

Frequently Asked Questions

Glenorchy War Memorial Pool

BACKGROUND

Why is the pool closed?

The Glenorchy City Council commissioned an independent report into the condition of the pool due to its age. The report highlighted a number of issues which posed safety risks for the public and facility staff. As a responsible authority, the council had no choice but to prioritise public safety and close the pool to the public, until upgrade works could be funded and undertaken.

Why was the pool allowed to deteriorate so badly?

The pool was built in the 1960s. Facilities of this type normally have an operational life of about 40-50 years, while this pool has 60 years. The fact that it has been able to achieve a longer-than-expected operational life is due to the council's management of the facility over the years. However, all public infrastructure has an operational lifespan, and when that is reached, require redevelopment or replacement. The pool has reached a point where normal maintenance cannot keep up with deterioration caused by the age of the facility and the plant that operates it.

Can rate payers read the consultant's condition report on the Glenorchy War Memorial Pool?

Yes, this is attached to the July 2023 Council meeting report, and is also provided on the Glenorchy Pool webpage - www.gcc.tas.gov.au/discover-glenorchy/venues-and-facilities/glenorchy-pool/.

Is the pool leaking?

When it was operational, the pool needed to be continually filled around the clock to ensure it had sufficient water volume. Water metering showed that this amounted to 35,000 litres a day which is significantly more than could be attributed to water loss through evaporation or splashing.

The exact location of leaks has not been determined; however, the planned repair and upgrade works are expected to resolve this. The water had been leaking into the water table and surrounding environment.

The Lacus Report states the pool shell is in good condition. Why did council drain it completely?

The Lacus report states the pool's concrete shell is in 'fair' condition when considering its age. The shell of the pool is 60 years old.

The pool has been drained to protect the environment and public safety. The water was stagnating and attracting wildlife, further polluting the water. Council also wanted to prevent further water leaking into the surrounding environment.

However, rather than refill the pool, the advice from Lacus was to install a series of Hydrostatic Relief Valves on the floor of the pool. These valves will open if there is an excessive build-up of water pressure underneath the pool shell whilst it is empty, to mitigate any risk of cracking.

The relief valves will also provide ongoing benefits for the pool, given it needs to stay empty during the planned repair works, and will be emptied each year for maintenance.

These core holes were drilled on Monday, 8 April 2024, in accordance with the engineer's specification. Now that these holes are drilled the risk of water pressure building up underneath the pool is mitigated. The hydrostatic relief valves will be installed into the core holes in the coming months as part of the pool renovation project, which will allow the pool to be refilled following the renovations.

Does the council plan to sell the pool site?

No. The council has commissioned a study into options for the site, including a redeveloped pool. This process involved significant community consultation. There are no plans to sell the pool or the site.

Is the pool heritage listed?

The pool is not listed on the Tasmanian heritage register.

The Tasmanian Heritage Council had received an independent third-party nomination to have the Glenorchy War Memorial Pool (pool) listed as a site of State Heritage Significance.

The Tasmanian Heritage Council assessed the pool site and found it did not meet the thresholds for listing as a site of State Heritage Significance. Independent to this, the Council has commissioned a report assessing the pool as a site of Local Historic Significance. The findings of this study will be included in, and considered as part of, the investigation of pool site redevelopment project that is currently underway.

What happens next?

There are currently two processes underway:

- The repair and reopening of the pool in the short-term
- The long-term future of the pool

POOL REPAIR AND REOPENING

Is the pool being repaired?

Bipartisan election commitments of \$5 million, for repairing and reopening the pool were made, in the last state election. The State Budget has since been released, which includes this \$5 million commitment. State Government officers are preparing a grant deed with Council that will set out the requirements for receiving and reporting on this funding. This is however only a short-term fix as the facility is 60 years old.

What is the scope of works for the repair and upgrade?

Council is working with aquatic engineers and specialist designers to create a plan for repairing and upgrading the pool.

- Upgrades to the entry area, changerooms and toilet facilities
- A new environmental protective chemical delivery bund
- Concrete repair in the grandstand, plant room and around the pool
- Installation of new pool expansion joints
- Repair and upgrade the pool drains and plant room
- Repainting the pool
- Installation of new separated filtration system for the toddler pool
- New heating system
- New switchboard
- All-ability accessible ramp entry into the main pool

The repair work will extend the life of the current pool for at least five to seven years.

Why will the upgrade only last five to seven years?

This estimate came from the original audit inspection when the pool was closed. It is because it is 60 years old. Council will do everything within our power to maintain it and keep it open for as long as possible.

When will the work start?

The engineering and architectural design work is already underway. Once a formal grant deed for the funding is provided and signed, the repair works will go out to tender in late 2024, with the plan to start the on-ground repairs early in the new year.

When will the pool reopen?

It is hoped that the pool will reopen in late 2025, but we won't know for sure until tenders are received and the repair work begins. We will try to prioritise the repairs that will enable the pool to open as soon as possible.

Can the urgent repairs be done, and the pool reopened while less urgent repairs are carried out?

No. Investigations have shown that the issues involved in refurbishing the pool are all related, so we can't fix one thing without fixing the other.

Is the waterslide being replaced?

Assessment of the waterslide shows the structure to present significant safety risks. Advice indicates the access stairs, the structure, the runout pool and the filtration system would all need replacing, as well as enclosing the open slide. It is estimated that this work would cost approximately \$1M. These works are unfortunately not viable within the repair budget which must focus on ensuring the pool can be reopened with safe conditions and accessibility.

Where can people swim while the pool is closed?

As per last season, people will need to access another aquatic facility until the pool is repaired and reopened. The closest public swimming pools are the Hobart Aquatic Centre (indoor), Clarence Aquatic Centre (indoor), Huon Valley (outdoor) or New Norfolk Pool (outdoor).

LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE POOL

If the repair and reopening is a short-term solution given the age of the pool, what is Council doing about the long-term future of the pool?

Council received a \$200,000 grant from the State Government to fund a feasibility study into the long-term future of the pool, which was run by MI Global who undertook extensive community consultation.

MI Global prepared three shortlisted options for Council for a redeveloped pool based on community feedback and a cost/benefit analysis.

The options were discussed and voted on at the August 2024 Council meeting. The preferred option was an outdoor and indoor aquatic facility with an outdoor 50m pool, indoor 25m lap pool, indoor 20m warm water learn to swim/program pool, wellness hall (including spa, sauna, and steam facility), leisure/toddler pool, café and a gym.

The MI Global report can be found on Council's website at: <https://www.gcc.tas.gov.au/future-of-the-glenorchy-war-memorial-pool/>

What happens next?

Now that the preferred option has been decided, MI Global will do full concept designs, cost planning and modelling as part of a business case. This will be presented to Council in mid to late October 2024 and will

be made available to the public soon after that. MI Global Partners expect to present the final report to an Open Council Workshop on 21 October 2024.

Once Council receives the final business case, it will be used to lobby State and Federal Government for funding for the long-term future of the pool.

If no funding is secured from Federal or state governments, how long will it take for funding to be secured and a new pool to be built in Glenorchy?

This will depend on what funding opportunities exist.

Why can't the sale of land proceeds, specifically designed to fund community infrastructure, be accessed to expend some funds for the pool?

The estimated cost of a new aquatic facility is approximately \$80M. Council does not have this amount of funds available in reserve.

What will a redeveloped pool cost ratepayers?

Whilst a community aquatic facility can provide wide reaching benefits, there are costs associated with the build and ongoing maintenance and depreciation which need to be considered.

Council is not in a position to fully fund a new aquatic facility. Federal or State grants would be applied for, and if there was a shortfall any additional funding would need to be secured through a commercial loan.

At this stage, if it is assumed to be a \$70M project and Council was to borrow a third of this amount (\$23M) then it is estimated that if depreciation, operational loss and loan repayments were to be covered by additional rates revenue, that this would equate to an approximate 9% increase in rates.

This is an estimate only – any increase would depend on the final construction cost, the operational losses, and how much funding was able to be secured for the redevelopment.

As the project progresses, Council will keep the community up to date on any financial implications.

Why can't the pool just be replaced like for like? Couldn't we do a more modest development to replace the facility as it is?

This option was considered and was one of the options presented as part of the consultation. Whilst the initial cost of this would be less, the benefits are also significantly less and do not deliver what the community has asked for.

The first round of the MI Global consultation found that the community wanted to retain a contemporary pool in the City. Through the recent Elector Poll which received over 22,000 votes, 93% of community members

told Council that they would like to retain the pool and redevelop it into a modern public pool facility that will serve the broader region. Council took this as a powerful signal of what the community wants.

Council's elected members have worked to ensure the chosen option represents the best value for money for future generations.

Why can't we build a new pool around the old one?

Unfortunately, the site does not have the room to retain the current pool whilst building a new facility, and there would also be safety considerations. This would require closure of the pool whilst a new facility was being built. Retaining the old pool would greatly compromise the designs for a new facility. As the old pool is 60 years old it would also require removal during the life/operation of the new facility which would be impractical.