

**Submission for the Revision of Wyndham Aquatic Strategy**

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# 1. Background

This submission has been written and submitted on behalf of the Point Cook Residents in response to the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy 2011 to 2031 (June 2011) – Strategy Recommendations and Overview prepared for Wyndham City.

Whilst not stated in the Aquatic Facility Strategy, further investigation has revealed that the outcomes of this strategy have been limited by the Council's economic preference to construct a fewer number of larger facilities, rather than a larger number of smaller local facilities. Point Cook residents believe that this focus on economic outcomes has resulted in the important social, environmental and health issues that are important to Point Cook residents and necessary for developing a strong community being overlooked.

In addition to this, Point Cook residents don't believe our voice has been adequately heard, nor has the unique nature of Point Cook as a suburb been adequately considered as part of the consultation process. This submission aims to collate and present those views for further consideration and as a means of requesting further consultation of Point Cook residents prior to confirmation of the final version of the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy.

Having reviewed the recently announced Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy, it is noted that there are plans for the redevelopment of the existing Wyndham Leisure and Events Centre and the construction of a new leisure facility in the years 2020/2021 in Tarneit. This submission calls for the revision of the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy to further consider an additional leisure facility in Point Cook, to be constructed in a staged development, with Stage 1 to commence within a five year period.

Point Cook is a beautiful and progressive area that has experienced significant growth over the past decade. However, infrastructure has not developed at the same rate as growth in population and Point Cook residents have had to wait for many basic services (in some cases for years). Point Cook now has several of the basic facilities and services (e.g. local shops, parks and medical centres) in the area to make it an attractive suburb to raise a family.

Point Cook residents have a strong and passionate desire to expand on these facilities and make Point Cook a truly great place to live and raise families. This includes ensuring the safety of our families, whether that be learning vital swimming skills, preventing drowning, maintaining physical and emotional health and fitness, keeping kids off the streets, reducing our carbon footprint or giving people the chance to meet up and socialise within their own community, not someone else's.

Due to the unique circumstances of Point Cook as a suburb, there is a need for Point Cook to have its own leisure facility to meet the various community needs that are outlined in this submission.

## 2. Unique nature of Point Cook as a suburb

### 2.1. Point Cook topography

- Point Cook is located south of the Princess Freeway. There are three access points to cross the freeway, with no safe passage across the Princess Freeway for pedestrians and/or cyclists. These access points are bottlenecks at peak travel times. Peak travel times can be anywhere from 6am-9am and 3pm-7pm and sometimes extending beyond those periods, as the peak is influenced by commuters, school drop offs and pickups and/or any incidences that may occur at any point along the freeway in either direction.
- Point Cook is bordered by the bay as well as the Princess Freeway, therefore reducing the potential catchment obtainable south west of Point Cook, as would be the case if that area were

a neighbouring suburb. This should be taken into consideration as part of Point Cook's unique circumstances.

## **2.2. Point Cook's demographic**

- Point Cook consists mainly of young families (66% in 2006)<sup>1</sup>, with an increasing number of seniors moving to the area as a result of the recent and future planned construction of several retirement villages in Point Cook. Young families and seniors are traditionally the highest user groups of leisure facilities.

## **2.3. Insufficient recreation facilities in Point Cook**

- Point Cook residents rely on neighbouring suburbs for the provision of facilities and/or services, not through choice but necessity. Point Cook residents have a strong desire and need for local active recreation options.
- There are insufficient recreation facilities in Point Cook. In particular, there is currently no public swimming pool in Point Cook. Point Cook residents currently have to travel to locations such as Hoppers Crossing (Wyndham Events and Leisure Centre – WELC), Werribee (Werribee Outdoor Olympic Pool – WOOP), Laverton (Swim and Fitness Centre – LSFC), Altona (Bayside Fitness - BF) or further afield to access a leisure facility. The closest facility is approximately a 20km round trip via car (even further for some residents), adding more congestion to the roads and creating a significant carbon footprint by residents.
- Point Cook's two closest leisure facilities (WELC & LSFC) are in need of an upgrade.<sup>2</sup>
- Hobson's Bay Council completed an aquatic report a number of years ago and did not identify any improvements to be made for the LSFC. The complex is on leased land and when the lease expires its future is unknown. Hobson's Bay are intending to revisit this issue at some stage, but current reports from Hobson's Bay Council indicate that the complex may close when the lease expires. That said; the Laverton pool is still on the Northern side of the freeway and just as difficult to access (if not more from some parts of Point Cook) than WELC and WOOP.
- Local Community Leisure Facilities provide many benefits to a community, including improved health (e.g. physical and mental), reduction in incidences of many diseases (e.g. diabetes and obesity), improved social outcomes (e.g. community connectedness and decreased crime rates), environmental benefits (e.g. reduced carbon footprint due to close proximity of facilities) and economic benefits (e.g. providing a workplace for residents), as well as providing opportunities for developing future champions (in sport and life).
- Community Leisure Facilities also provide benefits for the elderly and disabled who may need aquatic rehabilitation or exercise. These are the people who find it hard to travel far distances, often having to rely on taxis, as they don't have easy access to public transport.

## **2.4. Limited public transport in Point Cook**

- The public transport options linking Point Cook with the leisure facilities in the area are inadequate, with many residents having to take multiple busses and/or a train to gain access to those facilities. Teenagers based at Point Cook Town Centre who want to go swimming without getting their parents to drive them face either having to get 2 buses (42 min) or a bus, a train and then another bus journey (1h 8min) to Hoppers Crossing alone depending on what time of day they set off. If they were to travel to the outdoor pool at Werribee it would be between 59 minutes and 1 hour 43 min by public transport and walking. Even if they were to cycle, they would be putting their lives at risk by having to go over the freeway (all three points are not bike

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Census 2006 – <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Wyndham City Council, Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy 2011 to 2031 (June 2011) – Strategy Recommendations and Overview prepared for Wyndham City

safe) and/or tackle Forsyth Road or Old Geelong Road, which are simply far too dangerous for youth on bicycles.

- Although there is a planned duplication of Sneydes Road with pedestrian/cycle access, this is unlikely to result in residents (particularly youth) cycling to WELC and/or WOOP on a regular basis, due to the distance.
- Although there is a planned train station for "Point Cook", it will be located in Williams Landing on the northern side of the Princess Freeway. It is therefore unlikely to provide any improvement in accessibility to WELC and/or WOOP via public transport for the majority of Point Cook residents, as it will still involve a significant walk for most residents or multiple connections utilising busses to complete the journey.

### **2.5. Reliance on motor vehicles for Point Cook residents**

- Point Cook residents are forced to rely on motor vehicles to access most essential facilities and/or services due to limited public transport options, distance to travel for most services and the lack of a community hub that enables the majority of services to be accessed in the one location.
- In 2006, 25% of Point Cook households had either one or no car.<sup>3</sup> Many families on one salary cannot afford the cost of running two cars as well as the mortgage, household bills and food. Often the worker takes the car to commute into town (or sometimes only to drive to the station and park there for the day) and leaves the stay at home parents without a car and having to rely on walking or public transport. If they opt to visit a pool by public transport, you have the added hassle of prams and you will find most will not bother, potentially leading to issues of isolation.
- By having a leisure facility in Point Cook, residents would be able to reduce their reliance on motor vehicle usage and therefore reducing their carbon footprint.

### **2.6. Strength of the Point Cook's voice**

- There are already more than 300 online supporters of this campaign – and Point Cook Residents haven't yet started door-to-door, local businesses and school consultations.
- The schools in Point Cook have been lobbying collectively for a pool in Point Cook for many years.
- There have been many letters to the local papers over the last few months, both via the Point Cook Residents and through independently concerned individuals with no affiliation.
- As Point Cook residents pay a premium in terms of council rates, the close proximity of a public swimming pool is not an unreasonable request.

## **3. Facts**

- Point Cook currently the third largest suburb in Wyndham behind Werribee and Hoppers Crossing (which both have pools). Residents are already need of facilities and they should be catered for now.
- Currently 20% of the City of Wyndham population live in Point Cook.
- Including Werribee South, 21% of the City population reside south of Princess Freeway.
- Currently, children aged 0-4 years are most likely to reside in the Point Cook over other areas in Wyndham, making up 27% of the suburb's population (3,915 out of 14,249 people).<sup>4</sup>
- We have the highest birth rate and need access to a community hub within our own suburb, where we can meet other mums, ethnic groups, exercise, go swimming, teach our children to swim, allow our older kids to meet their friends and use their energy in a positive manner.
- These facts highlight the strong need for a leisure facility in Point Cook now.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Census 2006 – <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/>

<sup>4</sup> Source: Wyndham City Council Website -

<http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/aboutwyndham/wyndhamcity/demographics/growthfacts>

- Travelling by road, WLEC is located 12km from the centre of Point Cook. The Werribee outdoor pool is 10km away. A pool in Tarneit, only 4km from Hoppers Crossing is further afield, is some 13km from Point Cook.<sup>5</sup>
- Due to the high property value, Point Cook pay the highest rates in the City of Wyndham and contributes approximately 27% of the City's total annual rates, some \$23 million dollars.<sup>6</sup>
- A number of new Point Cook residents are strongly considering moving or thinking of moving to other areas that offer increased recreational facilities, which could result in a lack of income through rates if this is to occur on mass.

#### 4. Potential future growth

- Wyndham's total population is expected to reach 245,000 by 2021, and 321,000 by 2031. The highest proportion of residents in 2021 is forecasted to reside in Point Cook (47,391), Werribee (40,909) and Hoppers Crossing (37,156) respectively. This is forecasted to remain much the same through to 2021.<sup>7</sup>
- The population assumptions used to develop the Wyndham Aquatic Facility strategy were restricted by the uncertainty of land re-zoning within the area and there is potential if land is to be re-zoned as commercial/housing that Point Cook population could increase far beyond the quoted 65,685 by 2050, as indicated during the Draft Aquatic Strategy 2011 Community Information Night.
- Should additional land be re-zoned to commercial and/or housing on the southern side of the Princess Freeway, then a portion of that land gifted to Wyndham City Council by the developers could provide a potential site for a Community Leisure Facility in Point Cook. As a minimum, this consideration should be included in the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy.
- Recent proposed re-zoning of land<sup>8</sup> has been met by protests within the community based on potential further congestion on current services within Point Cook. A leisure facility on this site would be a more efficient use of the land to directly benefit the community rather than the proposed golf (that would make three golf courses in Wyndham) and would assist in gaining community support for such a development, provided transport issues (i.e. congestions on local roads) were also addressed in advance of this re-development.
- There appears to be no evidence regarding how the proposed future development of Werribee South has been taken into consideration within the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy. A leisure facility within Point Cook has the potential to cater for Werribee South residents also, who will face similar issues regarding accessing services on the northern side of the Princess Freeway.

#### 5. Need for a community hub in Point Cook

There is a desperate need for a community hub in Point Cook that provides active recreation options (both structured and unstructured) for families and individuals to connect within their community

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Google maps: <http://maps.google.com.au/>

<sup>6</sup> Combined sources: Australian Property Monitors Home Price Guide – [http://www.homepriceguide.com.au/2006 Population and household forecasts City of Wyndham](http://www.homepriceguide.com.au/2006%20Population%20and%20household%20forecasts%20City%20of%20Wyndham)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Wyndham City Council Website - <http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/aboutwyndham/wyndhamcity/demographics/growthfacts>

<sup>8</sup> Source: Growth Areas Logical Inclusions Review Process 2011 Preliminary Assessment Report West Region: Wyndham and Melton

locally. This fits in with Councils mission of "Creating a healthy, safe, vibrant, proud and harmonious community whilst respecting our environment".<sup>9</sup>

The ideal mix of such a facility would be dependent on what is sustainable and most appropriate to meet community needs (to be determined), but should include as a minimum both wet and dry multi-use active recreation spaces.

Point Cook is facing the following issues that could be addressed through a creative plan for a community hub located in Point Cook:

### **5.1.Lack of a local leisure facility for Point Cook residents**

- Lack of a facility for residents to learn to swim, experience water play, lap swim, become involved in group fitness classes and/or participated in preferred active recreation pursuits.
- It is noted that Point Cook does have many oval facilities. However, they are geared more towards the male population for their structured activity use. In addition to this, they are mainly used for walking dogs outside of these structured activities. Ovals are used by a smaller proportion of the population than those that would use a local community leisure facility and do not provide the same community benefits that a local leisure facility would offer.

### **5.2.Insufficient family activities in Point Cook**

- Insufficient family activities within Point Cook, a suburb that consists mainly of young families. Although Point Cook does have an abundance of parks and open spaces for families to enjoy, however the weather does not always make those public spaces a viable option. During inclement weather, families are restricted to the Town Centre, Sanctuary Lakes Shopping Centre, Point Cook Library, local cafés and one privately run indoor play centre (which is aimed at young children) as the main options for "undercover leisure options" during inclement weather. We need activities for our children and youth that are inexpensive and family orientated.

### **5.3.Insufficient structured programs in Point Cook to engage youth**

- Almost \$300,000 was spent on removing graffiti over the past year in a bid to clean up Wyndham.<sup>10</sup> Issues such as graffiti, car hooning, crime and depression amongst teenagers are on the increase and could be addressed through targeted youth programs within a community leisure facility. The UK has had much success with programs such as these utilising leisure facilities. Local Leisure Facilities would provide a positive outlet for teens. As children get older (teenagers) they need accessible creative outlets to channel their energy. A single skate park (also geared toward the male population) is insufficient leisure provision for this vulnerable demographic.
- This is a vulnerable age group. For example, one in five children and adolescents are affected by mental health problems and disorders. Those aged 18-24 have the highest prevalence of mental disorders of any age group.<sup>11</sup> We currently have insufficient activities to ensure good mental health for these members within our community.
- A multi-use facility could incorporate appropriate spaces for youth, such as a "teen lounge" and regular evening entertainment such as discos and various activities (e.g. card swapping nights) to cater for teens who need to engage with peers but are not interested in active recreation opportunities. Failure to provide such facilities will lead to anti-social behaviour and higher incidences of anti-social behaviour as a result of boredom.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Wyndham City Plan 2011-2015.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Star: Werribee, Hoppers Crossing, Point Cook.

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/228/story/84349.html>

<sup>11</sup> Source: Black Dog Institute:

<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/depression/inteenagersyoungadults.cfm>



#### **5.4. Insufficient kindergartens and childcare facilities in Point Cook**

- Currently there are a lot of families already having to rely on kindergarten, childcare facilities and after school activities (and even schools) outside of Point Cook. Wyndham City Council could consider incorporating such services within the footprints of a leisure facility to address those issued concurrently.

#### **5.5. Overcrowding in Point Cook schools**

- Wyndham City Council could consider including the construction of a community leisure facility within the planning of a proposed future school in the area.

#### **5.6. Poor take up of school swimming programs in Point Cook schools**

- Current school swimming programs take up more than half of the school day due to the amount of travel time that is required from Point Cook to WELC. By having a closer facility, our children would spend more time being educated rather than being transported. The cost of such transport is also a deterrent for some schools when considering offering such programs and can be a barrier for many parents that cannot afford the cost. Depending on the proposed location, walking to the pool for school swimming lessons may also be an option for some schools, providing a double health benefit.

#### **5.7. Isolation of stay at home parents**

- Stay at home parents (particularly those without access to a car) would really benefit from a Community hub that offers a pool, kinder, a crèche, a reasonably priced gym, exercise classes and a general meeting and social place for people in their own local community. Community engagement for better mental health can be a real positive for people in a position such as this that may feel cut off from the community due to poor access to facilities.

#### **5.8. Need for targeted programs for Point Cook ethnic groups**

- A large proportion of Point Cook residents are immigrants that have moved here hoping to enjoy the many recreational activities that Australia is renowned for, including swimming. A community leisure facility could provide a meeting place and special programs for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to assist in breaking down barriers, as well as providing opportunities for more effective integration.

#### **5.9. Need for residents to learn to swim**

- It is important for all children and adults to be given the opportunity to learn to swim. This is particularly important for Point Cook residents, as our suburb is part-bordered by Port Phillip Bay and 83km from the closest surf beach. In the past 2 years the number of people drowning in Australia has increased by close to 21%. Royal Life Saving says children (particularly those under 5 years) are the most vulnerable to drowning.<sup>12</sup> We need to be able to protect our children.

#### **5.10. Limited sporting options available**

- There are many sports that are not provided for in Point Cook that could be made available through appropriate programming of a multi-use undercover wet/dry leisure facility. These could include but are not limited to table tennis, squash/racquetball, badminton, netball, basketball, indoor lawn bowls, tenpin bowling, various forms of dance, gymnastics, sport aerobics, cheerleading, etc. Further consultation and feasibility would need to be undertaken to determine the appropriate mix.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Royal Life Saving Society Australia Website - <http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/www/html/2629-2010-national-drowning-report-.asp>

### **5.11. Increasing number of seniors**

- The construction of several retirement villages in Point Cook will result in the relocation of many seniors to the area that are looking to access leisure activities to actively engage with their peers and contribute to better health outcomes and improve quality of life for retirement.

### **5.12. Access to leisure facilities for people with disabilities**

- Sport (and active recreation) is an excellent vehicle for providing opportunities for building confidence, providing sense of future and connecting people back into community. Access to local facilities is one of the factors that influence the participation of people with disabilities in sport and active recreation, with a lack of access providing a major barrier to participation.<sup>13</sup>

### **5.13. Lack of employment options in Point Cook**

- Most Point Cook residents work outside of Point Cook, with a large majority travelling into the city. For many, this involves approximately one-hour travel time (sometimes longer with the struggle to get out in and out of Point Cook during peak times). It is unreasonable to expect parents working in those circumstances to return to Point Cook to collect their children and then to travel another 20 minutes (if going at peak time) to access the closest leisure facility. Arriving later maybe advised, however they begin to shut down from 8:30pm and several residents have sited incidences of being asked to vacate the pool at 8:30pm even though it doesn't actually close until 9pm.

### **5.14. Potential business precinct in Point Cook**

- There has been talk at Council level of a potential "business park" in Point Cook, should land be re-zoned for commercial use. If this is to occur, this could be a potential site for a leisure facility, providing a facility for corporate fitness programs. Having a leisure facility in Point Cook could also increase employment within Point Cook, therefore reducing traffic congestion toward the Princess Freeway in some small part.

It is noted that Point Cook does have (and will soon have even more) football fields, but the Point Cook residents feel strongly that such facilities cater only for a small portion of the community and that a leisure facility (which incorporates both wet and dry multi-use active recreation spaces) is better placed to provide solutions to the above issues.

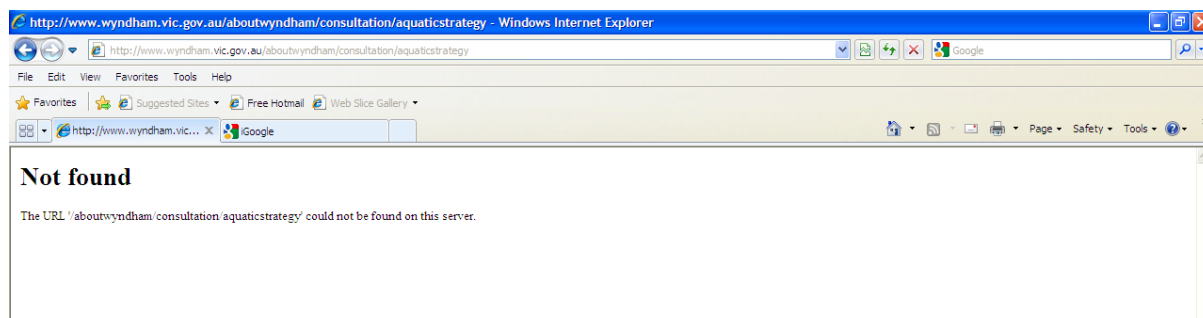
## **6. Availability and Inadequacies of current Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy**

### **6.1. Not publicly available online**

We appreciate that "the draft Aquatic Strategy document which was placed on public exhibition in late June; and the presentation was provided to those attending the Community Information session at WLEC on 14<sup>th</sup> July". The presentation is not on the website and the Strategy is not available for download:

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Australian Sports Commission:  
[http://ausport.gov.au/participating/disability/research\\_and\\_reports/identifying\\_the\\_sporting\\_needs\\_of\\_people\\_with\\_a\\_disability](http://ausport.gov.au/participating/disability/research_and_reports/identifying_the_sporting_needs_of_people_with_a_disability)



## 6.2. Restricted brief

- It appears that the current strategy has been developed primarily based on economic considerations for the Wyndham City Council (i.e. fewer larger facilities rather than more smaller facilities). Whilst it is understood that these economic considerations are a very important factor, Point Cook residents believe that Point Cook as a suburb presents a strong case for arguing re-assessment of this position based on other potential impacts that a local leisure facility would have for the community, including measures of health, social outcomes and the potential environmental benefits of such a facility. For example, an increase in the availability of a healthy lifestyle will decrease the direct and indirect costs of obesity and other overweight health related problems. It could also potentially reduce the strain on our medical centres.

## 6.3. Insufficient details

- The Wyndham report contains very little detail, few statistics and there is no logical progression from data through analysis to conclusion. By comparison:
  - The Bendigo<sup>14</sup> and Surf Coast<sup>15</sup> strategies (prepared by two different consultants) contain much greater detail about population levels current and future, sustainability levels for pool complex operations and the direct and indirect benefits of providing a complex.

## 6.4. Lack of community consultation

- Only two people attended the community consultation for the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy that was held on 14 July 2011 at WELC. Anecdotal evidence would suggest this was due to a combination of poor communication and distribution of information to Point Cook Residents (which is an issue that affects many issues beyond just this strategy), along with poor location and timing of meeting. Rather than determine the cause of the poor attendance and re-convene this meeting, Wyndham City Council appeared to have ticked the box that community consultation had occurred and progressed regardless.
- In addition to this, the Principal of Point Cook P-9 College was aware of Point Cook's Leisure Strategy and the contents within, but was unaware that an Aquatics Strategy had been developed. He advised that Point Cook schools, which meet regularly to discuss strategic issues for the community such as the need for a local swimming pool, had not been consulted on this

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<sup>14</sup> Source: City of Greater Bendigo, Draft Greater Bendigo Aquatic Facilities Strategy, August 2010 – [http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/News\\_and\\_Information/Current\\_Projects/Proposed\\_second\\_indoor\\_aquatic\\_leisure\\_centre](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/News_and_Information/Current_Projects/Proposed_second_indoor_aquatic_leisure_centre)

<sup>15</sup> Source: Surf Coast Shire, Final Report Surf Coast Shire Aquatic Leisure Centre Feasibility Study November 2009 - [http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Leisure%20&%20Cty%20Services/Documents/SportRec/Indoor\\_Aquatic\\_CentreFeasibility\\_Study\\_FR.pdf](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Leisure%20&%20Cty%20Services/Documents/SportRec/Indoor_Aquatic_CentreFeasibility_Study_FR.pdf)

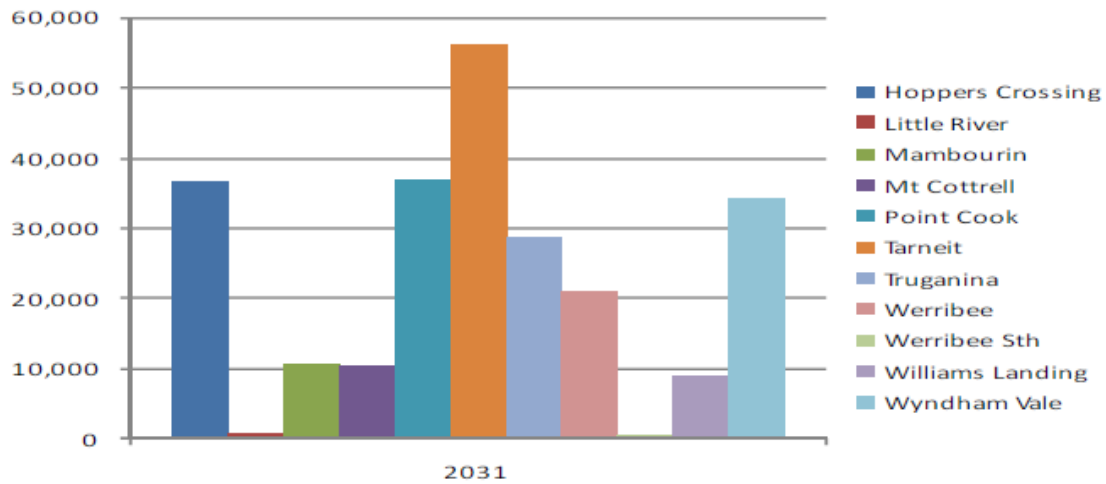
matter. It seems this is a fairly large user group of aquatic facilities that has been overlooked in this consultation process.

### **6.5.Incorrect figures**

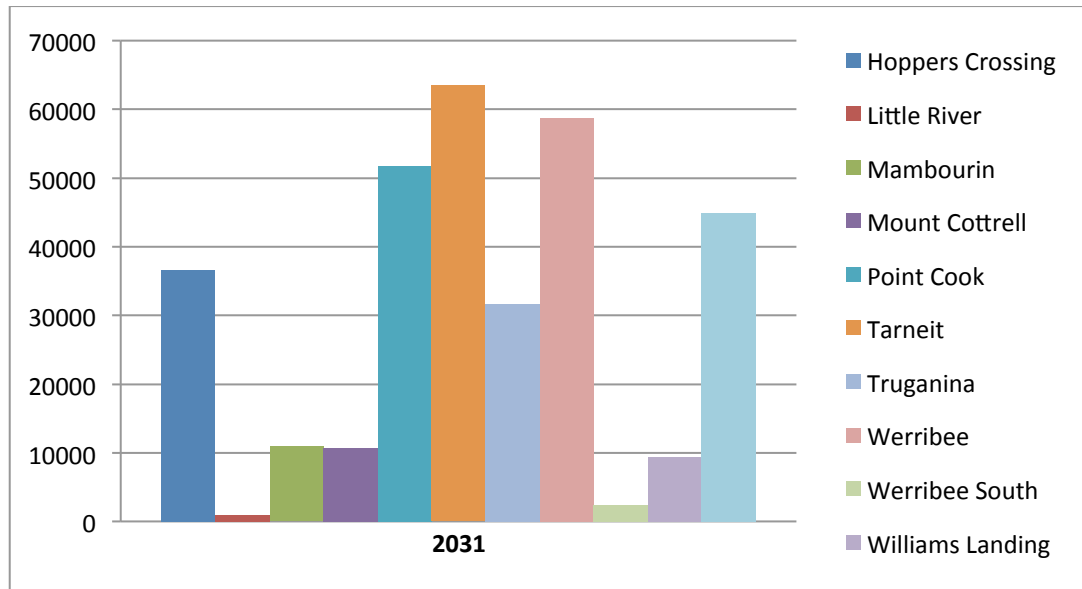
- Upon further investigation, there appears to be errors in this Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy (page 2). Forecast population increase per suburb for 2031 has been graphed incorrectly, with some suburbs showing population 'increases' and some the 'total' population. This graph leads to false conclusions regarding the areas of greatest population, how existing pools will cope with population increases and the best placed areas for a new pool.
- The graph presented in the Aquatic Strategy is quite different to the corrected result as presented below:

Wyndham Aquatic Strategy – population by suburb 2031<sup>16</sup>

## WCC Population By Suburb 2031



Correct projected population forecasts by suburb 2031<sup>17</sup>



- Notice the difference – Point Cook and Werribee have been left short (15,000 for Point Cook and 38,000 for Werribee). This is a massive discrepancy and the error has a significant impact on the current recommendation in the Wyndham Aquatic Strategy.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Wyndham City Council, Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy 2011 to 2031 (June 2011) – Strategy Recommendations and Overview prepared for Wyndham City

<sup>17</sup> Source: Forecast ID (City of Wyndham – Population and Household forecasts) –

<http://forecast2.id.com.au/templates/forecast2/Clients/124Wynd/PDF/10.pdf>

## 7. Considerations

Significant consideration has been taken to the development of the proposed recommendations in this submission, including Wyndham City Council's position to be able to deliver the proposed recommendations. The following points have been considered as part of the process of developing this submission:

- The Council has contracted an independent consultant (and specialist in the area of leisure planning) to undertake the appropriate research and develop the Wyndham Aquatic Strategy based on assumptions relating to predicted population growth rates.
- There are certain population thresholds that determine how big a facility is warranted for an area.
- It is more economical to build a small number of large facilities within an area rather than several smaller facilities and this is the direction Wyndham City Council has chosen to take.
  - Wyndham population forecast 2031 = 310,000, their report suggests two pool complexes plus the outdoor pool will be sufficient (at best approx. 1 per 100,000).
- The strategy of fewer large facilities is not the only option and several councils with their own unique circumstances for their communities have chosen to adopt a different strategy. For example:
  - Bendigo population forecast 2031 = 145,000<sup>18</sup> and their aquatic report suggest this will require four pool complexes (approx. 1 per 36,000)
  - Surf Coast population forecast 2031 = 44,000<sup>19</sup> their aquatic report is suggesting a pool now, but understands that it won't be sustainable until population is approximately 40,000 (approx. 1 per 40,000).
  - Based on both of these examples, Point Cook's current population of 32,167 (2011) and (conservative) forecast population of 51,000 (2021) and 65,685 (2050) would be enough to sustain a leisure facility. Calculations would just need to be done to determine the scale of such a facility and it could be considered as a staged build based on actual population/usage figures.
- Adopting a strategy that provides a leisure facility in Point Cook would result in higher running costs per square meter of facility and could result in possible rate increases. Note: Point Cook residents should be given the opportunity to consider this rather than dismiss such a strategy in fear of resident's response.
- The cost of maintaining a leisure facility far exceeds the cost of building a facility over time.
- Wyndham City Council needs to ensure that the Aquatic Facility Strategy maximises the use of current infrastructure, while planning for a new facility to accommodate significant population increases in Wyndham's growth corridors.
- Existing built facilities within Wyndham that rely on Point Cook residents to achieve patronage figures need to remain viable (notably WELC).
- The catchment area for a leisure facility can be impacted by what other facilities are in the area and there are several other facilities that may be considered "in the area" on paper.
- VicHealth and the State Government Victoria: Department of Planning and Community Development (Sport and Recreation Victoria) have recently developed tools that can assess the full impact (health, social, environmental and economic) on building (and not building) leisure facilities in areas based on community data. Wyndham City should gain access to these tools to assist in informing their decision.
- The Council does not own any "spare" land in Point Cook and the cost of land in Point Cook is more than in other areas such as Tarneit. Note: This would not be an issue with "gifted" land as part of a new development.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=134&pg=5180>

<sup>19</sup> <http://forecast2.id.com.au/default.aspx?id=222&pg=5180>

- A leisure facility in Tarneit will help to encourage land and house prices to rise, whereas Point Cook is almost peaking.
- The Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy includes a short-term strategy of reviewing the Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy's "medium" and "long-term" strategies particularly with respect to population growth in each growth corridor and competitor facility developments (e.g. Hobson's Bay) by end 2015. Should the assumptions relating to population be proven incorrect in this period and Point Cook continue to increase in population at a greater rate than proposed, then this time period will be too long.

### **7.1. Ongoing usage and sustainability of WELC and WOOP**

It is understood that current facilities may sustain an initial loss of income should a Leisure facility be built in Point Cook. However, forecast growth within Wyndham would indicate that this would be a short-term issue and one that Wyndham City Council should consider wearing in the short-term with a long-term vision of growth beyond the capacity of current facilities.

- If a smaller leisure facility was considered for Point Cook, there may still be a need for residents and Point Cook user groups to travel to WELC and/or WOOP for programs that could not be provided via a small facility, such as school swimming carnivals and access to a 50m training venue.
- Decreased reliance on WELC and/or WOOP by Point Cook residents would be replaced by the increased population in the northern part of Wyndham in the short-term prior to a facility being built in Tarneit (by 2021).
- Some residents and families would still access WELC and/or WOOP when meeting friends/family from those communities.
- WOOP would still maintain its niche as Wyndham's outdoor facility and therefore continue to attract the patronage of those that are seeking an outdoor leisure facility.
- Issues of overcrowding and increased customer satisfaction on hot summer days would be improved as a result of an additional leisure facility in Point Cook.

## **8. Proposed Recommendations**

Point Cook Residents believe that Point Cook's unique circumstances warrant the need for its own leisure facility on the southern side of the Princess Freeway to address the issues raised in this submission and propose the following:

- Wyndham City Council to respond to Point Cook Residents regarding the concerns expressed regarding the inadequacies of the current Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy and lack of community consultation.
- The Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy 2011 to 2031 is revised to:
  - Include the provision of a community leisure facility (incorporating both wet and dry multi-use active recreation spaces) in Point Cook.
  - Correct the graphical error and corresponding conclusions (as highlighted in section 6)
- The Wyndham Aquatic Facility Strategy 2011 to 2031 is revised to include provision that should additional land be re-zoned to commercial and/or housing on the southern side of the Princess Freeway, then a portion of that land gifted to Wyndham City Council by the developers could provide a potential site for a Community Leisure Facility in Point Cook.
- Feasibility studies and additional community consultation of Point Cook Residents be undertaken to determine what type of facility (and blend of uses) could be sustained based on current shortages of facilities and services within the community and the short-term population forecasts. Health, social, environmental, economic and other appropriate measures should be considered as

part of this study to ensure the full impact of both providing and not providing a leisure facility is duly considered.

- A long-term plan and blueprint for a large community leisure facility be developed based on a staged approach to development. Phase 1 should cater for current population needs and 5-year population forecast for Point Cook, with the view of further expansion if and when the population and/or usage warrant the need.
- Wyndham City Council to seek State and Federal Government grant support for funding the development of a Point Cook Leisure Facility.
- Appropriate land in Point Cook (that will accommodate the long-term blueprint) be identified and targeted as "gifted" land as part of future sub-divisions.
- Phase 1 of a leisure facility to be constructed in Point Cook in the short-term (approx. 5 years).
- Phase 2 of leisure facility to be developed if and when the population and/or usage warrant the need.

## 9. References

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Wyndham City Council Website - [www.wyndham.vic.gov.au](http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au)

Wyndham City Plan 2011-2015.