



# Inland Pools Strategy 2043 Public Exhibition Report

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## Executive summary

City of Newcastle (CN) maintains five public pools at Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield; all of which have a similar facility mix and have an average age of 53 years.

CN engaged Otium Planning Group to develop a 20-year strategy to ensure all five pools can continue to operate safely over the next 20 years. Otium conducted a critical review of our pools to inform what is needed to maintain and renew these assets, ensuring they meet the changing needs of our community and are fit for purpose.

The Inland Pools Strategy 2043 (the Strategy) was placed on public exhibition from 12 April to 12 May 2023, and community members were able to provide feedback via the online form on CN's Have Your Say page, mail or email. To encourage feedback from a broad cross-section of the community, CN promoted the engagement with a letterbox drop to all residences within the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA), as well as via media release, social media posts, e-newsletters and pop-up sessions at each of the inland pools.

Overall, 124 people provided feedback on the draft Strategy. No feedback was received from State or Federal MPs.

The main themes identified were:

### Extended access to facilities

- **A longer season/year-round facility is needed** to enable greater utilisation of the pools and provide health and wellbeing benefits for the community.
- **Heating** would allow people to use the pools for an extended season providing continued access as well as encouraging greater usage, increased convenience and comfort.
- **Indoor facilities** would also support greater access year-round and in all weather conditions.

### Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure

- Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure are needed to maintain the pools and meet the needs of current and future users, such as:
  - solar and heating
  - sporting and competition facilities
  - toilets/showers and change facilities
  - accessibility upgrades
  - shelter/covered areas and indoor facilities
  - recreational facilities
  - family friendly programs and facilities
  - general maintenance.

### General support/positive comments

- There was support for the draft Strategy and the actions identified to maintain and protect our inland pools.

- Submissions also acknowledged the many benefits that inland pools provide to the community for sport, recreation, health and wellbeing, water safety and social gatherings. Our pools are also enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and fitness levels.

### **Sporting and competition facilities**

- Investment is needed to provide continued access to lap swimming, diving and water polo facilities within the region for athletes to train and compete. Improved facilities could also bring tourists and visitors to the region.

### **Hunter Park**

- NSW Government investment, including a new aquatic centre in Hunter Park, is welcomed by the community. Feedback included that the Inland Pools Strategy should be reviewed within a specified timeframe given that Hunter Park is in the early planning stages and that Lambton Pool should also be upgraded regardless of decisions regarding Hunter Park.

### **Accessibility**

- Accessibility upgrades are required across all pools to ensure that they are inclusive and able to be used by all members of the community. Suggested upgrades include access ramps, wheelchair lifts, indoor facilities and accessible changing facilities.

### **Funding/partnerships**

- There was acknowledgement of the significant cost of maintaining and operating our inland pools. Comments included funding of annual maintenance and upgrades, the need for external funding sources through grants and development of partnerships with State and Federal government and other organisations.
- It was also suggested that repairs for all pools be appropriately staged and costs spread out over time as much as possible.

## 1. Background

CN's public inland pools attract more than 320,000 visitors per year and offer valuable opportunities for exercise, sport and recreation. Inland swimming pools are important spaces for the general community and user groups such as swimming clubs, water polo clubs and diving.

Inland pools support the health and wellbeing of our community, promote a liveable Newcastle and are a key deliverable within our Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan.

CN engaged Otium Planning Group to assess the condition of our pools and provide recommendations for the ongoing investment required to maintain and improve each of our pools so that they can safely operate for the next 20 years and are fit for purpose.

Each of our inland pools has a similar offering which includes a 50-metre lap pool, off-street and accessible parking, ample green space, play spaces, BBQ facilities, shaded seating, kiosks, change rooms and heated showers. However, each swimming pool services the community in its own unique way. The Inland Pools Strategy 2043 builds on this uniqueness and sets a strategic direction for each pool in line with how our community uses the facilities today and what's expected in the future.

Four categories have been used to identify the role that each swimming centre will play to maximise viability and avoid unnecessary duplication with regards to catchment areas and facilities.

These are:

- Hunter region (serving the entire Hunter region)
- Greater Newcastle (Newcastle and parts of Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens and Cessnock)
- District (cluster of suburbs from the immediate surrounding catchment)
- Tourist (supporting broader tourism strategies)

The Hunter region lacks a contemporary, major event and high performance aquatic facility which should be addressed through the development of a new aquatic facility at the NSW Government's proposed Hunter Park. Venues NSW has prepared a business case for the 63 hectare site at Broadmeadow, however, the timing for Hunter Park, and any new state of the art aquatic facility are unknown. Confirmation of a regional aquatic facility at Hunter Park will assist in confirming the role of each pool in Newcastle's inland pool network, however, the Strategy considers a future both with and without the facility at Hunter Park.

## 2. Engagement objectives

To better understand community opinion on the draft Inland Pools Strategy, CN publicly displayed the Strategy from 12 April to 12 May 2023.

More specifically, the public exhibition sought to:

- Inform the community about the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 which aims to ensure our pools will remain operational for the next 20 years and fit for purpose.
- Understand the community's level of support towards the draft Strategy and identify any potential concerns.
- Provide an opportunity for the community to share their feedback and inform the final Strategy.






### 3. Communication and promotion

During the public exhibition, a communications campaign was implemented to raise awareness of the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback.

Key communications activities follow, and key pieces of communications collateral are available in [Appendix II](#).

Channel	Description	Reach
 <b>Have Your Say webpage</b>	A dedicated project webpage was created on CN's Have Your Say website to provide information about the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043, and to encourage people to share feedback.	1,309 page visits
 <b>Flyers and onsite signage</b>	<p>Flyers promoting the public exhibition were distributed to all properties in the Newcastle local government area.</p> <p>Onsite signage was used at the community pop-up stalls to promote awareness of the public exhibition.</p>	90,500 flyers distributed
 <b>Social media</b>	<p>The public exhibition was promoted via two posts on CN's Facebook page on 13 and 27 April 2023 to raise awareness of the Strategy and encourage people to have their say.</p> <p>A paid Facebook campaign was used to further increase the audience reach and encourage feedback.</p>	More than 25,000 people reached
 <b>Newsletters</b>	<p>An e-newsletter was distributed to subscribers of the Newcastle Voice community panel on 21 April 2023. It contained an article about the Strategy and encouraged the community to provide feedback via the Have Your Say webpage.</p> <p>An article was also included in the BlueFit e-newsletter on 20 April 2023.</p>	Distributed to 2,534 people
 <b>Community pop-up sessions</b>	<p>CN representatives from the Project and Community Engagement teams attended each of the inland pools to raise awareness about the draft Strategy and encourage community members to provide feedback (via the Have Your Say webpage).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 pop-up session was held at Stockton, Beresfield, Wallsend and Mayfield pools</li> <li>2 pop-up sessions were held at Lambton pool</li> </ul>	6 community pop-up sessions



 <p><b>Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee presentation</b></p>	<p>The draft Strategy was workshopped with CN's Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee on 20 April 2023.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
 <p><b>Councillor Briefing/ Memo</b></p>	<p>A briefing was held with Councillors on 5 April 2023. A memo was also sent on 12 April 2023 advising of the engagement and providing information on how constituents can provide feedback.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
 <p><b>Media coverage</b></p>	<p>A media release was issued on 6 April 2023, and was subsequently reported in the Newcastle Herald, Newcastle Weekly, Newcastle Live, Inside Local Government and The National Tribune along with broadcast media.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

## 4. Engagement activities

The community were invited to provide feedback on the draft Inland Pools Strategy from 12 April to 12 May 2023.

The community were able to provide comment on the Strategy in a number of ways:

### Online feedback form

Community members were able to provide written submissions via an online feedback form on the Have Your Say webpage.

In total, 123 people provided feedback via the online form that related to the Draft Strategy. An additional 46 submissions were received, however, the feedback was outside the scope for review e.g. general comments about pools, Council funds or the management of pools. Findings from the online form are presented in [Section 5. Key Findings](#).

### Other submissions

Community members were also able to provide feedback by mail or email. In total, 1 submission was received via email, and is included in [Section 5. Key Findings](#).

## 5. Key findings

One hundred and twenty four people provided feedback about the draft Inland Pools Strategy. An analysis was undertaken by catchment area to identify the closest facility for each submission. Almost half (46%) of the submissions were from respondents within the Lambton Pool catchment area, and nearly a quarter (22%) were from respondents within the Stockton Pool catchment area.

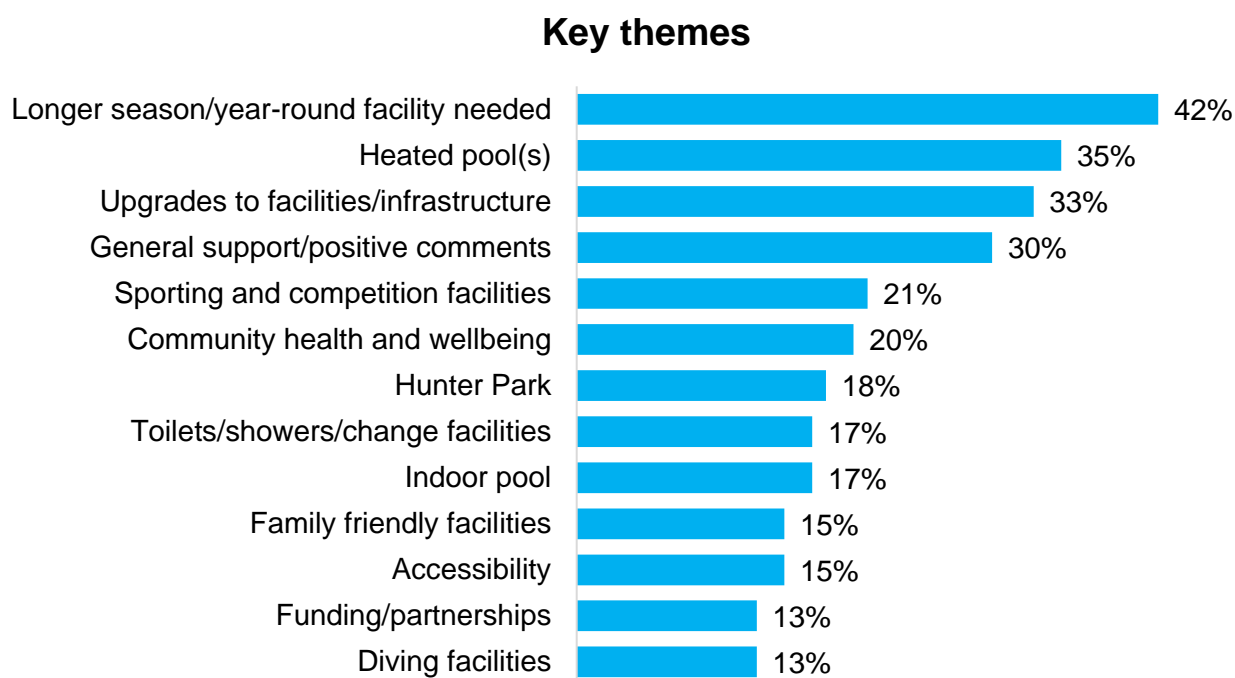
### 5.1. Submissions by catchment area

Facility	N=124
Lambton	46%
Stockton	22%
Wallsend	14%
Mayfield	12%
Beresfield	5%
Unspecified	1%

## 5.2. Key themes

Feedback was categorised to identify recurring themes. Many respondents mentioned more than one theme, therefore, percentages total more than 100%. Several respondents also mentioned individual themes multiple times, however, this was only counted once for each submission. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of submissions or respondents that mentioned each theme.

The key themes included:



For a detailed list of themes identified, see [Appendix I](#).

### 5.2.1. Longer season/year-round facility needed

The most frequently mentioned theme was the need for a longer season and/or year-round facility. Our inland pools are important community facilities that offer a range of health and wellbeing benefits for all ages and abilities. Thus, it was suggested that a year-round facility within Newcastle would mean higher utilisation of pools, and that people wouldn't have to travel to facilities in Lake Macquarie or further afield.

Examples of comments are shown below.

#### Examples of comments: Longer season/year-round facility needed (42%)

*"We need this plan to go ahead. Council Operated pools are imperative for an active community. I currently use Lambton Pool 4 times a week when it's open but I have to travel to Charlestown in winter..."*

*"More year round facilities and upgrade to indoor pool."*

*"Agree with the proposal, and reiterate Newcastle need at least one pool opened year round..."*

*"... I would most definitely use it year round if there were a means to providing it with additional heating. I understand the logistics and expense attached to this idea but on behalf of the 50 years and over demographic who rely on the pool for our physical and psychological well being, to be able to use the pool most months of the year would be beneficial beyond description."*

*" We would really love to see Beresfield pool heated and open for us all year / longer seasons. Our boys attend swimming lessons here which are so beneficial for them in so many ways, teaching safety, keeping active, building confidence etc and the instructors are incredible and we only wish we could see them there all year round to continue to build their skills..."*

*"Stockton pool is well used by all ages. It would be nice to have the pool open all year and to have a heated pool in the cooler months."*

*"...The lack of access to quality facilities 12 months of the year has significant negative impact on the health and well-being of our community. Furthermore, it puts all of our aquatic based athletes (including swimmers, water polo players, divers, triathletes) aspiring to compete at higher levels at a distinct disadvantage to other athletes throughout New South Wales and Australia who have access to facilities..."*

*"The NCC area at this point has no provision for year round swimming. Council pools close for the winter. This results in athletes having to choose private pools or migrate to other regions to train. There are many small squads of up to 30 swimmers cramming into 2 lanes in places like Charlestown as those pools have designated squad lanes and the swimmers from all NCC and other LMC converge on the only pool that remains open and heated. A training and coaching facility in a City the size of Newcastle is not unrealistic. We have a growing triathlon community, a huge surf sports family and significant numbers of fitness based swimmers. Worthy of consideration."*

*"I definitely support the need for a year round opening and indoor facility at Lambton Pool. Apart from the ocean baths, which aren't very friendly in winter months for young children, there are no swimming options offered all year round for families. This means that learning to swim and continuing to foster water safety and enjoyment is a stop-start activity..."*

### 5.2.2. Heated pool(s)

Similar to having a year-round facility, pool heating was a common theme that would allow people to use the pools for an extended season. Having better heating of pools within Newcastle would encourage greater usage, provide continued access and greater convenience in that people would not have to travel outside the Newcastle area to use these facilities. This is especially important for elderly people and those living with a disability for whom it provides essential health benefits, but may be unable to travel to a facility further away. It would also enable children to continue to practice water safety throughout the year.

#### Examples of comments: Heated pool(s) (35%)

*"An option for a heated pool/covered pool would be great..."*

*"I love our pools! However, at 62 years of age with severe arthritis, a cold water pool successfully dissuades me from swimming in winter. I would love to see more heated pools (solar) available in council areas."*

*"Heating the pool for year round use would be useful for us locals"*

*"The Inland Pools Strategy needs to ensure that pools are open all year round and heated as part of their strategy in each community. If this was the case, many more people would use the pools, as they do not want or unable to travel far to use the facilities..."*

*"...With extra care and maintenance towards the pool and heating we could ensure our children don't lose the swimming skills they have developed over summer..."*

*"I need to travel outside Newcastle council area to enjoy an indoor heated pool... Lake Macquarie council have numerous indoor pool for year round swimming. Newcastle have zero."*

*"All the pools need upgrades to heating systems, the pool I swim at, Wallsend is well used by swimmers of all ages for fitness and exercise. Better heating would allow for a longer season. The older swimmers don't all have the capacity to travel to Charlestown or Lambton."*

*"...Consideration should be given for decent Hydro & Spa Pool (similar to the one @ Toronto). This would be beneficial to the disabled.. people living with arthritis & health issues.. also sport injuries...Wallsend & Lambton are not sufficiently heated for aged or disabled."*

### 5.2.3. Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure

Upgrades to facilities and infrastructure was the third most common theme. Mentions were broad in scope, including:

- solar and heating
- sporting and competition facilities
- toilets/showers and change facilities
- accessibility upgrades
- shelter and covered areas
- recreational facilities e.g. open spaces, grass areas, BBQs, seating
- family friendly programs and facilities e.g. learn to swim, splash parks and water play
- indoor facilities
- general maintenance.

#### Examples of comments: Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure (33%)

*"It is a good draft strategy to keep and maintain the five inland pools. It is important to please include these repairs and works in your strategy at the Lambton pool. Please upgrade the showers into cubicles and change all the taps to heated showers. It is very hard not to have a hot shower in privacy after a swim..."*

*"Wheelchair lifts need to be a higher priority. At the moment there is no outdoor public pool in the Newcastle electorate where people in wheelchairs can access a pool. It is discriminatory and doesn't make pools inclusive... Wallsend pool doesn't even have an accessible toilet. People including children want to get into the pool and have fun with their families and peers..."*

*"...I would like to suggest that the installation of more covered shelter would improve the amenity of the Stockton pool. Also to encourage more patronage, additional solar panels would increase the water temperature, especially for those early morning swimmers as well as a more efficient solar blanket system, one of the winches is broken at Stockton and so we do not achieve good heat coverage..."*

*"The diving platforms need to be addressed, this is the only diving pool outside of Sydney it's a huge disadvantage to country divers not to have facilities to be able to train year round... A covered indoor pool would be the best option and would provide year round use, the pool could also be used by other sports in the winter months..."*

*"Stockton pool requires a lot of general maintenance for example fixing holes in the roof over the kiosk, leak in the 50m pool. The bathroom facilities require an upgrade. Not all showers work or have hot water. But cubicles are required for changing. A water park would be great for children and shade over the 50mtr pool would be great..."*

*"...The report mentions shade covering at the pools, but nowhere does it flag providing shade over the main pool... With the sun becoming more damaging, consideration ought to be given to provide this sort of structure at the pools..."*



#### 5.2.4. General support/positive comments

Many of the submissions expressed support for the Strategy and the actions identified to maintain and protect our inland pools. There was also strong support for an additional facility at Hunter Park. It was agreed that upgrades to pool facilities are needed to better service the communities that they serve now and into the future. Some commented on specific focuses of the Strategy such as education, health and social wellbeing, whilst others expressed support for ongoing improvements and upgrades.

#### Examples of comments: General support/positive comments (30%)

*"Fully support high end, 'State' level aquatic facility as part of Hunter Park, which includes competition level lap and deep water pools. Fully support major upgrades to Lambton, Mayfield and Wallsend pools in particular to better service the growing catchments with lap, smaller deep water / polo pools as well as water play areas and green spaces."*

*"Agree that a forward strategy is needed. Need to include adjoining LGAs in this strategy to better serve communities..."*

*"I'm really pleased that Council has identified the importance of maintaining our current Council pools. They are an important part of community life and provide low cost leisure options for all members of the community. As a user of Mayfield pool on a regular basis I really appreciate having this community facility in my suburb. As a ratepayer, I would be willing to pay a bit extra in my rates to ensure Council does not have to rely heavily on state government to assist in the more expensive aspects of this strategy."*

*"It is very important to maintain our pools. We also need new indoor pools to serve our growing population during the winter."*

*"I like the strategy, especially since it focuses on education and health in addition to the social purpose. I also love how you are thinking about sustainability by using solar energy..."*

*"...It's encouraging to see the City of Newcastle taking a proactive approach, and I look forward to the progress made towards improving these valued facilities..."*

*"Overall, I see this as a very positive move on the part of the City of Newcastle. It recognises that these assets are important for a variety of reasons and that they must be maintained and enhanced to meet current and future needs..."*

### 5.2.5. Sporting and competition facilities

Access to sporting and competition facilities, particularly lap swimming, diving and water polo facilities was another common theme. A lack of year-round and indoor facilities means that athletes are required to travel long distances to other facilities, and have limited access to train/compete in the Newcastle area. Upgraded facilities are needed to provide greater access and encourage participation in water sports. Better sporting and competition facilities could also draw tourists and visitors to the region.

#### Examples of comments: Sporting and competition facilities (21%)

*"Strongly support the proposal to build a modern pool at Hunter Park. I love the facilities we have but they are very crowded and the lack of an indoor facility means we are dependent on private providers for this essential amenity in winter months. An indoor facility is also a much safer option for swimming carnivals."*

*"Newcastle urgently needs a heated diving & waterpolo training facility. Our elite kids travel to Sydney multiple times a week over winter to access facilities, we then lose them to Sydney clubs permanently. Ashfield swimming pool in Sydney should be viewed for comparison for its changing level outdoor pool that can be used for water polo & learn to swim."*

*"...The lack of a year-round water polo pool in the Newcastle/Hunter region has long been an issue for developing junior players. We have consistently lost our more promising players to Sydney as they cannot progress their athletic careers without consistent access to training and playing opportunities..."*

*"There has to be a huge emphasis on the deep water pool. Waterpolo in particular is one of the worlds top growing sports. We are severely lacking in facilities in Newcastle. Too many athletes travel to Sydney multiple times each week for opportunities to train and play. Newcastle should be the major nsw regional waterpolo destination for competitions."*

*"Lambton Pool 50m outdoor should be heated and open all year round. Indoor facilities need to be considered too. The region (as a "Global City") needs quality pools to attract quality coaches and grow the next generation of world class swimmers, divers, water polo players etc."*

### 5.2.6. Community health and wellbeing

The feedback highlighted several key benefits that our inland pools provide to the community for sport, recreation, health and wellbeing, water safety and social gatherings. Pool facilities are enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and fitness levels and are a low cost leisure option.

#### Examples of comments: Community health and wellbeing (20%)

*"Stockton Pool is a wonderful asset to our community. It serves the local and wider community as an Olympic pool and caters to a number of primary and high school in a number of important capacities ranging from intensive learn to swim classes, school sport and swimming carnivals. It is important that Stockton Pool remains an Olympic Pool for continuous use by these schools..."*

*"The Mayfield pool is loved by the community. It supports school activities, families, regular people exercising and lots of people just enjoying swimming. Great to have a play group and bbq's available are fantastic!"*

*"Wallsend is well used by swimmers of all ages for fitness and exercise..."*

*"Our council pools provide the community; particularly the "older" members of the community with a safe, effective and enjoyable exercise facility in the warmer months of the year..."*

*"There are many people in this community like me, seniors or disabled who use the pool as a form of exercise to keep us mobile..."*

*"Every family and child should have the right to water safety in their local community..."*

### 5.2.7. Hunter Park

The Inland Pools Strategy considers a future with and without an aquatic facility at Hunter Park. However, given that the NSW Government facility is still in the early planning stages, it was suggested that the Strategy should be reviewed within a certain timeframe e.g. 5 years. The main reasons for supporting the Hunter Park facility were with regards to having an indoor facility and providing competition level sporting facilities.

There was also strong support for further upgrades to Lambton Pool e.g. diving facilities, regardless of the proposed Hunter Park facility.

#### Examples of comments: Hunter Park (18%)

*"I am a Lambton resident & I am heartened to see that the much needed upgraded work is currently taking place at Lambton pool. This pool is an important asset that is heavily used for recreational & competitive swimming together with the diving & water polo communities including hosting important major events... Hunter Park is in the earliest stage of planning and may not be built for many years, if ever. Therefore, I submit that Lambton Pool should be fully renewed & upgraded if funding has not been obtained within a reasonable time period eg 5 years..."*

*"I'm excited to hear that our pools are going to be upgraded, and extremely excited about the proposed facility at Hunter Park. I am a competitive swimmer who trains 5-7 days a week, and feel we need to cater as much as possible to those of us who swim for fitness and competition, having more lanes available to lap swimmers. I think the proposal is a fantastic idea, and hopefully can attract national and international level swimming events to the area."*

*"We welcome the news that the Hunter Park proposal will contain an indoor pool facility capable of hosting water polo training and competitions... Ideally, a purpose-built water polo pool constructed to Olympic standards would be optimal, possibly by making the pool slightly bigger and locating the diving infrastructure away from the 'field of play' so that the pool could be used concurrently by diving."*

*"We require a plan that ensures the continued upkeep of Lambton Pool regardless of a pool being built at Hunter Park. The pools would cater for different users..."*

*"...I would recommend working on two scenarios for two possible futures..."*

- *Hunter Park to include an elite sports swimming centre that is BUILT within 15 years, and firm binding decision are made about it within 5 years.*
- *No firm, funded and binding decision is made regarding a swimming centre at Hunter Park within 5 years..."*

### 5.2.8. Toilets/showers/change facilities

Several submissions commented on upgrades to toilets, showers and change facilities. There were mentions of the number of showers and toilets provided, as well as the provision of hot water, better privacy and unisex change facilities for families/groups.

#### Examples of comments: Toilets/showers/change facilities (17%)

*"The Mayfield pool is fantastic however lacks attractive features such as the Lambton pool by way of a splash park for younger children... there are also a limited number of shower and toilet facilities..."*

*"Beresfield Pool requires more hot showers, only one in ladies change room is not enough when the family/disabled change room is being used. This will make it better especially for swimming lessons etc..."*

*"...Pool attendance would increase with heated water and good dressing and shower facilities..."*

*"...An outdoor heated shower needs to be located near the diving pool for the use of the divers..."*

*"...Simple things like including unisex change cubicles/areas for families or groups will remove stresses for carers, parents and non-binary persons having to decide which bathroom to use..."*

### 5.2.9. Indoor Pool

There was support for indoor pools to provide access year-round and in all weather conditions. Indoor facilities would also provide a safe environment for children during winter months and additional opportunities for family friendly activities/water play.

Despite the intention of an additional indoor facility being developed at Lambton Pool, some comments raised concerns about it becoming an indoor only facility and raised questions about the proposed location.

#### Examples of comments: Indoor pool (17%)

*"...A couple of indoor, heated 25m pools that are open in winter, like the West Wallsend pool (lake Mac.) would be excellent..."*

*"It is very important to maintain our pools. We also need new indoor pools to serve our growing population during the winter."*

*"An all-season heated 50m indoor pool would be a great asset. Currently I have to move to a private indoor 25m pool when Lambton pools is closed for the winter season..."*

*"...My only concern is not having enough indoor pools. With the changes in weather, it is important to consider building more indoor activity areas..."*

*"...It is possible to keep the pools open all year round without creating an indoor facility and this should be the first priority... There is nowhere to put a new pool of this size without impacting on the LTS pool (which is in good condition) or taking up park land or the water play area..."*

### 5.2.10. Family friendly facilities

Suggestions for family friendly areas and activities included more shaded areas, interactive water play, splash parks, grass/picnic areas and pools that can be used for children's swimming lessons.

#### Examples of comments: Family friendly facilities (15%)

*"Mayfield Swimming pool would greatly benefit from more shaded area and an interactive water play/splash park section."*

*"It would be amazing to have a pool that can be used for children's swimming lessons so we don't have to travel as far - it needs to be warm and sheltered from outside conditions. I'd also love to see a splash area like at Lambton pool..."*

*"My family and I use Lambton Pool. The mix of facilities (large pool, dive pool, smaller pool, water play area and waterslide), the grassy area and the outdoor environment of the pool is what makes the pool attractive to families and to kids and young people..."*

*"I would like to see splash parks rolled out at most of the inland pools. Splash parks are the new destination attractions..."*

*"Newcastle needs an indoor aquatic centre with kids section as soon as possible..."*

### 5.2.11. Accessibility

Access for people with disability or mobility needs was seen as a key concern, and was noted to be an issue across all pools. Suggested improvements included access ramps, wheelchair lifts, indoor facilities and accessible changing facilities. Heating of pools was also a consideration for the comfort of the elderly and people with disability. It was suggested that further consultation should be undertaken with disability groups to ensure that pools are inclusive and accessible for all members of the community.

#### Examples of comments: Accessibility (15%)

*"...We require all pools in the region to have facilities for disabled patrons to make the pool accessible for everyone including ramps, lifts etc..."*

*"We don't want those swing out crane wheelchair access we want what Toronto has, a wheelchair lift that lowers the chair or person into the water which accommodates larger people as well... we need ramp access into all public pools. It's alright to build diving boards and waterslides and playgrounds but disabled people and elderly people like to exercise in fact we need it for our health, and we should not have to travel long distances to have access to these services..."*

*"...I welcome greater accessibility. Please do consult with disability groups to find out what works best for them. Chair lifts can be cumbersome and there may be better options..."*

*"...Prioritising indoor facilities and changing places would give you your best return on investment, as the elderly and disabled are severely under-serviced at aquatic facilities in Newcastle..."*

*"...Recommend two of these (platform lifts) be acquired so that one can be used for the learn to swim pool and one for the 50m pool..."*

### 5.2.12. Funding/partnerships

Several responses acknowledged the significant cost of maintaining and operating our inland pools. Comments included funding of annual maintenance and upgrades, the need for external funding sources through grants and development of partnerships with State and Federal government and other organisations.

Some concerns were also raised with regards to similar timeframes for required repairs across the pools, spreading costs across generations, and the scope of the planned upgrades or enhancements being too limited.

#### Examples of comments: Funding/partnerships (13%)

*"...I realise that pools are expensive to maintain and run, however, pools are a benefit to all ages of our community and a strategy needs to be in place to acquire and maintain funding for the long run for the benefit of all young and old."*

*"...I have noted that the emphasis for Stockton is fundamentally on keeping it operational rather than making significant enhancements... Improvements mentioned are longer term and subject to external funding. This does not offer users much confidence that we'll see much beyond essential maintenance. I encourage CN to pursue this strategy with conviction and to go hard for State and Federal funding..."*

*"...Funding all of these facilities will be a difficult task. The situation is not helped by the fact that all the pools are in need of major overhauls in a similar timeframe. I think an inland pool fund will be a good idea to help save the next generation from these issues. I also believe strategising how the work is done to more evenly spread the cost out for the next generation would be a good plan. We want to make sure the next time they need to be rebuilt, they are not all due at the same time..."*

*"...The funding strategy needs to be more than just asking state or federal government to pay for just about everything. It should clearly set out expenses and revenue required now AND index for the next 20 years, and how that money will be sourced for the following:*

- Operations (either staffed by Council or contracted out)*
- Annual maintenance*
- Asset renewal*
- Modernisation or upgrades...*

*Develop strategies and specific actions for how to secure the future of the pools with a range of funding options, including how to do it if:*

- Council needs to manage and secure the future of the pools without State or Federal funding*
- Council can only secure limited State and Federal funding*

*Develop partnerships with a wide range of potential partners for funding such as schools. Philanthropic organisations, grant bodies, community sources ect..."*



### 5.2.13. Diving facilities

Some respondents wanted to see more focus on diving facilities. It was acknowledged that Lambton Pool is the only local pool with diving facilities, and suggested that more investment should be made into diving facilities at Lambton Pool, complementing the proposed facilities at Hunter Park. Lambton Pool provides important access to diving, water polo and other facilities for sporting groups within the region.

#### Examples of comments: Diving facilities (13%)

*"We need a proper concept plan that ensures the future of Lambton pool complex. A plan that ensures that much needed maintenance will be carried out, and that the future of all the pools, especially the diving pool, be assured..."*

*"...The strategy must as a priority commit a safe and secure future for the deep-water pool and all the sports that use it, especially diving, aquarobics and water polo. The deep-water pool is in high demand now and the city could definitely use more than one deep water pool so it makes no sense not to commit to the future of the deep water pool. Even if Hunter Park has a deep-water pool at some time in the distant future, the city will be able to use two facilities and this would reduce conflict over its use..."*

*"I am a Lambton resident & I am heartened to see that the much needed upgraded work is currently taking place at Lambton pool. This pool is an important asset that is heavily used for recreational & competitive swimming together with the diving & water polo communities including hosting important major events..."*

*"...No information is provided about the condition of the deep-water pool and specifically no information is provided about the condition of the diving platforms which are known to be in poor condition..."*

### 5.3. Key themes by facility mentioned

The top 5 key themes were compared by facility mentioned. Overall, the top 5 themes (longer season/year-round facility, heated pools, upgrades to facilities/infrastructure, general support, and community health and wellbeing) were relatively consistent across all facilities.

Theme	Lambton	Mayfield	Wallsend	Stockton	Beresfield
Longer season/ year-round facility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heated pool(s)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
General support/positive comments	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Community health and wellbeing		✓	✓	✓	

## 6. Summary and next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. We heard that our public inland pools are important for supporting the health and wellbeing of our community, and providing sports and recreation opportunities.

There was general support for developing a strategy to protect these important intergenerational assets. However, we heard that there are infrastructure upgrades needed to ensure that our pools remain operational into the future, including heating, sporting and competition facilities, toilets/showers and change facilities and accessibility.


CN will continue to work with the NSW Government on the future of Hunter Park, to ensure that the status and timing of Hunter Park is considered and aligns with the implementation of this Strategy.


## Appendix I - Themes identified

Theme	N=124	Theme	N=124
Longer season/year-round facility	42%	Fitness programs/gym facilities	10%
Heated pool(s)	35%	Hydrotherapy/rehabilitation	10%
Upgrades to facilities/infrastructure	33%	Review investment strategy	8%
General support/positive comments	30%	Shade/covered areas	8%
Sporting and competition facilities	21%	Covered pool	8%
Community health and wellbeing	20%	Pricing/affordability	8%
Hunter Park	18%	Open space/grass areas	6%
Toilets/showers/change facilities	17%	Picnic and BBQ facilities	6%
Indoor pool	17%	Seating/spectator area	6%
Accessibility	15%	Café/canteen	6%
Family friendly facilities	15%	Broader catchment areas	5%
Diving facilities	13%	Special events e.g. inflatable days, outdoor cinema	2%
Funding/partnerships	13%	Operational times/hours	2%
Lap swimming	11%	Do not support investment into pools	<1%
Swimming lessons	11%	Outdoor pool	<1%
Deep water pools	10%	Other	5%

## Appendix II – Promotional materials

### Have your say webpage


Home Projects My profile



### Inland Pools Strategy 2043

We've developed a draft Strategy for the management and renewal of our five public swimming pools over the next 20 years. Have your say until 5pm 12 May 2023.

[Home / Inland Pools Strategy 2043](#)

#### Why do we need a strategy for our pools?

City of Newcastle (CN) maintains five inland pools at Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield, all of which have a similar facility mix and were built over 40 years ago, with an average age of 53 years.

We recently engaged Otium Planning Group to develop a 20-year strategy for CN to continue operating all five pools into the future. Otium conducted a critical review of CN's pools to inform what is required to maintain and renew these assets whilst meeting the changing needs of our community, ensuring all five pools are fit for purpose.

The draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 provides a recommended investment strategy for each of our inland pools to ensure they can operate safely over the next 20 years.

#### The benefits of our swimming pools

Sport and active recreation are a valuable part of life in Newcastle that promotes active lifestyles, helps develop valuable social networks and contributes to the liveability of communities.

Inland swimming pools are important spaces for the community and user groups such as schools, swimming clubs, water polo clubs and diving. The provision of aquatic facilities is a key deliverable within our Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan.

#### Document Library

[Strategy document \(open for feedback\)](#)  
**Draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043**  
 PDF (8.02 MB)

[Supporting documents](#)  
**2019 Inland Pools Research Report**  
 PDF (2.79 MB)

Establishing the Inland Pools Community Network is one of the ways we're engaging the community to help shape the way we manage & invest in our pools

[Click here to find out more](#)

#### Have Your Say

We want to hear your feedback on the draft Inland Pools 2043 Strategy. Complete the form below to have your say.  
**Feedback closes 5pm 12 May 2023.**

[Open](#)

#### Feedback on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043

First name:

Last name:

Email address:

Suburb:

Please provide your feedback on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043:

Upload a file (optional)  
[Choose file...](#)

Max files: 5 Allowed file types: pdf,doc,docx,txt,xls,xlsx,rtf,png,gif,jpg,jpeg Size limit: 10.00 MB

[Submit](#)




#### Timeline

- Development of the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043**  
 2022  
 CN engaged Otium Planning Group to develop the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043.
- Community consultation**  
 12 April - 12 May 2023  
 The draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 is open for feedback from the community.
- Review of community feedback**  
 Mid 2023  
 The project team will review all feedback from the community and use this to finalise the Strategy.

[See less](#)

#### Contact Us

Have questions or want to learn more about a project, contact us below:

 Name: Engagement Team  
 Phone: 02 4974 2000  
 Email: [engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au)

## Flyer



I'm pleased to share our plan for protecting and improving Newcastle's public pools for the next 20 years.

City of Newcastle's public inland pools attract more than 300,000 visitors per year and are cherished by the community for exercise, sport and recreation. Providing aquatic facilities is a key deliverable in our Community Strategic Plan - Newcastle 2040, and we are committed to keeping all five of our inland swimming pools operational into the future.

We have developed the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 which provides a 20-year plan to enhance and protect Newcastle's five inland swimming pools at Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield.

I encourage you to provide your feedback on the draft strategy. Please visit our website and provide feedback on this strategy by 5pm 12 May 2023.

Lord Mayor Natalie Holmes

Most people in Newcastle live within 15 minutes of an inland pool

Our five inland pools are ageing, and community needs and expectations have changed over the years. Our pools are based on approaches that were common decades ago when 50 metre outdoor pools, primarily for recreational lap swimming, were considered the key attraction.

In late 2021, we set about developing a strategy that would ensure the continued operation of our five public pools for the next two decades.

This included commissioning an independent engineering report on the condition of the pool shells and tiles to help understand the costs to maintain our five inland pools. While the report showed that the pools are in reasonably good condition, investment is needed to ensure these facilities are suitable for our growing population over the next two decades.

Our strategy suggests a funding model for the ongoing investment required to maintain and improve our pools. Increasingly state and federal governments are providing significant funding to councils to ensure the renewal of existing pools and for new pools. We require similar support to maintain and improve the existing pool network to ensure our pools are fit for purpose.



### Have your say

Through the *Inland Pools Strategy*, we will ensure that our five publicly owned pools are fit for purpose and, where appropriate, upgraded to meet community expectations and needs.

We want to hear your feedback on how we protect and enhance our pools into the future. Visit [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay) and provide your feedback by 5pm 12 May 2023.



## Inland Pools Strategy 2043

Our plan for protecting and improving Newcastle's public pools for the next 20 years



The average age of our swimming pools is 53 years

Our network of five pools have a similar offering which includes a 50 metre lap pool, off-street and accessible parking, ample green space, play spaces, BBQ facilities, shaded seating, kiosks, change rooms and heated showers. However, each swimming pool services the community in their own unique way.

The *Inland Pools Strategy* builds on this uniqueness and sets a strategic direction for each pool. Four categories have been used to identify the role that each swimming centre will play to maximise viability and avoid unnecessary competition between CN facilities.

**Hunter**  
Serves the entire Hunter region and focuses on facilities that support aquatic based event and high-performance programs and services, including increased lap swimming space, deep water related facilities, and recreation, leisure and adventure, fitness, training, education, and therapy activities.

**Greater Newcastle**  
Serves all of Newcastle, along with parts of Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens and Cessnock, and incorporates high quality and high capacity facilities, that support recreation, leisure and adventure, fitness and training, education, and therapy activities.

**District**  
Serves a cluster of communities/suburbs from its immediate surrounding catchment, with a mix of local training or social use and inter-club competition.

**Tourist**  
Support broader City tourism strategies with a focus on informal leisure/adventure and recreation aquatic facilities.



### Hunter Park

The Hunter region lacks a contemporary, major event and high performance aquatic facility which should be addressed through the development of a new aquatic facility at the State NSW Government's proposed Hunter Park. Venues NSW has prepared a masterplan and business case for the 43 hectare site at Broadmeadow however the timetable for Hunter Park, and any new state of the art aquatic centre in this precinct, is unknown. City of Newcastle will work with the newly elected State Government to have this matter addressed as a priority. Confirmation of a regional aquatic facility at Hunter Park will assist in confirming the role of each pool in Newcastle's inland pool network.

Over time, population growth in Newcastle's western corridor will require Wallsend Pool to be enhanced and upgraded from what is known as a District pool to a Greater Newcastle pool, with a catchment area further away from Broadmeadow to complement the future Hunter Park facility, which will be built by the NSW Government.

## Corflute signage



**Inland Pools Strategy 2043**

*Our plan for protecting and improving Newcastle's public pools for the next 20 years*

City of Newcastle's public inland pools attract more than **300,000 visitors per year** and are cherished by the community for exercise, sport and recreation.

We have developed the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 which provides a 20-year plan to enhance and protect Newcastle's five inland swimming pools at Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield.

Through the Inland Pools Strategy, we will ensure that our five publicly owned pools are fit for purpose and, where appropriate, upgraded to meet community expectations and needs.

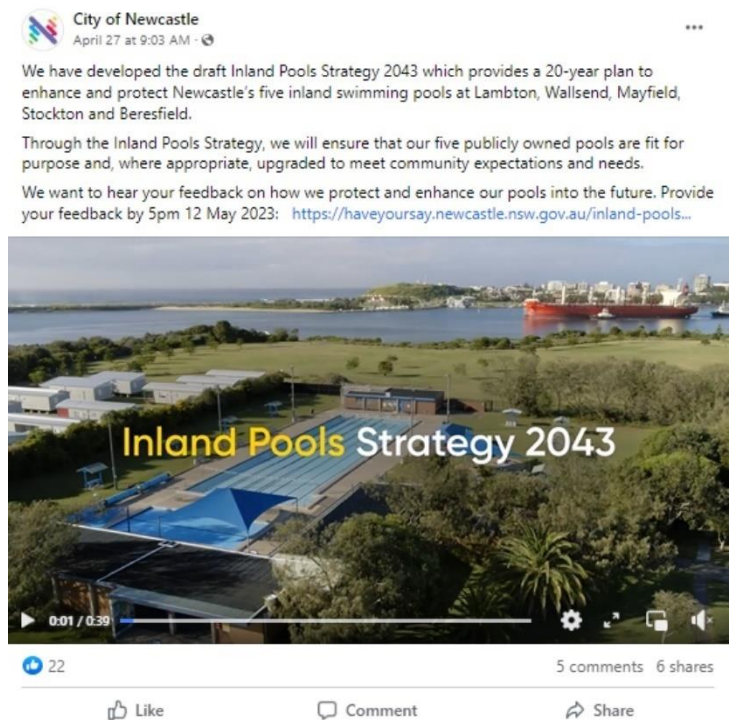
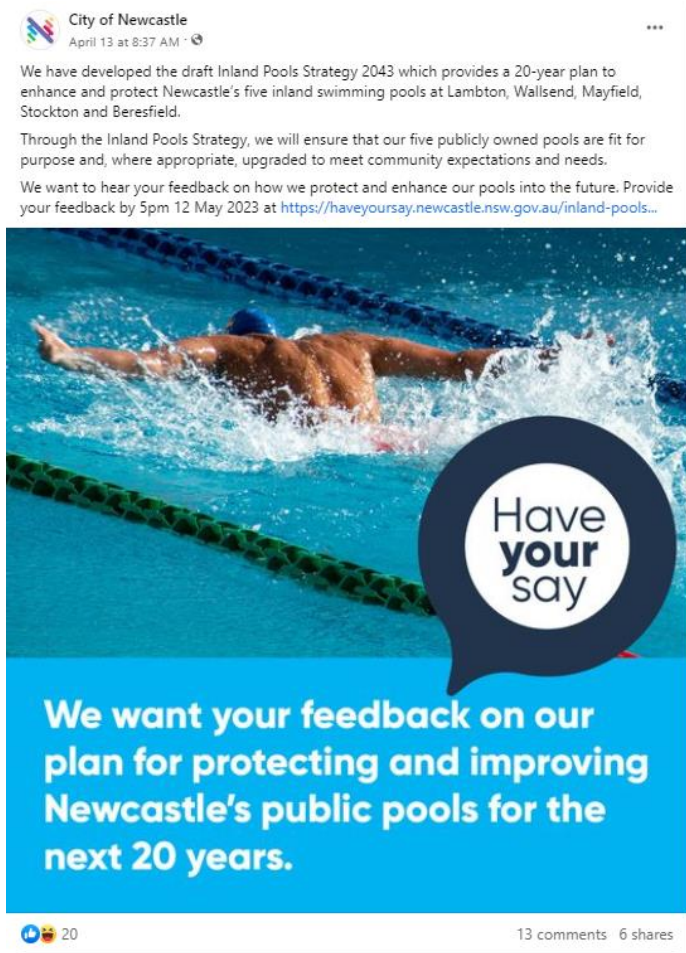
We want to hear your feedback on our plan to protect and enhance our pools into the future. Scan the QR code or visit [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/your say](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/your say) and provide your feedback by 5pm 12 May 2023.

**Have your say**






## Social media





## Newsletters

### Newcastle Voice e-newsletter

#### Help shape the future of our inland pools

We've developed the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 which provides a 20-year plan to enhance and protect Newcastle's five inland swimming pools at Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield.

Through the Inland Pools Strategy, we will ensure that our five publicly owned pools are fit for purpose and, where appropriate, upgraded to meet community expectations and needs.

Have your say on how we protect and enhance our pools into the future.



Have your say by 5pm **12 May 2023**

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

### BlueFit e-newsletter



#### HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR POOLS

Have your say on City of Newcastle's 20-year plan for enhancing and protecting our five inland swimming pools.

**READ MORE**

## Media release

<https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-and-updates/latest-news/community-wade-in-on-20-year-plan-for-newcastle-s->


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## Community wade in on 20-year plan for Newcastle's public swimming pools

06 Apr 2023

 Listen
  Share

A comprehensive review has outlined a strategic path for the City to enhance and protect Newcastle's five public swimming pools for the community over the next 20 years.

The 'Inland Pools Strategy 2043' sets out an investment plan for Newcastle's network of public swimming pools to ensure they are fit for purpose in the long term, while noting more than \$5 million has been spent upgrading and \$2 million maintaining our public pools over the past five years.

The draft Strategy proposes the creation of an Inland Pools Reserve Fund to ensure that funding is set aside annually to enhance the City's five public pools over the next 20 years. The investigation has also found that the condition of the public pools will enable them to continue to operate without replacement until at least 2043.

From next week, CN will seek feedback from the community and key stakeholders, including a newly formed Inland Pools Community Network, that sought nominations from members of the public who regularly use Newcastle's five publicly owned pools.

Lord Mayor Nuatall Nelmes said the draft Strategy considered current and future user needs, along with the existing conditions of the pools, to guide future investment.

"City of Newcastle's public swimming pools attract more than 300,000 visitors every year. Independent research shows public satisfaction with our pools is more than 80%, making them just as popular as the Newcastle Art Gallery and Museum," Cr Nelmes said.

"The draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 shows how our network of five swimming centres service the community in their own unique way and sets a strategic direction for each, including upgrading Wallsend Swimming Centre as our population in the western suburbs increases.

"We're now encouraging the community to have their say on the draft Strategy to help us shape how City of Newcastle protects and invests in its five public pools over the next 20 years."

The draft Strategy was top of the agenda last night amongst the Inland Pools Community Network, a newly formed group of passionate community representatives.

Representatives for Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield swimming centres in addition to a school representative and accessibility advocate were selected via an expressions of interest process to make up the Network.

Cr Nelmes said each community representative is an active member of a local swimming centre and will help share information, provide feedback and advocate on behalf of pool users.

"City of Newcastle looks forward to working together with the Inland Pools Community Network as we invest in these community facilities and ensure they are accessible to everyone," Cr Nelmes said.

"We look forward to hearing what each community representative brings to the table to help us plan for the future of our city's much-loved inland pool network."

Colin Irvine spends most days at Lambton Swimming Centre and said he is committed to actively contributing to the way the facilities are managed.

"These days I coach both swimming and water polo at Lambton Pool and am there most days. I can see the challenges faced by those running swimming pools from many perspectives," Mr Irvine said.

"I have been a swimmer all my life and have spent a lot of time at Lambton Pool. In my younger years I was an elite level competitive swimmer and water polo player. As an athlete, a parent, a coach, a business owner, and as a frequent user, I have an appreciation for the challenges faced by local and state authorities in balancing competing community needs with scarce resources."

Consultation will open on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 following the Easter holidays.

## Media coverage

### City of Newcastle's inland pools plan on public exhibition in April 2023



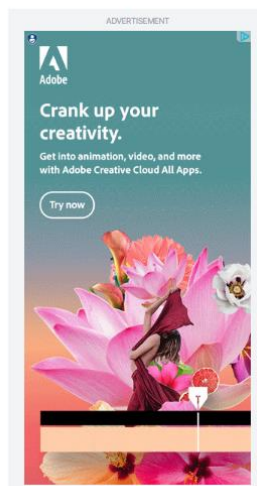
By Matt Carr  
Updated April 6 2023 - 4:48pm, first published 3:08pm

0 Comments



A swimmer doing laps past the temporary seating placed in front of the 60-year-old grandstand at Lambton Park War Memorial Swimming Centre in January. Picture by Simone De Peak

A PLAN to invest in Newcastle's inland pools over the next 20 years will go on public display next week, City of Newcastle has confirmed.



<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/8150849/newcastle-20-year-pool-plan-consultation-starts-after-easter-council/>

MUSIC ▾ ENTERTAINMENT ▾ LIFESTYLE ▾ WATCH ▾ LISTEN

COMMUNITY ENTERTAINMENT

## The future of Newcastle swimming pools

by NEWCASTLE LIVE  
3 months ago

Newcastle's five public swimming pools are set to be enhanced and protected for the next 20 years.

The *Inland Pools Strategy 2043* outlines an investment plan for the city's public swimming pools, ensuring they remain fit for purpose in the long term. Over the last five years, \$5 million has been spent upgrading and \$2 million maintaining the public pools.

The draft strategy proposes the creation of an Inland Pools Reserve Fund to ensure that funding is set aside annually to enhance the city's five public pools over the next two decades. The review found that the public pools' condition would enable them to continue to operate without replacement until at least 2043.

"City of Newcastle's public swimming pools attract more than 300,000 visitors every year. Independent research shows public satisfaction with our pools is more than 80%, making them just as popular as the Newcastle Art Gallery and Museum," Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said.

"The draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 shows how our network of five swimming centres service the community in their own unique way and sets a strategic direction for each, including upgrading Wallsend Swimming Centre as our population in the western suburbs increases.

"We're now encouraging the community to have their say on the draft Strategy to help us shape how City of Newcastle protects and invests in its five public pools over the next 20 years."

The draft strategy shows how the city's network of five swimming centres services the community in their unique ways, including upgrading Wallsend Swimming Centre as the population in the western suburbs increases.

Lambton Swimming Centre devotee, Colin Irvine said he is committed to actively contributing to the way the facilities are managed.

"These days I coach both swimming and water polo at Lambton Pool and am there most days. I can see the challenges faced by those running swimming pools from many perspectives," Mr Irvine said.

"I have been a swimmer all my life and have spent a lot of time at Lambton Pool. In my younger years, I was an elite-level competitive swimmer and water polo player. As an athlete, a parent, a coach, a business owner, and a frequent user, I have an appreciation for the challenges faced by local and state authorities in balancing competing community needs with scarce resources."

City of Newcastle is encouraging the community to have their say on the draft strategy to shape how the city protects and invests in its five public pools over the next 20 years

Consultation on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043 will begin after the Easter holidays.

<https://newcastlelive.com.au/newcastle-swimming-pools-future/>





## Newcastle residents invited to wade in on 20-year swimming pool plan

ROD THOMPSON  
APRIL 8, 2022

SHARE



Consultation is set to open on City of Newcastle's (CN) tactical path to protect the region's five public swimming pools over the next two decades.

The draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043, which focuses on the Lambton, Wallsend, Mayfield, Stockton and Beresfield swimming centres, will ensure they are fit for purpose in the long term.

It also proposes the creation of an Inland Pools Reserve Fund to guarantee funding is set aside annually to enhance the facilities over a 20-year period.

Already, more than \$5 million has been spent upgrading, and \$2 million maintaining, the public pools over the past five years.

And, from next week, CN will seek feedback from residents and key stakeholders, including a newly-formed Inland Pools Community Network, that sought nominations from members of the public who regularly use the complexes.

Locals like Colin Irvine.

He spends most days at Lambton Swimming Centre.

"I'm committed to actively contributing to the way the facilities are managed," he said.

"These days I coach both swimming and water polo at Lambton.

"I can see the challenges faced by those running swimming pools from many perspectives.

"I've been a swimmer all my life and spent a lot of time at Lambton Pool.

"In my younger years, I was an elite level competitor and water polo player.

<https://newcastleweekly.com.au/newcastle-residents-invited-to-wade-in-on-20-year-swimming-pool-plan/>

## Newcastle dives into consultation on 20-year plan for city's pools

10/04/2023



Consultation on City of Newcastle Council's Inland Pools Strategy 2043 will soon begin, as the next step in Council's work to enhance and project the city's five public swimming pools over the next two decades.

<https://insidelocalgovernment.com.au/newcastle-dives-into-consultation-on-20-year-plan-for-citys-pools/>

# Appendix III – Online feedback form

## Have Your Say

We want to hear your feedback on the draft Inland Pools 2043 Strategy. Complete the form below to have your say.  
Feedback closes 5pm 12 May 2023.

Open

### Feedback on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043

**First name:** Required


**Last name:**

**Email address:**

**Suburb:**

**Please provide your feedback on the draft Inland Pools Strategy 2043:** Required

**Upload a file (optional)**

 Choose file...

Max files: 5 Allowed file types: pdf,doc,docx,txt,xls,xlsx,rtf,png,gif,jpg,jpeg Size limit: 10.00 MB

Submit