

National Aquatic Facilities Strategy

2023



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Disclaimer

In preparing this strategy it has been necessary to make a number of assumptions on the basis of the information supplied to Global Leisure Group Limited in the course of investigations for this strategy. The recommended actions contained in this strategy are subject to uncertainty and variation depending on evolving events but have been conscientiously prepared based on consultation feedback and an understanding of trends in facility provision.

The authors did not carry out an audit or verification of the information supplied during the preparation of this strategy, unless otherwise stated in the strategy. While due care was taken during enquiries, Global Leisure Group Limited does not take any responsibility for any errors nor mis-statements in the strategy arising from information supplied to the authors during the preparation of this strategy.

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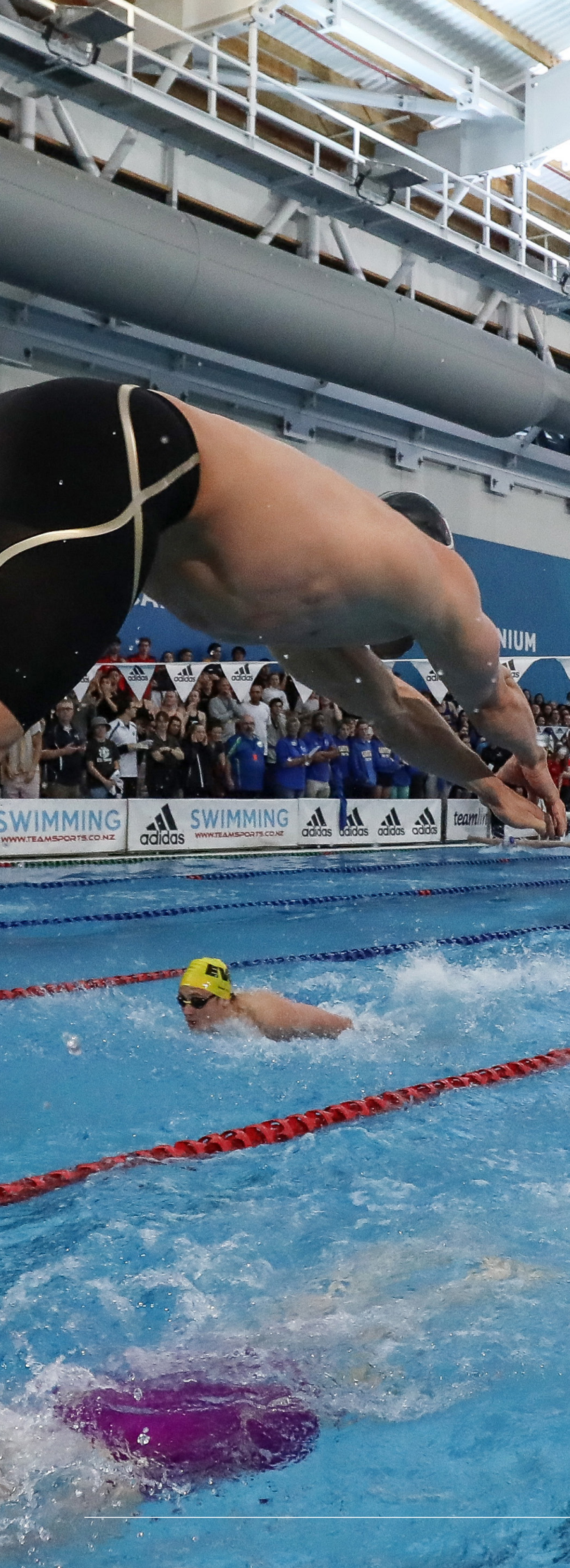
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1. Foreword

Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa (Sport NZ) aims to inspire New Zealanders to develop a lifelong love of play, active recreation, and sport. Above all, we want to see 'Every Body Active' and having access to a great network of community, school, and privately run swimming pools gives the opportunity to be active, get fit, improve swimming competence, relax, socialise, and have fun in a safe aquatic environment.

We have opportunities to improve the accessibility, inclusiveness and environmental sustainability, and the fit-for purpose nature of our aquatic facilities across the country, while recognising we are operating in a tight fiscal environment especially for local government as a core provider and funder of aquatic facilities.

The 2023 National Aquatics Facilities Strategy represents a significant step forward in providing guidance for planning and investing in aquatic facilities across Aotearoa New Zealand which are appropriately scaled and best located to meet the needs of all stakeholders and participants. There is also a deliberate need for collaboration and partnership in the way forward to make the most of the opportunities we may have to improve and expand our aquatic facility network.

Sport NZ contracted Global Leisure Group (GLG) to develop the 2023 National Aquatics Facilities Strategy, building off the base of the previous strategy developed in 2013. I would like to acknowledge and thank them and the Project Steering Group who have provided invaluable support and expert reference for GLG in preparing this strategy.

Glenn McGovern

Manager Spaces and Places, Sport NZ

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

Aquatic facilities perform a critical role in our communities by providing safe and fun environments to participate in a range of aquatic activities, increase aquatic competence and improve individual and community health and wellbeing. Whilst aquatic facility provision is a significant financial commitment, recent Sport NZ research has determined that overall sport and physical activity provides \$2.12 of social return for every \$1 spent and aquatic facilities contributes to this.

This strategy sets the direction of change to inform investment into the Aotearoa New Zealand aquatic facility network. It provides guidance on what is required to transition and transform our current and future aquatic network to best meet community need.

The strategy has been informed by an analysis of aquatic facilities supply and demand, and detailed research. Insights have been provided by a wide spectrum of the aquatic sector stakeholders from Territorial Authority's (TA's), National Sports Organisations (NSOs) – traditional and emerging, Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs), aquatic facility operators, the Ministry of Education (MoE), and others.

2.2 Current situation

The aquatics sector is facing ever increasing pressures:

- maintaining an existing, and aging network of aquatic facilities
- meeting increasing demand from a growing, diversifying, and aging population
- adapting to the changing needs within the community
- competing demand for water space allocation at peak times
- the escalating cost of provision, both capital and operational
- adapting to climatic change and improving environmental sustainability.

In 2023 there were a total of 2,301 pools (339,430m²) identified in Aotearoa New Zealand, of which 1,195 (125,570m²) are school pools. A critical factor is that 50% of the current facilities are over 50 years old.

There has been an evident change in the past 10 years in what aquatic recreation activities people participate in and how they are physically active - with growth in more casually and socially based aquatic play and recreation. The increasing

national drowning rates suggest that water safety skills and aquatic competence across the country require improvement.

2.3 Future considerations

The planning period for this Strategy is 15 years to 2038. In that time period in Aotearoa New Zealand the following changes are forecast:

- The resident population is projected to grow from 5,127,900 in 2022 to 5,876,400.
- The 65+ years age group is projected to keep increasing and to reach 22 percent of the population.
- The population of tamariki (age 5 to 12 years old) and rangatahi (age 12 to 17 years old) is projected to remain unchanged.
- If the 24% of the population that identified as disabled in 2013 remains constant then the numbers of disabled people will increase consistent with population growth.
- Growing ethnic diversity is projected within our population overall.

These influences will drive a shift to cater more to the aging population, disabled people, Māori and those of Asian ethnicity in particular.

2.4 This document

The goal of this strategy and [supporting document](#) is to inform the organisations that contribute to the network provision of aquatic facilities (TAs, educational institutes, and others) with the following information to help them to make good evidence-based investment decisions:

- What aquatic facilities are currently available and where they are?
- What needs do the current aquatic facilities fulfil?
- What are the current aquatic facility needs of our communities?
- How the current aquatic facility needs will track in the near future – out to 2038.
- Who to involve in the process.
- Insights on quality aquatic facility planning practice.

2.5 Why facility planning is important

Good facility planning is vital because the investment in building, maintaining and supporting aquatic facilities needs to represent the best use of resources to meet the needs of the communities they serve. It is also important that facilities that are built are fit for the purpose for their intended uses and to optimise use.

2.6 Updated guidance

This strategy provides updated guidance to assist in the development of a transformed network of aquatic facilities that are:

- appropriately scaled
- more financially and environmentally sustainable
- universally accessible
- best located and designed to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

2.7 Key concepts

This strategy includes two major concepts in analysing supply and demand:

1. **Pool availability** is measured as a full time equivalent (FTE). Not all water space is available to communities to use all of a facility's opening hours. For example, a facility which is fully available for community aquatic activity or access during early morning to late evening opening hours is assessed as 1 FTE, whereas a facility that was developed primarily for delivering learn to swim classes and is not open outside class times is assessed as 0.5 FTE.
2. **Aquatic demand**
 - A benchmark of providing a minimum of 27m² of aquatic space per 1,000 population.
 - The type of facility use is under three broad categories:
 - fitness/health/lane sports/deep water sports
 - aquatic competence (water safety skills and learn to swim)
 - leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access.

2.8 FTE shortfall

Nationally, to meet demand, the total of water space available for community access would need to increase by 16% by 2038 to meet forecasted demand:

In 2023 there was 130,340m²

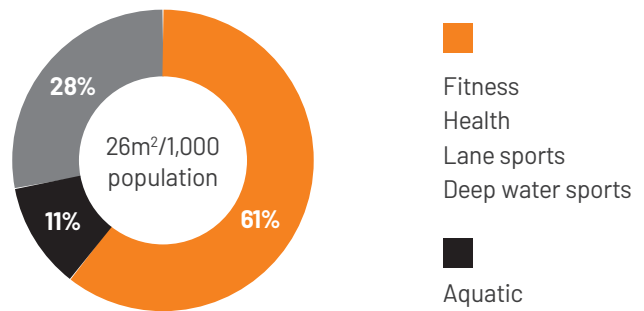
In 2038 the country will require 151,626m²

There are regional variances with some regions needing to increase their available space significantly (Auckland by 44% and Northland 37%). Planning must begin now, or some regions will not be able to meet the demand for pool water space.

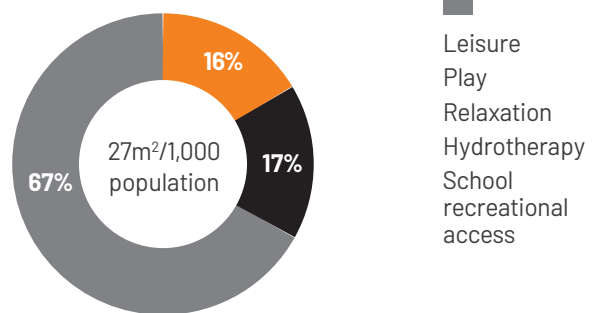
2.9 Type of water shortfall

Nationally, evidence indicates the critical shortfall in supply is at the community level for **leisure, play, relaxation, hydrotherapy and school recreational access**. There is also a shortfall in aquatic competence pools.

National Aquatic Supply (2023)



National Aquatic Demand (2023)



There are not enough fit for purpose aquatic facilities to meet the demands of the leisure and play participant now and in the foreseeable future, particularly if we use a traditional view of what is a suitable pool. More pool water space is required for aquatic competence development (learn to swim, water safety) development as a transgenerational investment in reducing deaths from drowning.

In general, aquatic sports and lane swimming is adequately supplied, acknowledging the pressures on lane space at peak times (including on 2m deep indoor water spaces use for some aquatic sports and indoor dive pools).

There is no evident need for more major event pools, particularly 50m pools. Any end-of-life 50m pool requires localised analysis and planning to determine if it should be replaced like for like or by an alternative type or mix of pools to better meet community need.

2.10 Regional and national facilities

There are sufficient regional, national and international level facilities for the supply of aquatic events, with Parakiore in Christchurch opening in 2025. However, securing access for the full calendar of competition events is a challenge for some sports. This requires a management response to prioritise access to suitable facilities and to ensure that they are affordable for sports, thus negating the need for more facilities. Also of note is that no facility is event ready for a major international competition (with the exception of Water Polo which held World Cups in 2010 and 2015). Should Aotearoa New Zealand secure one of these events, then temporary infrastructure would be required to supplement existing national aquatic facilities.

2.11 Where do we want to be?

Better planning of aquatic facilities means more robust decision-making about investment into fit-for-purpose facilities, best use of finite resources, operational efficiencies, and ultimately enhanced wellbeing through increased participation in aquatic activities. We need to transition to:

- Working in partnership with mana whenua and growing authentic relationships.
- Using/adapting what aquatic facilities we already have, and looking to the school and private network to assist with facility provision.
- More environmentally sustainable facility development and operations.
- A participant centred approach, co-designing facilities with key user groups, stakeholders, and operators (including the recreational and/or non-user).
- Avoiding pitfalls of underfunding, poor design concepts and incorrect specifications that lead to facilities not being fit for their intended purposes.

2.12 Key shifts – how we get there

- a. Take a network approach to detailed regional/local analysis using the current supply and demand indicators to ensure the right mix of aquatic facilities is provided – redressing the imbalance in pool water type to meet the demand identified. Specific geographic and climatic conditions are a key local issue to address any imbalances in provision.
- b. Provide a minimum of 27m² of aquatic space per 1,000 population when the balance of pool water space type is achieved.

- c. Focus aquatic facility planning on meeting the local community need.
- d. Prioritise improving access to existing facilities first before redeveloping or building new.
- e. Apply the New Zealand Spaces and Places Framework guiding planning principles when undertaking aquatic facility network or project planning:
 - a Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed approach
 - meeting an identified need
 - co-design
 - inclusive and accessible
 - environmental and financial sustainability
 - partnering/collaboration
 - connected and future proofed facilities.

Consider having Sport NZ/Recreation Aotearoa conduct a peer review of the planning outcomes and facility design.

- f. Improve management approaches to maximise the use of existing facilities and reallocate some activities to other water spaces.
- g. Continue to improve planning and facility audit data by:
 - identifying community access levels
 - improving the facility audit data (water depth, temperature, heating system)
 - monitoring and recording activity participation levels and demand.

2.13 Conclusion

The investment required to build new aquatic facilities to redress the imbalance and shortfalls in some regions across the country is significant. With TAs coming under increasing financial constraints, a more flexible/lateral approach is required. We have a large network of pools in our communities, districts, cities and regions, and these are mostly outdoor seasonal pools, many of which are located at schools. If we can increase the availability of suitable school pools, and appropriate other outdoor seasonal pools, by upgrading key sites for year round use, with appropriate amenities, we could reduce the shortfall and support achieving the right balance to meet demand.

The priority and focus over the 15 years this strategy covers will be on increasing the supply at the community level through facilities that are more participant centred, inclusive, environmentally sustainable, affordable, and, critically, more accessible for aquatic play and recreation.

3. Introduction

Aquatic facilities perform a critical role in our communities by providing safe and fun environments to participate in a range of aquatic activities, increase aquatic competence and improve individual and community health and wellbeing.

This strategy sets the direction of change to inform investment into our aquatic facility network. It provides guidance on what is required to transition and transform our current aquatic infrastructure to best meet community need.

The first National Aquatic Facilities Strategy was developed in 2013 and was recognised as a single point of reference for aquatic facility planning in Aotearoa New Zealand. This strategy builds on the 2013 strategy, considering the physical activity, social and wider health and well-being benefits from aquatic participation, reflective of the worldwide trend towards appreciating leisure facilities as active recreation and wellness centres and not just sport facilities.

In the context of New Zealand with so much access to natural bodies of water - lakes, harbours, rivers and oceans, aquatic competence has greater focus in this revised strategy. New Zealand has a high drowning rate (94 deaths in 2023, 12 fatalities above the 2013-2022 10-year average of 82), compared to other western nations such as Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Access to safe aquatic environments to recreate and develop the skills for less controlled water experiences is of high importance to our community.

This strategy considers the type and availability of aquatic provision to encourage a more nuanced approach to the planning and provision of aquatic facilities. It has analysed the network of aquatic facilities including council facilities,

school pools, and private pool facilities, capturing private swim schools, trust/community owned and operated pools, commercial hot pools/spas, retirement village pools and any other pool facilities that serve the needs of the communities we live in.

Through detailed data analysis and demand modelling using a range of validated data sources, a demand benchmark is established that captures pool area and proportionality by water type.

With the current state (2023) known and demand profile determined, future planning decisions can be informed by how the network should evolve to meet the demand of our communities.

Much progress has been made to make better decisions on investing in aquatic facilities over the past ten years, with better upfront planning and demonstrating evidence for need. However, it is clear that further guidance is required to ensure networks of aquatic facilities can address current and new challenges and respond to emerging trends.

This document is not a complete facility network plan for the country. Regional and city/district planning is still required and this strategy provides guidance for those completing more localised planning.

This updated strategy takes a leap forward in addressing the need for up-to-date guidance.



3.1 Why is this strategy needed?

The aquatics sector is facing ever increasing challenges in maintaining the existing network of provision and meeting population driven demand and the changing needs within the community. There has been an evident change in the past 10 years in what people do and how they are physically active. It has seen the growth of more casually and socially based aquatic play and recreation, and a slight decline in competitive sport overall.

It is more important than ever with the challenges the sector is facing that there is updated guidance to assist developing a network of aquatic facilities that are appropriately scaled, environmentally and financially more sustainable, universally accessible and best located to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

This strategy is crucial to guide TAs (or other bodies) when considering their aquatic facility network and/or an aquatic facility build to develop a strategy that maximises value to meet the greatest areas of need.

3.1.1 The aquatic facility provision challenges Aotearoa New Zealand is facing are:

Evolving expectations on pool facilities

As communities diversify so do their physical activity preferences. Customer expectations are also on the rise, all leading to demand for higher quality, more accessible and inclusive facilities with more whānau centric play and leisure facilities – in addition to traditional lap pools.

Growing population

As populations grow, more people mean increasing demand for aquatic provision, particularly in urban centres and new settlements.

Aging and outdated network

50% of aquatic facilities are over 50 years old. Many facilities in the network are not truly accessible, inclusive or meet the varied aquatic needs of their community. They require investment to be more sustainable and make use of technological advances.

Impact of weather events

Weather events are threatening the viability of poorly located and designed facilities.

Cost of provision (capital and operational)

Building new aquatic facilities is expensive and covering operating costs (heating, treating, and supervising) is increasingly challenging. Only a small number of facilities make sufficient revenue to cover their operating cost and very few to cover their depreciation and renewal costs.

Local government as a main provider of facilities are coming under increasing financial constraints.

Cost of access

The increasing cost of provision is flowing on to affect the user, limiting the aquatic opportunities for an increasing proportion of the population and constraining sport use. It is becoming increasingly expensive for aquatic sports both at an event level and for weekly training, limiting growth of their sports.

The push for greater environmental sustainability

Climate change and new building regulations mean there is greater emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. There is increasing need to look at optimising and reusing first before redeveloping or building new facilities.

Aquatic facilities are high consumers of water and energy, and often have a high carbon footprint. Approaches are required to ensure the efficient use of resources to improve environmental sustainability while also leading to long term cost savings.



3.1.2 Impact of better planning

Better planning for aquatic facilities has a wide-ranging impact on resource efficiency, operational effectiveness and ultimately supporting active, happier, healthier communities whose wellbeing is enhanced by participation in aquatic activities.

What it could look like if we don't plan effectively:

More of the same types of facilities and pool types serving a decreasing proportion of the population.



What it could look like if we get it right:

A complementary and responsive network of aquatic facilities with a mix of water types that are located within 80% of the catchment population's travel time expectation.

Decreasing aquatic competence within the population leading to increased drowning rates.



Localised opportunities for aquatic competence of varying depths, ensuring a high level of water safety and swimming capability of tamariki throughout the country.

Underutilised facilities that are expensive to operate because they are not responsive to community needs.



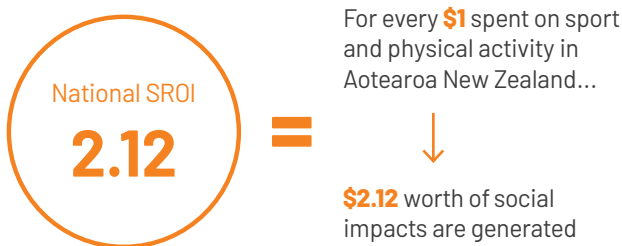
More sustainable, safe, well-used, fit-for purpose facilities in the right location, operating efficiently, and taking account of whole of life impact on communities and the environment (taiao).

3.2 Why invest in aquatic facilities

The central government adoption of a wellbeing approach has had very significant implications for the play, active recreation, and sport sector. Pools are wellness facilities and are a crucial and inclusive well-being generator for local communities. Sport NZ estimates that overall for every \$1 spent on sport and physical activity \$2.12 of social return is generated and aquatic facilities contributes to this.

Figure 1 – Social return on investment

Recreational physical activity generates significant value for society.



Investment in appropriate facilities in the right locations will enable improved physical activity levels and improve the quality of the participant experience leading to increased utilisation and sustainability of facilities. This will deliver benefits to local communities¹:

- increased social connectedness
- improved health and social wellbeing
- increased cultural identity/ūkaipōtanga
- improved environmental quality.

Water-based recreation makes a particularly significant contribution to Māori wellbeing through strengthening intergenerational relationships and reinforcing cultural values, beliefs, social norms, and knowledge.

Added to the positive social outcomes, pool facilities contribute to the economy through employment of the workforce and purchasing of goods and services from ancillary industries to support the operations of aquatic facilities.

In 2017 research showed that the economic value of the wider sport and recreation sector is estimated at \$4.9 billion per annum, which equates to a 2.3 percent contribution to our GDP.

In most cases pool facilities are not built as financial investments. They are costly to construct and operate. Those that are not private commercial facilities (swim schools and tourist spas) will operate at a financial loss. A common level of operational contribution across council facilities in New Zealand is 70% of operational costs². Therefore, the return on investment for most pool facilities is not driven by financial returns but by wellbeing returns.

For further information see the [supporting document](#).

1 Sport New Zealand Outcomes Framework

2 Excluding significant repair and renewals, interest and depreciation and organisational overheads.

3.3 Aquatic facility planning

Changes in the planning approach since 2013

Since 2013 there has been a range of changes in the overall planning approach that are reinforced in this 2023 strategy. These include:

Improved facility information – supply

The Sport NZ Facility Planning Tool (FPT) now holds significantly more detail of facilities and improved levels of information on each facility.

Increased understanding of type and purpose

There is a greater understanding of types of water spaces and how water can be used for a wide range of aquatic play, recreation, health, and wellbeing pursuits.

Layered levels of planning

Regional spaces and places and aquatic facility plans have become more common which then further guide city/district level plans. The value the user or potential user can add to the planning process has also become more widely understood.

Increased desire for improved planning guidance

Stakeholders wish to ensure appropriate investment decisions are made to avoid duplication and to meet the identified demand as established through good planning practice.

Evidence-based approach to prove need

Much more focus has been put on providing evidence to underpin the identified need. In the past aquatic facility projects were often driven by a select interest group(s), and the proposed facility solution was developed with limited evidence of serving the overall community demand. This has become more important as the cost of development and provision continues to increase.



4. Trends: Looking to the Future

4.1 A changing population

The resident population in Aotearoa New Zealand is projected to continue to grow out to 2038. This growth will drive additional demand.

4.1.1 Demographic trends

Table 1 – Demographic trends

	2013	2022	2038 forecast
NZ Total Population	4,442,100 ³	5,127,900	5,876,400
Rangatahi and Tamariki ⁴	846,190 ⁵ (19.0%)	915,840 (17.8%)	813,060 (13.8%)
Aged 65+	626,000 ⁶ (14.1%)	868,700 (16.9%)	1,302,000 (22.2%)
European or Other (including New Zealander)	75%	69%	65%
Māori	14%	17%	20%
Asian	9%	18%	24%
Pacific	9%	9%	10%



The most recent published statistics from the Statistics New Zealand 2013 Disability Survey⁷ identified that 1.1 million people identified as disabled (24%).

The most significant change since the last National Aquatic Facilities Strategy in 2013 is the increase in the over 65 years old age group and increasing ethnic diversity. The 65+ years age group is projected to keep increasing over the 15-year period of this strategy as is the growing ethnic diversity within our population overall. This will drive a shift to cater more specifically to the aging population, Māori and those of Asian ethnicity in particular.

Age profile considerations

Older adults increase the demand on health and relaxation water spaces. The 2001 Census found 1 in 8 residents was 65+, in 2022 it was estimated at 1 in 6, it is projected by 2028 to be 1 in 5. In some areas of the country over the next 20–30 years this will approach 1 in 3.

Children are the biggest aquatic users primarily for learning and play. From 2023 to 2038 the number of young people will remain at a similar level.

³ NZ Statistics Estimated Resident Population 2013

⁴ Tamariki are aged between 5 and 11 years old, Rangitahi are aged between 12 and 17

⁵ NZ Statistics Estimated Resident Population 2013

⁶ NZ Statistics Estimated Resident Population 2013

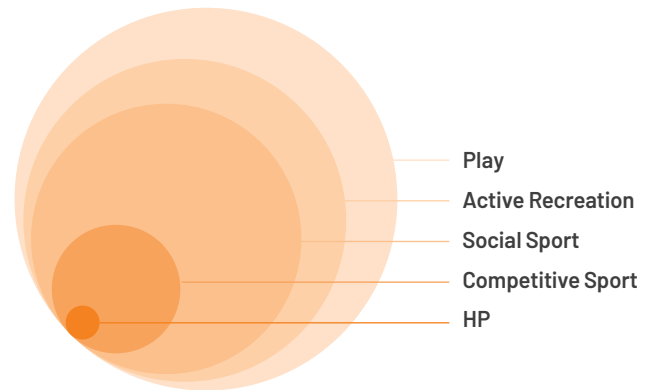
⁷ Results from the 2023 survey were not available at time of writing this strategy so trends remain unknown

4.2 Changing participation

Research tells us there has been a significant growth in active recreation type activity and a shift away from traditional competitive sport.

Figure 2 presents the nature of the motivations to participate in physical recreation and sport activities. The boundaries in the charts are not strictly defined with each of the activity areas merging into the next depending on the motivations and the participants involved. Increasingly there is a mismatch of what the participant wants versus the traditional offering from club-based sport which has driven the design of many of our aquatic facilities across Aotearoa New Zealand in the past.

Figure 2: Community activity based on the motivations of the participant



These changing participation trends are highlighted through the Active NZ survey data that indicates the different participation in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities. In 2022 it can be seen that 60%+ of all participants were involved in non-competitive activities only.

Figure 3: Young People - Participation in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities in the last seven days

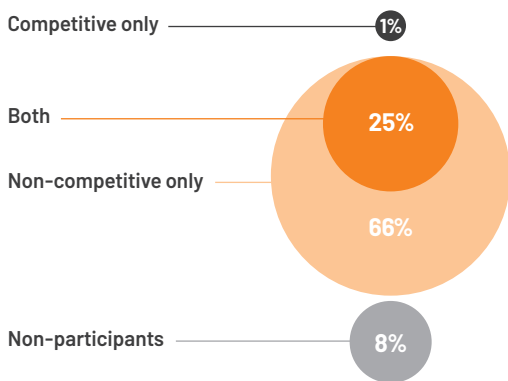
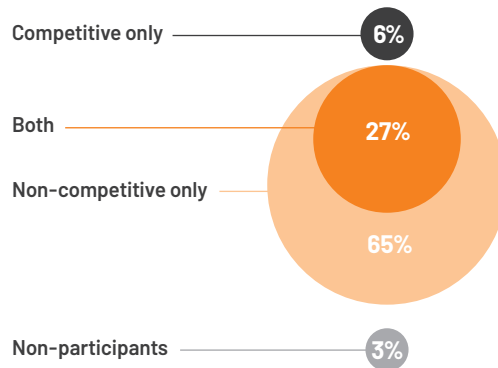


Figure 4: Adults - Participation in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities in the last twelve months



4.2.1 Aquatic participation trends

Sport NZ's Active NZ survey provides a high-level indication of aquatic activity trends⁸.

Table 2 - Swimming participation (2017 - 2022)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Aquatic Participation in the Last 7 days (Adult) ⁹	9%	9%	9%	Data unavailable due to the Covid-19 disruption	8%	7%
Aquatic Participation in the last 7 days (Young People)	36%	35%	33%		29%	30%

The six years prior to this strategy shows a decline in swimming participation for both adults and young people. Prior to Covid-19 adult participation was stable at 9% of the population but has now dropped slightly. Since Covid-19 the percentage of young people swimming has lifted, and it would be reasonable to assume that this will be maintained and may continue to rise.

Table 3 - Aquatic participation by sub group 2022

	2022
Disabled (Young People)	23 - 25%
Non disabled Young People	34 - 35%
Disabled (Adult)	6-7%
Non disabled Adult	7-8%
	2022
NZ European	32%
Māori	30%
Pacific	21%
Asian	24%

There are also differences in participation within the different sections of the community:

- Both young people and adults that identify as disabled in the Active NZ survey have a lower participation in aquatic activities.
- The highest participation in aquatic activities is within those that identify as NZ European at 32%.
- Participation rates are lower in Māori, Pacific Island and Asian communities.

Table 4 - NZ aquatic sports code membership (2014 - 2022)

	2014	2018	2022
NZ Aquatic Sports Membership ¹⁰	37,912 (0.85% of total population)	42,248 (0.86% of total population)	37,582 (0.73% of total population)

It can be seen that membership within the aquatic sports codes in New Zealand was increasing between 2014 to 2018 however declined during Covid-19 and has not yet recovered to previous levels.

Aquatic sports report that a key factor limiting growth of their sports is access to suitable pool space during the school term to train. They are unable to change their demand profile when the majority of their participants are school aged and for some aquatic sports require access to deeper water (for example 1.8-2m deep for water polo and artistic swimming and 4m+ for diving).

⁸ The Active NZ Survey uses the term swimming and this includes all aquatic activity in all environments with pool based aquatic activity as a subset of this.

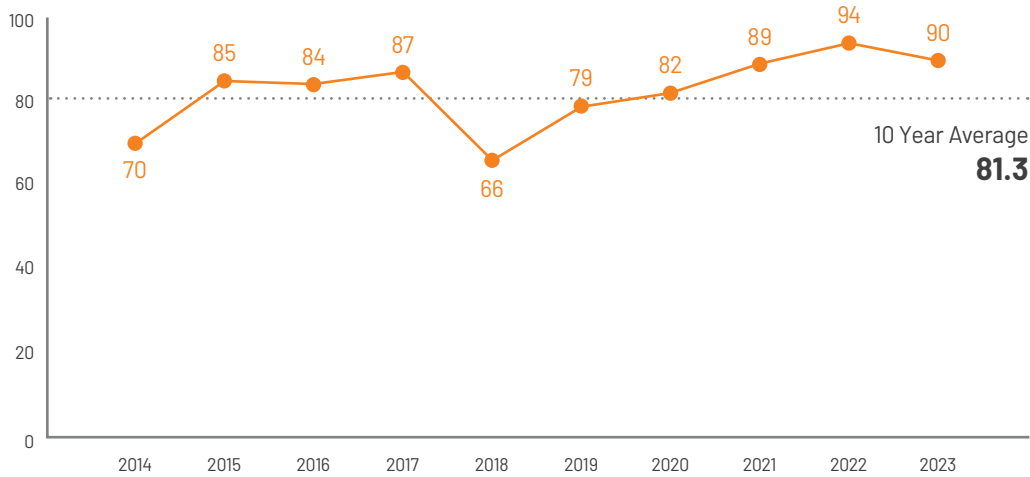
⁹ Active NZ 2022 Activities done in the last 7 days

¹⁰ New Zealand Aquatic Sport Membership (artistic swimming, surf life saving, swimming, underwater hockey and water polo) 2014, 2018 and 2022 figures (exclude diving)

4.2.2 Drowning fatality trends in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand has a poor record of drownings with 94 drowning fatalities in in 2022. The largest annual loss of life over the past decade following an increasing trend over five years¹¹. In 2023 there were 90 drowning fatalities.

Figure 5 – New Zealand drownings (2014 – 2023)



4.2.3 Latent demand

There are many factors which need to be considered when analysing population and participation changes to give an indication of latent demand for activities within a community.

Indicators of potential latent demand include:

- current facilities operating at or near capacity at peak times, constraining access
- participation levels remain at similar levels despite high levels of population growth
- higher levels of participation in school sport not reflected in the community
- new or emerging activities/sports unable to secure access to facilities
- venue bookings/programming based on historical patterns which do not reflect current demographics (for example, aging and diversifying population)
- limited range of pool water types in a catchment.

There are examples where the provision of specific types of aquatic facilities has been a catalyst for increased participation in minor/emerging sports. For example, before the Regional Aquatic Centre in Hastings was built there was no water polo in Hawke’s Bay and within a year there was a club and local competition happening.

A challenge for effective planning is to determine the latent demand for informal aquatic activity.

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4.3 Aquatic sector trends

It is important to examine the wider context and several international trends in the aquatics sector have been identified that are relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand:

Enjoying aquatic recreation is regaining importance

The individualisation of our society and new ways of working, with blurring boundaries between work and leisure, are leading to stronger on-demand activities like swimming, jogging and cycling for health and fitness.

Immersing in a lifelong healthy lifestyle

Water sports and swimming fit in perfectly with the trend of people leading more healthy lifestyles coupled with an ageing society with more active seniors.

Pool facilities are turning into 'wellness hubs'

The increasing importance of 'preventive healthcare' (including mental health/stress reduction) is encouraging holistic life-style activities.

Fun for children and families

In addition to the wellness trend, children and families are a core target group for pools to provide fun and entertainment.

Designing for inclusivity

The original concept of accessibility focused on the needs of people with visual and mobility impairments. This has expanded significantly in recent years as society becomes more inclusive. Increased awareness of community needs, and wider understanding of marginalised communities has raised the need for more inclusive facility design and operational practices. This has also been driven by demographic change, migration and increasing cultural diversity. Social sustainability and inclusion have become important goals for public leisure facilities.

Pool facilities as places for socialising

The social function of sports and leisure facilities is growing in importance. Facilities need to be multifunctional and serve as a 'social hub' for the community.

Environmental sustainability

The environmental effects of the construction and operation of aquatic facilities is better understood leading to a shift in design and operations to reduce environmental impacts.

Competing demands on public finances

The competing demands on public finances call for a prioritisation of investments. In competition for public funding, promoters of pool facilities projects must place greater emphasis on the financial cost/benefit of funding decisions along with a growing awareness of the Social Return on Investment.

Improving economics

Long-term business cases (including life-cycle costing and financing) are crucial steps towards achieving a good long-term financial outcome. Financial performance can also be improved in multi-use facilities by combining profitable life-style sports with traditionally unprofitable activities and sports, for example, adding leisure elements or a fitness club to a competition pool, or by combining pools with other non-sport municipal functions and through sustainable energy infrastructure and design.

4.4 Trend implications

- Significant population growth indicates a growth in demand for aquatic facilities however overall aquatic participation is decreasing as a percentage of the population. The net result is that there is still a need for more aquatic facility provision.
- The number of rangatahi and tamariki are projected to remain at a similar level but decreasing proportion of the population in 2038. As these age groups represent the majority of traditional club-based activity this potentially indicates limited growth in aquatic sports membership.
- Significant impact of an aging population, by 2038 the 65+ age group is projected to have increased by over 100% since 2014. An increase in the older population potentially indicates an increase in demand for warmer water spaces.
- Increasing ethnic diversity potentially indicates a decrease in overall demand but support for different types of activities and programming requirements to meet specific needs.
- National aquatic sports membership is not yet back to pre-Covid-19 levels and is decreasing as a percentage of the population.
- Increasing drowning fatality rates indicate that the water safety skills across the country require improvement and having appropriate aquatic facilities for learning is fundamental.

These trends have an impact on both the quantity of water area required and the balance of water spaces which should be considered when planning future aquatic provision. Understanding these changes at a regional/city/district level, and how they are projected to change in the future, should be considered as a base starting point for planning future aquatic provision at a more localised level. What is clear is that using the identified needs of 10 years ago is not appropriate as it does not fully reflect the current needs, and even less so the future needs.

5. Guiding Principles for this Strategy

The [New Zealand Spaces and Places Framework](#) is an overarching framework to guide facility development. The principles have been developed and have relevance and application to the planning and development approaches promoted in this strategy and should be used as the guiding principles for future aquatic facility planning work.

These principles are further supported by, [Guidance: Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed approach to aquatic facilities provision](#) (page 10, [National Aquatic Facilities Strategy Supporting Document](#)) and [Environmental Sustainability Guidelines for Spaces and Places](#).

For further information see the [supporting document](#) on the expanded principles and further guidance.

Principle	Intent
Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed approach	Recognise the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi when planning facilities through the principles of partnership, protection and participation.
Meeting an identified need	An evidenced based approach to identifying need ensures fit-for-purpose solutions.
Inclusive	Valuing diverse groups by developing safe welcoming and collaborative environments where everyone can participate and thrive.
Accessible	Truly accessible facilities (design, location and cost to use) are created that enable the entire community to access and use them with dignity.
Co-design	Communities and hapori (group, family or community) are involved in the planning and design of facilities and active environments so that their needs are met.
Partnering/collaboration	Partnerships and collaborations lead to well-used facilities that maximise the return on (social and financial) investment.
Environmental sustainability	Facilities are developed and operate more environmentally sustainably over their life-time.
Connected	Networks of connected and complementary facilities and active environments create physical activity opportunities and connected communities (rural and urban).
Future proofed	Facilities can easily adapt to accommodate changing circumstances and emerging trends over time.
Financially sustainable	Financially sustainable and viable facilities and active environments over the lifetime of the asset.

A decision-making framework has been developed for use along with an outline of organisations' roles and responsibilities to underpin and guide implementation of this strategy. For further information see the [supporting document](#).

6. Aquatic Provision

6.1 Aquatic strategy definitions

The strategy includes a range of terms for aquatic activity and pool types as they are recorded in the Sport NZ Facility Planning Tool (FPT), aligned to the demand categories. Table 5 provides clarification of terms and how they align.

Table 5 – Aquatic terminology matrix

Activity	Pool type (supply audit)	Demand categories (population)	Key characteristics to meet the purpose ¹²
Structured activity			
Programmed aquatic competence Water safety and swimming lesson provision	Aquatic competence Swim schools, teaching pools in council or other facilities	Aquatic competence	Generally, 29-32°C pools and typically, shallow (0.5-1m). Some pools have deeper water for out of depth competence (1.4+m)
	School All school pools (when available to the community out of school hours)	Leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access¹³	
Programmed exercise activity Programmed aquatic fitness classes for example, aqua Zumba, aqua jogging, low impact fitness	Fitness/health/lane sports Lane/lap pools, diving pools	Fitness/health/lane sports/deep water sports	Generally, 29-32°C pools and typically, deeper water for low gravity exercise (1.4+m)
Fitness/exercise lane swimming Swimming to keep fit, informal training for other activities by individuals, possibly informal groups for example, triathlon or ocean swim athletes			Generally, 26-29°C and mostly 25-50m pools. General depth range 1-1.4+m
Training Club booked space and time for competitive sports training			Generally, 25-28°C. General depth range 1.2-1.4+m. Deeper water sports require 1.8-2m and diving 4m+
Competition Regional/national competition booked space and time for competitive sports, school sports and high-performance training			Generally, 25-28°C. FINA, World Aquatics, CMAS specifications (including depth) for related aquatic sport

¹² These characteristics are those that are most appropriate for the aquatic activity. Out of need current pools, particularly unheated seasonal pools, are used for activities outside the optimal temperature range.

¹³ Where schools are listed in this category it only relates to access to school pools out of school hours for fun, play, and recreational aquatic activity.

Activity	Pool type (supply audit)	Demand categories (population)	Key characteristics to meet the purpose ¹²
Unstructured activity			
Play Free play activity, whānau and friends playing together	Leisure/play Leisure free-form pools, wave pools, toddler pools, zero depth water play spaces, lazy rivers, hydro-slides, bombing pools, summer outdoor Lido style pools	Leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access	Generally, 29–32°C pools. Varying depths from zero depth to 4+m
Social/informal Water areas and space for group interaction, for example, play and relaxation			Generally, 29–32°C pools. Varying depths from zero depth to 4+m
Relaxation Specialist pools for varying forms of relaxation	Relaxation Spa pools, thermal baths		Generally, 36–38°C pools. Varying depths
Structured and unstructured activity			
Hydrotherapy Specialist led and self-directed wellness/mobility activity	Hydrotherapy Specialist hydrotherapy pools, sensory pools and the like.	Leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access	Generally, 33–35°C. Varying depths



¹² These characteristics are those that are most appropriate for the aquatic activity. Out of need current pools, particularly unheated seasonal pools, are used for activities outside the optimal temperature range.

7. Case Studies

While a proportion of aquatic facilities provide for specific demand categories there are many that cover all three. The strategy has considered three case study facilities as examples of multi-purpose facilities briefly described below (which are captured in more detail in the [supporting document](#)). They outline the catchments, user breakdown and charges, operating revenue and expenditure and required operating subsidy. These are not case studies of best practice or of the principles and planning guidance presented in this strategy.

7.1 Case Study 1: Coastlands Aquatic Centre Paraparaumu, Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC)

The facility provides for all three demand categories (with the exception of deep water for diving). It includes a 25m x 25m (10 lanes) lane pool with a moveable floor, a programmes pool (includes learn to swim), a toddlers pool, a hydro-slide, a spa pool and a sauna. Total pool area identified in the FTP – 775m².

It serves the KCDC District, Paekākāriki – Ōtaki population 54,000. It falls within a district network of pools in Ōtaki, Paraparaumu and Waikanae (the Waikanae Pool is a seasonal pool). Across district boundaries there are also pools with a similar capability at Porirua (PCC) – 36km to the south, and Levin (HDCC) 26 km to the north.

Table 6 – Coastlands Aquatic Centre

Coastlands Aquatic Centre	
Catchment Area	54,000
Annual Users/Visitation (2022/23)	200,000 – 215,000
Annual Operational Expenditure (2022/23)	\$4,360,000 (including overhead allocation)
Annual Operational Subsidy (2022/23)	\$3.16m
Public : Private revenue and financing policy	70-75% : 25-30%
Capex	\$22.3m (2013)

The commercial activities (swim shop/café and programmed activities – fitness and learn to swim) provide 50-55% of the total revenue.



7.2 Case Study 2: Moana Pool Dunedin City Council (DCC)

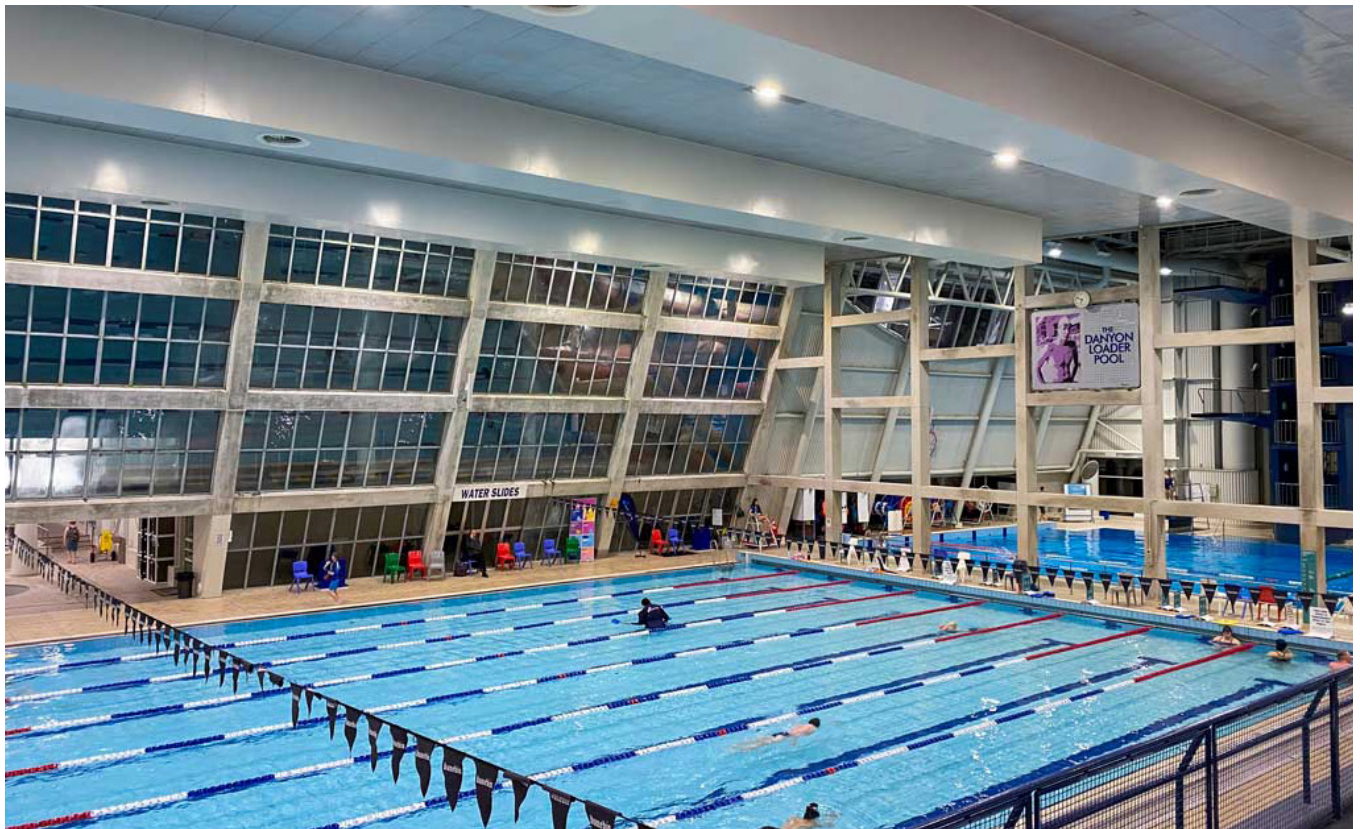
The facility provides for all three demand categories. It includes a 50m 8 lane pool (non-FINA depth compliant), a leisure pool, a learner’s pool, two dive pools (one at 3.8m deep and the other at 4.6m), hydro-slides, a spa pool, and a fitness centre. Total pool area identified in the FTP – 1,677m².

It serves the central Dunedin catchment of 50,000+, and the city as a whole with a population of 135,100. The city’s territory also has the new indoor Te Puna o Whakaehu (Mosgiel Pool) facility and seasonal pools at Port Chalmers and St Clair. In 2023 it is the only facility in the South Island with capability to host some national swimming events.

Table 7 – Moana Pool

Moana Pool	
Catchment Area	135,100
Annual Users/Visitation (2022/23)	580,000 (+174,790 fitness centre users)
Annual Operational Expenditure (2022/23)	\$5,865,000 (including overhead allocation)
Annual Operational Subsidy (2022/23)	\$2.6m
Public : Private revenue and financing policy	55% : 45%
Capex	N/A

Opening in 1964 with additions made over the years, the capital cost was £450,000 (pounds). The commercial activities (learn to swim, fitness centre, and retail sales) provide 55-60% of the fees and charges revenue.



7.3 Case Study 3: Albany Stadium Pool Auckland Council (AC)

The facility provides for two demand categories, aquatic competence and leisure/play/relaxation. It is not a hydrotherapy or sport pool facility. It includes a leisure pool, a splash pad with interactive play features, a pool, a spa pool, a sauna, a fitness centre, and a small cafe. Total pool area identified in the FTP – 903m².

Located in Albany on the North Shore in Auckland (140,000+), the facility is the catchment’s primary location for leisure/play aquatic recreation. Wider aquatic leisure opportunities are available in the network at Glenfield Pool and Leisure Centre 8.2 kilometres away. Aquatic sport (except diving) is provided at the National Aquatic Centre 4.2 kilometres away.

Table 8 – Albany Stadium Pool

Albany Stadium Pool	
Catchment Area	140,000+
Annual Users/Visitation (2022/23)	232,777 (+174,790 fitness centre users)
Annual Operational Expenditure (2022/23)	\$3,265,908 (not including overhead allocation)
Annual Operational Subsidy (2022/23)	\$485,724
Capex	\$19m (2017)

The commercial activities (learn to swim, fitness centre, and retail sales) provide approximately 80% of the total revenue.



8. Aotearoa New Zealand’s Current Aquatic Provision

It is acknowledged that there are many different aquatic facilities currently available and that the current pools are often used for multiple types of activity whether suitable or not. The Sport New Zealand FPT is the most comprehensive database of all sport and recreation facilities in the country. The 2023 update of the FPT data by Sport NZ, RSTs and TAs has resulted in a vast improvement in the recorded knowledge of the aquatic facility network.

There is some ability in the FPT to acknowledge multiple uses of pools, but the data is incomplete, and the audit analysis has been limited by this. There are still gaps and consistency issues that will improve over time as the regional and city/district network planning research occurs.

There were 2,301 pools identified across Aotearoa New Zealand in totality in the FTP audit, August 2023.

8.1 National aquatic provision metrics

As was identified in the 2013 strategy, the pool water area is a key measure of provision. For a more detailed understanding of what type of pool we are measuring, this strategy includes type of water and its availability for community use.

8.1.1 Water area

The total area of all pools (m²) was calculated from the dimensions recorded in the FPT¹⁴. As noted earlier there are some details missing from the FPT and when the measurements for the length and/or the width of a pool was missing a set of proxy measurements were applied. These were based on the average measurements of the same pool type in the FPT.

For the specific proxy measurements see the [supporting document](#).

In total it is determined, with the use of proxies in some cases, that there is **339,430m²** of pool water area (excluding domestic pools) in Aotearoa New Zealand of which **125,570m²** is within the school pool network.

To provide a context for water area m², examples of pool areas for various facilities across Aotearoa New Zealand are shown below:

2650m²

AUT Millennium (including the National Aquatic Centre) with two 50m lane pools and a teaching pool

964m²

Wai o Rua – Stratford Aquatic Centre with 25 m lane pool, teaching, toddlers and hydrotherapy pools (excludes splash pad)

275m²

A typical secondary school lane pool

75m²

A typical primary school pool

8.1.2 Pools by type

Knowing the types of pools and how much water space they contribute to the total network enables analysis to consider how the network serves (or not) the demand.

The main demand categories identify:

- lane swimming (fitness, health, lane sports, deep water sports)
- aquatic competence (learn to swim and aquatic education facilities)
- leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access.

Refer section 6.1

14 The FPT includes confirmed new build aquatic facility projects that have been funding and are scheduled to open before the end of 2026.

8.1.3 Availability for the community

Knowing the pool type provides the opportunity to determine the availability of a pool to the community. **An FTE approach has been used as a measure of the availability of the pool for community access** to ensure that only facilities that allow community access are identified as available to the community.

One FTE is a facility (pool) that is available to the community for all the practical peak hours (such as 6-9am and 4-9pm on school term days, 8am-5pm Sat/Sun). Those pools that are not available for community use at all are not included in the calculation of available water space, and those that have different levels of community availability are assigned a FTE value. Table 9 provides the assumption rationale regarding FTE descriptions, for more detailed descriptions see the [supporting document](#).

Table 9 - FTE assumption based on pool type

Aquatic facility type	Description	FTE assumption
Council/community facility	A facility which is fully available for community aquatic activity	Indoor = 1.0 Seasonal = 0.4
School pool (with community availability)	A school-based pool which has regular community availability beyond the school community	Indoor = 0.5 Seasonal = 0.1
Private swim school	A facility that was developed primarily for delivering learn to swim classes available to the community	0.5
Event facility provision	A public facility that has an aquatic events purpose from time to time	1.0
Pool with no community availability	A facility where there is no community availability	0

By applying the FTE factors to the pool database to better reflect the availability of the facilities to meet community demand, the total available pool water is **130,340m²**.

8.1.4 Hierarchy

Having a hierarchy of provision is essential to meet the range of aquatic needs. This includes:

Local/sub-district

A local pool that is available for community use which often facilitates people's introduction to water play and recreation, aquatic competence including learn to swim and swimming. It primarily serves a small town and its surrounding area, large town or suburb(s) of a city, it is normally a single pool or double pool (lane pool and shallow pool) facility.

District/city/sub-regional (Auckland Local Board)

It is a destination facility with the ability to draw significant numbers of recreational users/whānau and sport participants/teams/competitors from a whole district or across adjacent TA boundaries for a variety of purposes including play and recreation, therapy, exercise, competition or training purposes.

Regional

A facility with the ability to draw significant numbers of recreational users/whānau, sport participants/teams/competitors from a whole region or across adjacent regional boundaries for variety of purposes including play, therapy, exercise, competition or training purposes. Has the ability to host inter-regional and intra-regional club and school competitions and/or serves as a regional high-performance training hub for one or more sports codes.

National (International)

A facility with the ability to host national and inter-regional representative competitions and/or to serve as a national high-performance training hub for one or more sports codes, it will meet the national standard specifications of the aquatic sport.

The 2023 analysis of the FPT identified:

- **6 National and Regional** capable pool facilities for swimming events (water polo and underwater hockey use these pools)
- **3 National and Regional** capable pool facilities for dive events with one additional pool for junior-only events (artistic swimming generally use these pools)
- **22 Regional** capable pool facilities for swimming events (6 National and 16 Regional)

There were a further **294 sub-regional/district/local** identified pools for swimming and **23 sub-regional/district/local** identified pools for diving (with springboards of varying heights).

To note: there are no event ready facilities for a major international competition and should Aotearoa New Zealand secure one (with the exception of water polo which has held World Cup events previously), then temporary infrastructure would be required to supplement existing national aquatic facilities.

8.1.5 The 50m pool debate

There is often much debate about a 50m pool compared to a 25m pool and the community demand or desire for a 50m pool. There is a need for 50m pools to meet the demand for national and international competition and to a lesser degree, high-performance training, but they are not considered the most appropriate solution to meet the wider range of community aquatic demand.

To meet a wide range of community aquatic demand, provision of smaller, flexible water spaces (including a 25m pool) is recommended with the following benefits:

- reduced capital costs
- reduced ongoing subsidy (through lower operating costs and increased income generating activities)
- increased flexibility of water areas, depths and temperatures, increasing the ability to meet a wider range of free-play, leisure and programming activities.

Should a current 50m pool need to be retired the localised analysis and planning will be used to determine if it should be replaced like for like to meet the community need or by an alternative type of pool.

See the [supporting document](#) for more details.

8.1.6 Ownership, governance and management options

There are many different approaches to ownership, governance and management of aquatic facilities. The commercial imperatives for each model differs and should be considered during the planning phase .

In most cases the land is in public ownership with TAs and the MoE, with the exception of privately owned facilities. The facility ownership and management varies across and within regions and these include:

- council owned and managed
- community trust owned and managed
- council/community trust owned with private sector contract management
- school/MoE owned and management of community access
- school/MoE owned with private sector contract or community trust management
- privately owned and managed.

Whichever model is considered, the traditional approach has been that the TA is a main funder of community aquatic projects and in the past MoE for school pools. Given the increased pressures on council budgets and MoE no longer providing financial support to schools for pools, alternative funding and delivery models will be required if we are going to meet demand. Potential approaches could include:

- network partnering TA and school pools to enable community access during the summer months for example [Hamilton City Partner Pools Programme](#)
- partnering with operators to deliver aquatic competence services and to support ongoing maintenance and renewals for example [Easyswim](#) in Wellington
- enabling/supporting the provision of commercial facilities such as private swim schools, or fitness enterprises that include swimming for example [Fastlane Fitness](#) in Hamilton.

Irrespective of the approach taken, it is considered that a radical rethink is required, to actively explore alternative funding and partnership arrangements.

8.1.7 Management Influences

Having an aquatic facility is the first step. How the facility is managed and available for users is a key consideration for planning. Some planning considerations are outlined here:

Cost recovery

For TA facilities there is a practice of setting a cost recovery policy (subsidy). The cost recovery policy can have a significant impact on the accessibility and affordability of facilities for the general public and aquatic sports. As the cost of operation increases, so usually does the cost of entry or hire fee which may result in some activities and even general admission becoming unaffordable to some. Increasing costs of training and competition is a limiting factor in the growth of aquatic sports.

Water temperature appropriateness

The water temperature of a pool must meet the primary purpose of that particular pool to match the user demand. See the [supporting document](#) for more details and there is guidance in NZS 4441:2008 Swimming pool design Standard and in NZS5826:2010 Pool Water Treatment Standards for warm water and spas temperatures.

Prioritisation of purpose

A clear policy to allocate water space can ensure that community needs are met adequately. For example, if learn to swim is a community priority, then allocate all pool space at peak time (for example, 4.00-6.00pm) to learn to swim programmes and close casual public lane swimming or allocate casual public lane swimming at other identified pools in the network. Prioritising use of deeper water space and bespoke diving facilities also requires a clear policy so water spaces can be used for their intended purposes when there is sufficient demand.

Water space access and transparency

Using technology advances, there is an opportunity to provide greater water space availability transparency to enable booking access - for example: to book a casual lane swimming spot, aquarobics class, or book a regular time and pool space.

Event interruption to aquatic recreation and community sport use

The aquatic facilities that are regional, national, or international facilities will impact on community users to varying degrees dependant on the exclusive space/s required, scale and duration of the events.

Securing access for training and events

Ensuring training and events can secure access to appropriate regional facilities enables the best use of the current network of facilities. While the facilities may be provided, securing access at the required time can be difficult. There is often competition between codes for the same facilities due to competing/overlapping event schedules.

Staff capability

With the broadening user needs and operational requirements the capability of staff to engage with users and ensure efficient facility operation, the levels of staff training are also increasing. Staff capability is now required to include:

- cultural capability and diversity awareness
- activation and programming
- environmental sustainability practices
- pool-water quality management.

8.2 Aquatic availability for the community analysis

As a high-level analysis, Table 10 demonstrates that all regions have a significant total water area, however once the FTE approach (see section 7.1.3) is applied this is significantly reduced.

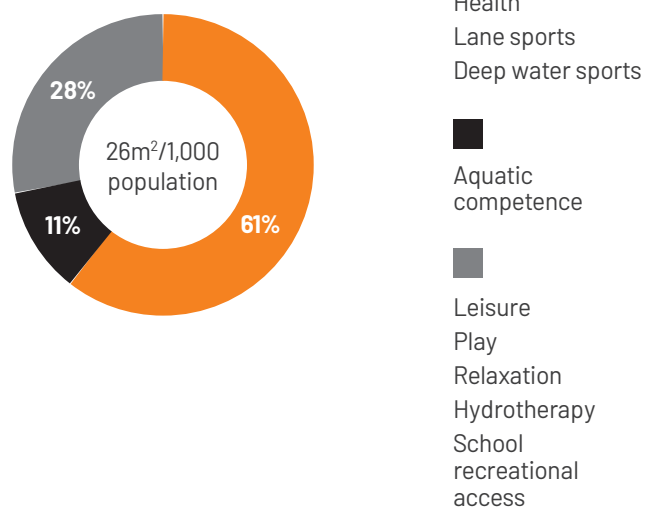
Table 10 - Aquatic provision (regional analysis 2023)

	Total water space m ²	FTE water space m ²	Population	Total m ² per 1,000 residents	FTE m ² per 1,000 residents
Northland	18,578	3,420	187,068	99	18
Auckland	72,934	30,443	1,743,404	42	17
Waikato	42,433	12,359	483,152	88	26
Bay of Plenty	25,266	7,918	328,580	77	24
Gisborne Tairāwhiti	7,187	1,919	48,684	148	39
Hawke’s Bay	21,309	7,284	170,610	125	43
Taranaki	17,752	5,845	121,381	146	48
Whanganui	10,060	3,885	72,632	139	53
Manawatū	17,055	5,837	171,254	100	34
Wellington	27,431	14,607	524,882	52	28
Tasman	16,374	4,872	169,044	97	29
Canterbury/West Coast	40,457	19,603	659,724	61	30
Otago	16,978	9,542	238,457	71	40
Southland	5,614	2,807	98,973	57	28
Aotearoa New Zealand	339,428	130,341	5,017,845	68	26

8.3 2023 aquatic provision in Aotearoa New Zealand

As presented earlier in Table 5 – Aquatic terminology matrix, the current aquatics provision can be considered under three broad categories: **fitness/health/lane sports/deep water sports, aquatic competence, and leisure/play/relaxation/hydrotherapy/school recreational access**. The 2023 aquatic supply is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - National aquatic facility provision 2023



9. Overall Aquatic Demand

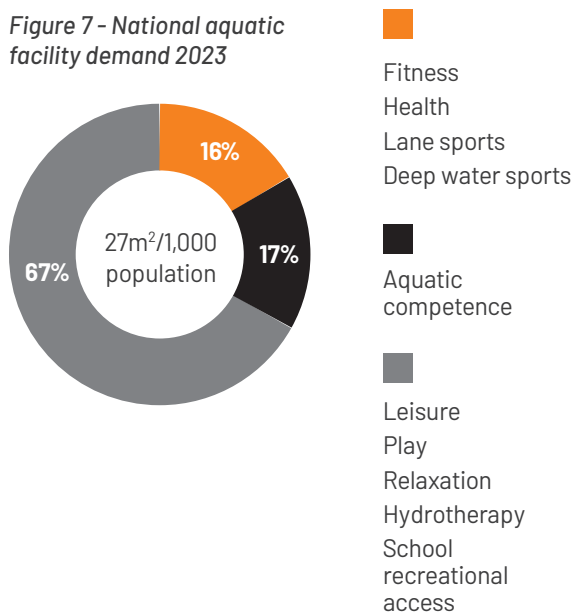
9.1 Aquatic demand

Demand for aquatics facilities comes from many different user groups wanting different types of water space. Recent improvements in the quantity and quality of data available have enabled a bespoke demand modelling approach to be developed utilising specific New Zealand aquatic participation data and industry data science to develop a greater understanding of the demand for aquatic facilities.

The demand model approach included analysis of Active NZ Sports and Activities 2021 data, national sport organisations membership data, and visitation data from aquatics facilities (Aotearoa New Zealand data only). This data science driven approach provides an Aotearoa New Zealand demand profile. This was validated using international benchmarks (Australia, UK) to provide confidence in the demand profile.

9.2 Demand profile for the Aotearoa New Zealand population

Figure 7 - National aquatic facility demand 2023



Key planning point:

Meeting 27m² aquatic area for every 1,000 population is considered a minimum level of provision once the mix of facilities to meet the balance of demand has been achieved.

9.3 Difference between the 2013 aquatic demand calculations

In the 2013 strategy a review of available international benchmark calculators was completed and an outcome was that a suitable tool for translating a population profile into demand for facilities was the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator. However, it was identified that the Sports Facility Calculator proved to provide an inadequate estimate in provincial centres where pools need to cater to low populations spread over large areas. As such, the 2013 identified different demand projections per head of population based on catchment area size and population.

Current analysis of New Zealand based aquatics demand and participation identifies that this approach is not supported and that demand for aquatics is very similar in all sections of the community regardless of the location or the urban/rural split. The important distinction is that while the demand for aquatics is the same, the potential solutions to how this demand is met are different dependent on factors such as lower population densities, accessibility and natural geographic barriers.

For further information see the [supporting document](#).

9.4 Indicators to support regional and local analysis

Current participation data from Sport NZ and data science from ActiveXchange¹⁵ clearly highlight there are only marginal differences in the demand profile for aquatic activities between urban and rural areas. The ability to meet the FTE water area demanded, while important, should not be considered in isolation. Consideration of the overall FTE water area and the suitability of the water spaces is an essential starting point however there are many other criteria to be considered when interpreting the regional demand and it is critical that a second level of analysis is undertaken.

In local planning the potential indicators, or a selection of those most relevant to the territory, should be used to inform the judgements about the quantity of the different types of space to be provided in the future. This will also reflect the regional/city/district market demand, existing facility utilisation levels and the expressed needs.

This will provide a more nuanced approach to provision and enable more informed decisions about current and future provision in the network.

A nationally standardised menu of indicators for regional and local analysis includes:

- Local validation of FTE capacity based on the actual community access for each pool.
- Current supply (facility network) within catchment/off-peak traffic drive time (could include neighbouring territorial local authority pools):
 - community – 80% of population are within (Urban – 15-20 mins, Rural – 30-45 mins).
 - regional – 80% of population are within one way travel time of 2 hours of a regional facility.
- Total catchment population over time, and
 - proportion/total tamariki and rangatahi in catchment population
 - proportion/total 65+ in catchment population
 - deprivation level of catchment population
 - ethnicity of catchment population.
- Current diversity of offerings/opportunities present in market (for participating in aquatic play, active recreation and sport, indoor and outdoor, safe natural bodies of water).
- Current participation in aquatic active recreation and sport (LTS, water competence, penetration rates of core aquatic sports).
- Future participation in aquatic play, active recreation and sport (whānau, recreation, age appropriate, programmed activity).
- Average regional temperatures in cooler months of the year (April-September).



Climatic influence

In warmer parts of the country where the natural bodies of water are warmer (and safe) to enter and enjoy there may be reason to consider these places and spaces as part of a local network of provision. Specifically for recreation and fun purposes, but also for fitness and competition.

There are wide differences based on latitude and the further south in the country, the less natural bodies of water would be considered as part of the network of provision. For example, the sea temperature in Kaitiāia in February ranges from 19.9 to 22.6°C¹⁶ and is 6.75°C higher on average across the year than Dunedin.

For further information see the [supporting document](#).

¹⁵ ActiveXchange is a data technology company using data intelligence to support evidence based decisions in active recreation and sport.

¹⁶ <https://www.seatemperature.org/australia-pacific/new-zealand/>

9.5 Aquatic provision surplus/shortfall (regional analysis 2023)

At a national level it is identified that there is a small deficit in overall FTE water area to meet current demand. However, some areas, especially Auckland, have a significant shortfall in community provision.

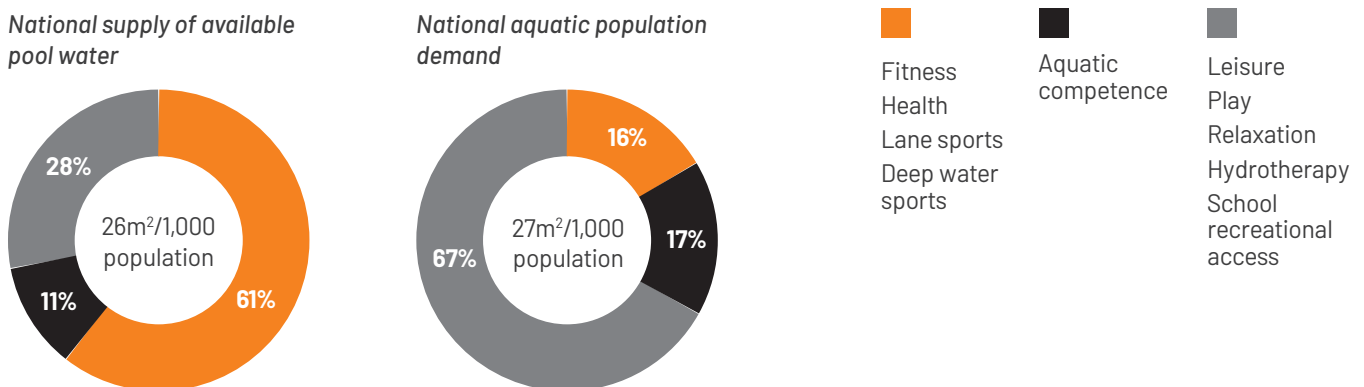
Table 11 - Aquatic provision surplus/shortfall (regional analysis 2023)

	FTE supply (Total m ²) per 1,000 residents	Demand benchmark m ² per 1,000 residents	FTE surplus /shortfall (total m ²) per 1,000 residents	FTE supply total m ²	Demand by benchmark m ²	Surplus/shortfall total m ²
Northland	18	27	-9	3,420	5,051	-1,631
Auckland	17	27	-10	30,443	47,072	-16,629
Waikato	26	27	-1	12,359	13,045	-686
Bay of Plenty	24	27	-3	7,918	8,872	-954
Gisborne Tairāwhiti	39	27	12	1,919	1,314	605
Hawke’s Bay	43	27	16	7,284	4,606	2678
Taranaki	48	27	21	5,845	3,277	2568
Whanganui	53	27	26	3,885	1,961	1924
Manawatū	34	27	7	5,837	4,624	1213
Wellington	28	27	1	14,607	14,172	435
Tasman	29	27	2	4,872	4,564	308
Canterbury/West Coast	30	27	3	19,603	17,813	1,790
Otago	40	27	13	9,542	6,438	3,104
Southland	28	27	1	2,807	2,672	135
Aotearoa New Zealand	26	27	-1	130,341	135,482	-5,141

9.6 National supply versus demand imbalance

Analysis of the current provision has highlighted a mismatch between the type of water spaces provided and the overall community demand. 61% of the current aquatic network has been developed with the fitness/health/lane sports/deep water sports as the primary user of the facility (in terms of pool size, dimensions, water depth and temperature) while these user groups make up 16% of the aquatic demand (see Figure 8).

Figure 8 - National supply versus demand imbalance 2023



9.7 Regional aquatic supply versus demand (2038)

Table 12 presents the projected surplus/shortfall by 2038 if no additional pool capacity is delivered (and none is retired) based on the median population projections from Statistics NZ. Several regions have strong projected growth, and some have slower projected growth. The most acute shortfalls are seen in Auckland, Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty.

Table 12 - Aquatic provision surplus/shortfall (regional analysis 2038)

	FTE supply (total m ²) per 1,000 residents	Demand benchmark m ² per 1,000 residents	FTE surplus /shortfall (total m ²) per 1,000 residents	FTE supply total m ²	Demand by benchmark m ²	Surplus/ shortfall total m ²
Northland	17	27	-10	3,420	5,380	-1,960
Auckland	15	27	-12	30,443	56,490	-26,047
Waikato	23	27	-4	12,359	14,517	-2,158
Bay of Plenty	22	27	-5	7,918	9,664	-1,746
Gisborne Tairāwhiti	39	27	12	1,919	1,339	580
Hawke's Bay	42	27	15	7,284	4,716	2,568
Taranaki	46	27	19	5,845	3,465	2,380
Whanganui	57	27	30	3,885	1,848	2,037
Manawatū	33	27	6	5,837	4,849	988
Wellington	26	27	-1	14,607	15,061	-454
Tasman	28	27	1	4,872	4,756	116
Canterbury/West Coast	27	27	0	19,603	19,973	-370
Otago	37	27	10	9,542	6,902	2,640
Southland	28	27	1	2,807	2,668	139
Aotearoa New Zealand	23	27	-4	130,341	151,626	-21,285

9.8 Regional imbalance overview

This provides a high-level analysis of pools against the national demand ratios to identify if the regions are under or over provided for using a blunt total population divided by available pool water space for community access. This does not consider whether a region is dominated by metro or large city urban populations or is a more sparsely populated rural region.

9.8.1 Local planning – determination of provision solution

A significant barrier to increased participation in and wellbeing through aquatic play, recreation and sport is to have the right quantity and quality of local pools across Aotearoa New Zealand. The challenge nationally for local provision is to improve:

- matching the water type to participation type
- accessibility
- inclusivity
- network thinking and optimisation.

The determination of the actual mix or balance of pool types (including depth and temperature) needed in the network is required at a regional/city/district/Auckland local board level to fully understand the current supply based on the type of actual utilisation of facilities.

Addressing this imbalance between demand and supply in provision type is considered a key focus moving forward. The imbalances at a regional level may not reflect the imbalance at a local/district level and the approaches to transition the pools network to meet need will therefore be different.

What is evident is that across all regions there is an oversupply of water spaces for fitness/health/lane sports/ deep water sports and an undersupply of leisure/play/ relaxation/hydrotherapy school recreational water spaces and to a lesser extent, except Southland, an undersupply of water space focused on aquatic competence (water safety and learn to swim).

In almost all cases, large population centres and the proportion of outdoor seasonal and school pools may mask localised surpluses/shortfalls resulting in the need to do regional/local authority level and sometimes more localised analysis (especially in geographically isolated areas).

To note - there is limited distribution across the country of deeper water facilities (4m+). See the [supporting document](#) for more detail.

To understand the local/regional situation in more detail:

- Review and update the audit, consider actual community availability and apply a FTE at a local level.
- Review and update the FPT allocation of pool type based on community utilisation to identify the imbalance of pool provision at a local level.
- Undertake an assessment against the national demand metrics and balance of pool types demanded.
- Consider the character of the catchment territory and its resident population, market demand analysis (including latent demand), peak time usage constraints, mana whenua views and expressed needs from community engagement.



An example of this is in the [Northland Aquatics Plan](#) where the analysis was done at the regional level and then broken down into four sub-districts for the Far North District, three sub-districts for Kaipara District and for Whangārei District as a whole, being the major population centre. This has resulted in district level recommendations for provision. The Northland Aquatics Plan also highlights two community pool projects ([Otamatea High School Pool](#) and [Whangaroa Community Pool](#)), and two community access partnerships ([Tikipunga High School](#) and [Bream Bay College](#)).

In the case of Auckland, analysis will be required at the local board level and/or across several local board areas to achieve a complementary network.

Table 13 provides the high-level regional picture of the 2038 imbalance levels assuming no pools closing or new pools being added.

Key planning point:

When completing more localised and detailed planning the primary purpose of each pool must be determined first, that is, temperature and depth considerations and then additional possible uses of the pool, for example, 80% aquatic competence and 20% leisure.

Table 13 – Regional imbalance summary¹⁶

	2038 FTE water area per 1,000	Leisure Play Relaxation Hydrotherapy School recreational access	Aquatic competence	Fitness Health Lane sports Deep water sports
Regions with an undersupply of total available water space in 2038				
Demand benchmark		67%	17%	16%
Northland FTE supply	17m ²	48%	5%	48%
Northland imbalance		-19%	-12%	32%
Auckland FTE supply	15m ²	22%	14%	64%
Auckland imbalance		-45%	-3%	48%
Waikato FTE supply	23m ²	34%	9%	57%
Waikato imbalance		-33%	-8%	41%
Bay of Plenty FTE supply	22m ²	33%	12%	55%
Bay of Plenty imbalance		-34%	-5%	39%
Wellington FTE supply	26m ²	31%	8%	61%
Wellington imbalance		-36%	-9%	45%
Regions with adequate or oversupply of total available water space in 2038				
Demand benchmark		67%	17%	16%
Gisborne Tairāwhiti FTE supply	39m ²	21%	7%	72%
Gisborne Tairāwhiti imbalance		-46%	-10%	56%
Hawke's Bay FTE supply	42m ²	22%	13%	65%
Hawke's Bay imbalance		-45%	-4%	49%
Taranaki FTE supply	46m ²	48%	9%	43%
Taranaki imbalance		-19%	-8%	27%
Whanganui FTE supply	57m ²	17%	14%	69%
Whanganui imbalance		-50%	-3%	53%
Manawatū FTE supply	33m ²	31%	10%	59%
Manawatū imbalance		-36%	-7%	43%
Tasman FTE supply	28m ²	27%	11%	62%
Tasman imbalance		-40%	-6%	46%
Canterbury/West Coast FTE supply	27m ²	24%	11%	64%
Canterbury/West Coast imbalance		-43%	-6%	48%
Otago FTE supply	37m ²	25%	14%	62%
Otago imbalance		-42%	-3%	46%
Southland FTE supply	28m ²	38%	20%	43%
Southland imbalance		-29%	3%	27%

9.8.2 National sports organisations facilities guidance

The NSOs and their regional bodies that are the primary sports users of pool facilities have provided their events data at regional, national and international levels and the facilities they currently use to host these events.

Table 14 summarises information supplied by each aquatic NSO on the current supply of event venues in Aotearoa New Zealand for their sport and demand for regional and higher-level events organised or endorsed by the NSO.

Note:

Facility Supply - The totals for venues are cumulative based on the logic that an international venue can accommodate the other lower level events, that national can accommodate regional events and regional venues only accommodate regional events and below events. The number in brackets is the cumulative number of venues including those requiring a dispensation of some kind to host events. For example, "2 (3)" indicates there are 2 compliant venues or a total of 3 venues if a dispensation is given.

Events Supply - The event totals are not accumulated.

Table 14 - Summary of supply of NSO organised events and aquatic venue supply

Sport	Supply situation	International	National	Regional	Network overview from NSO feedback
Artistic Swimming	Facility supply	3	5	8	Seating limitations for full international events. Parakiore will be added, Hawke's Bay excluded due to no local club.
	Events supply	1	1-2	3-5	The International event is Oceania and not a full world level event. Parakiore will be added.
	Gap/over-supply	Adequate supply			
Diving	Facility supply	2	3 (4)	3 (4)	Water World - Junior only
	Events supply	1-2	9	6	
	Gap/over-supply	Events reliant/restricted to Westwave, Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre and Moana for seniors. Parakiore will be added.			
Surf Life Saving	Facility supply	1	1(3)	14	Nationals: Westwave (have not used since 2014), Water World (cannot set records - too shallow)
	Events supply	0	1	14	
	Gap/over-supply	Adequate supply			
Swimming	Facility supply	2	6	22	The two international venues require additional infrastructure for anything larger than Oceania level.
	Events supply	0	7	28	
	Gap/over-supply	Adequate supply			
Underwater Hockey	Facility supply	5 (6)	7 (9)	11(13)	Naenae will be added when open.
	Events supply	1 (4 yrly)	4	6	Trans-Tasman U18
	Gap/over-supply	No capability in NZ to host world events	Adequate supply Potential need for 2 courts for events such as Zone Qualifying & World events (Parakiore may remedy this)		
Water Polo	Facility supply	1	15	20	
	Events supply	1 (average)	9	8	
	Gap/over-supply	Adequate supply			

Additional considerations:

- The analysis presented above considered the built facility and does not comment on venue availability at the times the events occur or cost of hire as these are management considerations, some of these are described in 8.1.7.
- It is not a gap for the National Strategy if some intra-regional competition events do not have a suitable facility in their region. This gap would be addressed in the relevant regional plan to address the intra-regional need.
- Over time the rules and regulations of a sport can change and impact on a facility's suitability. For example, the requirement of touch pad timing systems for swimming official results rules out many pools that were once surveyed as suitable because to have touch pads retrofitted changes the length of the pool.
- It is unrealistic to continually upgrade and redevelop the network of facilities to fully meet all evolving rules and regulations. A pragmatic approach is required in the application of these rules and regulations, especially at a training level, for example using a wider range of pools/use of stopwatches for recognising regional qualifying times.

Key planning point:

As a whole the supply of international, national, and regional event capable facilities is met. Therefore, aquatic facility planning can focus on meeting the local community demands.

For detailed competition aquatic sport facility specifications see the [supporting document](#).



10. Strategic Approach – Where Do We Want To Be?

To transition the aquatic network to better meet the aquatic demands of the population approaches are required to ensure there is a better balance between the supply of facilities and the community demand.

10.1 Grow authentic relationships and work in partnership with mana whenua

Sport NZ has made a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the three principles of partnership, protection and participation which is summarised below. The guidance towards a Te Tiriti informed approach reflects this commitment and is encouraged in the planning and provision of aquatic facilities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is recognised that each organisation may have different methods of applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi (for example, article based) and acknowledge their mana motuhake (authority) in doing so.

An overview of Sport NZ's approach to enacting the three principles of partnership, protection and participation through network and project planning, development and operation is outlined here:

Mana Ōrite – Partnership

- Grow enduring relationships with mana whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) and relevant Māori organisations (Māori sport authorities, health organisations, commercial entities etc).
- Establish and agree to the kaupapa (challenge you are seeking to solve) or the 'why' at the beginning of any project or planning process with all partners.

Mana Māori – Protection

- Ensure appropriate use of mātauranga Māori (traditional Māori knowledge) and mahi toi (Māori artwork) within the development of the project.
- Mana whenua will guide what appropriate use of their knowledge looks like.

Mana Taurite – Participation

- Ensure that space is allowed for mana whenua involvement throughout the entire process.
- Mana whenua involvement could include but is not limited to inclusion of cultural narrative, kaitiakitanga (environmental sustainability practices), commercial and employment opportunities, resource consent processes, spaces for Māori based activity, enabling by Māori for Māori

For organisations other than councils, seek advice from your local council if unsure when, who and how to engage with mana whenua (iwi, hapū and whānau).

Examples: [Kiwa Pools \(summary document and recorded explanation\)](#), and [Te Pou Toetoe Linwood Pool](#).

10.2 Using what we already have

Optimising our current pool network is the first step before considering other solutions. Critically, this can be done while reducing the capital and operating cost of adding additional space by accessing suitable facilities in networks such as schools that have spare capacity.

One of the primary opportunities is to shift school facilities from an estimated national average of **0.15 – 0.25** FTE community use to at least **0.5** FTE. Some school facilities are capable of hosting aquatic competence and/or aquatic recreation and/or community level sport training. Some may require upgrades such as covering, heating and upgrading amenities and some form of partnering agreement in place.

School aquatic facilities provide the opportunity to better manage demand for casual lane swimming and competition training for aquatic sport clubs by freeing up time in other, mainly council-owned owned facilities needed to meet other demands. Exploring options to consolidate school provision to provide fewer, higher quality facilities provides the opportunity to increase the sustainability of facilities given the lack of MoE operational support for school pools.

Demand for both club and casual lane swimming use can be shifted away from pools well suited to recreation use or from deeper water pools well suited to water polo, underwater hockey and artistic (Note: some school pools have deeper water that may be suitable for sport use) to better quality school pools. This will enable TAs to focus on filling gaps in their part of the network for warmer water pools for play, relaxation, aquatic recreation, and hydrotherapy.

The benefits to schools in addition to creating greater community connections, is the potential for revenue generation, cost sharing, provision of operational expertise and investment in what may be deteriorating assets.

These facilities already sit within our local communities across Aotearoa New Zealand and so are easily accessible for residents to participate and have been built using public (government and/or community) funds. How to make this happen:

- 1. Secure long-term community access to school facilities through city/district/local partnerships with legally binding agreements (covering access rights, control of use, revenue and expense shares).**

Example: [Hamilton City Partner Pools Programme](#)

- 2. Invest to make fit-for-purpose where needed** (for example, enclose and upgrade 33m and 25m school pools for focused use).

Examples: [Green Family Taradale Pool, Napier](#)
[Wellington City School Pools Partnership Fund](#)

To note: The use and management of school assets is entirely the responsibility of individual School Boards – this is a key feature of the New Zealand schooling system. From a property and planning perspective, it enables schools to have control over their physical environments (within available resourcing constraints) and the day-to-day policies and procedures that govern the use of those environments.

10.3 Sustainable development

There is a high level of embedded carbon within the existing aquatic facility network and ensuring a responsible approach to facility development is central to this strategy. While better access to many existing facilities is possible, not all facilities will be suitable. New build projects will be required where there are no viable alternatives, but the capital cost means we need to be prudent in why, what, where and when they are built. The priority hierarchy is to:

1. Extend life/make fit for purpose.

(for example, enclose a suitable outdoor pool, upgrade amenities/access or add additional facilities needed by the community).

For example, [Clive War Memorial Pool](#), Hastings was a seasonal 33 1/3m seasonal pool is now enclosed 25m and learn to swim pool.

2. Look to the education network for suitable development and upgrade opportunities, converting strategically located facilities to year round use.

For example, [Wellington East Girls College](#).

3. Look to the private sector and private schools for opportunities to partner when redeveloping or building new facilities.

For example, [St Peter's Swim School](#), Cambridge.

4. Build new if no adequate solution under 1, 2 or 3 (new build is last option).

For example, [Albany Stadium Pool](#) a conventional construction pool or tensile fabric options [Te Hiku Sports Hub](#), Kaitiāia a bespoke construction system, or [Kings Swim School](#), Christchurch as a proprietary construction system that comes in specific building width dimensions.

Note: While some private swim schools have repurposed an existing building such as a warehouse or retail premise, architectural/engineering advice is that this is highly unlikely to be viable for public pools due to the nature and challenges of public aquatic facilities.

In the past there have been aquatic facilities developed where mistakes have been made particularly in relation to funding. Where funding limitations create a shortfall, any design change must consider the intended purpose and prioritise keeping features that ensure the facility is fit for the intended purpose to meet the validated community need. Conversely, where there is an excess of funds the facilities or features being included should still be focused on meeting the intended purpose.

10.4 Participant centred approach

A participant centred approach requires a network approach, with opportunities for accessible aquatic play, recreation and sport experiences throughout the network. This may be through lower cost provision such as splash pads and toddler's pools in local parks or through partnerships and/or access agreements to existing school facilities, for activities such as play, aquatic recreation and fitness swimming through the higher demand summer months. This can complement the larger, central aquatics facilities that exist, providing the range of experiences. These larger facilities can also be more participant focused by ensuring that they are available for the activities that their communities need, that is, aquatic competence, play, recreation, relaxation and hydrotherapy.

Aquatic participation originated out of recreational pursuits and through the mid 20th century there was a movement away from recreational aquatic facilities towards lane pool provision through the growth of sport swimming. In the 21st century the participation need is calling for greater recreational aquatic facilities to address wider demands of aquatic pursuits. International Lido snippet: <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20220729-the-best-public-swimming-pools-around-the-world>

10.5 Co-design with key user groups stakeholders and operators

Ensuring that co-design is central to facility planning and development will ensure fit-for purpose facilities are developed, reducing barriers to participation and saving time and cost during the development phase. A commitment to co-design ensures that the needs and primary purpose of the facility is central to the provision and development, with mana whenua and community members considered equal collaborators within the planning and design process. Of equal importance is to ensure those with lived, technical and operational expertise are engaged throughout. Key user groups and stakeholders could include:

- Māori
- rangatahi and tamariki
- disabled people and disability organisations
- older adults
- aquatic sports/activities
- facility operators
- NSOs when relevant.

[Co-designing Spaces and Places with Rangatahi](#)

[Graham Condon Recreation and Sport Centre - accessibility](#)

11. Key Shifts – How We Get There

The planning priorities this strategy determines for future provision of aquatic facilities are:

11.1 Redress the imbalance of water space provision

Detailed localised (regional/city/district) analysis and planning is critical to achieve a complete understanding of the network and the provision shifts required. All regional/city/district planning and capacity building effort is to **primarily focus on local aquatic play, recreation and aquatic competence provision** (the biggest capacity gaps) – the supply of regional and above event/competition facilities is mostly adequate to meet NSOs' event needs.

11.2 Capacity minimum

The 27m² of aquatic space per 1,000 population is the minimum requirement when the pool water type balance is achieved.

11.3 Apply the guiding planning principles

Apply the principles identified in this strategy, aligned to the New Zealand Spaces and Places Framework, to the planning and development of district, city, regional provision:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed approach
- meeting an identified need
- inclusive
- accessible
- co-design (including operator, technical, and specific communities lived experiences)
- partnering/collaboration
- environmental sustainability
- connected
- future proofed
- financially sustainable.

Consider having Sport NZ/Recreation Aotearoa conduct a peer review of the planning outcomes and facility design.

11.4 A network approach

Take a network approach to aquatic facility provision to ensure the right mix is provided in each community (based on the national demand ratios) – a district, Auckland local board area/s, city or region. Work across regional and local TA, and in the case of Auckland, local board boundaries. Distribution of facilities is a key factor for equity of access.

Consider network provision as a partnership approach, that is, partnering to access historically unavailable facilities as part of a connected network, for example:

- school pool facilities
- commercial (privately owned) pool facilities
- community trust pools.

Accessing the appropriate school facilities on a consistent basis has been a challenge. Sport NZ should explore opportunities with the MoE on national policy changes to facilitate a consistent, enabling approach to maximise community use of school facilities.

11.5 Community provision over event facilities

There is no identified need for additional national or international aquatic sport events facilities so planning can focus on local community need.

11.6 Improved management approaches

Ensure management solutions are developed to maximise the use of existing facilities:

- Develop a balanced programme to meet the needs of the whole community.
- Ensure water temperatures are appropriate to the needs of a wide range of target users.
- Secure access to and make available appropriate facilities for aquatic sport training and competition.

11.7 Continuous improvement in planning

Ensure on going data collection is undertaken to enable greater clarity on the current network of facilities and a more nuanced approach to projecting current and future demand.

- Improve facility audit data (water depth, temperature, use).
- Activity demand data (code participation, facility utilisation/casual participation and latent demand).

12. Conclusion

Nationally, evidence indicates the critical shortfall in supply is at the community level for play, leisure space and hydrotherapy. In general, aquatic sports and lane swimming is adequately supplied. We do not have enough fit for purpose aquatic facilities to meet the demands of the play and recreation participant now and in the foreseeable future, particularly if we use a traditional view of what is a suitable pool.

The investment required to fill this gap in many parts of Aotearoa New Zealand is well beyond the financial means of most organisations to build new indoor aquatic facilities especially with TAs coming under increasing financial constraints. These constraints are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, however, if we are more flexible/lateral, we have a much larger network of pools in our communities, districts, cities and regions sitting in plain sight than we think, these are mostly outdoor seasonal pools many of which are located at schools. If we can increase the availability of suitable school pools and outdoor public pools by upgrading them for year round use, with appropriate amenities, nationally we could significantly reduce the shortfall.

Regional and above facility provision is generally focused on competition events for sport and evidence indicates the supply is adequate due to the significant investment over past decades in sport pools around the country. The addition of Parakiore in Christchurch will fill most gaps in international level events capability for aquatic sports in Aotearoa New Zealand. **No more major event pools are needed, particularly no more 50m pools are needed.** While there are considered sufficient pools, securing access for the full calendar of events and training is a challenge for some codes. If we can identify management solutions, prioritising access to suitable facilities, and ensuring that they are affordable for codes, then no additional regional facilities and above are required.

The foreseeable planning horizon for this strategy is 15 years and over this time the priority and focus will be on increasing the supply at the community level through facilities that are more participant centred, inclusive, environmentally sustainable, affordable, and, critically, more accessible for aquatic play and recreation.





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