



## **NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING**

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of LISMORE CITY COUNCIL will be held at the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Oliver Avenue, GOONELLABAH on TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2003, at 6.00pm and members of Council are requested to attend.**

Paul G. O'Sullivan  
**General Manager**

April 30, 2003

# **EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL BUSINESS AGENDA**

**6/5/03**

**PUBLIC ACCESS SESSION**

**PAGE No.**

**OPENING OF MEETING AND PRAYER (MAYOR):**

**APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

**ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

1

**MAYORAL MINUTES**

**NOTICES OF RESCISSION**

2

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

3-4

**REPORTS**

Aquatic Centre

5-19

**1 METHOD OF ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The method of election is to be found in schedule 3 of the Local Government (Elections) Regulation 1993. Relevant extracts of this schedule are detailed below:-

**Returning Officer**

- 1) The General Manager (or a person appointed by the General Manager) is the Returning Officer.

**Nomination**

- 2)
  - a) A councillor may be nominated without notice for election as mayor or deputy mayor.
  - b) The nomination is to be made in writing by 2 or more councillors (one of whom may be the nominee). The nomination is not valid unless the nominee has indicated consent to the nomination in writing.
  - c) The nomination is to be delivered or sent to the returning officer.
  - d) The returning officer is to announce the names of the nominees at the Council Meeting at which the election is to be held.

**Election**

- 3)
  - a) If only one councillor is nominated, that councillor is elected.
  - b) If more than one councillor is nominated, the council is to resolve whether the election is to proceed by preferential ballot, by ordinary ballot or by open voting.
  - c) The election is to be held at the Council meeting at which the Council resolves the method of voting.
  - d) In this clause:  
“ballot” has its normal meaning of secret ballot;  
“open voting” means voting by a show of hands or similar means.

**2 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

**Policy No. 1.2.10**

Prior to any election, each candidate for the position of Deputy Mayor will give a short presentation outlining her/his reasons for standing, how s/he would operate as Deputy Mayor, what time commitment would be given and the skills s/he would have to offer; and each will answer questions from the floor on their candidacy.

## **NOTICE OF RESCISSION MOTION**

I hereby give notice of my intention to move at the next meeting of the Council a rescission motion rescinding the Draft Urban Strategy:

The Motion was:

1. Adopt the Lismore Urban Strategy as exhibited but incorporate amendments 1 – 20 and
2. forward the strategy to Planning NSW for the Director General's agreement.

COUNCILLOR CROWTHER

COUNCILLOR BAXTER

COUNCILLOR HAMPTON

DATE April 9, 2003

## **NOTICE OF MOTION**

If the Rescission Motion is successful, I hereby give notice of my intention to move the following motion:

Council -

- A** Adopt the Lismore Urban Strategy as exhibited but incorporating the following amendments -
- 1 Include reference to Planning NSW's Sustainable Urban Settlement Guidelines in the implementation section of the Strategy. Consistency with the Guidelines should be a matter for applicants to address when preparing rezoning applications for land identified in the Strategy.
  - 2 Include Class 6 (Specialist class land) as a constraint along with Classes 1,2 & 3 representing prime crop and pasture land.
  - 3 Include information on requirements for rezoning applications in the Strategy.
  - 4 Include a disclaimer stating that inclusion of land within the Strategy does not guarantee rezoning or development approval.
  - 5 Include a requirement for an independent assessment of potential agricultural land use conflicts at the rezoning stage for the North Lismore plateau.
  - 6 Change the preferred use for Lot 2 DP 620590 and part Lot 1 DP 957677 to future light industrial. Include reference to Planning NSW's Sustainable Urban Settlement Guidelines in the Implementation
  - 7 Include a requirement for a buffer to agricultural land at the Tucki Creek area.
  - 8 Include reference to DLWC's multi-attribute mapping for mass movement areas.
  - 9 Delete the numbering of greenfield sites in the section of the Strategy relating to sequencing so that sequencing refers only to short and medium term. Change the Invercauld Road site from long term to medium term.
  - 10 Include a requirement that 'core koala habitat' as defined in SEPP 44 be identified at the rezoning application stage.
  - 11 Include a requirement that scattered koala habitat trees be mapped and an assessment of the significance of these trees to koala populations and their movements be provided at the rezoning stage.
  - 12 Amend the map of the greenfield sites to exclude those areas that are not considered in the Strategy.
  - 13 Include a statement that a future access road from the Trinity Drive greenfield site to Bangalow Rd be designed to discourage its use by through traffic from outside the area.
  - 14 Clarify the extent of proposed urban release area at Pineapple Road to include the area at the northern end of Daniel Drive (and including a severed lot created by the new alignment of Pineapple Road).
  - 15 Include the Lucia Crescent infill site as having limited potential for urban residential development.
  - 16 Update the population projections and housing balance sheet to take into account the 2001 Census data.
  - 17 Delete reference to those infill sites that were investigated but not recommended for inclusion in the strategy.
  - 18 Include a requirement for master plans to be prepared and submitted for greenfield sites at the rezoning stage.
  - 19 Include reference to the results of the sewer modelling undertaken by Australian Water Technologies.

- 20 Clearly define in the Strategy the limit to urban expansion in an easterly direction as representing a line extending south from the eastern boundary of the Regatta estate through to the eastern boundaries of the Napier Court estate and the Seventh Day Adventist School in Blue Hills Ave.
- 21 Amend the section of the Strategy relating to the North Lismore plateau to allow a rezoning submission for the plateau land to be lodged upon finalisation of a legally binding agreement between Council and the Show Society that addresses the future operations of the speedway.
- 22 Include the Monaltrie area in the sequencing as long term priority.

**B** Forward the Strategy to Planning NSW for the Director-General's agreement.

**COUNCILLOR** CROWTHER

**DATE** April 9, 2003

**Subject/File No:**        **AQUATIC FACILITY**  
S845

**Prepared By:**            General Manager

**Reason:**                 Aquatic Facilities for Lismore

**Objective:**                To identify an effective sustainable strategy for meeting Lismore's Aquatic Facility needs.

**Management Plan Activity:**    General Manager's Office

---

## **Executive Summary:**

There is a distinct danger of this report providing too much information due to the long history of the debate over pools for Lismore. There does seem to be an element of presumed knowledge about the key issues and selection criteria. What is also apparent is the tendency for individual opinions to assume greater credence than expert analysis. The following report has been compiled based on the most up to date technical, financial and strategic analysis available and deserves close consideration before any conclusion is reached.

The Council has deliberately created a situation which allows a choice between two alternatives :

**Option A** – Construct a new replacement 51 metre 8 lane outdoor pool on the site of the existing Memorial Baths.

**Option B** - Retain the existing 50 metre 6 lane Memorial Baths pool after upgrading the water treatment equipment and change rooms, plus construct a new 25 metre 8 lane indoor heated pool, leisure pool with multi-purpose dry area facility at Goonellabah.

The choice is not as simple as it might seem even though OPTION A at a net capital cost of \$3,430,000 requires less investment than OPTION B at \$4,330,000. Beware the low cost option. It is most important to read below that headline to find OPTION B generates a significantly greater usage level (157,500 visits) compared to OPTION A (56,000 visits). Option B clearly gives a superior cost benefit for the community as a whole.

Pool facilities tend to run at a deficit and are regarded as a community service. The projections reveal OPTION A will be a cost to the Council budget of \$7.64 per visit whereas OPTION B gives a higher level of service at a cost of \$3.49 per visit. These are the costs which will be borne by ratepayers.

There is a complex mix of factors which will prove the efficacy of Council's decision on this matter. Low cost for the hardware is but one of them.

The report summarises the views of key stakeholder groups in the following terms:

**Lismore Swimming Club:** Chris Mills, President:

*Need 50 metre facilities for competition but the most pressing need is heated water and additional water space in Lismore. On the assumption that the Goonellabah option maintains the Memorial Baths the Swimming Club sees merit in Option B.*

---

**Lismore Water Polo Club:** Jonathon Horsley, President:

*The availability of water space is currently a problem and the most important feature is heated water. A suitably configured indoor facility at Goonellabah would suit their needs as long as the Memorial Baths 50m pool is retained.*

**Public Schools Sports Association:** Peter Bylos, Regional Co-ordinator:

*Schools use swimming pools predominantly for learn to swim programmes and carnivals. A 50m pool is best for carnivals and heated indoor water space is best for learn-to-swim programmes so that they can be held throughout the year regardless of weather conditions. Sun protection is also an important consideration and an indoor pool would address this concern. The option to develop an indoor facility in Goonellabah and retain the Memorial Baths will certainly improve the current situation, however, in the long term a new 50m x 8 lane pool should be provided.*

**Memorial Baths Pool and Learn-to-Swim:** Ian Jones, Manager:

*The most important feature required is heated water, because of the ability this gives for extending the season. A year round facility is strongly supported. As a pool manager the business opportunities from an indoor pool far exceed the limited flexibility which a 50m outdoor cold water pool can provide. The proposed Goonellabah Option B would be preferred over Option A given that Council cannot afford a new 50 m pool plus a new indoor pool. The schools program could also be better managed with an indoor pool because it overcomes cancellations arising from the outdoor pool's exposure to weather. Option B avoids the situation of no pool available in Lismore for a whole season.*

**RSL Sub Branch:** *The Memorial aspect is concentrated on the entrance to the existing pool and the cenotaph precinct fronting Molesworth Street. Whilst the existing pool was built as part of the Memorial, its retention as a swimming facility is not an essential feature of the Memorial into the future.*

*Council's **Senior Management Team** strongly endorses the **OPTION B** strategy.*

The most experienced pool advisor, **Rick Bzowy** is adamant that **OPTION B** can be the only satisfactory answer.

*The informed opinion is presenting a strong, clear recommendation.*

## **Conclusion**

Provision of aquatic facilities for Lismore is a topic which has just about exhausted the goodwill and tolerance of all parties who have had anything to do with it over many years. Now is not the time for Councillors to plump for a decision which glosses over long term ramifications in favour of an expedient outcome. This report comprehensively demonstrates that **Option B** has far superior merit over the alternative when this significant investment in Lismore's future is objectively scrutinised. The opportunity presents itself whereby Council can effectively and affordably respond to the broadest aspirations of its current and future community by adopting a progressive solution as outlined in **Option B**.

---

**Recommendation**

1. That Council responds to the expectations of its community by endorsing the development of the **Option B** aquatic facility configuration for Lismore which retains the Memorial Baths, upgrades its water treatment and change rooms and constructs a new 25 metre 8 lane indoor heated pool at Goonellabah together with complementary dry area facilities.
2. That works to upgrade the Memorial Baths be initiated immediately to ensure that there is no interruption to its normal usage in the 2003/04 summer season.
3. That documentation to enable calling of tenders for a new indoor pool and associated facilities in Goonellabah be prepared with a view to Council awarding a construction contract by the end of 2003.

**The following report outlines in detail the justification for the recommendation being so strongly supported and it is commended to all Councillors for thoughtful consideration.**

## **Background:**

Since commencing work on the Aquatic Centre with the Project Team of Group Managers Bismire, Cooper, Kelly and Moorhouse our joint objective has been to formulate a strategy which can progressively accommodate all the community identified aquatic needs. These include:-

- Improves the status quo
- Provides additional formal and leisure water space
- Provides heated water
- Allows year round multi function use
- Incorporates a 50 metre pool
- Offers growth potential via a master planned approach
- Is affordable

Councillors were informed at a briefing session on 15<sup>th</sup> April, that the Project Team had closely examined eight options which considered:-

- Two proposals on the site of the Memorial Baths
- One proposal on the parkland (Circus site) in Diadem Street
- One proposal on vacant Council land opposite the Council Chambers in Goonellabah
- Four proposals in the vicinity of Southern Cross University at East Lismore

That session was also informed that Southern Cross University had very recently advised it did not wish to be involved with a joint venture proposal, at this time.

The consensus decision by Councillors was that the next report to Council should detail the pros and cons of two specific but differing options.

- A)** A new replacement 51 metre 8 lane outdoor pool on the site of the existing Memorial Baths.
- B)** Retain the existing 50 metre 6 lane Memorial Baths pool after upgrading the water treatment equipment and change rooms, plus  
Construct a new 25 metre 8 lane indoor heated pool, leisure pool and multi-purpose dry area facilities at Goonellabah.

Until this most recent examination of options, Council's approach has been predicated on the basis that the existing Memorial Baths has exceeded its design life. Even so, the Baths continue as a usable facility and some affordable techniques will extend their operational life. Importantly, as retention of these Baths is a core element of Option B, the following review by Rick Bzowy of technical reports is instructive. The full text is in Attachment I.

**Condition of the Memorial Baths**

A series of previous Condition Reports have been reviewed.

All reports make it clear that there are numerous aspects of the pool structure and infrastructure that have deteriorated due simply to their age and extent of usage. Notwithstanding the lack of Statutory Compliance in many areas of the treatment plant, issues also involve elements of concealed condition which cannot be exactly measured and commented upon.

The previous reports have all correctly identified the pool as having a range of difficulties which, if attended to in their entirety, would render the exercise questionable from a cost benefit perspective.

However, none of the consultants were asked to approach the strategy from the perspective that a minimal level of works could be achieved to give some minor relief to the maintenance conditions, extend the life of the pool, and overcome some of the Statutory issues which have been superimposed on the facility.

The recommendation would appear to be that of a program of “soft” maintenance which can be engaged and afforded, allowing the pool to continue to service the current level of provision for the foreseeable future.

The overall recommended strategy sets aside an initial maintenance figure, followed by an annual cost allowance. These have never been approached before because, as a means of fulfilling the entire swimming needs of the community this strategy would be seen as somewhat risky. However, if a parallel development occurs at Goonellabah, the risk is eliminated.

In the event of any serious breakdown, not only does the community still have access to water, but the Council also has the luxury of being able to attend to maintenance issues in a sensible time frame, rather than be pressured into a need to rush in and “band aid” the problems to reinstate the pool.

In the context of the future efficiency of funds expenditure, it is anticipated that any new elements of plant and equipment will be selected so as to allow their continued re-use in any further development.

Working back from this strategy, it appears that only nominal works should be done to improve the turnover and filtration; minor upgrades which will not imperil the pipework.

**Conclusion**

In essence, the common view of all of these reports appears to be that there are no practical strategies to ensure a long term future for the pool as it stands.

Minor maintenance however does appear to be practicable, and is quite likely to offer some relief to the current problems and add some life to the existing pool .

Based on the added local knowledge of Council’s Pool Manager, it is both practical and feasible to consider the continued use of the Memorial Baths as envisaged in Option B.

## **Selection Criteria**

Councillors will be aware that other public authorities have experienced mixed results in developing aquatic centres. Research shows that there are a number of hallmarks to success:-

1. **Design**  
Good mix of facilities which enable a wide range of activities. The provision of complementary components such as gymnasium facilities, aerobics rooms, dry sports all have a direct relationship to the ultimate performance of centres. Indoor centres have a distinct advantage in providing a greater range of services on a consistent basis and this is reflected in annual attendances and financial performance.
2. **Management**  
Management flexibility to respond to demands in the local market.
3. **Marketing**  
Very good understanding of market demand and meeting the needs of patrons, targeted efficiently and effectively. Four core market segments:
  - Recreation
    - General community activities
    - School holiday programmes
    - Senior citizen groups
  - Fitness
    - Adult lap swimming
    - Corporate fitness programmes
    - Rehabilitation fitness programmes
    - Aqua-aerobics
  - Education
    - School programmes
    - Learn-to-swim programmes
    - Private tuition
  - Sport
    - Swimming club training and competition/carnivals
    - Water polo training and competition
    - Swim squads
    - School competition/carnivals
4. **Programming**  
Comprehensively programmed facility offering a wide range of quality services.
5. **Pricing**  
Realistic and affordable pricing structures.

**Financial Issues**

Whilst Options A and B provide clearly identifiable variances, a key feature for consideration is the value delivered by those differences.

After allowing for funds on hand through internally restricted reserves and Section 94 collections the net capital costs will be financed from loan borrowings and are thus paid for through visitation charges plus an annual charge against rate revenue. The costs to be amortised amount to:-

- \$3,430,000 for **Option A**, replace Memorial Baths; and
- \$4,330,000 for **Option B**, retain Memorial Baths and build new facility in Goonellabah.

LISMORE AQUATIC CENTRE DEVELOPMENT Comparative Financial Analysis (refer Attachment II)		
	Option A	Option B
<b>Components</b>	<b>Memorial Baths (Redeveloped)</b>	<b>Goonellabah Aquatic Leisure Centre with Multi-purpose Activity Space</b>
	51m x 8 lane outdoor pool Covered changerooms 200sqm multipurpose / kiosk Pavilion upgrade	25m x 8 lane indoor pool Leisure pool Covered changerooms 200sqm multipurpose / kiosk 400 sqm dry activity area Management offices Memorial Baths upgrade
<b>Capital Cost</b>	\$ <b>3,700,000</b>	\$ <b>6,600,000</b>
<b>Available funds</b>		
Reserves	0	890,000
Existing S94 Funds Collected	270,000	1,380,000
Borrowings	3,430,000	4,330,000
Loan Repayments @ 7.25%, 20 years	-330,085	-416,696
Revenue	126,000	603,750
Operating Expenditure	-224,000	-637,000
<b>Operating Deficit</b>	<b>-98,000</b>	<b>-33,250</b>
<b>Memorial Baths Deficit</b>	0	-100,000
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL DEFICIT</b>	<b>-428,085</b>	<b>-549,946</b>
<b>Total Annual Visitations</b>	56,000	157,500
<b>Deficit per Visitation</b>	<b>-\$7.64</b>	<b>-\$3.49</b>
<b>* Potential Future S94 Funds</b>	<b>417,000</b>	<b>1,061,000</b>

\* Whilst it is possible to service debt from future Section 94 collections, such cash flow is unpredictable and should be viewed as a resource which will be applied when it becomes available. In the first years of operation the above figures for Option A and Option B should be assumed as reliable estimates.

**Section 94 Contributions**

Comment by Development Assessment Planner Chris Soulsby.

Council is currently collecting contributions for an Aquatic Centre/Leisure Centre. Contributions were collected for this from all new development occurring in the urban east catchment. As this facility was also intended to satisfy the needs of the greater city area as well as the urban east area contributions for this facility were levied on all development within the local government area. Both the 1994 plan and the 1999 plans envisaged that this facility would be built in Goonellabah (urban east catchment in the plan).

**Option A: Memorial Baths (redeveloped):-** The existing S94 funds collected from the citywide component of the plan could be put towards this project. A total of \$267,000 has been collected thus far.

The contributions plan would have to be amended to reflect the reduced value of the project (\$3,700,000). This would result in a maximum of \$417,077 to be collected from new development on a citywide basis.

This amount is likely to be recouped slowly due to the slow rate of development shire wide when compared with urban east and due to the distance discounts applied as per the plan contributions plan.

**Option B: Goonellabah Aquatic Centre with Multi Purpose Activity Space:-** All funds collected in both the citywide and urban east components of the plan could be expended on this project. Council has collected \$1,113,431 in the urban east catchment and \$267,000 from citywide giving a total of \$1,380,854 of S94 funds available for this project. As the value of the project has increased from \$5,360,100 to \$6,600,000 Council has the ability to amend the contributions plan to recoup, on a proportional basis this additional cost. This would result in an additional \$107,569 to be collected in the urban east catchment and \$953,577 from the citywide component. The total S94 funds (existing and future collections) available for this project would be \$2,442,000.

**General Comments:** Future S94 contributions funds could be utilised for the repayments of a loan to cover the capital expenditure of Council forward funding the project. In terms of Option A this is somewhat limited due to the small amount to be collected.

**Level of Service / Amenity**

Without question, **Option B** provides more opportunities to the community which results in significantly higher patronage, year round access unaffected by weather and an increase in operating revenues.

The following comparative assessment matrix reinforces the advantages of Option B over Option A (refer Attachment III).

- Legend:**
- X Poor result and/or does not meet requirements
  - ✓ Fair result and/or only moderately meets requirements
  - ✓✓ Good result and/or meets requirements

ISSUES	OPTION A New Memorial Baths Outdoor 50m Pool	OPTION B Existing Memorial Baths + New Indoor 25m + Leisure pool and Dry Activity Space
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> Current access to capital Future access to capital Sponsorship support Operational implications Cost benefit/user Usage disruptions	✓ X X ✓ X X	✓✓ ✓✓ ✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓
<b>AQUATIC PROGRAM CAPABILITIES</b> Youth programs Unprogrammed water play School programs Family programs Safety programs Community programs Carnivals	✓ ✓ ✓ X ✓ X ✓✓	✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH BRIEF</b> Outdoor 51m Indoor 25m Increased indoor leisure New changerooms Creche Improved kiosk Increased staff areas Management offices On site dry activities	✓✓ X X ✓ X X X X X	✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓✓ ✓✓
<b>URBAN PLANNING</b> Parklands access Public amenities Demographic centralisation	X X X	✓ ✓ ✓

<b>VEHICULAR PARAMETERS</b>		
Public car parking	X	✓
Programmable parking	X	✓
School and public buses	X	✓
Tourist buses	X	✓
Disabled parking	X	✓
Ambulance parking	X	✓
Staff parking	X	✓
<b>USAGE PATTERNS</b>		
Seasonal	✓	✓✓
Year round	X	✓✓
<b>REDUCED CLIMATE EXPOSURE</b>		
Wind chill	X	✓
Rain	X	✓
Solar impact	X	✓
<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS</b>		
Employment opportunities	✓	✓✓
Multiplier benefits	X	✓
Cross activity exposure	X	✓
Market synergy	X	✓✓
<b>MASTER PLANNING FUTURE EXTENSIONS</b>		
Additional aquatic	X	✓
Additional dry activities	X	✓
Additional programs	X	✓✓
<b>Even though it is a once only occurrence, Option A cannot overcome the disadvantage of closing the Memorial Baths across a full season during its reconstruction.</b>		

### **Public Consultations**

Councillors will recall that a number of prominent stakeholder groups have previously articulated their views, about aquatic facilities for Lismore. These same parties have been recently interviewed to establish their current position.

Their sentiments are represented as follows:-

**Lismore Swimming Club:** Chris Mills, President:

*Need 50 metre facilities for competition but the most pressing need is heated water and additional water space in Lismore. On the assumption that the Goonellabah option maintains the Memorial Baths the Swimming Club sees merit in Option B.*

**Lismore Water Polo Club:** Jonathon Horsley, President:

*The availability of water space is currently a problem and the most important feature is heated water. A suitably configured indoor facility at Goonellabah would suit their needs as long as the Memorial Baths 50m pool is retained.*

**Public Schools Sports Association:** Peter Bylos, Regional Co-ordinator:

*Schools use swimming pools predominantly for learn to swim programmes and carnivals. A 50m pool is best for carnivals and heated indoor water space is best for learn-to-swim programmes so that they can be held throughout the year regardless of weather conditions. Sun protection is also an important consideration and an indoor pool would address this concern. The option to develop an indoor facility in Goonellabah and retain the Memorial Baths will certainly improve the current situation, however, in the long term a new 50m x 8 lane pool should be provided.*

**Memorial Baths Pool and Learn-to-Swim:** Ian Jones, Manager:

*The most important feature required is heated water, because of the ability this gives for extending the season. A year round facility is strongly supported. As a pool manager the business opportunities from an indoor pool far exceed the limited flexibility which a 50m outdoor cold water pool can provide. The proposed Goonellabah Option B would be preferred over Option A given that Council cannot afford a new 50 m pool plus a new indoor pool. The schools program could also be better managed with an indoor pool because it overcomes cancellations arising from the outdoor pool's exposure to weather. Option B avoids the situation of no pool available in Lismore for a whole season.*

**RSL Sub Branch:** *The Memorial aspect is concentrated on the entrance to the existing pool and the cenotaph precinct fronting Molesworth Street. Whilst the existing pool was built as part of the Memorial, its retention as a swimming facility is not an essential feature of the Memorial into the future.*

**Project Team Comments**

**Group Manager – Planning and Development**

As a relative newcomer to the organisation, the exercise undertaken by the management team over the past 2-3 months has been invaluable in giving me insight into the evolution of the various aquatic centre proposals in recent times. The process undertaken by the management team in arriving at its final recommendation has, from my perspective, been logical, rigorous, realistic and above all achievable. The team focused on delivering an outcome which is financially responsible (and sustainable), strategic in scope (ie. it allows for staged development) and which best meets the wide range of community aspirations for such a facility.

**Group Manager – City Works**

The construction of a new leisure facility and pool at Goonellabah has been proposed since 1987. Since then there have been a number of pool proposals that for a variety of reasons have not progressed past design stage. Clearly with a growing community the need is now great for a major complex.

The current proposal is financially achievable and desperately needed by the community.

I recommend that we move forward and complete **Option B** ASAP.

**Group Manager – Corporate and Community Services**

The approach of the working party in its deliberations to date have been well structured and methodical, whilst working within the broad guidelines as detailed within the report. Many possible options were considered, with the main considerations reported to the recent workshop.

The need for more water space in Lismore is well documented, as is the needs/wants of both mainstream users and the vast "untapped" numbers of residents that would potentially use a more user friendly facility.

Councillors need to take a long term strategic approach when considering this matter as any facility will need to service our residents for many decades to come. It is my opinion that the Memorial Baths site has too many constraints to effectively meet that demand into the future.

As befitting our regional status, our residents deserve an upgrade to the facilities that are currently provided and it is only **Option B** that will provide this within the foreseeable future. It also has the advantage of not disrupting a swimming season and allows for future needs to be determined when more funds become available.

**Group Manager – Business and Enterprise**

The redevelopment of the Memorial Baths is an option that has received significant consideration over the past three years. Irrespective of what cost is attached to this option it does not meet the requirements of the majority of users particularly all year round access. Even with an extension of the season through some heating, this facility primarily serves competitive and fitness swimmers, with the bulk of recreation use only in the peak of summer months.

The potential for a Joint Venture partner provided the most cost effective facility that would meet the requirements of the majority of users and provide a partner to share capital and operating costs. Without this option the next most affordable option that will meet the majority of user requirements is construction in Goonellabah of an indoor 25 metre facility with the option of master planning a 51metre pool for an undetermined time in the future. The construction of such a facility combined with leisure water and dry facilities provides Lismore not only with an alternative aquatic option but provides that option 12 months of the year. Programming of this facility, which is a key to minimising ongoing operating deficits cannot be replicated effectively in an outdoor facility, that is only open in the warmer months and then without extended hours.

This option presents a range of benefits to a community seeking additional water space when combined with the continued operation of the Memorial Baths. The Baths are still functional and additional capital expenditure will be required for the Baths to operate into the future. This expenditure is planned to be carried forward to any replacement pool.

The concurrent operation of the Memorial Baths and a proposed indoor facility in Goonellabah will divide the market while both are operating. The research does however indicate that Lismore has an unsatisfied market for aquatic activity. There is a reasonable expectation that the market for aquatic leisure will expand provided facilities that meet the communities expectation are constructed. Irrespective of this there are options to trim the existing aquatic season at the Memorial Baths as there would be an alternate facility in October and April provided by the indoor pool. Competitive and fitness swimmers who are the primary users of the Memorial Baths at this time could transfer to other facilities. The objective of this would be to maintain any operating deficit on the Memorial Baths at the current level.

If the objective of Council is to meet the demonstrated demands of the community for an all year facility then the Goonellabah option is the most affordable option after a joint venture with the University. Redevelopment of the Memorial Baths will cater for climate driven recreation but does not meet the needs of the community and will have a nil or marginal impact on satisfying the demand for aquatics.

**Comments from Pool Architect Rick Bzowy**

At the most fundamental level the proposal to simply build another 50m outdoor pool ignores most of the fundamental principles behind the Council's long standing desire to develop a facility for Lismore.

That underlying principle has never been to simply continue to cater to the current sports/fitness/carnival market, which is typically no more than 8-10% of the entire user market. It is and always has been about the provision of a facility which would attract the balance of the community for recreation and leisure swimming, a capability which is well documented as lacking in the community.

It is no coincidence that after almost a decade of consultation and planning (utilising almost the entire pool of aquatic specialist architects in Australia), that consultation keeps stressing the notion of multi-purpose water space.

Primarily, the provision of a new outdoor 50m pool at the Memorial Baths does not offer any additional members of the community anything new; the expenditure of some \$4.0 million dollars does not even preserve the amount of non-50m water available in the existing pool.

There would be less water available for families, for leisure, for recreation, and for a diversity of programs such as learn-to-swim, a critical program in any new development.

What of a new outdoor 50m pool, designed to Olympic standards. That just means more carnivals, regional comps and events, more lap swimming and fitness programs, more sports usage in water polo, synchronised swimming, all of which is great for the sports.

So is it the sports lobby who are promoting the exclusive development of an outdoor 50m at the Memorial Baths? The answer is no! Even swim clubs and schools are looking forward to the benefits of a year round pool.

Regular access to indoor pools means schools can program their access to water all year round, and need never fear the need to cancel due to poor weather. The programs can be expanded to provide diversity, and be spread over the entire year, meaning a more balanced curriculum rather than trying to get all the water sports into a short time table just before and after Christmas.

The community can look forward to family days at the pool, educational programs for safety and education, water fitness for the elderly, fun programs for children of all ages, "dive in" movies, activity programs throughout all school breaks for all ages of kiddies, aqua aerobics, scuba training; the list goes on and on.

What about families; what about youth? So much is being made of developing programs to encourage youth to a healthier lifestyle, healthier social habits, healthier recreation habits.

Even though Federal and State Governments are embarking on billions of dollars of expenditure to reinvigorate school fitness programs, so few children have the opportunity to access year round facilities which they can adopt on a social base.

It is essential that Council sets aside their own individual pre-conceptions of what any pool should or should not be. Council must really listen to what is being asked for.

With that though in mind there can only be one satisfactory decision – **Option B.**

## Manager - Finance & Administration Comments

I would preface my comments by stating that I understand Council is committed to providing improved aquatic facilities for Lismore, that this is the next highest priority for Council and it plans to provide such by either the adoption of Option A or B.

This being the case, from my perspective, the following points are relevant:

- i) If Option A is adopted, we still need to construct a recreational facility in Goonellabah to meet the requirements of the Community Facilities S94 Plan. Approximately \$1.1 million has already been collected in developer levies for this purpose.

Admittedly, it may be possible to expend less than \$6.6 million, but it would more than likely result in two minimum or substandard facilities that don't really meet the community's needs and in the long run, prove most costly.

- ii) Option B will provide facilities which best satisfies community expectations and most likely in the long run, affordability concerns. It would also meet the requirements of the Community Facilities S94 Plan for a Goonellabah facility.

It is clear that whatever option Council adopts, it will have a significant impact on available funding as both require contributions of \$330,000 pa for Option A and \$450,000 pa for Option B. While these costs will be offset by future developer contributions, with the most being collected for Option B, it is likely to result in the need to review recurrent works and services funding levels so as other major projects and initiatives can proceed in future years.

## Author's Response to Comments from Other Staff

Councillors might note the weight of professional input applied to this matter, Council's five most senior staff in whom responsibility rests equally to advise Council in its strategic decision making have concluded by consensus that **Option B** is the most appropriate solution.

Representatives of the key user groups strongly endorse the concept of **Option B** and Council's current Pool Manager, a person with demonstrated practical, operational and management expertise recognises **Option B** as the preferred outcome.

Council's Pool Architect who is an acknowledged expert finds for **Option B**.

The informed opinion presents a strong, clear, logical message.

## Conclusion

Provision of aquatic facilities for Lismore is a topic which has just about exhausted the goodwill and tolerance of all parties who have had anything to do with it over many years. Now is not the time for Councillors to plump for a decision which glosses over long term ramifications in favour of an expedient outcome. This report comprehensively demonstrates that **Option B** has far superior merit over the alternative when this significant investment in Lismore's future is objectively scrutinised. The Memorial Baths site was at the centre of Lismore's social and community activities when it opened in 1928. It remained so as it passed its 30<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversaries but as the population expands, a 50m outdoor pool alone does not satisfy the requirements of contemporary Lismore. The opportunity presents itself whereby Council can effectively and affordably respond to the broadest aspirations of its current and future community by adopting a progressive solution as outlined in **Option B**.

**Recommendation**

1. That Council responds to the expectations of its community by endorsing the development of the **Option B** aquatic facility configuration for Lismore which retains the Memorial Baths, upgrades its water treatment and change rooms and constructs a new 25 metre 8 lane indoor heated pool at Goonellabah together with complementary dry area facilities.
2. That works to upgrade the Memorial Baths be initiated immediately to ensure that there is no interruption to its normal usage in the 2003/04 summer season.
3. That documentation to enable calling of tenders for a new indoor pool and associated facilities in Goonellabah be prepared with a view to Council awarding a construction contract by the end of 2003.

