



GRENFELL POOL AMENITIES FACT SHEET

Securing the Future and of the Weddin Shire

Background

The Weddin Shire Council is committed to maintaining a vibrant Weddin Shire community. To do this, Council needs to continue to provide services and community amenity that meet the needs of our villages and towns.

Grenfell's public swimming pool reached the end of its useful life due to unrecoverable and significant maintenance issues, water leakages and associated health risks. The pool and the amenities continually leaked, ultimately the pool required new pipes to be installed to collect lost water from surrounding soil to be treated and recycled. The filtration and pump systems struggled, and the pool was regularly closed by NSW Health. Weddin Shire Council was faced with a decision: modify, upgrade or decommission (replace or dispose of) the community pool.

Following investigation of the alternatives and consultation with the Weddin Shire community (which included community support of higher rates in order to deliver a new facility) the decision has been made to renew the Weddin aquatic facility and its ancillary amenities. Importantly a new modern aquatic facility will overcome the problems of the old facility that had poor access, significant maintenance issues, water leakages and associated health risks.

Given the failure of the old facility the community had little choice but to urgently replace the pool, but had insufficient funds to replace the amenities. As a small rural council, Weddin Shire Council was unable to fund such a significant project without increased income and grants. While a 25% increase in rates provided capacity to enliven the aquatic centre project the resources were only able to fund the pools. No submissions opposed the increase, demonstrating the strength of local commitment. Grants would be needed to complete the amenities.

The construction of a new 6-lane, 50-metre lap pool along with a separate activities pool is nearing completion at a cost of \$4 million funded by external borrowings. Whilst investigations into the retention of the existing amenities were carried out all pre-existing buildings on the site had to be demolished due to structural issues and to facilitate the construction of the water bodies. This has meant the existing amenities have to be replaced with temporary demountables until funding is found to construct permanent ancillary amenities to ensure an overall accessible aquatic and fitness centre.

The ancillary amenities will include a kiosk, office area, first-aid room, club/community meeting room, increased storage, air-conditioning, disability accessible toilets and change rooms; male and female toilets and change rooms; and, the provision for additional shaded areas as well as some landscaping.

Residents of the Weddin Shire have limited recreational and social connectedness opportunities. Those residents who require accessible aquatic facilities currently have to travel to alternate facilities in surrounding towns. With no access to public transport the necessity to travel to access services adds to the living cost of low skilled and disadvantaged residents and results in economic leakage in a rural community that can ill afford it.

Failure to address community amenity threatens the very future of the community, potentially increasing social dislocation in the district and jeopardises the economic contribution it makes to the region, to NSW and to the Commonwealth.

Weddin is categorised as disadvantaged on the SEIFA index having high levels of disadvantage which Weddin Shire Council has determined to address so that the community can retain labour (through capacity building) and attract skills to build economic and social infrastructure. Weddin LGA also has higher health risks than the NSW average when benchmarked against 100 in four key areas: body mass attributions (135.7); smoking related (104.8); alcohol attributed (114.5) and ambulatory care (107.8).

The ancillary amenities constructed next to the new pool are essential.

Demonstrated need

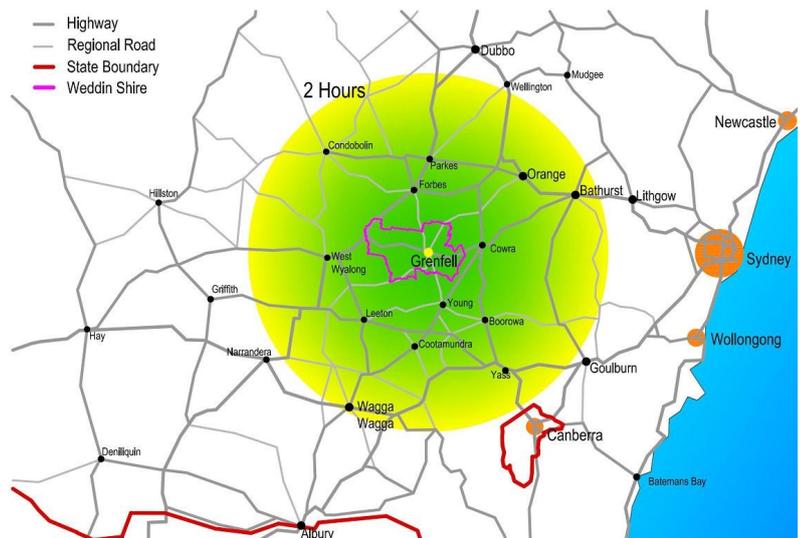
The importance of providing accessible fit for purpose amenities at the Grenfell Aquatic Centre of which the community can be proud cannot be overstated:

- Community amenities such as the Grenfell Aquatic Centre are **critical to retention and attraction of population and skills** that underpin the viability of the local economy
- Access to community facilities that provide affordable connectedness are **critical to building community capacity** in a disadvantaged community.
- **The temporary demountable facilities will not be accessible.** The Weddin Shire has an ageing population currently well above the State average. By 2031, the number of persons aged over 70 years will increase by 26.5%. Providing accessible amenities is not just a necessity it is critical to meeting future demand.
- Sport plays an important role in rural, regional and remote Australia. **Sport has been found to contribute to community identity, sense of place, social interaction [Tonts and Atherley 2010; Spaaij 2009] and improved health [Townsend 2002].**
- **Learning to swim is an important life skill** not to be ignored.
- Review of Sport and Recreation in Regional Western Australia by Watson P, Perth, Western Australian Government (2008) found that "**sport and recreation are inextricably linked to the notion of 'community sustainability'**". Sport and recreation was also identified as important in regional communities in promoting participation and in building capacity.

Vital community infrastructure—Lifelong learning—
School swimming carnival— courtesy Grenfell Public
School



Large distance to alternate accessible facilities:



Benefits the new amenities will deliver

The project is shovel ready...

1. To ensure effective disability access:

The new water bodies have accessibility ramps [Complete].

Upgraded ancillary amenities still required to support increased use of the facility by the aged and ensure access and equity

2. To provide a facility that is safe and promotes a healthy outcome:

Upgraded ancillary amenities that better meet public safety guidelines and provide enhanced opportunities for adopting active, healthy lifestyles.

Work toward meeting the NSW State Plan objective of reducing childhood obesity

3. To ensure all community members have access to learn to swim:

The ancillary amenities support the 'learn to swim' needs of the community by providing change rooms, ancillary facilities and club room for instruction and staff planning.

4. Ensure a diverse range of the community has ongoing access by:

Elimination of steps into all the demountable facilities.

By replacing temporary demountables, access will be provided across a level area between all ancillary amenities.

By providing off season direct access to community groups for fitness programmes and other community activity.

5. Improve recreational activity selection in Weddin Shire:

The Centre is located next to a skate park and provides the only accessible free play space for younger active children and teenagers in Grenfell.

The Centre is also located next to a bowling green and provides a water activity centre close by for partners of bowlers.

Ensure that base community amenities are of a high quality and to continue to attract labour to support the agricultural and growing aged care sectors.

6. Meet community expectation for more effective aquatic activity:

The demountables do not meet community expectations in the medium- to long-term.

The leased and second-hand demountables are removed and replaced with facilities that meet the target age groups' needs.

7. Better meet the fitness needs of tourists:

In particular, primary target 'grey nomads' and those who have ongoing exercise needs, when they travel to lower cost 'bush' towns such as Grenfell.

Meet the experience needs of travellers during hot summers.

8. Resolve the maintenance and ongoing deterioration of the ancillary amenities and resolve the temporary solution of demountables into the future.



ELEVATION AMENITIES LOOKING SOUTH