

Our Community Plan Submission

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I wish to talk to the main points of my submission at the hearings

This submission relates to the proposed level of service change in the provision of aquatic facilities with the development of new facilities in the West (Hornby, Halswell) and East (Linwood, Woolston). (Pages 125-134)

Council has stated that it is involved in recreation and leisure activities in order to promote healthy active lifestyles for everyone. By providing accessible pools and leisure centres, stadia and sporting facilities so that people can participate in sport and physical activity at whatever level they choose, including local, national and international sport.

Stated in the Draft Aquatic Facilities Plan the planning of future facilities the following target groups are identified as requiring special consideration:

- Low Income families
- Older adults
- People under 15
- Low mobility

In addition people with disabilities are identified as a target group requiring consideration but this is discounted as it is difficult to map.

These target groups have been further analysed, statistically on a mesh block basis using a close proximity methodology.

Close proximity is defined as a radial distance of 3km for QEII and 2km radius for area based leisure centres. This has been the basis on which the mapping technique has been used to identify the areas of the city outside 'close proximity' however only in relation to the target groups stated above ignoring the remainder of Christchurch residents.

This has been the basis by which the decision of future need is established.

I want to challenge this rationale :

- These groups are not the only ones that should be considered in determining future requirements, doing so is not equitable, ignores the needs of the wider community.
- Basing need on perceived deprivation is flawed. Need is not just about poverty or hardship it also includes wants, desires and requirements. Deprivation alone does not equal need nor demand for an aquatic facility.

- This approach confuses accessibility with affordability, ignores lifestyle choices, overlooks user demand and is oblivious to constraints and barriers experienced by those outside these target groups. Affordability is dealt with through discounted rates and charges. Accessibility is about convenience which includes geographic location, ease of access, ease of use and mode of transport to get there. Accepting private ownership of a vehicle as the only acceptable mode to accessibility is flawed. It ignores peoples choice to alternative transportation and private use of company cars, there are people who choose to walk, bus, cycle and car pool as a lifestyle choice. There are suburbs in Christchurch not adequately serviced by public transport and some distance from community facilities and services thus vehicles are necessary. Assumes not owning a car is a barrier to entry, not true. If public transport is an issue, influence the change of bus routes. If ease of use is the issue this can be resolved through more appropriate design functionality
- Age based considerations – a healthy and active lifestyle and participation in physical activities needs to be encouraged to all age groups. This is reflected in the draft community outcomes. If there is a real need for a specific group use targeted programmes and support to encourage participation, not location based solutions. If affordability is the issue this is addressed through discounted fees and charges.
- The residents in the catchment area (as defined by Statistics NZ for census purposes) of Heathcote Valley to Sumner including Lyttelton currently have to travel 6 to 12km to the closest Council leisure facility (Centennial) and up to 16km to QEII, both facilities, well outside ‘close proximity’
- The population of this catchment area totals 15834 (census 2001) an increase of 435 from the 1996 census. Increasing population outside ‘close proximity’
- There is no aquatic facility servicing the residents of this catchment area
- The catchment area of Linwood (including North and East, West and South Woolston (as defined by Statistics NZ for census purposes) has a population base of 13851 (census 2001) a decrease of 144 from the 1996 census. A declining population inside ‘close proximity’
- These residents have access to two facilities (Centennial & Aquagym) within a 1-2km radius. Close proximity to two facilities

In addition the basis on which location of the future provision of leisure facilities also has included the considering of effectiveness and efficiency:

- Effectiveness being the achievement of community outcomes, of which should not be determined by these target groups alone but by the community as a whole, as it relates to access, encouragement and opportunities to all regardless of age, ability, income etc.
- Efficiency this measures how successful the effectiveness is, ie the measurement of the success in how the community outcomes are achieved, once again this is the community as a whole and not isolated to certain target groups.

Putting all that into perspective, locating a new facility within an area that is already in close proximity to leisure facilities, is affordable, accessible and statistically has a declining population is not rational.

The decision on location of facilities and the assessment of community needs, need to be done so on an equitable basis for present and future generations.

Taking into consideration of the above and the balance between effectiveness, efficiency, affordability and equity I request a reconsideration of, the location and prioritisation of a leisure facility that adequately services the residents of Heathcote Valley to Sumner and Lyttelton, and better aligns to Councils objectives. Specifically the Heathcote area is an ideal location and currently supports recreational activities.

Don't ignore the residents who contribute to funding these facilities by putting up barriers of accessibility and ignoring their needs.

Kathrine Hilton