

## 6.10. MOSSMAN SPLASH PAD FEES AND CHARGES

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### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council maintains the current fee structure for entry to the Mossman Pool facility including the new splash pad, as determined in Council's 2023-2024 Fees and Charges Schedule.**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council received funding from the Queensland Government to build a zero-depth water-play area in each of Port Douglas and Mossman.

The Mossman splash pad was built within the fenced precinct of the Mossman pool facility for security and amenity, but this location presents challenges for the provision of free entry to the splash pad.

Various options have been explored to enable free entry for families utilising the splash pad, including fencing the splash pad from the rest of the venue, changing the fees and charges schedule to allow free entry to the Pool precinct for all Douglas residents, or to allow free entry to the precinct for those only using the splash pad.

Each of these options would result in reduced services to patrons of the pool precinct or a negative financial impact to Council, or both. It is therefore recommended that Council maintains the current fee structure and continues to allow patrons of the Pool precinct to enjoy all of the various activities and services the venue currently provides, in addition to access to the new splash pad.

### BACKGROUND

Council received funding from Queensland Government to build a zero-depth water-play area in both Port Douglas and Mossman. In the 2022-2023 Operational Plan, Council resolved that the Mossman water-play area would consist of the installation of an off the shelf type splash park within the Mossman pool facility.

The current fees set by Council in the 2023-2024 Fees and Charges Schedule for entry to the Mossman pool include:

- Family Day Pass (4 people) - \$15
- Adult - \$6
- Children aged 3 – 12 years - \$5
- Children Under 3 – no charge
- Spectator – no charge

This provides all-day access to the amenities and kiosk, toddler pool, kid's pool, free BBQ and picnic area, 50 metre pool, and new splash pad.

## COMMENTS

The location within the fenced pool precinct creates challenges for the provision of free entry to the splash pad.

Options canvassed for providing free access to the Mossman splash pad include:

1. To create a separate venue accessible from Park Street by fencing the splash pad to excise it from the rest of the pool precinct.

This option would prevent families using the splash pad from accessing any of the other facilities at the Pool precinct.

2. Change the fees and charges schedule to allow free entry to the entire pool precinct for Douglas Shire residents.

This option would result in a negative financial impact to Council from lost revenue of approximately \$60,000 per annum.

The financial impact could be mitigated by offering limited free entry: only on weekends; for a limited time from the opening of the new splash pad; or by offering residents a set number of vouchers per year.

3. Change the fees and charges schedule to allow free entry for patrons utilising the splash pad only.

This option would be difficult to enforce without employing extra staff to police patrons' usage of the various play areas, creating an unwelcoming atmosphere at the venue, unless it was implemented through use of an 'honour system', trusting the honesty of patrons who request free entry to use only the splash pad area.

Abuse of the honour system would result in lost revenue to Council of potentially up to \$60,000 per annum.

## PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council maintains the status quo and retains the current fees and charges regarding entry to the Mossman Pool precinct. With the recent additions of the splash pad, the Aquaglide inflatable obstacle course, and the free BBQ and picnic area, the venue is becoming an even greater attraction for families looking for a day of children's entertainment.

It is recommended that Council maintains the current fee structure for entry to the Mossman Pool facility including the new splash pad, as determined in Council's 2023-24 Fees and Charges Schedule.

## FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council risks losing up to \$60,000 per annum in lost revenue from pool entry fees if the entry fees are fully waived or an honour-system implemented and abused.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The size and location of the splash pad on a side street, behind the rest of the pool precinct and separated from the carpark results in a risk of it becoming underutilised if it is separated from the main facility by a fence and separate entrance gate.

This would also reduce the ability of lifeguards or other Council Officers to see or respond to any injuries or incidents at the splash pad.

Separating the splash pad would increase the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the venue.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

**Economic:** Swimming pools and splash pads are expensive to operate and maintain. The revenue brought into the venue through entry fees does not cover the costs of running the facility but an annual loss of \$60,000 for operating expenditure would need to be diverted from elsewhere in Council's budget.

**Environmental:** Nil

**Social:** The splash pad adds to the activities provided to families visiting the Mossman Pool precinct. Any changes to the levels of service provided would impact the social benefits of a thriving, low-cost, public venue.

## CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

#### Theme 5 - Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery

Strong governance and financial management are the foundations of the way in which Council will conduct its business and implement the initiatives of the Corporate Plan.

*Goal 2 - We will put the customer at the centre of our service delivery and process improvement as we deliver efficient and appropriate services based on community expectations.*

### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Actions:

Nil

## COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

**Builder/Owner** Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.

## CONSULTATION

**Internal:** Council Workshop 21 November 2023

**External:** Nil

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nil

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil