ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ON THE NEW GREATER BENDIGO INDOOR AQUATIC LEISURE AND WELLBEING CENTRE

Why do we need a new indoor swimming pool?
The City of Greater Bendigo’s 2010 Aquatic Strategy identified the need for a new indoor swimming pool facility to serve our growing City and the wider region.

Greater Bendigo is the third largest city in Victoria with a population of approximately 110,000 and it is forecast that our population will increase by 40 per cent in the next 20 years. Therefore it’s important to have new infrastructure like this in place to cater for the community’s needs.

Also in 2014 the City’s Active Living Census also found that swimming is the second most popular form of physical activity in Greater Bendigo and this will allow residents to enjoy water activities all year round.

Why build the new indoor swimming pool in Kangaroo Flat?
Following intensive research and consultation over several years the Kangaroo Flat Leisure Centre site was identified as the best site for the new indoor pool.

The site is centrally located and offers easy access for people using both public and private transport, it also links in with existing bike and walking trails and other recreational facilities and parklands and is situated on Council owned land.

Why is Council pulling down the Kangaroo Flat Leisure Centre to build the new indoor pool complex?

While a glance at the leisure centre site may suggest it is an unconstrained and large development site, the reality is that it’s not.

The existing leisure centre building is being demolished as there is simply not enough room at the site to accommodate both the new indoor swimming pool development that the community has said they want and the existing leisure centre building as well as retaining the sports oval and providing for parking and access.

The leisure centre building was built over 30 years ago and while it was generally well utilised in the 1980’s and 90’s this is no longer the case.

Why couldn’t the plans be adjusted to fit both the leisure centre and the new indoor pool?
The site is actually a reasonably constrained development site from a design, planning and engineering perspective.

Some of the sites limitations include the existing CFA fire track, an Environmental Significance Overlay (Planning Scheme Zone) along the creek immediately to the east, Browning Street to the north, the existing sports oval and parkland to the south and the need to design a building that is well situated to provide efficient aquatic centre operations well into the future.

Because of these constraints there is no realistic scope to accommodate the existing leisure centre building on site without adversely impacting the ability to develop and operate a large
contemporary efficiently run aquatic centre, incorporate the car parking that is required and retain the existing sports oval and associated parkland.

When will the leisure centre be demolished?
Work has already commenced to decommission services such as telecommunications, power and water and secure and fence the site for demolition. The actual demolition works will commence in mid to late November 2015.

What has happened to all the equipment from the leisure centre?
Equipment from the Leisure Centre has been redeployed for use in other community facilities. Fixtures and fittings have also been offered to local not for profit groups.

There are plans to preserve a section of the flooring for use in the new facility as a feature and to acknowledge the Leisure Centre building.

Where are the events that used to be held in the leisure centre going to take place now?
The Leisure Centre hosted a small number of annual events which will now take place in alternative facilities at nearby Crusoe College, JB Osborne Theatre, Bendigo Exhibition Centre and various community halls including the Bendigo Town Hall and church buildings.

There will also be multi-purpose spaces within the new Aquatic Centre for the whole community to use.

How has the community been consulted?
Since 2009 the community has had numerous opportunities through the development of both the 2009 Kangaroo Flat Community Plan, the 2010 Aquatic Strategy to have a say on the proposed new aquatic facility.

In addition a range of community workshops, surveys, listening posts have taken place along with regular communication via regular media coverage, project bulletins, Council publications and community newsletters.

A group of locals representing a range of sectors and community groups were also part of a Community Reference Group. Positions for the Community Reference Group were advertised in mid-2012 and since that time, those selected to represent the community have been fundamental in ensuring that the community’s opinion and voice was represented during the entire process.

What is Council actually building at the site?
Council is building a multi-purpose indoor Aquatic Leisure and Wellbeing Centre featuring:-
• 51.5 metre 8-lane pool inclusive of a 1.5m moveable “boom” pool divider;
• Hydrotherapy warm-water pool with associated spa facilities;
• Beach-entry family/children’s play pool incorporating play equipment and toddler learn-to-swim area;
• Benched seating for up to 500 people;
• Change facilities (individual and group rooms);
• Allied health "Wellbeing Centre";
• Reception and administration area;
• Café;
• Multi-purpose "dry" rooms;
• Gymnasium and associated fitness areas; and
• Plant room and equipment.
• Associated landscaping and car parking

The total physical area of the facility is in the order of 5,900 sq. metres.

**How much is the project costing and how is it being funded?**
The total cost of the project is $31M.

The project is being funded by a $15M contribution from the State Government, $8.615M - $13.5M from the City of Greater Bendigo (depending on the outcome of Council’s request for Federal Government funding support), $1.5M from the company who will operate the new centre and $1M from the Kangaroo Flat Community Enterprise (a not for profit community company formed by residents of Kangaroo Flat and surrounding areas).

**What will happen to the existing Kangaroo Flat Pool when the new indoor pool is built?**
The pool will close and be decommissioned. As stated in the 2014 Dower Park Masterplan the existing pool site will be redeveloped into new community sporting facilities for tennis, netball and bowls in the future.