesday 16 August to Sunday 24 September 2023, the community was invited to share comments on the draft Maribyrnong Aquatic Strategy, and provide feedback on the different elements of the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre draft Master Plan.

Recognising current challenges and future proposed conversation on parking within the wider precinct, community members were also able to share any ideas or concerns related to car parking that could inform the future discussion.

The draft Strategy and draft MAC Master Plan were promoted in the Spring 2023 edition of the Maribyrnong Messenger, which is distributed to 38,000 households within the municipality, and via traditional and digital media.

An email (eDM) campaign was shared with community members registered on Your City, Your Voice.

Two in-person events were also held at the MAC where visitors to the Centre had the opportunity to speak directly with Council officers.

## Overall Response

An eDM was sent via Your City, Your Voice to **334** recipients subscribed to receive alerts when either Major Projects and/or Sport, Recreation and Open Space are up for discussion. Of those, **67.4% (225)** opened the email of whom **16.2% (54)** recipients clicked through to the project page. The draft Strategies were also promoted twice via social media - via a generic post and also post including a video with Mayor, Cr Sarah Carter

The video post shared on Facebook achieved a reach of **654**, resulting in **22** clicks through to Your City Your Voice, while the second post achieved a reach of **2,363** clicks. The same post reached a further **2,288** impressions on Instagram and was liked by **59** people.

In total, **236** people visited the draft Aquatic Strategy page and from there, a further **46** and **9** people respectively visited the draft MAC Master Plan and Car Parking subpages.

A total of **22** contributions were received, which included:

- **16** contributions<sup>1</sup> to the online form regarding the draft Aquatic Strategy
- **four** contributions to the online questionnaire regarding the MAC Master Plan
- **one** email to the Community Engagement inbox
- **one** contribution to an online social map related to car parking in the MAC precinct<sup>2</sup>

Approximately **ten** individuals attended the two in person events.

### Your City Your Voice

A total of **21** contributions were received and **three** people followed<sup>3</sup> the project page.

The draft Maribyrnong Aquatic Strategy was downloaded **54** times.

Interest in the project peaked on 17 August following the launch of the project, and again on 6 September when the project was promoted on social media.

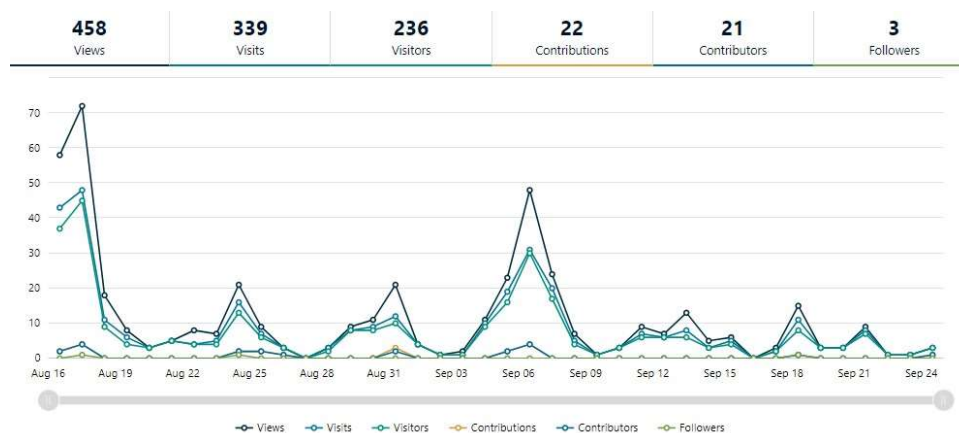


Figure 1: Digital engagement performance summary

### In-person events

Two in person events were hosted at the MAC:

- Tuesday 5 September, 5.00-7.00pm
- Saturday 9 September, 9.00-11.00am

<sup>1</sup> One contribution was left blank and has not been included in the total tally.

<sup>2</sup> Feedback received on car parking will be considered as part of the Highpoint Parking Plan community engagement. At the time of writing this report this engagement remains open.

**Ten** community members attended these in-person events, which provided an opportunity for community members to discuss the draft Aquatic Strategy and MAC Master Plan with Council officers, ask any questions and also share their ideas and concerns.

Attendees were also invited to complete provide their comments/feedback via iPad.

**One** community member sent an email to the Community Engagement inbox suggesting Council consider planning for an outdoor aquatic facility.

## Findings – Draft Aquatic Strategy Form

A summary of the **16** completed online forms is provided in the table below.

Sentiment	N=	Sample Quotes
Outdoor pool/second facility	6	<i>"We need an outdoor 50m lap pool as there is a lack in the area, or the facilities are above capacity."</i>
Increased amenities	3	<i>"Ideally a steam room would be added to the upgrade as well as improve change room facilities."</i>
Other	3	<i>"East Keilor has done a fabulous job with their new Centre. Therapy pool is a decent size, they have plenty of areas for learn to swim along with recreational swimming areas and a fantastic kids play area. Not to mention a great sized outdoor pool. I don't understand how so many things are not right with the Mac, it's had so many renovations and it's still lacklustre."</i>
Supportive of the draft Aquatic Strategy	2	<i>"Good strategy, looking forward to the improvement already underway and planned for the future."</i>
Increased service offering	2	<i>"The childcare centre at MAC should be a key enabler of greater wellness focus. Many parents struggle to get into council day cares or other childcare and I think the childcare at MAC is under used due to lack of awareness and limited hours. Please consider how expanding the childcare offering can support parents to utilise wellbeing spaces and assist the pressure on childcare wait lists. Options for full day care and care at the weekend would make a big difference."</i>

Table 1: Comment summary

## Demographics

All 16 respondents completed this section:

- **50% (8)** identified as male and **50% (8)** as female
- **93.7% (15)** indicated they lived in Maribyrnong, while **6.3% (one)** identified as a worker within the municipality
- the majority were aged either 35-39 (**43.7% or seven**), followed by 30-34 (**18.7% or three**)
- **31.2% (five)** identified as members of the LGBTQIA+ community, one quarter (**four**) said they speak a language other than English at home, while **6.3% (one)** identified as having a disability.

## Findings – draft MAC Master Plan Questionnaire

There were **4** online questionnaires completed.

**Question: One a scale of one to five, how do you feel about the draft MAC Master Plan?**

Answered by all four respondents with an average rating of three out of five stars.

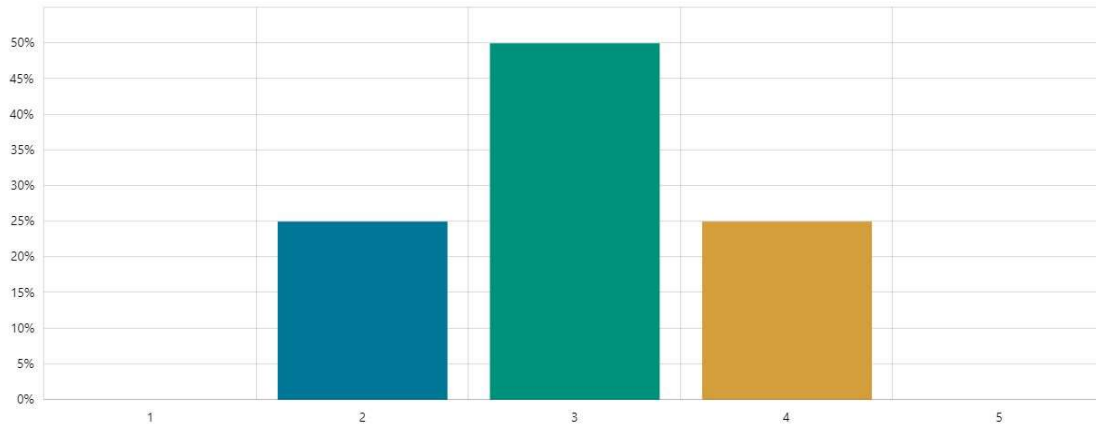


Figure 2: Rating scale results

**Question: If you would like to, please explain the reason for your rating.**

Answered by three respondents. Feedback included:

- upgrades to the gymnasium
- including the disability community in the conversation
- improving cycling and walking connections

**Question: A contemporary aquatic and leisure facility would require a greater focus on education, leisure, therapy and wellness - recognising the MAC currently only serves two of these markets well. Please indicate your level of support for each of the markets.**

Answered by all four respondents. Overall, respondents considered each market to be more important than not.

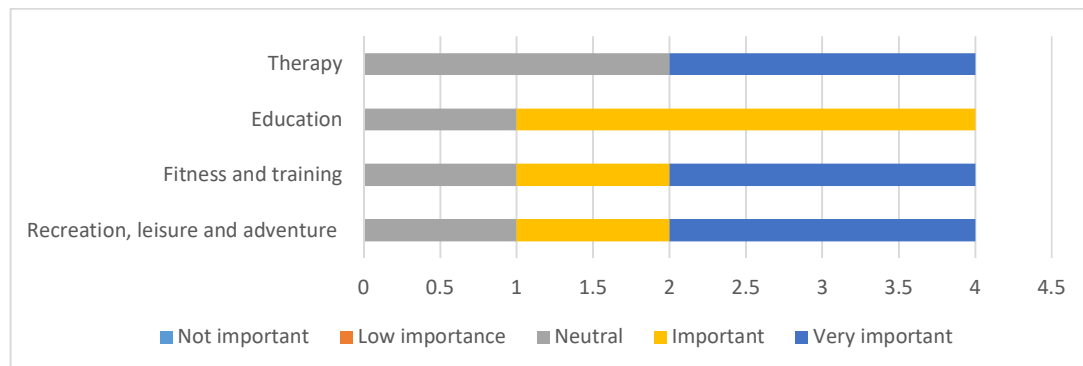


Figure 3: Level of importance for each market type

**Question: Are there any specific comments you would like to share with us in relation to the potential upgrades identified in the draft Master Plan?**

Answered by three respondents who were then invited to select as many of the following elements as they wished to provide further comments on:

- Dedicated warm water pool with spa and sauna
- New dedicated Learn to Swim/Program Pool
- New indoor water play/splash pad and water slides
- New dedicated wellness area
- Multi-purpose event room
- New reception and foyer (under construction)
- Change village and gender neutral facilities

No feedback was received regarding the learn to swim/program pool, wellness area, or reception and foyer.

Sentiment	N <sup>4</sup> =	Quotes
New indoor water play/splash pad and water slides	2	<i>"These create extremely high noise levels which contradict needs of people using hydrotherapy. Consider separating these into different sections of the building with walls."</i>
Dedicated warm water pool with spa and sauna	1	<i>"Please consult with the disability and elderly communities about their requirements. Onsite exercise physiologists and physiotherapists could provide hydrotherapy programs."</i>
Multi-purpose event room	1	<i>"Again, not safely accessible (except by car) to most people in the municipality, which is disappointing."</i>
Change village and gender neutral facilities	1	<i>"Please incorporate disabled change facilities within the Change Village. Disabled people should be included not excluded with separate facilities."</i>

Table 2: Feedback summary

## Demographics

Answered by all four respondents.

- **two** identified as female, **one** as male, while **one** uses another identity
- **all** lived in Maribyrnong
- **two** were aged 40-44, **one** was 20-24 and the other was 35-39
- **one** speaks a language other than English at home, while **one** identifies as having a disability
- **one** identified as a MAC user, **two** were users of other aquatic facilities, while **one** identified as a non-user of aquatic facilities.

<sup>4</sup> Given the small number of respondents, findings presented are indicative only.