



City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters

10 December 2015



Engagement Report

Swimming Centres Review



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1.0 Introduction

The Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres in the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters are nearing the end of their functional life. Before embarking on major investment, the Council is exploring options to ensure the two swimming centres remain relevant for the needs and aspirations of the current and future community. To assist with understanding community views on the future of the swimming centres, the Council initiated an engagement process which was undertaken in November 2015.

1.1 What is the role of this report?

This Engagement Report summarises the engagement activities undertaken in relation to the review of the swimming centres and the key themes that emerged from this process. The information provided in this report will then be used along with a range of other information sources to inform the preparation of options for the future of the two swimming centres.

1.2 What community engagement activities were undertaken?

The following community engagement activities were undertaken to gather community input to the preparation of options for the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres:

- Conduct of focus groups comprised of participants invited via a random selection process
- Community event which was publically advertised via advertisements in the Messenger newspaper and signage at the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres.

Section 2 of this report summarises these engagement activities in more detail and the information collected.

In addition to these formal engagement processes a number of other contributions from community members were received providing comment on the swimming centres, which are also summarised in Section 2.



2.0 What did community members tell us?

This section of the report summarises the engagement activities in more detail and the information that was collected from community members.

2.1 Focus groups

Two focus group sessions were held whereby participants were invited to attend via a random selection process. Participants were invited to attend a focus group session by way of direct letters of invitation. The composition of the focus groups sought to have 15 people in total, with equal representation from the following interests:

- Rate payers
- User groups (eg swimming clubs, parents/carers of children taking lessons)
- Stakeholders (eg Residents associations, representative bodies such as Royal Life Saving).

Like any focus group, numbers were intentionally capped to enable detailed and focused discussion about the swimming centres.

In forming the focus groups, it proved difficult to obtain the requisite numbers for the focus groups across the different interests, but in particular, ratepayers. Three focus groups were originally scheduled but one was cancelled due to a lack of numbers. Participants from the cancelled session were reallocated to the other two groups. Even with this consolidation of groups, the requisite number of 15 people per focus group was not achieved. This is despite the numerous efforts that were made through multiple direct mail outs, phone calls and emails to obtain members. At the completion of the focus groups, 14 people attended the first session and 10 attended the second.

The objectives of the focus groups were to:

- Understand what is currently valued about the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres
- Consider opportunities that could be provided by the swimming centres in the future
- Explore the implications of changes to the swimming centres and discuss how to balance different objectives.

A series of activities were undertaken at the focus groups to assist with eliciting information regarding the above aspects.

The full summaries of each of the focus groups is provided in Appendix A.

An overview of the key themes that emerged from the discussion at the focus groups is provided below. Where text appears in quotations, this represents a verbatim comment recorded during discussion.



Highly valued community facilities

- Both the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres are highly valued community facilities that should be retained into the future.
- The value of these facilities is linked to the important services and functions they provide such as providing opportunities for exercise (eg lap swimming), learning to swim and water safety (which are considered fundamental life skills), socialising, water based sports such as club swimming and canoe polo and swimming events such as school carnivals, Vacs Swim and competitions.
- As densification and population growth occurs in the Council area, the provision of these types of community facilities will become more important as places that provide recreational opportunities and opportunities for community connection.

The look and the feel

- Both swimming centres are valued for their relaxed and community atmosphere, their open air nature and the green setting provided by the trees and grassed areas.
- The personal and friendly service provided by the staff at both centres is also appreciated which contributes to the experience provided at the swimming centres.
- The facilities are clean and well maintained and the water is “crystal clear”.
- The “intimate” and “private” nature of the Norwood Swimming Centre and that it “feels like my backyard” are key aspects that are valued. This contrasts with the Payneham Swimming Centre where the large open spaces are valued.

History and connection to past

- There is a strong affection for and nostalgia associated with the swimming centres which is linked to the era that they were built, and a connection to a time that was “simpler”. For some, this is linked to the intergenerational use of the swimming centres within their family.
- The “unique historical significance” of the Norwood Swimming Centre is valued and is connected to the era of design and construction of the pool and associated buildings.

Accessibility and proximity

- Both of the swimming centres are valued for their convenient location and proximity in relation to where people live, other facilities such as the library (in the case of the Payneham Swimming Centre) and public transport.
- There is plenty of car parking provided at the Payneham Swimming Centre which contrasts to the Norwood Swimming Centre where it is much more difficult to park.



Activities and experiences

- The variety of experiences and activities that are provided by the Payneham Swimming Centre is linked to the number of pools which cater for a variety of swimming levels and ages and enables transition between pools as skills and ages increase. The size of the pools, especially the 50 metre pools, and grounds also enable particular activities to occur such as carnivals and competitions, canoe polo, swimming training and lap swimming.
- The size of the Payneham Swimming Centre (including the larger kiosk compared to the Norwood Swimming Centre) contributes to creating a place where you “can stay for the day-swim, relax, eat”.
- The diving board at the Norwood Swimming Centre is considered a key attractor, particularly for children and young people. The diving board provides experiences of “risk” and “adrenalin competitions between friends”.
- Both swimming centres are important places for social connection and that you “always know someone that is there”.
- There is a strong feeling in relation to the Norwood Swimming Centre as being “our pool” and a place where people feel a “sense of belonging”.

Opportunities for the future

- There was strong support for retaining the swimming centres into the future given the vital role they play as community facilities for recreation, community connection, learning to swim and water based competitions, sports, activities and events.
- It was considered that a “point of difference” that would make the swimming centres key attractions could be as places where people “feel part of the community” even if they are not from the local community.
- There is strong sentiment that the Norwood Swimming Centre is a “simple, quiet facility in a neighbourhood setting” with strong historical value which should be built on and not lost. This compares to the Payneham Swimming Centre where more scope and space for change to occur is considered appropriate.
- Opportunities identified for change to the swimming centres mostly related to enhancing their core functions as swimming centres. For example, by providing shade and seating, upgrading change rooms, considering changes to opening hours to enable greater use of the centres for lap swimming throughout the year, promotion and marketing opportunities etc.
- Opportunities identified to extend the experiences provided at the swimming centres included providing water play, playground or nature based play spaces, restaurant or café, value add experiences such as personal fitness equipment, yoga, volleyball courts on the grassed areas, basketball rings, gym and Wifi. The use of inflatable infrastructure (eg slides, obstacle courses etc) was also suggested as were film nights, food trucks, pop up markets.



2.2 Community event

A drop in style event was held in the foyer of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters civic centre on Thursday 26 November 2015. More than 130 people were estimated to have attended the drop in session.

A range of activities were provided at the community event to enable participants to identify:

- how frequently they use the swimming centres and the types activities they undertake
- what they value or consider important about the swimming centres currently
- opportunities for the swimming centres in the future.

It should be noted that it was observed that the majority of people who attended the community event appeared to be there to communicate their opposition to the Council's decision to close the diving board and/or because they had "heard" that the Norwood pool was to be closed.

2.2.1 Use of the Swimming Centres

Participants were asked how frequently they use the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres.

Overall, 105 people identified that they are users of Norwood Pool, and 27 people identified that they are users of Payneham Pool. This meant that many of the conversations at the drop in event were focussed on Norwood Swimming Centre and focused upon the issues and opportunities associated with that centre.

Most participants identified that they are regular pool users, using the swimming centres daily or weekly.

The majority of users identified they use the Norwood pool for laps, recreational swimming and meeting friends and family. The majority of users identified they use the Payneham pool for laps.

2.2.2 What is valued about Norwood Swimming Centre currently?

Highly valued community facilities

Beyond more specific attributes that are discussed below, participants emphasised how important the Norwood Swimming Centre is to them, with comments including:

"A brilliant and unique community facility... a true local treasure"

"More than a pool...it's a cultural asset".

The look and the feel

Participants value physical features that contribute to the outward appearance of Norwood as well as intangible characteristics that contribute to the atmosphere and ambience of the centre.



These features include the art, the bees, the simplicity and relatively small size of the centre, and the way it is not crowded, the community spirit and relaxed atmosphere, with example comments including:

- “amazing ambience”
- “a peaceful low key recreational asset”
- “clean, basic, all I need”
- “simple non obtrusive buildings”
- “relaxing and very special”
- “it makes me feel good”
- “not too crowded so easy to keep an eye on kids”.

The natural surroundings

Related to the look and feel were many comments about the natural environment at the Norwood Swimming Centre, with people valuing the trees, landscaping, grass and shade, for example:

- “I like the grass to sit on – not hard concrete”
- “love the gum trees, the grass and the low key atmosphere”
- “the trees providing shade is lovely – you do not get too hot standing in the pool with children”.

Diving board

A large number of comments were received about the diving board, identifying it as one of the most valued aspects of the centre and expressing a desire for its use to be re-instated. Comments included:

- “we need our children to take some risks. This is why the diving board is important”
- “the best thing is watching the endless loop of kids jumping off the board...”
- “big kids won’t come without diving boards”.

History and connection to past

The history and older character of the pool, change rooms and turnstile is valued by many, with participants commenting:

- “I love its old world charm”
- “the change rooms –great character and ambience”
- “its as old as me – swim there all my life”
- “love the old fashioned exit turnstile gate”
- “it should be heritage listed”.



Staff and management

The friendly and helpful staff who provide excellent customer service and contribute to the atmosphere at the swimming centre are valued. Comments included:

“love the friendly and helpful staff...very customer focussed”

“staff are great – friendly, helpful and safety conscious”.

Accessibility and proximity

Many people value the location of the centre, serving the southern part of the Council area and close to people’s homes and schools, for example:

“I moved and built a home here in Norwood specifically to be close to the pool”

“close to school”.

Activities and experiences

Participants value the swimming opportunities that the centre provides to people of all ages and of differing swimming abilities, with people commenting:

“accessible form of exercise for older people”

“swimming lessons are so much fun”

“polite fellow swimmers”

“good base for local junior swimmers”

“pool is full 50m length with room for many users”

“wonderful contributor to ratepayer fitness”.

2.2.3 What is valued about Payneham Swimming Centre currently?

As mentioned earlier, a much smaller number of participants who attended the community event identified that they were users of Payneham Swimming Centre compared with the large number of attendees who reported to be users of Norwood Swimming Centre. This meant that there were far fewer comments about the valued aspects of Payneham Swimming Centre.

The look and the feel

People value the spaciousness of Payneham Swimming Centre, including grass and trees, evident in comments such as:

“its simplicity and quiet atmosphere”

“its spacious grounds, outdoors, trees and lawn”

“lovely peaceful cement surroundings – yes cement is beautiful”



Accessibility

Participants identified that they value the easy access to the centre, convenient parking, and its location near the Payneham Library and River Torrens Linear Park.

Activities and experiences

Participants value the recreational opportunities that the three pools in the centre provide for people of all ages, people with disabilities, and people from outside the Council area. There were also a number of references to the clean water and the extended season, with comments including:

“the pool is a very important part of my staying fit and healthy. Has been for 40 years”

“water quality! Unsurpassed in Australia”

“slow lane for elderly”

“season extended into April”.

2.2.4 What could our Swimming Centres be like in the future?

A range of images showing swimming centre experiences from around Australia were displayed to promote ideas about what could occur at Council’s swimming centres in the future.

People identified experiences they would like to see with dots, and facilitators documented conversations about the reasons why people would like/like not to see those experiences.

No change

A number of participants were unsupportive of all of the experiences shown on the photo board, instead commenting that nothing should be changed. It is understood from the conversations facilitated by Council staff at this activity that these comments primarily related to Norwood Swimming Centre, and a number of people felt that it is appropriate to change Payneham, but not Norwood.

Playspaces and water play

There were mixed views about new play spaces and water play. While some people indicated support for new play spaces or water play activities, others commented that “we don’t need a playground... it’s a pool for swimming” and “keep them simple”. One person suggested that nature play style water play for children be provided.

Swimming classes, events and activities

A number of photos showed a range of swimming activities, such as competition level swimming, swimming carnivals, children learning to swim, aquatics programs for older people and school holiday activities with inflatable equipment.

These experiences were supported by most participants, with the exception of the photo of the aquatics program for older people and the school holiday activities with inflatable equipment. It is understood that some of the people who were opposed to these experiences did so because the photos showed



activities taking place in indoor pools, and they were indicating that they do not support indoor swimming centres.

In discussing these photos, some people commented that there should be more organised classes at the swimming centres, both in the water and out of the water (e.g. yoga/pilates). Providing access to primary and allied health services, such as massage, movement and hydrotherapy was also suggested.

Facilities and shade

The photos showing natural and artificial shade were supported by many participants. Shade appears to be a particular issue for the Payneham Swimming Centre, and some people suggested fully covering the pool with shade cloth, planting more trees, providing partial shade or temporary shade for use during very hot weather.

Facilities such as seating, tables and shade shelters received wide levels of support. Seating in particular is popular with one person commenting that it allows “parents to watch the kids while they are playing” and another that lazyboy chairs, umbrellas and picnic tables and chairs are needed at Norwood.

There were very mixed levels of support for an indoor gym facility, and low levels of support for outdoor exercise equipment.

There appears to be very mixed levels of support for cafés or kiosks. Some people suggested a more substantial café at Norwood Swimming Centre could provide good coffee, stay open all year round and be open to the public as well as swimming centre users. Others expressed concern for any development that could undermine the character and ambience of the centre, result in the commercialisation of the centres and that the Norwood Parade is nearby. Some people indicated that the current kiosks are “great as is – just somewhere to get a drink or ice cream”.

Some people identified the need for improved fencing at both pools to prevent people illegally entering the pool on summer nights to swim.

2.2.5 Ideas for the future

Participants were asked to identify “my one bright idea for our swimming centres in the future”. Below is a summary of these ideas. Ideas that relate to the swimming centres in general are discussed first, followed by specific ideas for each of the centres.

Minimal change

Some participants indicated a preference for minimal or no change, noting that simplicity can be a drawback and that Council should focus on maintenance to keep the pools functioning properly, with ideas including:

“keep it going just as it is”

“maintenance has to be done, that’s understandable. Please leave the pools as they are, though”

“more shade over the grass”



Improvements to the swimming pools

There were a number of suggested improvements for the swimming pools themselves, for example:

“ledge at deep end so kids can stand”

“improving water quality by increasing oxygen content”

“consider solar heating”

“lanes allocated to laps all the time”

Operation times

Many people commented that the swimming centres should have an extended season. For example:

“would pay annual fee if open all year”

“extend the pool’s season – mid Sept to mid June, like Unley pool ”

Others suggested opening later into the night, for example “stay open later please – less risk of sunburn at night”. Others suggested extended hours (for example, up to 9.30pm) during weather above 35 degrees.

Experiences and activities

Some people suggested new experiences and activities for the centres, such as water based activities to support the health of older people, more group fitness classes, Tai Chi, yoga, massage and installing a film projector and screen and holding film nights.

Marketing and community groups

There were many ideas about the way in which the swimming centres could be marketed and managed in the future. Comments included marketing to increase general awareness, promoting the Norwood pool as a heritage asset and unique pool, and improved signage. Some people suggested new approaches to management, for example, “encourage community ownership – working bees” and “encourage innovative governance to allow community involvement”. Others identified the establishment of social groups based at Norwood Pool.

Norwood Swimming Centre

A large number of ideas identified specifically related to the Norwood Swimming Centre.

Keeping the diving board open was suggested by a number of respondents. Some people offered practical ways to allow this to happen, for example, “how about having a token machine entrance, with the money saved used for a life guard to monitor the diving board”.



A number of these were suggested changes to the pool itself, for example, “install bund to make pool 50m and give the option to break pool into 2x25m areas” and “ramp access if reasonably priced”. Others commented that the environment surrounding the pool should have more shade, additional trees and improved lighting. There were a number of comments about the showers, for example, “shower heads need to have more directional pressure to wash out chlorine”. Some people suggested adding more oxygen to the water.

Other ideas related to experiences and activities, for example, holding a high profile charity event each year, or providing water and land based exercise classes for older people.

Some people emphasised minimal change, for example, “keep it just as it is” and “keep its unpretentious state” and “use its 1960s look as a point of difference”.

Payneham Swimming Centre

Ideas specific to Payneham included providing shade, extending the operating hours during Autumn and Spring, longer stay car parking beyond the two hour limit and constructing another shallow teaching pool to allow for more lessons. Participants also suggested specific modifications to the pool, such as hand holds in the deep end to allow people to catch their breath, and additional female showers.

2.3 Other contributions to the engagement

In addition to the formal engagement processes described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 above, a number of contributions from community members were received providing comment on the swimming centres.

These contributions came in a variety of formats including:

- A film where residents and users of the Norwood Swimming Centre describe to camera what they “love” about the Norwood pool and reasons why it should be retained for the community
- Emails sent direct to the Council
- Drawings and written comments provided by children from Glen Osmond Primary School regarding the Norwood pool.

These additional contributions reiterate the aspects described in the previous sections, in particular in relation to what is valued about the Norwood pool and the desire to retain both centres as important community facilities that provide opportunities for swimming first and foremost.

Comments from children regarding Norwood pool appeared to be in response to the fear that the Norwood pool was to be closed. Comments included:

- “it’s awesome”because it has “the best instructors”, they’re so nice, they teach us lots of stuff”
- “it’s good because it’s an outdoor pool and there aren’t many left”
- “I really love the Norwood pool because it is the deepest pool I know and its really fun how it’s outside”
- “because it’s a relaxing pool and a peaceful pool”.



3.0 Considerations for the preparation of options for the swimming centres

The aim of the community engagement was to gather input from community members regarding their views and aspirations for the future of the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres. Based on the information collected via the engagement activities documented in section 2 of this report the following aspects are identified for consideration in preparing options for the two swimming centres:

- Both the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres are highly valued community facilities that should be retained into the future, particularly given projected population growth and change
- Retain the core function of the swimming centres as facilities for water based activities
- Continue to provide opportunities for a range of activities that are appropriate for different ages and abilities. These activities include lap swimming, club swimming, team sports such as canoe polo, swimming lessons, school carnivals and competitions and recreational swimming
- Provide a diving board or similar so that risk taking and experiences which challenge and attract children and young people to the centres continues
- Provide opportunities for new activities which broaden experiences available for exercise and recreation such as combined land and water based programs for older people, yoga, Pilates, volleyball courts on the grassed areas, basketball rings and Wifi
- Provide opportunities for providing water based/nature based play experiences as complementary activities to the swimming pools.
- There are a range of characteristics that contribute to the atmosphere and ambience of the centres which attract people to them. These characteristics should be retained and are a combination of:
 - > Friendly and welcoming staff
 - > Character and style of the pools which is linked to the era they were built in
 - > Trees and grassed areas
 - > Local, suburban nature which means you are likely to bump into someone you know
 - > Open air nature
 - > Water quality and general maintenance of the facilities
- Provide/upgrade built infrastructure that enhances the water related experiences available at the swimming centres for example seating beside the pools and throughout the grounds and improvements to the change rooms
- Provide additional shade (both natural and constructed) over the pools and around the grounds



- Protect and celebrate the heritage of the Norwood pool which is linked to the era of its design and construction
- Commercial activities should be in keeping with the community focus of the facilities and comprise activities which enhance the swimming experience such as a kiosk or café
- Consider changes to opening hours to enable greater use of the centres for lap swimming throughout the year as well as new and different promotion and marketing opportunities to broaden use of the centres
- There is strong sentiment that the Norwood Swimming Centre is a “simple, quiet facility in a neighbourhood setting” with strong historical value which should not be lost
- There is support for more substantial change to occur at the Payneham Swimming Centre in comparison to the Norwood Swimming Centre. This support is linked to the space available to provide new facilities/experiences and the different character and patterns of use between the centres.



Appendix A

Focus Group Summaries

City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Swimming Centres Review

Focus Group

4pm-5.30pm, Thursday 19 November 2015

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is undertaking a project to review its swimming centres to ensure they remain relevant facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future community.

Both the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres are nearing the end of their functional life and will require significant investment in the upgrade of plant and equipment in the near future. The timing is therefore opportune to review whether the Council should invest resources in upgrading the swimming centres so they are able to continue to function as they are currently, or whether consideration should be given to providing new and different experiences at the swimming centres given changing community needs and aspirations.

To assist with understanding community views on the future of the swimming centres, the Council has initiated an engagement process. This engagement process included the conduct of focus group discussions whereby participants were invited via a random selection process. Participants were selected to represent the following interests:

- Rate payers
- User groups (eg swimming clubs)
- Stakeholders (eg Kensington Residents' Association, Royal Life Saving).

The first of two focus group discussions was held on Thursday 19 November 2015 at 4pm at the Mayor's Parlour at the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Civic Centre and was attended by 14 people. The focus group was facilitated by Nicole Halsey and Michael Arman from URPS, and the discussion recorded at this session is summarised below.

Text that appears in quotations represents a comment recorded verbatim at the session and reflects a comment made in the participants' own words.

Objectives of the focus group session

The objectives of the focus group were to:

- Understand what is currently valued about the Norwood and Payneham swimming centres
- Consider opportunities that could be provided by the swimming centres in the future
- Explore the implications of changes to the swimming centres and discuss how to balance different objectives.

A series of activities were undertaken at the focus group to assist with eliciting information regarding the above aspects.

What is valued about the swimming centres currently?

As an initial activity participants were asked to consider what is valued about the swimming centres currently. Participants were asked to identify what they considered important by recording their views on post it notes and sticking them up on the wall. An affinity diagram process was then used

to group comments and identify common themes. This process enabled all participants to express their views individually and then explore values identified across the group.

This process identified the following aspects that are valued in relation to the swimming centres:

There were a range of comments valuing the proximity of the swimming centres to where people live and other facilities such as the library, and their accessibility in terms of being close to public transport routes or within a walkable distance. Comments included that the centres are “close to home”, “can walk there” and that they are “close for schools to attend in the area and beyond”. It was also identified that there is good car parking at the Payneham centre. The swimming centres are also valued because they provide an activity for people to do and “get people out of home and off of Ipads”.

The feel of the centres was valued by participants as it is “safe”, “relaxed” and there is a “community atmosphere”. Other aspects which contribute to the feel of the centres included “space”, “grass”, “gum trees which give shade”, and “trees and birds and the occasional koala”.

The “outdoor” nature of the swimming centres was identified and the ability to see the “blue sky”.

The service and facilities were also commented on with participants identifying they value that the centres are “well run” and “clean”, that there are “helpful staff” and the water quality is excellent.

The size of the swimming centres was valued because it enables the provision of 50 metre pools and therefore “50 metre lap swimming in lanes”. The combination of 50 metre pools with other smaller pools was also considered important, and means the centres can “cater for small children” and “provide a necessary skill to all - learn to swim”. The opening times early in the morning and evening use for lap swimming was valued, noting however that it “was only for 6 months”.

The value of the swimming centres as “community facilities” was identified and they play an important role for a wide range of groups in the community such as schools for swimming carnivals, swimming clubs for training and competitions, for children learning to swim, recreational swimming and lap swimming for exercise. The swimming centres are also valued as they provide a “way for meeting local people”, are “for “residents” and are “not commercialised”.

Are there things we value that are specific to one or other of the centres?

Following this discussion about what is valued about the swimming centres, discussion was facilitated to tease out if there are any specific differences about what is valued between the two swimming centres. Comments are summarised below.

Norwood swimming centre	Payneham swimming centre
Shade from the trees	Plenty of parking
Shade over the pool	More swimming lanes
Greater water depth	Greater open space
Colder water	Pools that cater for different levels of ability (3 pools)
“always know someone that is there”	Has steps into the 50 metre pool
Feeling that you are “cut off from the city”	“in my era-feels like home”
“Sense of serenity”	Security for young children from staff supervision
Feeling that this is “our pool”	Space to hold competitions
Sense of belonging	

Thinking about the future

Following discussion about the swimming centres now, participants were asked to consider opportunities for the centres in the future to make sure they continue to be relevant facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of the community.

In considering future opportunities for the swimming centres, participants were asked to think about:

- The types of experiences that could be provided in the future given what we know about our current and changing population
- Whether the pools should provide different/alternative experiences to each other
- How the centres might accommodate any ideas identified.

One of the key messages that came through in this discussion was the importance participants placed on retaining the swimming centres into the future as they are community facilities that provide important water based recreational opportunities in the Council area. Within the context of increased densification of housing and population growth that is expected to occur in the Council area, participants considered that facilities such as the swimming centres will have an increasingly important role to play in the future in terms of providing open space and recreational activities to the community as “space will be at a premium”. Further, it was considered that these types of community facilities will continue to be needed to provide “places for community connection”. One participant commented that “once gone we will never get it back” illustrating for them the importance of retaining the swimming centres into the future. Another suggested that with the increased population growth, there may be opportunity for increased revenue to be generated by the centres as there will be “more users”.

Another key message that came through this discussion was the important role that the swimming centres play as a location for teaching swimming and water safety to children. These skills were considered fundamental life skills that needed facilities such as the swimming centres in the community.

Opportunities for the future that were identified included:

- Consider new commercial activities that were in keeping with the community nature of the swimming centres and did not pose any conflict with the core water based/swimming activities that should be provided by the swimming centres
- Consider making use of the centres as multi-use places that provide other activities/uses eg yoga, gym, allied health, pop up markets, films, food trucks
- Be places that “offer a point of difference” and draw people from outside of the Council area. This point of difference could include that these be places where people “feel part of the community” but don’t necessarily need to be from the local community.
- Provide shade over the pools, seating and grassed areas. Shaded areas should be large enough to accommodate large groups to sit under (eg school classes).
- Retractable shading to cater for summer/cooler months
- Availability of the centres for school swimming carnivals
- Upgraded change rooms, taking into account child safety needs
- Fenced off or safe areas for small children to use
- Consider ways to make use of the centres in the off season so they are not “underutilised” eg consider one enclosed pool

- Apply an holistic approach to catering for a wide range of ages and users eg Master games, recreational swimming, teaching, club training etc
- Extend the season for lap swimmers
- Provide new activities eg playground, waves for surfers
- Provide lane space for swimming training which is currently very difficult to secure and under pressure.

Balancing what to do

As a final discussion, participants were asked to consider what is most important to think about when balancing the improvement of the swimming centres and possible financial implications (which ultimately will be passed on to rate payers). It was identified that the two swimming centres currently run at a loss of some \$360,000 annually which is subsidised by rate payers.

Participants acknowledged the difficulty of this type of discussion, with one commenting “increased costs are a matter of degree but it’s time to provide for the future –don’t run the centres into the ground”. Another participant identified the need to determine what we might consider an “acceptable loss”, that is, “how much are we willing to lose” as a Council, rate payers and the community, in order to continue to have the swimming centres.

City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Swimming Centres Review

Focus Group

6.30pm, Thursday 19 November 2015

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is undertaking a project to review its swimming centres to ensure they remain relevant facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future community.

Both the Norwood and Payneham Swimming Centres are nearing the end of their functional life and will require significant investment in the upgrade of plant and equipment in the near future. The timing is therefore opportune to review whether the Council should invest resources in upgrading the swimming centres so they are able to continue to function as they are currently, or whether consideration should be given to providing new and different experiences at the swimming centres given changing community needs and aspirations.

To assist with understanding community views on the future of the swimming centres, the Council has initiated an engagement process. This engagement process included the conduct of focus group discussions whereby participants were invited via a random selection process. Participants were selected to represent the following interests:

- Rate payers
- User groups (eg swimming clubs)
- Stakeholders (eg Kensington Residents' Association, Royal Life Saving).

The second of two focus group discussions was held on Thursday 19 November 2015 at 6.30pm at the Mayor's Parlour at the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Civic Centre and was attended by 10 people. The focus group was facilitated by Nicole Halsey and Michael Arman from URPS, and the discussion recorded at this session is summarised below.

Text that appears in quotations represents a comment recorded verbatim at the session and reflects a comment made in the participants' own words.

Objectives of the focus group session

The objectives of the focus group were to:

- Understand what is currently valued about the Norwood and Payneham swimming centres
- Consider opportunities that could be provided by the swimming centres in the future
- Explore the implications of changes to the swimming centres and discuss how to balance different objectives.

A series of activities were undertaken at the focus group to assist with eliciting information regarding the above aspects.

What is valued about the swimming centres currently?

As an initial activity participants were asked to consider what is valued about the swimming centres currently. Participants were asked to identify what they considered important by recording their views on post it notes and sticking them up on the wall. An affinity diagram process was then used

to group comments and identify common themes. This process enabled all participants to express their views individually and then explore values identified across the group.

This process identified the following aspects that are valued in relation to the swimming centres:

There were a range of comments valuing the “convenience” of the swimming centres in terms of their “convenient location”, “good car parking (Payneham) and “close to main roads and transport”.

The outdoor nature of the centres was also valued with participants commenting on how the “urban open air pools are incredibly unique” and “my kids don’t like indoor pools!”.

The quality of the service provided at the centres was also highly valued with participants identifying the “excellent staff”, the way you are “greeted at the door” the “clean and well maintained” facilities and “good H2O”.

The role the centres play in contributing to “health and recreation” including opportunities for exercise in “hot summer months” and providing opportunities for “unstructured physical activity” as well as structured physical activity via swimming clubs, lap swimming, water polo, canoe polo etc was also valued.

The important role the centres play in providing facilities for life guard training, teaching swimming and water safety to children and VacsWim was also identified. The “family” atmosphere of the centres was also commented on and it was identified that they provide “a healthy and very important outlet for our children”.

There were a number of comments about the increasing importance of facilities such as the swimming centres as the population grows and densification occurs in the Council area and in adjoining areas as a result of “recent changes to Development Plans”. One participant identified that the centres are valuable public infrastructure and that “once gone it is rarely replaced”.

The history of the centres, particularly the Norwood pool was valued with participants commenting that the centres are “part of local fabric”, that the “Norwood pool has unique historical significance” and that the centres are “iconic venues that bring people from outside the area”. The “historical family connection to the pools” was also identified with a number of participants identifying they value the pools for the intergenerational use of the facilities within their family.

The “green grounds” and “large open space for carnival use” was valued, as are the diving board, the kiosk facilities and the ability to swim 50 metre laps.

The feel of the centres was also valued with comments including “pleasant ambience”, “intimate” and “relaxed environment”. The centres are places for “socialising”, “friendships” and “fun for children”.

The centres provide “low cost, affordable day out for families” and offer “affordable hiring rates”, “flexible hire options” and “reasonable fees for use”.

Are there things we value that are specific to one or other of the centres?

Following this discussion about what is valued about the swimming centres, discussion was facilitated to tease out if there are any specific differences about what is valued between the two swimming centres. Comments are summarised below.

Norwood swimming centre	Payneham swimming centre
Diving board-“kids love it”, “its exciting, free” and poses a “risk”. It provides an “adrenalin competition between friends” and is a key attractor of people to the Norwood pool Real lawn Gum trees Water is “crystal clear” Ambience-“there is something about it”, “it’s an oasis, you could be anywhere”, it “feels like my backyard” Private Intimate Outdoor Historical significance Cultural significance- features in songs Nostalgic	Caters for a variety of swimming levels and can transition between pools Good for carnivals Real lawn Expansive Big enough to play water polo Open - more visibility to passing traffic so people can see what occurs there Parking area Can stay for the day - “swim, relax, eat” Swimming lessons Outdoor Affordable hire compared to indoor facilities Affordable entry on a regular basis Clubrooms Use of rooms for storage of club/group equipment Vacswim-not many pools in the north eastern suburbs can cater for this

Thinking about the future

Following discussion about the swimming centres now, participants were asked to consider opportunities for the centres in the future to make sure they continue to be relevant facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of the community.

In considering future opportunities for the swimming centres, participants were asked to think about:

- The types of experiences that could be provided in the future given what we know about our current and changing population
- Whether the pools should provide different/alternative experiences to each other
- How the centres might accommodate any ideas identified.

One key message that came through in discussion was the unique nature of each of the swimming centres and the feeling that the Norwood pool was more of a “simple, quiet facility in a neighbourhood setting” with a strong historical value which should be built on and not lost. This compares to the Payneham pool which was seen by some as “much more of a public facility” where there was more scope and the space for change. It was also suggested that the two centres need to complement each other and “build on their differences” rather than try and deliver the same experiences.

Opportunities for the future that were identified included:

- Provide undercover/shaded seating areas. This should include providing shade over seating near the pool for supervisors/scorers of activities occurring in the pool
- Slides-“something for the children”
- Play equipment
- Water play area at Payneham instead of the toddler pool
- Incorporate water play at Norwood wading pool

- Consider opportunities for revenue generation such as a restaurant/café
- Enclosed outdoor pool for winter use
- Dedicated time for lap swimmers in cooler months for restricted hours
- Consider value add experiences that provide something else to do in addition to swimming such as personal fitness equipment (eg weights, treadmills), volleyball courts on grassed areas, basketball ring, Wi-Fi, gym
- Use inflatable infrastructure (eg slides, obstacle courses etc) which would provide flexibility of use
- Consider ways to be more flexible eg changes to opening times, seasons, program different activities on different days of the week to attract range of users
- Market the centres better
- Use innovative ways to widen user groups eg open up for free on a Friday afternoon, offer passes to visiting Tour Down Under cyclists, combine entry with other fitness organisations eg gyms in Council area
- Consider how to expand use of the centres by the local schools.

Balancing what to do

As a final discussion, participants were asked to consider what is most important to think about when balancing the improvement of the swimming centres and possible financial implications (which ultimately will be passed on to rate payers). It was identified that the two swimming centres currently run at a loss of some \$360,000 annually which is subsidised by rate payers.

One participant commented “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it”, while another identified that they wanted the Council to know the centres are “a highly valued service, even if nothing changes”. Another participant suggested the need for a change in thinking by the community that these types of facilities are what you get if you live in the Council area (and pay for via your rates) but in exchange, residents/ratepayers should have free entry to the pools.