

DUBBO AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The Dubbo Aquatic and Leisure Centre (DALC) has been under an external management contract for at least the past 25 years under various contract companies, with the current contractor managing the pool for the past 13 years. In contrast both the Wellington Memorial Pool and the Geurie Pool had been operating internally of the former Wellington Council for many years.

The original contract period for the current Contractor of the DALC ended in 2012. The contract was renewed in 2012 for an initial three year period that ended in 2015, before the option to extend it for a further three year period was offered and accepted. In February 2018 the contractor was formally advised that Council would extend the contract for a further one year period only.

At this time, the Contractor was advised that after the end of the term the contract would have to either go back to out to the market place as per the Local Government Act or Council may consider other management models to bring all three pools under the one management model.

A decision was made on the 25 March 2019 by Council at its Committee of the Whole Meeting to bring the management internally to explore this method of operation. Many factors were taken into account prior to the decision being made including the redevelopment of the Wellington Aquatic Leisure Centre and the master planning on the future development of the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre.

The main priorities when investigating a management model was to ensure the three sites operated consistently, efficiently and effectively. Bringing the three Aquatic Centres under one central management option will provide consistencies in process and policies when it comes to operating the facility, safety and customer service across the three sites.

Dubbo Regional Council is also currently developing a new master plan for the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre. This master planning will come with new developments and improved or new facilities and the cost implications that this would have on an external business or mixed management model at this stage are unknown.

An extensive feasibility study was undertaken and in house management will not cost the community more than having the facility managed by an external contractor. Bringing the management internal will mean the income generated from the pool - which is a community asset - will now go back into the pool facilities rather than to an external contracted business. Giving the community greater transparency on the operations of all three pools – income and expense.

There is no anticipated reduction in programs being delivered – rather Council is looking at service enhancement and consistency through the employment of a Swim and Water Activities Officer that will develop and deliver a broader range of water related programs. There have been no decisions and no planned restrictions on patrons bringing their own food to the facilities, however Council is intending to extend the café and kiosk offering will be increased to Victoria Park through redesign of the existing building.

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