CM13.2. Draft Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Plans - Public Exhibition

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Purpose of Report

To provide Council with the findings from the community engagement process and present the resultant draft concept design for the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment.

The report also provides a recommendation to progress the preferred concept design and long-term masterplan for the site to public exhibition. A further report detailing outcomes from the public exhibition will be provided to Council prior to commencement of the detailed design of the preferred concept.

Background

The Lavington Swim Centre officially opened in February 1967 to cater for the growing population in northern Albury. The facility has commonly been known as the North Albury/Lavington Swim Centre, until 2005 where the name was officially changed to the Lavington Swim Centre.

The entire facility covers an area of approximately 8,800m^2 and the grounds consist of concourse areas and grass areas with well-established trees. The swim centre currently includes the following components:

- Main entrance building comprising of entrance, kiosk, small office area and changerooms;
- 50m x 15.2m pool;
- Diving pool;
- 16m x 8m learners' pool;
- Toddlers' pool;
- Aquatic plant equipment;
- North Albury/Lavington swimming clubrooms;
- Northside Water Polo Club shed; and
- Shade structures.

The Lavington Swim Centre is a much-loved community facility, and it plays a substantial role in addressing socio-economic disparities, enhancing community safety, and improving the overall quality of life for the surrounding resident and broader community.

A condition audit report conducted by Creo Consultants in February 2024 confirmed that Lavington Swim Centre is at the end of its useful life and a replacement of the facility is required to ensure the

ongoing operation of the facility. Creo Consultants report recommends that AlburyCity maintain the pool's operation for two more summer seasons (2024/25 and 2025/26).

The replacement of this facility is in line with AlburyCity's Aquatics Strategy and Council resolution of 23 October 2023. The resolution states:

"That Council proceed with the replacement of Lavington Swim Centre, excluding diving infrastructure, to current and best practice standards as per the adopted Four-Year Delivery Plan with consideration for waterplay and learn to swim opportunities, to complement and not compete with the proposed Regional Aquatic Facility at Lauren Jackson Sports Centre."

To understand the community's requirements for a redeveloped facility, within the parameters resolved by Council, and to ultimately develop concept design options for Council consideration, a Request for Tender (RFT) was developed with the project's scope of works broken down into the following phases:

Phase 1	Initial investigations, extensive consultation, development of concept plans.
Phase 2	Development Design detailed plans to prepare for the ultimate construction of a replacement outdoor pool facility at the Lavington Swim Centre site inclusive of all pools, buildings and associated facilities.
Phase 3	Contract Documentation 70% complete.
Phase 4	Contract Documentation 90% complete.
Phase 5	Contract Documentation issued at 100% for tender and construction.
Phase 6	Partial Construction Services.

The RFT was released to market to appoint a suitably qualified contractor to submit a tender for the provision of Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Investigation and Design Services in April 2024 and closed on 2 June 2024. Five tender submissions were received with all tenders received and evaluated in accordance with the associated local government legislation, Council's Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy and Procurement guidelines.

A quantitative and qualitative assessment indicated that Canvas Projects Pty Ltd was the most favourable submission and Canvas Projects were appointed via a Contract Selection Report under CEO Delegation. Canvas Projects are a mid-sized architectural firm that have good experience in delivering similar aquatic and recreation infrastructure projects and their aquatic consultant, MLEI Consulting Engineers, have excellent experience in major aquatic projects.

On 11 November 2024, Council resolved that Council:

a. defers preparation of a request for tender for preliminary design of Aquatic facilities at Lauren Jackson Sports Centre until such time as an alternative funding source becomes available to pursue the project.

b. in accordance with the 2024/25 adopted budget, pursue preliminary design of Stage 2 of the Lauren Jackson Sports Centre multi-sport and associated facility elements, including 5 additional courts, as outlined in the Stage 2 Masterplan adopted by Council on the 22 July 2024.

c. *reflect budget savings arising from the revised project scope in the December quarter budget review.*
d. *Subject to the community consultation when finished, Council receives a report on the viability of the following features in the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre:*
    i. *A 10-lane, 52m heated outdoor pool with ramp entry and:*
        - *grandstand pool-side seating.*
        - *boom to be installed to allow for multipurpose usage will allow competition and lap swimming, school swimming carnivals, and local water polo training and competition.*
        - *a 12-month operational outdoor heated pool and scope to enclose such a pool.*
    ii. *A dedicated heated outdoor deep water 2m depth utility pool 30m x 30m (Size), this will cater for a mixture of programs form fitness programs, Lifesaving, Water Polo & Swimming. 12 months operation outdoor heated pool.*
    iii. *A dedicated heated outdoor Program pool to cater for Learn to Swim & other aquatic activates.*
    iv. *A dedicated all-abilities water play zone suitable for babies and children, with zero entry points with capacity to be Seasonally heated.*
    v. *A separate club office room / mixed usages for all user groups.*
    vi. *A café with casual seating that will serve indoor and outdoor spaces.*
    vii. *Separate modern, family-friendly change rooms and amenities for outdoor activities and dedicated disabled change rooms.*
    viii. *Open park-like outdoor space, BBQ for families to meet, gather and relax.*
    ix. *Office / administration areas.*
    x. *Provision of shade & storage areas.*
    xi. *A best practice Plant room area design.*
    xii. *Pool hoist to facilitate access for people who require it.*
    xiii. *If practical, the Main pool (Heated pool) to be designed with a movable bulkhead to allow greater operational usage.*
    xiv. *If practical, the redevelopment to include is a designated Water Polo pool.*
e. *The redevelopment of the Lavington facility to be designed to allow staged development as Council's budget allows.*

AlburyCity's adopted Four Year Delivery Program 2024-2028 has $14.3 million allocated for the replacement of the Lavington Swim Centre.

Engagement

The methodology for community engagement for the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment was guided by the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Attachment 1) for the project, which was endorsed by Council on 10 April 2024. The aim of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan was to:

- Align engagement activity with Engaging Albury Principles.
- Consult with stakeholders and the wider community to provide them with an opportunity to identify principles that will guide the draft concept design.
- Use a variety of engagement techniques to gather a range of ideas and feedback on possible inclusion for the draft concept design.

- Collect initial 'Have Your Say' feedback on how the community interacts with the facility and consider suggestions for potential inclusion in the draft concept design.
- Conduct one-on-one engagement with key stakeholders and identified key user groups to better understand their interests and needs for the future facility that will help shape the concept design.
- Provide the community with a further opportunity to provide feedback on the draft concept design when placed on public exhibition.
- Prepare a report for Council based on the results of the engagement activities.
- Close the loop with stakeholders and the community referencing the decision made by Council and how community feedback influenced the final decision.

The community engagement was designed to be undertaken over two stages of the project.

- **Stage 1 Concept Design**
  - Awareness raising and information gathering.
  - Test ideas/concepts for potential inclusion.
  - Presentation of concept designs to Council.
  - Public Exhibition of draft concept design.
- **Stage 2 Detailed Design**
  - Engagement with Key Stakeholders during detailed design.

The concept design stage of community engagement consisted of three main streams of consultation activities. The engagement commenced with the launch of a community survey on the Have Your Say page on the AlburyCity website on 23 October 2024. The survey was open for 28 days, closing on 19 November 2024. The Have Your Say page was launched in conjunction with two community pop up booths held at Lavington Square Shopping Centre and Lavington Swim Centre on Sunday 27 October 2024. The final consultation activity was one-on-one engagement sessions with key internal and external stakeholder groups.

<u>Have Your Say Community Survey</u>

The Have Your Say community survey was an invitation to the community to "*hear how you currently use the swim centre and what you'd like to see in a revamped facility."* The survey consisted of a series of questions divided into four categories:

1. Understanding Who
   - The first part of the survey was focussed on the demographic data of participants in order to understand who they are. The questions were about where they live, how far they live from the Swim Centre, their activity (work, live or participate) in the region, and their age range.

2. Understanding Why & How
   - The second part of the survey was centred on the patronage of the Swim Centre, why and how often participants visited, who they came with, and what they enjoyed about the current facility.

Both the first and second parts of the survey were multiple choice and mandatory with the flexibility to select multiple answers.

The second half of the survey was a series of open questions. These questions allowed participants to write as much or as little as they wanted to and were also optional. The survey could be completed without filling in any response to these questions.

3. Identifying Gaps
    - These were open-ended questions that focused on the current and potential future functions, services or activities offered at Lavington Swim Centre. This question included both aquatic and other activities and asked for a priority ranking of these activities.

4. Future Visioning
    - The final section of the survey was concerned with the length of the pool season, asking participants how important it was for the season to be extended. The last question was an open-ended question asking participants what else they would like to see offered at the new facility.

At the close of the Have Your Say community survey a total of 434 survey contributions were received.

The key findings from the Have Your Say Survey were:

- Demographic information of the respondents:
    - 39.4% of respondents were aged 35 to 49 years of age
    - 73.2% live locally, within 0 to 3km of the Swim Centre
    - 60.5% are residents of Lavington, North Albury or Albury
    - 23.7% are members of an Aquatics or Swimming Club
    - 39% of respondents visit the Swim Centre multiple times a week
    - 38.4% of respondents attend the Centre with their children, 33.3% attend on their own, and 30% attend as part of a team.
- The favourite aspects of the Swim Centre are:
    - the 50-metre outdoor pool, and
    - the grassy areas and gum trees
- The highest use facility is the Main 50 metre pool
- Respondents rated the best qualities of the Swim Centre as:
    - the location
    - good proximity and accessibility
    - local feel, quiet, peaceful and not overcrowded
    - good shading (trees and shade structures)
- The priorities for aquatic facilities are:
    - outdoor swimming pool: 88%
    - learn to swim swimming pool: 77.3%
    - pool access ramp 74.9%
- When asked how important it was for the pool to be open all year round:
    - 55.7% of respondents said 'very important'
    - 28.9% of respondents said 'moderately'

- The additional service requested the most was: swimming lessons, which received 76 votes - learn to swim, toddler swimming classes & adult swimming classes.

The Council resolution on 11 November 2024, in relation to the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment, occurred one week prior to the closure of the Have Your Say Community Survey. To gain insight into any potential change in sentiment as a result, each response was categorised neutral, positive or negative. A breakdown of the response sentiments is outlined below:

Sentiment Before 11 November 2024
- Neutral: 150 responses (46.6%)
- Positive: 144 responses (44.7%)
- Negative: 28 responses (8.7%)
- Toal: 322

Sentiment After 11 November 2024
- Neutral: 63 responses (56.3%)
- Positive: 38 responses (33.9%)
- Negative: 11 responses (9.8%)
- Total: 112

From the breakdown of sentiments before and after 11 November 2024, the following points can be inferred:

1. Overall Sentiment Remains Positive
   Both before and after 11 November 2024, the majority of responses were either neutral or positive. This indicates that the general sentiment towards the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment is favourable.

2. Slight Decrease in Positive Sentiment
   There is a slight decrease in the number of positive responses after 11 November 2024. This could suggest that some respondents may have had concerns or issues with the 11 November 2024 resolution.

3. Increase in Neutral Responses
   The increase in neutral responses after 11 November 2024 suggests that more respondents were indifferent or had mixed feelings about the redevelopment.

4. Consistent Negative Sentiment
   The number of negative responses remained relatively low and consistent before and after 11 November 2024. This suggests that the resolution did not significantly impact the overall sentiment.

In depth analysis of the community engagement process and findings can be found in the attached Canvas Projects Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Stakeholder Engagement Report (Attachment 2).

Community Pop-Up Booths

In person community consultation was held on the first weekend of the Have Your Say survey, with two community pop up booths. The pop-up booths were located at Lavington Square Shopping Centre (11:00am – 1:30pm) and at the Lavington Swim Centre (2:00pm – 3:30pm).

The pop-up booths aimed to raise awareness of the project and provide an opportunity for the community to ask questions regarding the engagement process and proposed redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre.

All participants who engaged with the pop-up booths were encouraged to scan the QR code and complete the Have Your Say community survey, as a formal record of their opinions and vision for the future of the Lavington Swim Centre. In addition, the comments received in person were noted by the AlburyCity and Canvas Projects staff present.

Overall feedback was positive with community members advising of their excitement for this project and feeling positive about the community involvement in the design of this facility. Community members advised that they felt the Lavington Swim Centre is welcoming and friendly with comments made that this location and facility is preferred over the Albury Swim Centre. Many stated that the Albury Swim Centre is often too busy and attendees having limited ability in accessing lanes to swim due to regular users 'taking over' the location, however the Lavington Swim Centre has a more community minded focus, where everyone is welcome.

Community members highlighted that this facility is one of the reducing numbers of useable outdoor 50m pools within the country and do not wish to have this enclosed, however possibly expand the area around the pool to accommodate additional seating, BBQ's and shaded areas for attendees to utilise while at the facility.

A high proportion of community members identified the need for a dedicated Water Polo facility, advising the need is only growing.

A complete record of the comments received from the Community Pop Up booths can be found in Appendix 01 of the Canvas Projects Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Stakeholder Engagement Report (Attachment 2).

Key Stakeholder Focus Groups

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment project identified both internal and external stakeholders who should be consulted in a focus group, or one to one engagement session. These focus group sessions took place with members of the AlburyCity project team, and Canvas Projects. The sessions were either in person or online.

The following stakeholders participated in key focus groups:

- Service Provider – Aquatic Services provider / operator
- Sports Club or Association – Swimming and Water Polo
- School Sports Associations

- Precinct Groups – Jelbert Park, Manual Activities Centre
- Disability & CALD community groups
- Clinical and Allied health providers
- Adjoining residents & general community
- State Sports organisations – Water Polo NSW, VIC
- Albury Aquatic Facilities Advisory Committee
- DCEO Business Growth and Community and Cr Hudson as Chair of the Albury Aquatics Advisory Committee

In total, key stakeholder focussed consultation was completed with fourteen separate stakeholder groups.

The key findings from the Key Stakeholder Focus Groups were:

- A community asset.
    - The importance of Lavington Swim Centre being a family friendly facility, the focus should be on encouraging water familiarisation and learn to swim within the community.
    - Great existing assets of Lavington Swim Centre are the lawn, tree shade, adequate BBQ and picnic facilities. It is a popular location for children's birthday parties.
    - Lavington Swim Centre should not replicate what is offered at Albury Pool – have something different so that the two are complementary.
    - General public are the largest user group of the pool – sometimes a shortage of space for general public if there are formal activities scheduled.
- Equitable access & diversity of spaces.
- Pool Access: Consider access to pool – not all people can use the special water wheelchairs, having both ramps and hoists for pool access should be considered for equity.
- Inclusive: Creating opportunities for teenagers and CALD community.
- Current conditions: the location of the two smaller pools is not close enough for simultaneous supervision.
- Key Findings
    - a local, outdoor pool
    - 50 metre pool
    - shady, with a lawn setting
    - a toddler-safe, engaging pool for young families
    - learn to swim
    - more water to meet demand in the region
    - open year round
    - facility that can cater for regional events
    - flexible water options to cater for different sporting activities and informal recreational use

Community Engagement Next Steps

If Council endorse a preferred design concept at this 10 March 2025 Council meeting, the draft concept design and long-term masterplan for the site will be placed on public exhibition. The exhibition period of 28 days will allow for community feedback. All those involved in the consultation

to date, where contact details were provided, will be encouraged to provide feedback, as well as the broader community.

Stage 2 of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will commence once the detailed design stage of the project has started.

Issues

Draft Concept Design Approach

The Concept Design for the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre is conceived as a masterplan for the facility, identifying several stages of redevelopment that can be fulfilled as demand requires and available funding permits. Stages represent self-sufficient redevelopment models that do not rely on later stages for success and do not present as unrealised works or as a development in waiting.

The stages provide aquatic and support facilities that observe the priority of needs identified in the Stakeholder and Community Engagement process, and resolutions of Council. The commencement stage of this redevelopment will be subject to the allocation of available funding to deliver this facility in the first instance and associated community programs will be made possible or precluded by that choice.

Consideration of the operation model has also been embedded in each stage, understanding that the pool will be run by an aquatic service provider/partner for at least the commencement stage of this redevelopment. The operation model observed in all proposed stages also provides for pool filtration and water management infrastructure that allows the pools to be run independently and for 12 months of the year, providing AlburyCity with the flexibility to alter or adapt the operational conditions as required.

Concept Design Stages

Concept Stage 1 – Replacement Facility

This first, or base, option provides a replacement of the current facilities at Lavington Swim Centre with the equivalent current best practice facilities and amenities. The main pool is a 50m x 15m (1.1 - 2.0m depth) accommodating six (6) lanes of regulation width or seven (7) narrower lanes as per the existing Lavington Swim Pool. A second Utility pool of 25m x 15m (0.9 - 1.5m depth) accommodates both lap swimming and remedial use. Both the 50m Pool and the Utility Pool are provided with entry ramps to permit universal access. A splash pad provides both an interactive waterplay area and a shallow toddler pool.

A new pool building with administration, kiosk, change facilities and amenities, multipurpose social room and a changing places amenity (approximately 500m2), replacing the existing Lavington Swim Centre facilities, is situated along the northern perimeter of the Swim Centre grounds.

A series of shaded arbour structures surround the perimeter of the Swim Centre and run alongside the pools. In support of the retained lawns and mature tree canopies, the shaded arbours provide additional shaded seating and opportunity for BBQ, picnic tables and mobile bleacher seating.

The existing Swim Centre building is proposed to be largely retained, with minor modification to support its use as a staging area for carnivals and events and equipment storage.

The estimated total cost of Concept Stage 1 implementation from commencement is $31.4M.

Concept Stage 2 – Stage 1 with 10 Lane 50m Pool

This stage provides an alternative starting point for this project providing a 50m long and 25m wide (1.1 - 2.0m depth) accommodating 10 lanes, in lieu of the 50m x 15m pool in Stage 1. This 50m pool, has a uniform 2 metre depth for 25m of its length, transitioning to 1.1m deep at the shallow end. This depth configuration allows the deep end to be used for water polo, while the shallow end can be divided into lanes running east-west for 25m lap swimming.

As an alternative starting stage for this project, Stage 2 also provides the utility pool, splash pad, northern pool building, shaded arbour structures and repurposed existing Swim Centre building described in Stage 1.

Stage 2 represents a higher cost than Stage 1, with the benefit of accommodating a dual use in the main pool.

The estimated total cost of Concept Stage 2 implementation from commencement is $35.9M.

Concept Stage 3– Stage 2 with Water Polo Pool

This stage also provides a dedicated 35m long and 25m wide (2.0m uniform depth) water polo pool. In addition to its function as a dedicated water polo pool, this pool also provides warm up and entry practice pool to support swimming events and carnivals being held in the main 50m x 25m pool. No entry ramp has been provided to this pool given its primary use is water polo, rather a hoist could be installed to ensure universal access.

This stage will also require an extension of the proposed pool plant room to accommodate temperature and treatment equipment for the water polo pool. Shaded arbour structures from Stage 1 and 2 have been extended to provide shading and amenity for spectators and participants surrounding the water polo pool.

The construction of the water polo pool will require the removal of significant existing trees in this area. Proposed landscape plans identify a strategy to replace the loss of these trees with new mature planting within the Swim Centre site.

The estimated total cost of Concept Stage 3 implementation from commencement is $45.1M.

Concept Stage 4 – Stage 3 with Multipurpose Pavilion

This stage provides additional multi-sports pavilion to the eastern edge of the Swim Centre site. Providing changerooms for teams and match officials, social room, kiosk / kitchen and equipment stores, this building (approximately 500m^2) is adjacent to both the 50m pool and the main soccer playing pitch and softball field to its east. This building is configured to provide secure access to changerooms and social spaces from both within the Swim Centre and Jelbart Park.

This multi-sport wing could be utilised by tenant Jelbart Park soccer and softball clubs along with the tenant swim and water polo clubs at the Lavington Swim Centre. For Lavington Swim Centre, the additional changeroom facilities would support occasions with a surge in participant numbers such as swim carnivals, touring schools and water polo events.

The estimated total cost of Concept Stage 4 implementation from commencement is $50.8M.

Concept Design Options

In addition to the Concept Design Stages outlined above, Canvas Project also propose four concept design options. These design options are add-ons to the concept stages and provide more flexibility in tailoring a concept design that suits.

Concept Stage 1 – Option 1A

This option provides an additional 10 metres of width to the 50m pool provided in Stage 1. Extension of the pool could occur at any point after the completion of Stage 1 and would also include an extension of the pool plant and equipment system. Modification of this pool would include the demolition of the eastern pool edge and would not impact proposed water reticulation and universal access entry ramps proposed for Stage 1. The estimated cost for this option is $5,270,000.

Concept Stage 4 – Option 4A

This option shows a structure which would support a seasonal enclosure to the lap pool and immediate concourse. The intent is to provide weather protection through a large volume created by a canvas or synthetic textile enclosure. The supporting portal structure would remain in place year-round, with the canopy elements put into storage during warmer months. The portal structure would aim to integrate with the established site grid and relate to the lower arbour structure that runs throughout the concourse and building borders.

The enclosure would be a steel portal frame structure, 4 metre high columns with 5 degree roof pitch, retractable canvas canopies to roof and sides, to provide a semi-enclosure to the 50m pool. The canvas canopy fabric could provide rain protection but would not be watertight or weatherproof. Coverage to the sides would be partial only. The consultants have highlighted that any full enclosure of the pool would require management of warm air and condensation (i.e. mechanical ventilation), which would be a significant cost addition. Open sides allow the pool to be part of the wider lawn area, enables viewing, and allows a simple conversion to ‘summer’ mode – with limited or no canvas

canopies. The semi-enclosure would provide effective shade protection, however, would not be very effective for retaining the heat of the pool in or protecting swimmers from the cold in the cooler months of the year. The estimated cost for this option is $3,840,000.

Concept Stage 4 – Option 4B

In the event that the Manual Activity Centre is relocated in the future, and the existing structure is demolished, the intersection of the aquatic facilities and the multipurpose sporting pavilion can be joined as a services enclosure accommodating the rainwater harvesting and distribution systems, including tanks. The estimated cost for this option is $680,000.

Concept Stage 4 – Option 4C

A public splash park located between the aquatic facility's northern facade and the main reserve car park, for use by all reserve visitors. This facility would form part of the landscape design for the building surrounds and would feature interactive playground elements with integrated splash play. The level of finish and robustness would reflect the parks exposure and public setting. This area of the reserve would not be secured outside of pool operational hours and staff supervision. The estimated cost for this option is $2,700,000.

An in depth report outlining the design approach and each stage in more detail can be found in the attached Canvas Projects Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Design Report (Attachment 3) and Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Design Report Appendices (Attachment 4).

Jelbart Park Considerations

Precinct Car Park

A new car park is proposed for the Jelbart Park Precinct, to be located to the north of the Swim Centre site with access from Moore Street. The car park will provide off-street parking for visitors and patrons to the park precinct, including the Manual Activities Centre, and is intended to be delivered at the same time as the Lavington Swim Centre project. The car park is proposed to be part of the wider Jelbart Park precinct Masterplan. The funding for this work is not included in the Lavington Swim Centre project but can be included in the draft Four Year Delivery Program 2025-2029.

Culvert Elimination

The existing open culvert located to the north and east of the project site effectively separates the Lavington Swim Centre from the remainder of the Jelbart Park precinct. It is currently fenced with one pedestrian access point located to the south of the Manual Activity Centre. The culvert is proposed to be replaced with an enclosed pipe and easement zone, which will allow this area to be landscaped along the east, and for the car park to be built along the north. The Swim Centre can then be reconnected both visually and physically with the remainder of the park precinct. The culvert elimination is proposed to be part of the wider Jelbart Park precinct master plan. As highlighted above, the funding for this work is not included in the Lavington Swim Centre project.

Manual Activities Centre

There is no change to the Manual Activity Centre building as part of this project, however the existing access and car park to the facility will be impacted. This impact will be minimised with the construction of the precinct car park and a new pedestrian pathway from the car park to the existing main entry of the Manual Activity Centre which will provide accessible car parking for visitors and patrons.

Jelbart Park Air Monitoring Station

The New South Wales Government's Department of Planning Industry and Environment currently have a licence to occupy a section of land within the proposed site to house the Jelbart Park Air Monitoring Station. This licence recently expired on 28 February 2025, and discussions are soon to commence regarding the potential desire of Council to not renew the licence and for this infrastructure to be relocated to an alternate location.

Existing Pavilion Retention

The Concept Stages propose that the existing Lavington Swim Centre Pavilion is retained and refurbished to provide a central enclosed storage area and the walls of the north and south wings of the pavilion are removed to provide sheltered undercover areas that are open on two sides. These provide flexible spaces that can be used for sun and rain protection or for corralling competitors during swimming carnivals or water event days. The central enclosed store can accommodate separate secure storage for the swimming and water polo clubs and other community or social groups. The cost of these works are included in the estimates provided.

Splash Pad – Flexible Operation

The Concept Stages propose two options for the splash pad; internal swim centre access or public access.

Swim Centre access - the splash pad is part of the Swim Centre site, with the Swim Centre fence line located on the north and western boundaries of the splash pad. Access to the splash pad is only for Swim Centre patrons and during operational hours of the Centre. The splash pad is under surveillance by Swim Centre staff and allows families to utilise this activity whist enjoying the other pools and kiosk.

Public access - the splash pad is external to the Swim Centre and accessible to the public. The secure fence line is located to the east and south of the splash pad, separating the Swim Centre site from the splash pad. This location allows for access to the splash pad by the public independent of the Swim Centre opening hours. The design of the splash pad in this location would ensure that it could operate safely without supervision. Families using the splash pad can access the kiosk from its external servery window. This would be outside the supervision of Swim Centre staff and hence would require a zero depth. Operational model would need to be explored with Lavington Swim Centre Operator for the continued testing and maintenance of this public facility.

11 November 2024 Council Resolution

The Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Design Report has considered all the elements of item d of the 11 November 2024 Council Resolution. Each item of the resolution is addressed below:

i. A 10-lane, 52m heated outdoor pool with ramp entry and:

- *grandstand pool-side seating.*
- *boom to be installed to allow for multipurpose usage will allow competition and lap swimming, school swimming carnivals, and local water polo training and competition.*
- *a 12-month operational outdoor heated pool and scope to enclose such a pool.*

The addition of a 10-lane 50m heated outdoor pool with entry ramp is included from Concept Stage 2 onwards. A 52m pool with moveable boom was excluded from the design as the aquatic's consultants recommended a centrally located hydraulic boom that can be raised from the bottom of the pool to separate the pool into a water polo playing field size. This hydraulic boom services the same purpose as a 52m pool with a movable boom with fewer complications.

Grandstand seating was considered by Canvas Projects, and they are recommending the use of portable grandstands that can be arranged underneath the colonnade along the eastern side of that pool that provides shade and weather protection. The landscape plan also includes grass banks along the eastern length of the 50m pool that will create a natural grandstand.

All Concept Stages include the capability for all pools to be heated. The proposed water management infrastructure allows the pools to be run independently allowing for different temperatures in each pool.

Concept Stage 4 – Option 4A provides an option to provide a seasonal cover over the pool for weather protection. As highlighted elsewhere in this report, the canvas canopy fabric could provide rain protection but would not be watertight or weatherproof and coverage to the sides would be partial only. The semi-enclosure would not be very effective for retaining the heat of the pool or protecting swimmers from the cold in the cooler months of the year. The consultants have highlighted that any full enclosure of the pool would require management of warm air and condensation (i.e. mechanical ventilation), which would be a significant cost addition. Given the aforementioned, and the community feedback in relation to a preference for an outdoor pool, this additional option is not recommended.

ii. A dedicated heated outdoor deep water 2m depth utility pool 30m x 30m (Size) this will cater for a mixture of programs form fitness programs, Lifesaving, Water Polo & Swimming. 12 months operation outdoor heated pool.

Concept Stage 3 provides a dedicated 35m x 25m pool with a uniform 2.0m depth that would be suitable for water polo matches and training, deep water fitness program, swimming warm up/cool down facility for events and carnivals and other programs. As above, the pool will be heated.

iii. A dedicated heated outdoor Program pool to cater for Learn to Swim & other aquatic activates.

All Concept Stages include a 25m x 15m (0.9 - 1.5m depth) utility pool that can be used for lap swimming, Learn to Swim classes, fitness programs and remedial use. The proposed design for this pool would have the temperature set at 33 degrees, that allows for a more comfortable environment for these activities.

iv. A dedicated all-abilities water play zone suitable for babies and children with zero entry points with capacity to be Seasonally heated.

All Concept Stages include a splash pad that provides interactive water play areas and a shallow toddler pool. The splash pad and toddler pool would be operated by a dedicated pool plant that would allow for temperatures to be set as required.

v. A separate club office room / mixed usages for all user groups.

All Concept Stages include a social room space in the new pavilion building at the north of the site.

vi. A café with casual seating that will serve indoor and outdoor spaces.

A café / kiosk is included in all Concept Stages that is adjacent to the new entrance at the northwestern edge of the site. The proposed cafe/kiosk services the pool patrons via an internal servery and services the public via an external servery and external seating. There is no provision for indoor seating with this café / kiosk, which is not considered necessary given the outdoor nature of this facility.

vii. Separate modern, family-friendly change rooms and amenities for outdoor activities and dedicated disabled change rooms.

Two new change rooms, a family change room, a staff change room and a Changing Places change room with internal and external access are included in all Concept Stages.

viii. Open park-like outdoor space, BBQ for families to meet, gather and relax.

Many of the existing trees and lawn spaces are kept in the Concept Stage designs. The shaded arbour structures around the site are designed to be able to include BBQs and picnic tables.

ix. Office / administration areas.

The new entrance to the facility includes office and administration areas.

x. Provision of shade & storage areas.

The Concept Stages propose that the existing pool building facing Moore Street is retained and refurbished to provide a central enclosed storage area. The walls of the north and south wings

of the pavilion are removed to provide sheltered, undercover areas that are open on two sides and fenced along the western building edge.

These provide flexible spaces that can be used for sun and rain protection in inclement weather, or for corralling competitors during swim carnival or water polo event days. The central enclosed store can accommodate separate secure storage for the Swimming and Water Polo clubs, and other community or social groups.

A series of arbour structures surround the perimeter of the Swim Centre and alongside the pools provides shade for patrons.

xi. A best practice Plant room area design.

The Concept Stages propose a new main pool plant and associated balance tanks at the southern edge of the site. The main pool plant will be enclosed in a roofed structure with acoustic treatment to minimise noise.

Reticulation of heated and treated pool water is via dedicated lines to each pool. Dedicated lines to each pool permit differential water temperatures and pools to be closed or isolated from each other in seasonal use. All reticulation is via inground lines immediately beneath new landscape pathways with regular access points for maintenance access.

xii. Pool hoist to facilitate access for people who require it.

The main pool and utility pool are designed to incorporate an access ramp for accessible use. The need for pool hoists will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project.

xiii. If practical, the Main pool (Heated pool) to be designed with a movable bulkhead to allow greater operational usage.

As mentioned above, the main pool will have a hydraulic boom that allows for operational flexibility.

xiv. If practical, the redevelopment to include is a designated Water Polo pool.

As mentioned above, Concept Stage 3 incorporates a dedicated Water Polo pool.

Canvas Projects' Concept Design Stage Recommendation

Canvas Projects' recommended Concept Design Stage for the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre was informed by:

- The Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment brief;
- The outcomes of the Stakeholder Engagement process; and
- Council's resolution on 11 November 2024.

The Canvas Projects Concept Design Report recommends Concept Design Stage 2 as the commencement stage for this project.

This stage provides aquatic and support facilities that observe the priority of needs identified in the Stakeholder and Community Engagement process, and Council resolutions, within a realistic budget. Aquatic facilities provided include a 10 lane, 50m pool, that can be flexibly divided to accommodate both water polo and 25m lap swimming. A Utility pool accommodates learn to swim and remedial aquatics, and a splash pad provides zero depth and toddler swim zones.

Proposed Costs v Budget

AlburyCity's adopted Four-Year Delivery Program 2024-2028 has $14.3 million allocated for this project. Based on the Concept Design Stages presented in this report, clearly this is a significant budget shortfall. While delaying or cancelling this project due to the cost may seem like the appropriate course of action, given the current focus on financially sustainability, failing to act now will only increase the cost to provide quality aquatic facilities in the future.

During the extensive community consultation undertaken for this project, and other aquatic projects over the years, the community has emphatically provided the feedback that there is not enough pool space with Albury's two current aquatic facilities. Not progressing the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment project, as outlined in the Concept Design Stages above, would leave AlburyCity with only one aquatic facility to serve the community. This is likely to occur in the very near future given the condition of the current asset, which has been independently assessed as being almost at its end of life.

According to the 2021 Census, the Albury Local Government Area currently ranks in the lower 50 percent among Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Australia based on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) score of 968. This ranking highlights the pronounced socio-economic disparities prevalent in our region. Within our LGA, Lavington and North Albury have been identified as the suburbs facing the greatest socio-economic challenges, with IRSAD scores of 872 and 888 respectively. These scores place them in the bottom 10 percent of all Australian suburbs in terms of social advantage.

Compared to other suburbs in Albury LGA, Lavington and North Albury also have the highest proportion of residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These individuals often encounter distinctive hurdles in accessing recreational amenities and integrating into the broader community. The Lavington Swim Centre plays a pivotal role in bridging these gaps and fostering a sense of community cohesion.

The indispensable role played by the Lavington Swim Centre as a vital community resource is further highlighted by the fact that Lavington and North Albury have the highest number of households without access to personal vehicles. This limited access to transportation hinders the ability of residents in these areas to reach alternative recreational facilities.

Furthermore, the AlburyCity Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027 calls attention to the importance of water safety within our region. Of particular concern is the Murray

River, which has been identified as the leading river drowning blackspot in Australia, with over 70 unintentional fatal drownings recorded since 2002. The inherent risks associated with the unpredictable conditions of the Murray River support the need for accessible and safer swimming alternatives like the Lavington Swim Centre.

Additionally, a comprehensive study conducted by the Royal Life Saving Australia in 2022 found that the closure of a single aquatic facility results in an average loss of $7 million in social, health, and economic benefits.

In summary, the Lavington Swim Centre plays a substantial role in addressing socio-economic disparities, enhancing community safety, and improving the overall quality of life for our surrounding resident community.

If Council proceeds with this project all potential funding sources such as State and Federal funding programs, loan funding and a Special Rate Variation will need to be considered. A project funding strategy is currently being developed and will be presented to Council together with the results of the Public Exhibition of the preferred Concept Design.

AlburyCity is currently in the process of updating and reprioritising the Four Year Delivery Program for consideration by Council, with priority being given to awarded grant funding project commitments. Given the cost of living crisis and our own financial position, our objective is to establish a sustainable works program that reflects what we can afford. Every additional $10 million in loan funding required by AlburyCity to fund capital works, incurs annual loan repayments of $850,000 which is equivalent to 1.5% of rate revenue.

External Funding Opportunity

A grant submission for the NSW Government's Regional Economic Development and Community Investment Program has been prepared for this project. The grant submission applied for $5 million in funding, the maximum available. The funds from this grant application, if successful, will be allocated to this project, reducing the additional funds that would need to be allocated by Council. The closing date for submissions was 20 February 2025.

If Council proceeds with the project, further external grant funding opportunities will be monitored, including while the design process is underway, and applications submitted where possible.

Economic and Social Benefits

Investing in this project will generate substantial long-term economic benefits. Economic modelling using REMPLAN demonstrates that the $35 million investment in the project will generate $78.7 million in direct, supply-chain, and consumption effects representing a 124.86% return on total investment. Additionally, the project is expected to create 141 long-term jobs and result in up to $5.42 million in workforce productivity gains.

The economic impact extends well beyond the initial construction and operational phases. These benefits will positively influence local businesses, improve community well-being, boost tourism,

increase property values, and enhance overall economic vitality. The creation of new jobs, along with increased consumer spending in the area, will stimulate local industries and support a thriving economy.

Fundamentally, the project will enhance Albury's appeal to individuals pursuing an active lifestyle, helping to retain and attract residents, which in turn will contribute to the region's workforce.

A significant barrier to regional economic growth is outdated or insufficient community infrastructure, such as public pools. The Lavington Swim Centre, like many regional facilities, is an aging facility with limited amenities which discourages both residents and tourists. Upgrading public pools enhances recreational opportunities, attracts visitors, supports local businesses, and improves community well-being. Without investment in such infrastructure, regions like Albury may struggle with quality of life and long-term economic growth.

Workforce is also a major impediment to regional economic growth. The project is expected to create 141 long-term jobs while enhancing Albury's appeal to new residents and improving liveability. The upgraded facility will also promote health and wellness activities, which reduce absenteeism, increase engagement, and improve physical health. These benefits could lead to up to $5.42 million in economic contributions, through reduced healthcare costs and better worker efficiency, providing businesses with a healthier and more capable workforce.

Health can also be a significant impediment to regional economic development. Poor health outcomes and limited access to healthcare services can create barriers to a productive workforce and overall community well-being. Improved health outcomes from increased physical activity at the upgraded pool will reduce healthcare costs and ease the burden on the local health system. Healthier employees contribute to a more efficient economy, creating a cycle where improved health drives economic growth, which in turn supports health initiatives.

The Royal Life Saving Australia 2017 report found that the average Australian visits a public aquatic facility 4.4 times per year. Based on this data, the 17,800 pool visits in 2024 equate to approximately 4,045 unique visitors. Given that 61.3% of Albury's population is of working age, it is estimated that around 2,480 of these visitors will experience workforce productivity benefits. This enhanced access to recreational facilities can also support workforce attraction, making Albury a more appealing destination for skilled workers who value quality of life and health-focused amenities.

According to KPMG-Econtech's 2008 report *The Cost of Physical Inactivity*, the value of avoided absenteeism was estimated at $458 per worker, which, adjusted for inflation, is $636.95 per worker in 2024 dollars. With an expected 20% increase in visitation, this project is projected to generate a present value of $5.42 million in avoided absenteeism.

In addition, increased visitation will result in health system savings. The Royal Life Saving Australia 2017 report *Economic Benefits of Australia's Public Aquatic Facilities* estimated health savings of $26.39 per visit, which adjusts to $32.07 per visit in 2024 dollars. With a 20% increase in visitation, this project is expected to generate $1.96 million in health system savings.

These figures underscore the significant long-term economic, health, and workforce attraction benefits this project will bring to Albury, improving workforce productivity, supporting talent attraction, and reducing strain on the health system.

AlburyCity Considerations for Next Steps

It is envisaged that the progression of the project will include the following:

1. Publicly exhibit the Lavington Swim Centre preferred concept design (Stage 2), and long-term masterplan (incorporating Stages 3 & 4) that will guide the future development of the site and seek community and stakeholder input via public exhibition. This will include sharing all related reports that have informed the project to this point.
2. Prepare a report for Council post public exhibition on the community feedback received.
3. Consider incorporation of revised cost estimates for the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment, as well as provisions for eliminating the culvert and establishing the Jelbart Park carpark, in developing the draft 2025-2029 Four Year Delivery Program.
4. Subject to Council approval, commence the detailed design process for the Lavington Swim Centre Concept Design Stage 2.
5. Once the detailed design is complete and required funding is secured, prepare for the construction phase, which is expected to begin in 2026.

Strategic Alignment

The Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment will support the achievement of the following strategic outcomes and actions:

- AlburyCity Aquatic Strategy 2017
- AlburyCity Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027

The project aligns with outcomes contained within *Towards Albury 2050* including:

A Growing Sustainable Economy:

1.1 Albury is a liveable city supporting sustainable population growth through the provision of high-quality infrastructure, industry – leading services and high levels of amenity.

A Caring Community:

3.3 Our community values arts, culture, heritage, and place. All residents share and celebrate our multiculturism in a welcoming and open community.
3.5 Albury is a safe, inclusive, and accessible region for our entire community.
3.6 Albury is a vibrant region that values the enrichment offered by arts and cultural activities and provides for diverse lifestyles and experiences.

A Leading Community:

4.2 Albury collaborates as a community to plan for the future and work towards a shared vision.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – The Concept Design Stages for the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre requires significant capital investment and presents a financial operational risk for AlburyCity. There is also a risk that the project may face additional financial overruns due to unforeseen construction costs, inflation or changes in material prices. There is a risk that given the Creo Consultants condition audit found that Lavington Swim Centre has a maximum of two more seasons of life expectancy, the facility would need to be closed before a replacement facility is completed. This could result in AlburyCity only having one swim centre to cater for the community for longer than the period required to construct the new facility at Lavington.
- **Corporate Risk** – Given the recent Council decision to defer plans for aquatic facilities at Lauren Jackson Sports Centre community interest in this project, particularly with the aquatic's community, will be high. If a decision is made to not progress the project, there is a risk that the community may express their disappointment at the lack of action by AlburyCity to progress the development of new aquatic facilities. Many in the community believe access to quality aquatic facilities improves their quality of life.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – Any decision to not progress this project would result in AlburyCity only having one swim centre to cater for the community and therefore would reduce the availability of safe and supervised water for the community, especially in the North Albury and Lavington area which could result in an increased risk of drownings in Albury inland waterways.
- **Environmental Risk** – The environmental risks for the project will be assessed by Canvas Projects as part of the detailed design process. It is imperative that during the detailed design process that the new facility is designed with sustainability in mind, including energy-efficient systems and materials.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – Delays in any phase of the project, from design to construction, could push back the completion date, affecting community access and increasing costs. The endorsement of the draft Concept Design will allow the detailed design stage to begin post public exhibition. The sooner the process can begin, the greater the chance of completing the consultation and detailed design prior to having to close the facility.

Options

That Council:

1.
    a. receive and note the Canvas Projects' Lavington Swim Centre Stakeholder Engagement and Concept Design Reports;
    b. endorse the Lavington Swim Centre preferred concept design (Stage 2), and long-term masterplan (incorporating Stages 3 & 4) that will guide the future development of the site, for public exhibition for a period of 28 days;
    c. consider incorporation of the revised cost estimates for the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment, as well as provisions for eliminating the culvert and establishing the Jelbart Park carpark, in developing AlburyCity's draft Four Year Delivery Program 2025-2029; and

d. receive a further report on the outcomes of the public exhibition process and a project funding strategy.
Recommended.

2. Seek further information or amendments prior to public exhibition of the concept designs. **Not Recommended.**

The concepts designs have been developed considering community feedback, Council resolutions to date, best practice design and the technical requirements for efficient aquatic facility operations.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre is a pivotal project that addresses the community's need for modern, accessible, and multifunctional aquatic facilities. The extensive community engagement and stakeholder consultation have provided valuable insights, ensuring that the proposed concept designs align with the community's aspirations and needs.

The recommended Concept Design Stage 2 offers a balanced approach, providing a 10-lane, 50m pool with flexible usage options, a utility pool, and a splash pad, all within a realistic budget. This stage not only meets the immediate needs but also lays a foundation for future expansions, ensuring the facility remains a vital community asset for years to come.

The project aligns with AlburyCity's strategic goals, enhancing community safety, addressing socio-economic disparities, and promoting a healthier, more inclusive community. The proposed redevelopment will significantly improve the quality of life for residents, particularly in the socio-economically challenged areas of Lavington and North Albury.

Securing additional funding and progressing to the detailed design phase are crucial next steps. By doing so, AlburyCity can ensure the timely delivery of this essential community resource, mitigating risks associated with the aging current facility and meeting the growing demand for aquatic services.

In conclusion, the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment is not just an infrastructure project but a commitment to fostering community well-being, inclusivity, and resilience. The proposed concept designs reflect a thoughtful, community-driven approach that will serve AlburyCity well into the future.

Recommendation

That Council:

a. receive and note the Canvas Projects' Lavington Swim Centre Stakeholder Engagement and Concept Design Reports;
b. endorse the Lavington Swim Centre preferred concept design (Stage 2), and long-term masterplan (incorporating Stages 3 & 4) that will guide the future development of the site, for public exhibition for a period of 28 days;

c. consider incorporation of the revised cost estimates for the Lavington Swim Centre redevelopment, as well as provisions for eliminating the culvert and establishing the Jelbart Park car park, in developing AlburyCity's draft Four Year Delivery Program 2025-2029; and
d. receive a further report on the outcomes of the public exhibition process and a project funding strategy.

Attachments

1. Lavington Swim Centre Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (DOC24/49371)
2. Lavington Swim Centre Stakeholder Engagement Report (B) (DOC25/48907)
3. Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Design Report (A) (DOC25/36183)
4. Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Design Report Appendices (DOC25/36184)