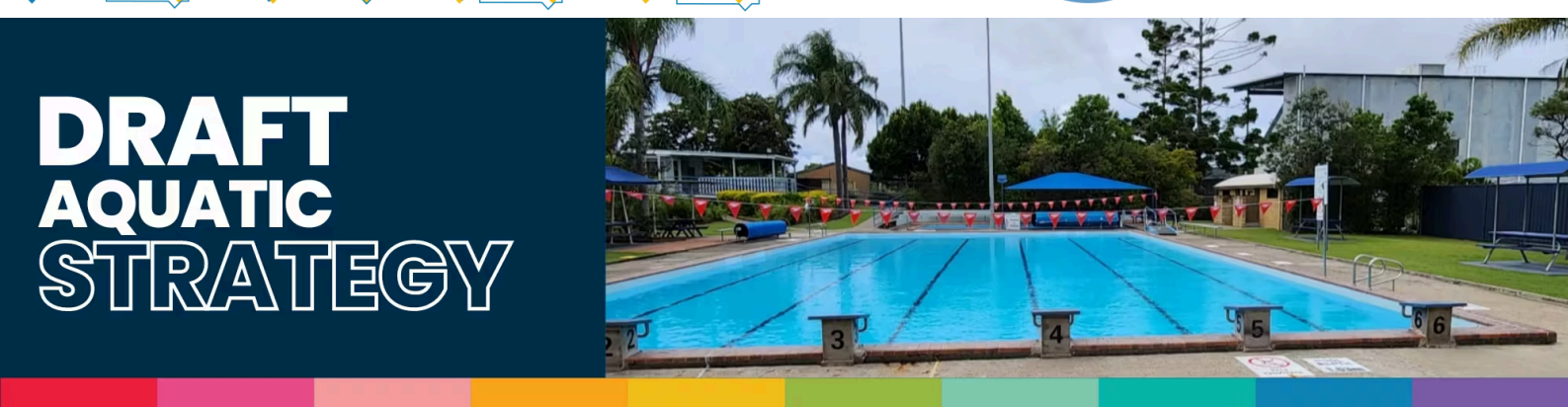




- Kempsey Shire Council
- Items on Public Exhibition

Search

- Sign in
- Register



Home / Draft Aquatic Strategy 2023-2033

Draft Aquatic Strategy 2023-2033



Consultation has concluded

Draft Aquatic Strategy 2023-2033

Kempsey Shire Council, supported by Locale Consulting, has concluded its initial investigation, stakeholder engagement, and research into our aquatic services and infrastructure, and have drafted the Kempsey Shire Council's Aquatics Strategy 2023-2033. The 10-year strategy provides direction for the future of swimming and related facilities and services for the Kempsey Shire over the coming decade and will help to identify the opportunities and constraints associated with the operation of the existing facilities.

The Strategy begins with an introduction and background to aquatic infrastructure and services within the Kempsey Shire, including an overview of each of the four aquatic centres:

- Kempsey McElhone Swimming Complex - Belgrave Street, Kempsey
- Crescent Aquatic Centre, Baker Drive, Crescent Head
- South West Rocks Swimming Pool, Sportsmans Way, South West Rocks.
- Macleay Memorial Pool, Kinchela Street, Gladstone.

The strategy then provides a summary of the investigation supporting the strategy, including the community and stakeholder engagement, industry benchmarking and research undertaken, and presents the key findings. Based on these findings, the strategy presents a range of recommendations to aquatic operations, services and infrastructure. These are summarised in the final section as an implementation plan.

What is the proposal for Gladstone Pool?

One of the key recommendations is for Council to close the Macleay Memorial Pool in Gladstone. Increased operating costs, low usage and availability of nearby options combine to make it unviable for Council to keep operating the pool. The Gladstone pool shell is 60 years old, the plant room needs renovation, and the facility is only visited 2,000 – 3,000 times a year. In addition, the industry benchmark, which suggests that operating costs should equate to a subsidy of around \$4.90 per visit for outdoor pools, is far exceeded by the Gladstone pool subsidy, which works out at around \$58.10 per visit.

The benchmarking data shows providing four aquatic facilities for a population of 31,000 people is much more than what is provided in other Local Government Areas. At a cost of over \$1million a year to operate the facilities, we need to consider the value for money for the entire community in context of Council's overall financial position.

Industry trends and community engagement data show there is a demand for aquatic facilities to offer a broad range of programs and activities. The draft Strategy recommends that savings from closing Gladstone could assist with water play and infrastructure improvements at the Kempsey complex, heating the South West Rocks pool to enable year-round use, or improvements at Crescent Head pool.

Why do we need a strategy?

Council's existing aquatic facilities are ageing and in need of ongoing maintenance and improvement, as highlighted through an asset condition report undertaken in 2022. With increasing competing demand for Council's limited financial resources, it is important to reassess community expectations of the broader community who are increasingly seeking more than just "pools", with programming, learn to swim, water play and year-round convenience being key drivers for the future. The Strategy seeks to:

- Understand the needs and desires of the Kempsey Shire community with respect to aquatic facilities,
- Reflect broader trends and opportunities within the aquatics sector, and
- Provide high level guidance on future investments in terms of Council's aquatic facilities.

How was this strategy developed?

The Strategy is informed by engagement with a range of stakeholders and the public. This included a public online survey with more than 150 respondents, targeted consultation with operators, as well as feedback from key user groups that have an active interest in the facilities. Industry benchmarking and consultation with other council's, suppliers and operators provides further insights into costs, options and trends.

What happened to the results of the Kempsey Shire Aquatic Survey?

The Kempsey Shire Aquatic Survey informed the development of the draft Aquatic Strategy. Our Your Say Macleay Page had over 800 visits to the page during the survey, with a total of 157 completed surveys received. Around half of these respondents were from South West

Rocks. 80 respondents reported to be unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with pool services. The major themes of the responses were:

- Improved heating, especially in South West Rocks, supporting longer opening hours
- Improved fitness classes, lessons, or squad training options
- Improved infrastructure, including a water play area, upgraded amenities and improved, shade, furniture and outdoor spaces
- Improved access for those with limited mobility or disability

These survey results were a fundamental part of our investigations and have guided the draft strategy.

What's next?

Council welcomes feedback on the ***draft Aquatic Strategy 2023-2033***, through until Friday, 10 November 2023. Feedback will be collated and reviewed. The final draft, which may include changes based on Your Say Macleay exhibition feedback, will be presented to Council for their consideration in December 2023.

Tell us what you think!

Submissions can be made by the following methods:

1. Fill out our short survey.
2. Make a more comprehensive, formal submission, using the online submission tool; by email to ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au or mailed to:

*The General Manager
Kempsey Shire Council
PO Box 3078
West Kempsey
NSW 2440*

Key dates:

Opens 29 September 2023.

EXHIBITION PERIOD EXTENDED UNTIL FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2023

[Survey](#)

[News feed](#)

CLOSED: This survey has concluded.

Do you agree with the contents of the draft Aquatic Strategy?

Kempsey Shire Council has developed a draft Aquatic Strategy to provide direction to Council's approach to the future management of our aquatic services and infrastructure. This has been compiled following investigation, stakeholder engagement, and research into our aquatic services and infrastructure.

Let Council know what you think of the draft Aquatic Strategy by filling in this short survey.

Consultation has concluded



CLOSED: This survey has concluded.

Formal submission: draft Aquatic Strategy

Consultation has concluded



Draft Aquatic Strategy 2023-2033

 [Kempsey Aquatic Strategy - Draft for exhibition.pdf \(6.92 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)




Council Resolution 19 December 2023

 [Council Resolution.PNG \(159 KB\) \(PNG\)](#)

Media Release

 [Media Release - Council votes to keep Gladstone Pool.docx \(252 KB\) \(docx\)](#)

FAQs

-  [How many pools does Kempsey Shire have?](#)
-  [How much does it cost to run our aquatic facilities?](#)
-  [Why is Council trying to save money on pool costs?](#)

❓ There is a lot of history to the Gladstone pool, with the community helping to fundraise and build it in the 1960s. Is there a way the community can protect it?

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[Moderation Policy](#) ❓ Will Council sell the land?

[Accessibility](#)

[Technical Support](#)

[Site Map](#) ❓ Will Council redirect the money it will save from closing Gladstone pool to

[Cookie Policy](#) improving the other Aquatic facilities in the Shire?