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

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Purpose of Report

To provide Council with the submissions and feedback received during the public exhibition of the draft Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Plans and seek endorsement to commence 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 8,800m2 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 assessment 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 recommended 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.*

After a period of community engagement, which included a community survey on the “Have Your Say” page on the AlburyCity website, two community pop up booths and one-on-one engagement sessions with key stakeholders, a Stakeholder Engagement report was prepared by Canvas Project.

The outcomes of the community engagement led to the development of four concept design stages. The concept design stages identify several stages of redevelopment that can be progressed 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.

On 10 March 2025, Council resolved that Council:

a. receive and note the Canvas Projects' Lavington Swim Centre Stakeholder Engagement and Concept Design Reports;
b. place the draft Lavington Swim Centre concept design Masterplan on public exhibition for 28 days;
c. incorporate 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.

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

Issues

Public Exhibition

The draft Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Concept Plans were placed on public exhibition via the "Have Your Say" page on AlburyCity's website commencing from 12 March 2025 and concluding on 9 April 2025.

The public exhibition survey asked the community four questions:

1. Do you think that the proposed Masterplan is appropriate for the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre?
    a. Yes, or
    b. No.
2. Why do you think this about the proposed Masterplan?
    a. Free text open ended question.
3. Given the forecast Capital Expense to our community, at which stage should AlburyCity commence this project?
    a. Stage 1 - $31.4M
    b. Stage 2 - $35.9M
    c. Stage 3 - $45.1M
    d. Stage 4 - $50.8M
4. Please provide any additional feedback.
    a. Free text open ended question.

The "Have Your Say'" webpage was promoted through postings on social media, and via direct email communication with key stakeholders and user groups who were involved with the community consultation.

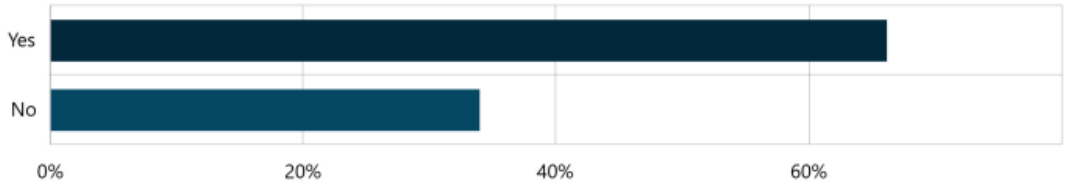
The public exhibition of the draft Concept Plans formed part of the agenda for the Albury Aquatic Facilities Advisory Committee meeting held on 2 April 2025, in which user groups were encouraged to make a submission.

At the conclusion of the public exhibition period, the “Have Your Say” webpage was viewed a total of 2,650 times, with 1,965 unique visitors and a total of 295 submissions received from 272 contributors.

Public Exhibition Outcomes

Queston 1 – Do you think that the proposed Masterplan is appropriate for the redevelopment of the Lavington Swim Centre?

Of the 295 submissions received; 195 (66%) of the submissions were supportive of the proposed Masterplan with 100 (34%) against.

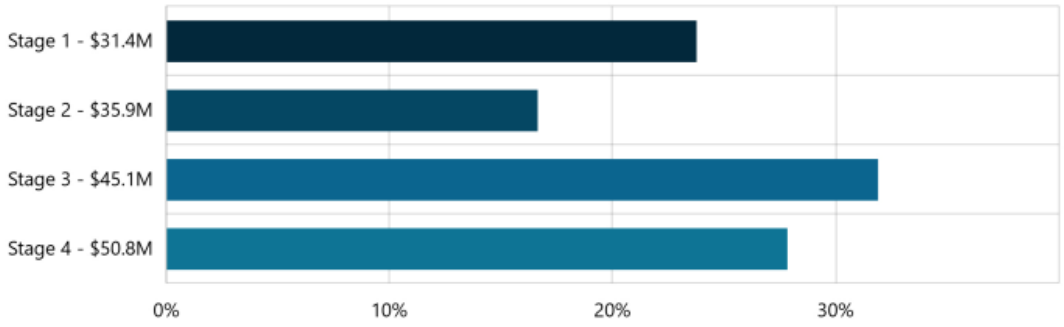


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	66.10%	195
No	33.90%	100
Total	**100.00%**	**295**

Question 2 – free text (refer below and Attachment 1)

Question 3 – Given the forecast Capital Expense to our community, at which stage should AlburyCity commence this project?

Of the 295 submissions received; Stage 3 - $45.1M was the most popular choice with 94 (32%), closely followed by Stage 4 - $50.8M with 82 (28%). The least popular choice was Stage 2 - $35.9M with 49 (17%).



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Stage 1 - $31.4M	23.73%	70
Stage 2 - $35.9M	16.61%	49
Stage 3 - $45.1M	31.86%	94
Stage 4 - $50.8M	27.80%	82
Total	**100.00%**	**295**

If the respondents that were not supportive of the Masterplan are excluded from the analysis results, the preferred staging indicated by the 195 submitters that selected 'yes' to Question 1 were as follows:

- Stage 1 - $31.4M - 16 (8%)
- Stage 2 - $35.9M - 39 (20%)
- Stage 3 - $45.1M - 76 (39%)
- Stage 4 - $50.8M - 64 (33%)

Stage 3 - $45.1M remained the number 1 option, but with a greater majority, and the support for Stage 1 - $31.4M was significantly reduced.

Key themes from Open Ended Questions Submitted (Questions 2 and 4)

The below provides a high-level summary of the themes of the feedback received. The key positive points from the feedback are:

- Appreciation for Proposed Upgrades:
  - Many respondents appreciated the proposed upgrades, especially the inclusion of a dedicated water polo pool and additional lanes for swimming.
  - Several comments highlighted the potential benefits for the community, including improved facilities for water sports, increased opportunities for hosting events, and overall enhancement of the area's recreational amenities.
- Community Benefits:
  - Respondents noted that the new facilities would provide significant benefits to the community, such as improved physical and mental well-being, reduced demand on health facilities, and increased opportunities for social interaction.

    - The upgrades were seen as a way to make Albury a better place to live, attracting people and events from surrounding areas.
- Support for Water Polo and Swimming Clubs:
    - The inclusion of a dedicated water polo pool was particularly well-received, with many respondents highlighting the benefits for local water polo teams and swimming clubs.
    - The new facilities were seen as a way to support the growth of these sports in the region, providing better training and competition opportunities.
- Year-Round Use and Accessibility:
    - The proposed upgrades were seen as a way to provide year-round access to aquatic facilities, which would be beneficial for all members of the community, including those needing rehabilitation and therapy.
    - Improved accessibility for people with disabilities was also highlighted as a positive aspect of the project.

The key negative points from the feedback are:

- High Costs:
    - Many respondents expressed concerns about the high costs associated with the proposed stages, particularly the later stages. They felt that the expenditure was excessive and questioned the financial feasibility of the project.
    - Some comments suggested that the funds could be better allocated to other community projects or facilities that would provide more value.
- Lack of an Indoor Facility:
    - A significant number of respondents criticised the lack of an indoor facility in the proposed upgrades. They felt that an indoor pool was necessary for year-round use and would better serve the community's needs.
    - The absence of an indoor facility was seen as a missed opportunity to provide a comprehensive aquatic centre that could be used in all weather conditions.
- Impact on Nearby Facilities:
    - Several comments mentioned the potential negative impact on nearby facilities, primarily the Manual Activities Centre (Albury Men's Shed). Respondents were concerned about the disruption to the day-to-day operations of these facilities and the lack of consideration for their needs in the proposed plans.
- Design and Accessibility Issues:
    - A few comments highlighted design and accessibility issues in the proposed plans. Respondents felt that the designs did not adequately address the needs of people with disabilities or provide sufficient amenities for families.
    - There were also concerns about the practicality and usability of certain features, such as the layout of the pools and the availability of shade structures.
- Scepticism About Implementation:
    - Some respondents were sceptical about the implementation of the proposed stages. They expressed doubts about whether the later stages would ever be completed and whether the project would deliver the promised benefits.
    - There were concerns about the long-term maintenance and operational costs of the new facilities.

The full submissions, along with a summary of the officer's response can be viewed in Attachment 1.

Other Submissions

Outside of the Have Your Say submissions, nine other submissions were received via email. These detailed submissions are provided in Attachment 2.

Condition Assessment Report

Creo Consultants were engaged in March 2025 to undertake another condition assessment report of the Lavington Swim Centre. The report found that the water quality within each of the pools at the time of the inspection was found to be at an acceptable standard and the condition of the concrete shells and applied finishes are not considered to be dangerous nor are the shells at risk of failure that would place patrons or staff at risk.

The condition of the 50-metre pool shell and the utility pool shell is considered to have worsened. However, the remainder of the pools and the filtration and water treatment systems remain consistent with the condition observations made by Creo Consultants in February 2024.

Creo Consultants reconfirmed their opinion that the pools have reached their end of life and AlburyCity should consider an asset replacement or closure pathway over the next two years. The report outlines that whilst it may be possible to continue to operate the pool beyond the 2025/2026 summer season, AlburyCity will need to accept the risk and costs associated with doing taking into consideration the following:

i. There will be an on-going need to continually administer localised concrete and tile repairs to the perimeter hob walls, especially the 50m pool and LTS pool.
ii. There will be an on-going need to continually administer localised repairs along the expansion joints within the water body within the 50m pool.
iii. The 50m pool centre filtered water delivery duct along the base of the pool will continue to deteriorate and Council will need to actively monitor the surface to ensure that the progressive collapse of the duct does not compromise swimmer safety as well as filtered water distribution through the pool. As a minimum, the protective rubber matting that covers the duct will need to be replaced and continually monitored as noted above.
iv. The 50m pool shell will continually leak water through joints and the damaged central duct such that the pool will continue to require consistent mains water top up. To clarify, at present, the mains water feed that services the pool through a float control valve in the soiled water collect pit generally runs continuously throughout the entire open season period. Council needs to accept that the pool will consume a considerable volume of water each season due to water loss into the surrounding ground.
v. The backwash frequency required by the aging sand media within the filters will increase, significantly increasing water consumption.

Funding Options

A draft Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Funding Options paper has been developed and can be found at Attachment 3.

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 vibrant city, providing high-quality sustainable infrastructure, industry-leading services, and amenities.

A Caring Community:

3.4. Albury is inclusive and accessible for all ages and abilities.
3.5. We are active, healthy and safe.
3.5.4. Provide high-quality parks, sporting spaces, natural areas and recreational facilities.

A Leading Community:

4.2. Our community's voice is considered in decision making.

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 recent 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, affect community access and increase costs. The endorsement of the draft Concept Design will allow the detailed design stage to progress in accordance with the contract with Canvas Projects. Progression of the project will reduce the risk of not having a shovel ready project prior to having to close the facility.

  The draft 2025-2029 Four Year Delivery Program includes $36.15M in forecast expenditure and is conditional on securing $20M in forecast grant income. Progression of the redevelopment will be subject to the adoption of the draft budget by Council and attraction of the grant funding specified. If grant funding is unable to be attracted over time, Council will need to consider other funding such as loans or increased revenue streams.

Engagement

The methodology for community engagement for the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment was guided by the Stakeholder Engagement Plan 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.

Stage 1 Concept Design 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. Post endorsement by Council, the engagement has been focussed on the "Have Your Say" survey, which included direct communication to key stakeholders and previously interested parties encouraging them to contribute their thoughts.

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

Options

1. That Council:

   a. Receive and note the submissions received during the public exhibition of the Lavington Swim Centre Masterplan; and
   b. Adopt 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.
   c. Note that detailed design for Stage 2 will now be completed as part of the current contract with Canvas Projects.
   d. Receive and note the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Funding Options paper.
   Recommended.

   While respondents showed their support for Stages 3 and 4, given AlburyCity's current financial constraints, the recommended Concept Design Stage 2 offers a balanced approach. It provides a 10-lane, 50m pool with flexible usage options, a utility pool, and a splash pad, all within a more realistic budget. Stage 2 not only meets immediate needs it also lays a foundation for future expansions, ensuring the facility remains a vital community asset for years to come.

   Future stages of the project can be realised when additional grant or Council funding becomes available.

On completion of the detailed design, final project costings and business case, we will commence preparation and lodgement of grant funding applications to suitable programs (unless programs become available earlier).

High level advocacy collateral can be developed once Council confirms its preferred commencement Stage and distributed to potential project funding partners and key stakeholders in support of lodgement of future funding applications.

2. That Council:

   a. Receive and note the submissions received during the public exhibition of the Lavington Swim Centre Masterplan; and
   b. Adopt the Lavington Swim Centre preferred concept design (Stage 3), and long-term masterplan (incorporating Stage 4) that will guide the future development of the site.
   c. Note that detailed design for Stage 3 will now be completed as part of the current contract with Canvas Projects.
   d. Receive and note the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Funding Options paper.
   Not Recommended.

3. That Council seek further amendments to the Lavington Swim Centre Masterplan prior to determining the preferred commencement stage.
   Not recommended.

   This is not the preferred option as the Lavington Swim Centre Master Plan has been developed in consultation with the community and other key stakeholders.

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 community engagement process has shown strong support for the project, with many respondents appreciating the proposed upgrades and the potential benefits for the community. The feedback has highlighted the importance of providing year-round access to aquatic facilities and improving accessibility for all members of the community.

Given the financial considerations, Stage 2 of the redevelopment is the recommended commencement point. This Stage aligns more closely with Council's current budget constraints while still delivering significant improvements to the facility. By starting with Stage 2, AlburyCity can ensure that the project remains financially feasible and can be successfully implemented within the available resources while also allowing for the site to be developed further in future in line with Stages 3 and 4.

Recommendation

That Council:

a. Receive and note the submissions received during the public exhibition of the Lavington Swim Centre Masterplan; and
b. Adopt 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.
c. Note that detailed design for Stage 2 now be completed as part of the current contract.
d. Receive and note the Lavington Swim Centre Redevelopment Funding Options paper.

Attachments

1. Lavington Swim Centre Concept Design Public Exhibition Have Your Say Submissions (DOC25/122478)
2. Lavington Swim Centre Concept Design Public Exhibition Long Form Submissions (DOC25/108474)
3. Lavington Swim Centre Funding Options (DOC25/108376)