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## 10. GLENORCHY WAR MEMORIAL POOL

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ECM File Reference: Glenorchy War Memorial Pool

### Community Plan Reference:

#### Leading our Community

The communities of Glenorchy will be confident that Council manages the community's assets soundly for the long-term benefit of the community.

### Strategic or Annual Plan Reference:

#### Leading our Community

Objective We are a leader and partner that acts with integrity and upholds our community's best interests.

Strategy Make informed decisions that are open and transparent and are in the best interests of our community.

Objective We responsibly manage our community's resources to deliver what matters most.

Strategy Deploy the Council's resources effectively to deliver value while being financially responsible.

### Reporting Brief:

To outline the reasons for keeping the Glenorchy War Memorial Pool closed until further notice as announced on Tuesday 17 July 2023, and provide options to consider for the future of the pool.

### Proposal in Detail:

The Glenorchy War Memorial Pool (Glenorchy Pool) located at Anfield Street Glenorchy has been operating since 1963. Originally operated directly by Glenorchy City Council, in more recent years its operation has been contracted to sporting and leisure professionals; currently to Belgravia Leisure and prior to that to the YMCA. As the pool is an outdoor facility it only operates for six months of the year - October to March. Last season the pool had recorded 17,788 attendances during this period, an average of approximately 100 visits per day during the six months of opening.

Commercial pools of this era typically have a usable life of approximately 40 to 50 years and the Glenorchy Pool is now 60 years old. In recent years, a number of issues relating to structural integrity, water loss, maintenance and general condition of the pool facilities have become apparent. Therefore, a detailed pool inspection and full

audit of the pool was recently commissioned and carried out by aquatic centre and asset specialists, Lacus Consulting and Know-Ledge Asset Management Services. A copy of the audit report is provided in [Attachment 1](#) and a copy of the consultant's presentation that was provided to the Council workshop on 3 July is provided in [Attachment 2](#).

This detailed assessment has unfortunately revealed that the Glenorchy Pool facilities have reached a condition and age that presents significant health and safety risks. The specialist advice also made clear that the works required to remove these risks would take more than 12 months to complete.

Therefore, on 4 July 2023, the General Manager made the decision, in his capacity as "person controlling the business or undertaking (PCBU)" under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012, that the Glenorchy Pool not reopen for the coming pool season and that the pool remain closed until further notice.

The timing of this decision allowed Council to give the operator, Belgravia Leisure, and users of the pool as much notice as possible. These parties have now been notified by Council staff.

As outlined in the attached consultant's report and presentation, some of the main issues include:

- faults in the pool shell which is causing the pool to leak (approx. 35,000 litres per day);
- structural issues with the concrete grandstand;
- an urgent requirement for the electrical switchboard to be upgraded and replaced;
- major works for the chemical dosing and filtration area;
- structural issues with the water slide;
- trip, slips and fall hazards in the concourse that need repairs; and
- a complete refurbishment of toilets and changeroom areas to meet current child safety requirements, privacy and accessibility (DDA compliance) standards.

These issues present significant challenges in both cost and time to rectify.

The scale of the issues is such that, even if works were carried out to rectify the main issues, these works would likely take approximately two swimming seasons to complete and would then only provide about five years of operation given the pool's overall asset condition and age.

Lacus Consulting and Know-Ledge Asset Management Services have provided Council advice as to the ramifications of the detailed audit and the options that are now presented to Council moving forward. These are provided in [Attachment 2](#) and are summarised below.

**Option 1 – Business as Usual (BAU) / do nothing**

Given the health and safety risks that have been identified it is clear that this is not an appropriate action, as reflected in the General Manager's decision to announce the Pool will not be opening for the coming season or until further notice.

**Option 2 – Make the necessary repairs only**

This option could bring the pool back to a safer condition but would not fully mitigate the risks. This option would require the pool to remain closed for two years, cost approximately \$1.3M initially as well as require similar investments in future years and increasing maintenance expenses. This option will not improve the amenity/appeal of the Pool, may not resolve the leaks, and will only provide a further five years of operation given the facility is already 60 years old. Given these factors, this would not be a sound or sustainable financial decision.

**Option 3 – Major overhaul and renewal**

This option could bring the pool back to a safe condition as well as improve some of the amenity/appeal of the pool. This option would require the pool to remain closed for at least two years, cost approximately \$5.1M as well as increase ongoing maintenance expenses. However, as per Option 2, this would only provide a further five years of operation due to the facility already being 60 years old. Given these factors this would not be a sound or sustainable financial decision.

**Option 4 – Replace with a new facility**

This option presents an opportunity to replace the pool with a modern facility that meets contemporary standards and user expectations.

The most significant challenge presented by this option is the approximately \$30-40M (depending on design) that would be required to undertake such a project as well as the approximately \$0.75M to \$1.5M in annual depreciation costs alone. It is expected that the design and construction process would take approximately three years.

Council does not have this level of funding available to undertake the project and would require significant State and/or Australian Government funding support to achieve this. Council made a submission to the last Australian Government budget requesting \$26M to redevelop the Pool. However, this was unsuccessful. Based on the recent findings presented in the attached report, Council is already in discussions with both the State and Australian Governments to explore options.

Large regional Government grants may present an opportunity for funding support. However, these generally require a 50% funding contribution from Council which is likely to be in the order of a conservative \$15M. A regional grant program is also likely to require Council to demonstrate that the project is a regional priority which may face challenges given that there are two existing major aquatic centres within a 10km radius of the site (i.e. Hobart and Clarence aquatic centres). The Local Government

reform project and potential Council mergers could present further challenges regarding duplicate aquatic facilities.

If funding support for the Pool redevelopment could be secured, then this is an option that Council may consider. However, the whole of life cycle costs of operating, maintaining and depreciating the asset and the impact on ratepayers would also need to be considered.

### **Option 5 – Close the pool permanently**

Given the challenges outlined with the other options this is the option that is recommended by the consultants. There is no doubt that the Glenorchy Pool is highly valued by some Glenorchy residents and has been a key feature of Glenorchy for 60 years. However, there is also the reality of the very high costs involved to the Glenorchy ratepayer, low usage rates, and the fact there are two existing year-round aquatic centres of a much higher standard within only a 10km radius of the site.

There is an appreciation that major facilities such as aquatic centres should be considered in a regional context. This is supported by research previously undertaken by the City of Hobart (CoH) that showed Hobart residents make up less than half of the visits to the Hobart Aquatic Centre and that Glenorchy residents make up approximately an eighth of the visitation (Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre Redevelopment Master Plan, May 2017). CoH reports that annual visitation of the Hobart Aquatic Centre last financial year (22/23) was 556,000. Based on the above figures, it is reasonable to estimate that approximately 69,500 of the annual visits to the Hobart Aquatic Centre are already from the Glenorchy LGA, which is almost four times the total number of annual visits to the Glenorchy Pool last season (17,788).

### **Conclusion**

As outlined in the report, Option 1 cannot be realistically considered due to health and safety matters. Options 2 and 3 present as financially unsustainable given the large investment required would only provide about five more years of life to the pool leaving Council in the same predicament in five years' time. As such, officer advice is that Council focus its attention on Option 4 - Replace with a new facility, and/or Option 5 – Close the pool permanently.

### **Contacts with State and Federal governments**

The Mayor, General Manager and Director Infrastructure and Works met with the Sports Minister, the Hon. Nic Street, on 19 July 2023, to provide him with a briefing on the status of the Pool. At the time of writing this report, the Mayor is awaiting a formal response from the Minister as an outcome of that meeting.

The Mayor, General Manager and Director Infrastructure and Works are scheduled to meet with Senator Carol Brown on 28 July 2023 to provide her with a briefing on the status of the Pool and explore options going forward.

**Consultations:**

Executive Leadership Team  
Senior Corporate Legal Counsel  
Manager Property Environment and Waste  
Manager Assets Engineering and Design  
Recreation and Environment Coordinator  
Property Assets Coordinator  
Project Officer Sport and Recreation Facilities  
Belgravia Leisure

**Human Resource / Financial and Risk Management Implications:**

Financial

The financial implications of the current pool closure would result in some operational savings in the order of \$350,000 to \$400,000 p/a including the subsidy paid to the pool operator, excess water, excess gas for heating, and maintenance.

The financial implications of the future options are summarised above.

Human resources

Council staff are responding to a number of enquiries about the Pool's status. As the pool operation is outsourced to an external party, there are no material human resource implications to Council of the current pool closure.

Risk management

The decision to keep the pool closed until further notice has been made by the General Manager in order to mitigate an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the community, staff and contractors. Council has received clear advice from specialised experts that re-opening the pool in its current condition presents an unacceptable health and safety risk.

The General Manager made this decision in fulfilling his workplace health and safety duties as the responsible Person Conducting a Business Undertaking (PCBU)

**Community Consultation and Public Relations Implications:**

Community consultation

The detailed assessment attached to this report has revealed that the Glenorchy Pool facilities have reached an age and condition that presents significant health and safety risks. The specialist advice has made clear that the works required to remove these risks would take more than 12 months to complete, hence the General Manager made the decision to announce that the pool will remain closed for the coming season and until further notice in order to give the operator, Belgravia Leisure, and users of the pool as much notice as possible. The General Manager made this decision in fulfilling his workplace health and safety duties as the responsible Person Conducting a

Business Undertaking (PCBU). As such, no prior community consultation has been undertaken on this decision.

A media release was distributed to ensure wide media coverage was achieved to announce the closure and all registered pool users, past pass holder's and schools that used the pool were notified directly.

Council is yet to consider the long-term solution for the pool and at this stage has only made the call to leave the pool closed until further notice due to unacceptable risks to health and safety. Council will keep the community informed of its investigations regarding the long-term future of the pool.

If Council makes a future decision to build a new aquatic facility or otherwise repurpose the site, then consultation with the community would occur in either event.

#### Public relations

Whilst the current usage levels of the pool are relatively low, there are many Glenorchy residents who have a strong connection to the pool and are likely to be upset at the current closure. There are also a number of schools and user groups that will be inconvenienced with the current closure. The site is also a Memorial facility that adds to the complexity of public relations.

A media release detailing the current closure was released on 11 July 2023 (Attachment 3). Council has worked with the Pool operator, Belgravia Leisure, to contact the regular user groups with this information. The most obvious alternative options for pool users currently are the nearby aquatic centres at Hobart and Clarence which operate year-round.

Whilst there are a range of people and groups likely to be upset and inconvenienced with the current closure the safety of the community, staff and contractors is paramount.

There are also likely to be residents and users that are upset that the pool has reached this condition. However, the reality is that commercial pools only have an expected life of 40 to 50 years, and the Glenorchy Pool is now 60 years old. The facility has stayed operational for 10 to 20 years longer than its expected life and can no longer be maintained by maintenance and upgrades. The Pool is end of life and the site options are complete replacement or repurposing.

### **Recommendation:**

That Council:

1. NOTE the General Manager's decision, on 4 July 2023, in his capacity as "person controlling the business or undertaking (PCBU)" under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, that the Glenorchy War Memorial Pool not reopen for the coming pool season and that the pool remain closed until further notice due to unacceptable risks to the health and safety of pool users, staff and contractors.
2. RECEIVE and NOTE this report and the attached reports of a detailed pool inspection and full audit of the Pool recently carried out by aquatic centre and asset specialists, Lacus Consulting and Know-Ledge Asset Management Services setting out the unacceptable risks to health and safety associated with the Pool (Attachments 1 & 2).
3. ENDORSE continued consultation with State and Federal Governments on potential funding opportunities for the future redevelopment of the site.
4. PROVIDE progress reports to Council on the status of investigations into the site's future.

### **Attachments/Annexures**

- 1 Detailed inspection and audit report
- 2 Consultant's presentation to Council Workshop
- 3 Media release announcing current closure