

SUMMARY OF RESULTS - AQUATIC CENTRE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

DALBY TOWN COUNCIL
2 February, 2005



Summary/Purpose

Summarise the key findings from survey results collected during the Aquatic Centre Community Consultation conducted November / December 2004.

Report

Introduction

Over the four-week period of Monday 15th November to Friday 10th December 2004, Dalby Town Council invited the community to participate in the planning of a new aquatic centre for Dalby and District with the distribution of a community information paper and feedback form.

This information kit was designed and released after consultation with a range of key stakeholders including Dalby and District Swimming Club, current pool manager, representatives from local schools, PCYC committee, Dalby Race Club, Dalby Tourist Park and Wambo Shire.

Approximately 1400 information kits were distributed to a total of 90 user groups including local schools, sporting clubs and community organisations. Public notices and media releases also promoted the availability of information kits from the swimming pool, both local councils and on-line at www.dalby.qld.gov.au.

In total 274 respondents participated in the community survey, resulting in an overall response rate of almost 20%, which is representative of over 2.5% of Dalby's population. *(An additional nine surveys have been received after data collation and therefore are not included in this report.)*

A smaller version of the survey designed for use by visitors to Dalby was also sent to all 16 of Dalby's hotels, motels and caravan parks as well as to the Visitor Information Centre. Of the 500 surveys distributed 4 were returned. Due to this poor response the results are deemed inconclusive and have not been included in this report.

Survey Sample

Age

The majority of the survey respondents were aged between 26 and 55 years of age. With 40% of aged between 36 and 55 years and 26% aged between 26 and 35 years. 20% of respondents were aged under 26 years and the remaining 14% of the group aged over 55.

Dalby Town Council
Cultural & Administration Centre
107 Drayton Street PO Box 551
Dalby Qld 4405

Phone: 4660 6100 Fax: 4660 6199
Email: info@dalby.qld.gov.au Website: www.dalby.qld.gov.au

Family Status

With the majority of respondents aged between 26 and 55 years it is not surprising that also 60% of respondents had children. 66% of this group's children were aged 0 - 12 years, while 23% were aged between 13 and 18 years.

Home Address

The clear majority of the sample group lived in Dalby town (81%), while 18% resided in the Wambo shire. Three of the respondents stated addresses outside the district, these being Toowoomba, Bongeen and the Warrego Highway.

Current Pool Use

While just over half of the respondents (55%) stated that they visited the Dalby swimming pool on a 'regular basis', only 20% currently held a season pass.

Summary of Key Findings

Strong support for the development of a new aquatic centre for Dalby and District was felt from the survey with 96% of respondents in favour of the proposed project. The remaining 4% were either against the project or unsure of their support.

The majority of non-supporters were aged either over 55 years or under 18 years.

Aquatic Centre Facilities

When asked what elements respondents felt should be included in the facility the following items were perceived as either the most or very important:

1.	Toilets/Change Rooms	98%
2.	Indoor 25-metre heated 10-lane lap pool	85%
3.	Enclosed heated learn to swim and hydrotherapy pool	84%
4.	Outdoor family recreation / activities pool	79%
5.	Administration / café building	75%
6.	Picnic / BBQ Areas	65%
7.	Playground facilities	58%
8.	Gym / Fitness facility	57%
9.	Water Slides	52%
10.	Hot Artesian Springs	50%
11.	Landscaped Parkland	47%
12.	Private health / treatment rooms	34%

Alternatively respondents felt the following elements were either the least or not very important:

1.	Private health / treatment rooms	42%
2.	Hot Artesian Springs	28%
3.	Gym / Fitness facility	26%
4.	Landscaped Parkland	25%
5.	Water Slides	24%

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There was some variance between age groups to the overall results above. For example, the hot artesian springs received very strong support from respondents aged either under 18 years or over 36 years.

The majority of the under 18 years sector also gave support to the private health / treatment rooms, which were also very popular with respondents over 55 year olds.

A gym / fitness facility received the most support from respondents aged under 25, with the majority of this group rating it as the most or very important element.

Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents aged under 18 years rated water slides as the most important element to be included in the aquatic centre.

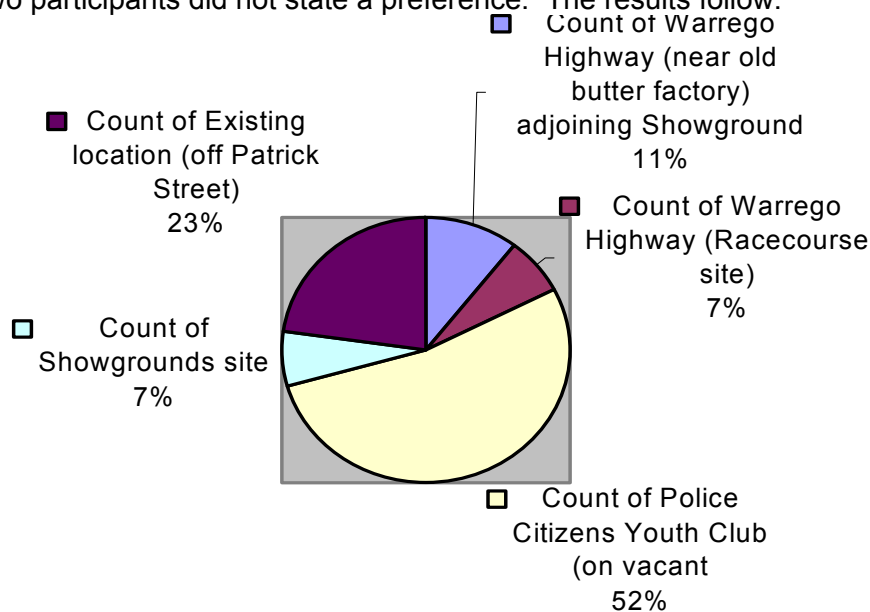
The survey also gave respondents the opportunity to give their ideas and make comment on the list of facilities to be included in the Aquatic Centre. Of the 55 additional comments received, 26 specifically requested the inclusion of a 50 metre outside pool.

Other suggestions received included:

- Multi-purpose 50 metre pool incorporating lap pool and recreational areas
- A non-heated lap pool for summer months
- Wave Pool
- Beach Volleyball
- Lifeguards
- Tourist park style facility - crèche, rock climbing, recreational lake, golf driving range, retail outlet

Proposed Location

Respondents were asked if they had a preference for the location of the pool facility, only two participants did not state a preference. The results follow:



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There was some variance between age groups on the topic of location with the PCYC receiving the majority of preferences from respondents aged under 35.

The PCYC was also preferred by the majority of respondent's aged 36-55, however this group also gave strong support to the existing location and the Warrego Highway (old butter factory site).

The majority of respondents over 55 years preferred the existing site, but also lent strong support to the PCYC.

Considerable additional comment was received in relation to the proposed location. The bulk of the comment was in support of the PCYC, followed by support for the existing location.

Suggested considerations for Council in the relation to a location included flooding, car parking, safe access for school children, wheel chair access, access by tourists, access to artesian water and proximity to central business district.

Additional suggested locations included:

- Drayton Street next to Council's administration building
- South East or South West corner of Thomas Jack Park
- Next to the Dog Bowl
- Near cricket ground and football fields

Usage of Facility

Survey respondents were asked to nominate what they would use the aquatic centre facility for and ranked the nine options given in the following order:

1.	Swimming for leisure	20.2%
2.	Swimming for fitness	19.9%
3.	Picnics / BBQ's, family outings	13.0%
4.	Aqua-aerobics / fitness classes	12.0%
5.	Learn to swim classes (children)	11.5%
6.	Hydrotherapy (health, treatment and/or rehabilitation)	10.3%
7.	Swimming training for competition purposes	5.0%
8.	Organised team sport - such as water polo	4.7%
9.	Learn to swim classes (adult)	3.4%

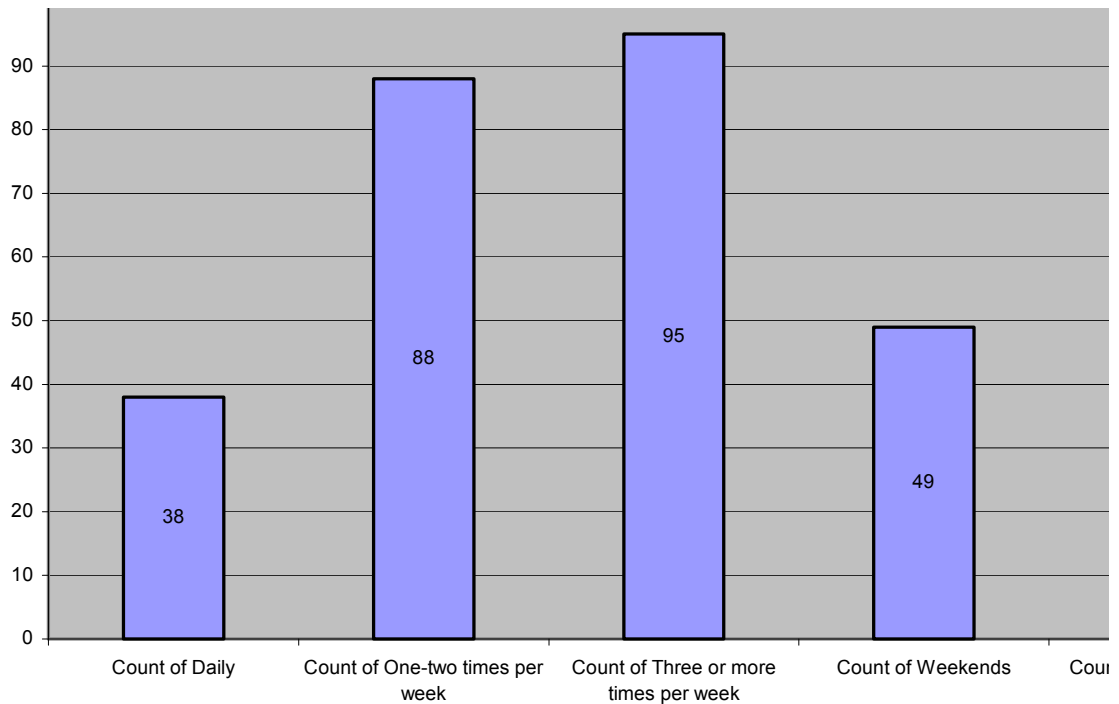
The above usage trend from the overall sample group remained fairly consistent among the varying age groups. The only obvious variance being that respondents aged over 55 years ranked Hydrotherapy as their second most popular use.

Frequency of Use

When asked how often respondents and their families would use the aquatic centre, over 60% indicated at least once a week up to three or more times a week. Full results shown below:

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In addition, the vast majority of respondents (97%) indicated that they would use the facility outside the summer months if it incorporated a heated indoor pool.

Additional Comments

The final survey question gave respondents the opportunity to give additional feedback, which the majority did. Several respondents even went so far as to submit letters, proposed designs, photos and one local contracting and consultancy business submitted a detailed consultancy brief for the project.

A summary of comments consistency made by respondents are listed below:

- General support for the project - "Will be great for Dalby and District"
 - Retain a 50 metre pool
 - The health benefits and perceived use of a hydrotherapy pool, saving residents trips to Toowoomba
 - Support for locating the centre at the PCYC.
 - Support for locating the centre at the existing site
 - Possibility of using some of the infrastructure at existing site, coupled with refurbishment and extensions.
 - Benefits for local youth and schools (Special Education Services)
 - Positives of centre for local tourism (Hot Artesian Springs/Bore Baths)
 - Concern over the cost of entry and requests to keep entry fees low/reasonable.
- Concerns over the safety of children if centre located on Warrego highway

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The following existing aquatic facilities proved popular amongst respondents:

- Milne Bay (With the exception that the 25 metre pool be extended to 50 metres to give more room to accommodate both lap swimmers and recreational activities.)
- Chinchilla swimming pool (50m outdoor, 25m indoor, gym and admin)
- Bribie Island Swimming Complex (All pools with ramp access)
- Stanthorpe complex (incorporates YMCA)
- Indoor heated pool at Highfields

Conclusion

Overall the feedback received from the sample group was positive and has provided Council with valuable information. The entire database of survey results and the accompanying information collected from respondents will now be passed to the consultant engaged in stages four and five of the project, namely concept design and feasibility studies.

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