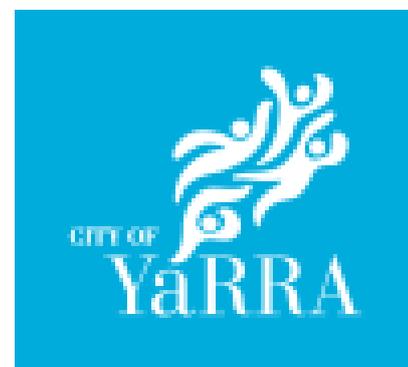


AQUATIC TRAINING PROGRAMS

Review

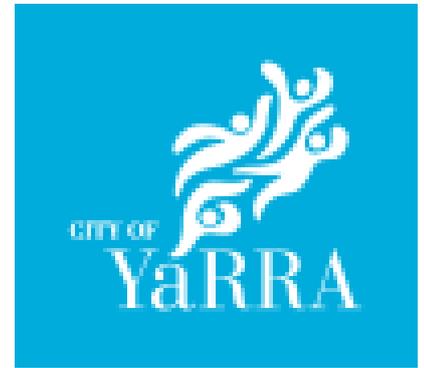
Aquatic Training Programs Review



Contents

Context.....	3
Review Objectives.....	3
Review Methods	4
Aquatic Participation Trends.....	5
AusPlay – Sport Australia.....	5
City of Yarra – Community Profile	10
City of Yarra - Yarra Leisure Members Profile.....	11
Findings	14
1. Survey Results	14
Aquatic Sports Clubs	15
Program Membership	16
Recreational Swimmer respondents.....	16
2. Stakeholder Group Feedback Sessions	18
Yarra Roughies Feedback	18
Yarra Tri Feedback.....	20
Inner City Aquatics (ICA) Feedback	22
Yarra Leisure Tri Coaches Feedback.....	23
Yarra Leisure Open Age Coaches Feedback	24
Yarra Leisure Aquatic Leadership Staff Feedback	24
3. Peak Sporting Association Feedback	24
Swimming Victoria	24
Triathlon Victoria.....	27
Impacts and Analysis.....	28
1. Aquatic Training Programs Identities.....	28
2. Current Club Systems.....	29
3. Competing/Conflicting Interests.....	30
4. Facilities Programming and Operations.....	30
Recommendations	34

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Context

This review partly arose from a petition presented to Council by members of the adult swimming squads at Fitzroy Swimming Pool (FSP), who expressed dissatisfaction with:

- A lack of clear relationship between squad swimming at FSP and the Triathlon program;
- The overly-specific triathlon focus of the Triathlon program;
- The preference for some of the FSP coaches, who coach some of the FSP training sessions in the Triathlon program;
- The conditions of employment of some of the FSP coaches who coach some of the FSP training sessions in the Triathlon program;
- The period of inconsistent availability of coaches within the Triathlon coaching team; and
- Yarra Leisure's communication with FSP adult swimming squad participants.

Additionally, Officers understood that Yarra's current approach to aquatic programs, services and club management was an outlier in the sector, thereby presenting an opportunity to better align with industry practice and manage and service community needs. Consequently resulting in undertaking a full program review of Yarra's aquatic training programs including:

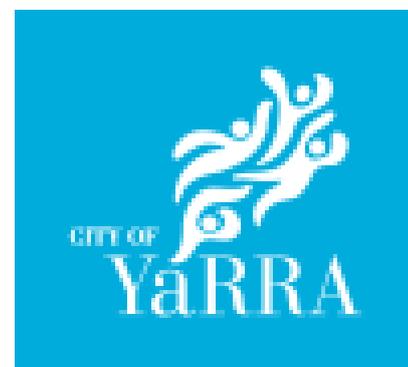
- Triathlon program;
- Open Age (Junior Squad) program; and
- Recreational swimming.

This report outlines the review process taken, findings, analysis and recommendations to transition Yarra Leisure's three aquatic training programs into the future.

Review Objectives

- Analyse the current performance, programming and operational aspects of the aquatic training programs.
- Explore deeply with all stakeholder groups associated with Yarra Leisure's aquatic training programs in order to hear and understand their needs directly.
- Analyse the varying relationships, partnerships and agreements Council has in place and make recommendations, which are realistic, appropriate, aligned with industry norms and reflect best-practice including seeking independent advice from industry experts.
- Re-focus Yarra Leisure services available for members of the community choosing to participate and develop in chosen disciplines.
- Make recommendations for the future that are suitable and appropriate for Yarra City Council to offer in each of the programming areas.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Review Methods

Over a six week period in December 2019 and January 2020, a stakeholder consultation program was undertaken by key Recreation and Leisure Services Officers.

A bespoke customer survey was developed to capture the specific feedback of the three different program participants, which was accessible for a four week period.

Customer feedback drop-in sessions were held at Collingwood Leisure Centre, Fitzroy Swimming Pool and Richmond Recreation Centre as well as attending an offsite session at the George Knott Athletics Track, Clifton Hill.

Stakeholder feedback sessions were scheduled with the following groups:

Stakeholder Group:	Date:
Participants - Survey	12 Dec-19 - 12 Jan-20
Participant - Drop-in sessions	16 Dec-19 - 22 Dec-19
Triathlon coaches	05-Dec-19
Open Age coaches	10-Jan-20
Aquatic Program Staff	29-Jan-20
Yarra Roughies Club	17-Dec-19
Yarra Tri Club	23-Dec-20
Inner City Aquatic Club	16-Jan-20
Triathlon Victoria	18-Dec-19
Swimming Victoria	05-Mar-20

Mr. Rohan Taylor, National Coaching Mentor, Swimming Australia, and State Head Coach for swimming in Victoria and Tasmania, was invited to independently review and provide comment and feedback on swimming, swimming teaching and coaching and swimming and squad programming in Australia and Victoria throughout the entire process.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Aquatic Participation Trends

AusPlay – Sport Australia

Participation

- The annual population estimate for Australian adults 15+ participating in swimming is approximately 15%
- Participation is slightly skewed towards females (16.5% of the population) who account for 56% overall participation. Male participation was also high (13%)
- Participation rates increased steadily from early adulthood to their peak in the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups (with 20% female participation and 16% male at these ages)
- Conversion to club participation was low (only 6% of organised/venue-based participation was through a club)
- The peak participation rates for children's organised out-of-school swimming were at the early ages of 5-8, with close to half of girls at this age (47%) participating. Participation decreased to 16% at 12-14 years.

Frequency

- Adults 15+ who participated in swimming had a median frequency of 48 sessions per annum (nearly once per week) with the median session duration being 45 minutes. Occasional swimming was high with 48% of adults participating at least once a week
- It is a sport most strongly associated with loyalty. Women were much likely to express loyalty to swimming than men.

Motivation

- The dominant motivation for adults 15+ to participate in swimming was '*physical health/fitness*' (51%). '*Fun/enjoyment*' was also a motivator (34%).

Reasons for dropping out

- Reasons for dropping out were varied, including '*not enough time/too many other commitments*' (19%), '*Poor health or injury*' (16%), '*Didn't like it*' (13%), or '*Not a priority anymore*' (10%).

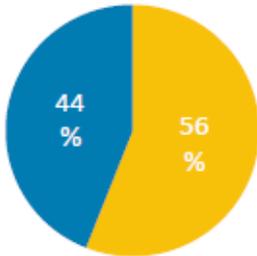
Opportunities for growth

- Adults - there was a high consideration for take up and market opportunity of nearly 900,000 new participants (26% potential increase). This was mostly due to female interest, but with broad appeal across all ages
- Children - most of the opportunity lies with infants (0-4) as they start learning to swim.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Gender Split



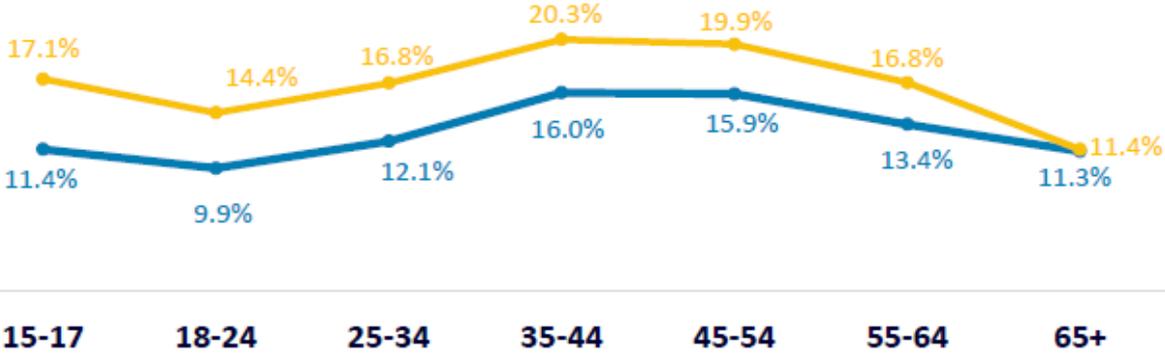
Participation Levels

	Total Participation	Male Participation	Female Participation
%	14.8%	13.1%	16.5%
000's	2,984.9	1,303.6	1,681.3

Participation Levels by Age and Gender

Peak Participation by Age

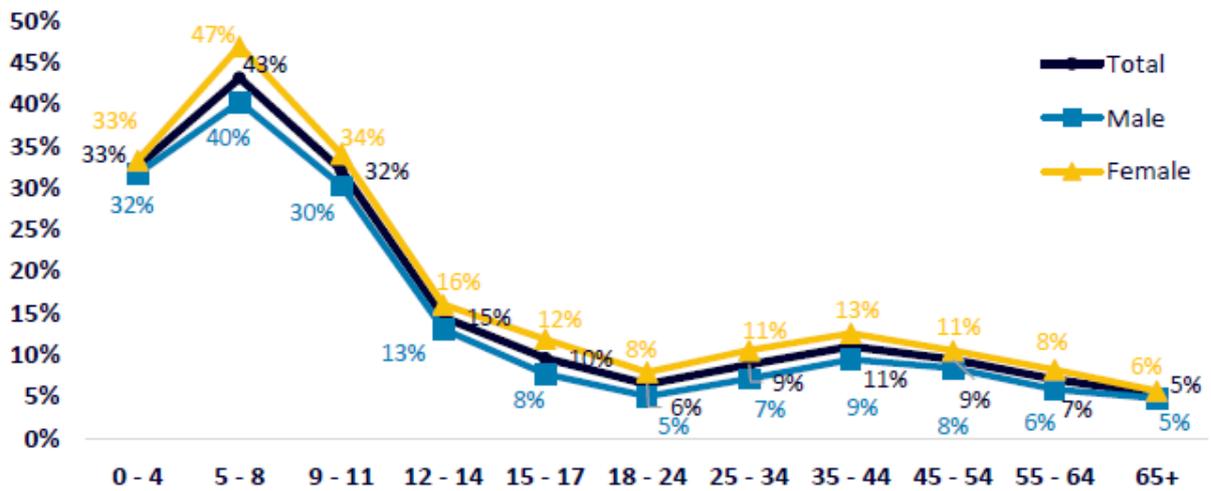
- 35-44 Male
- 35-44 Female



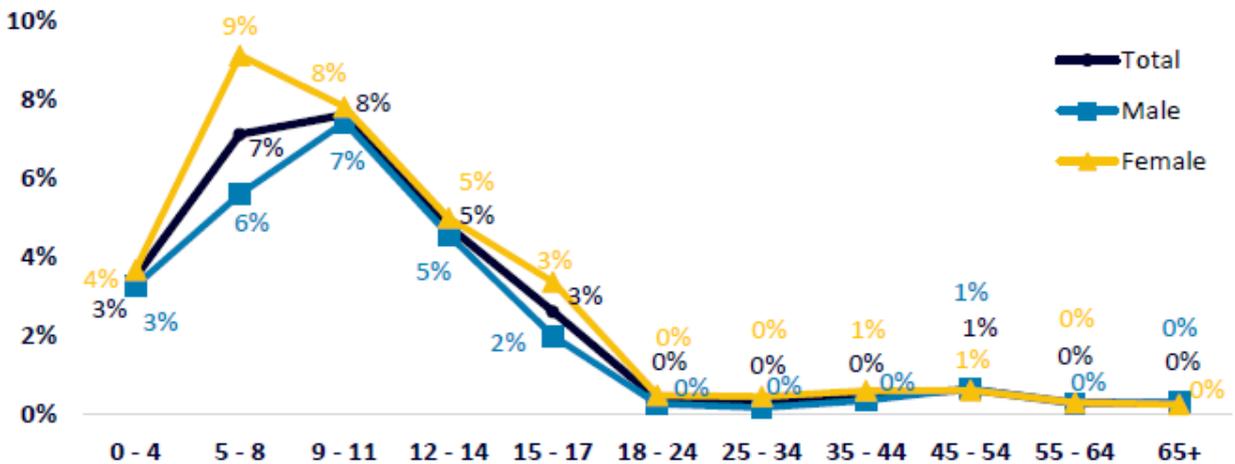
Aquatic Training Programs Review



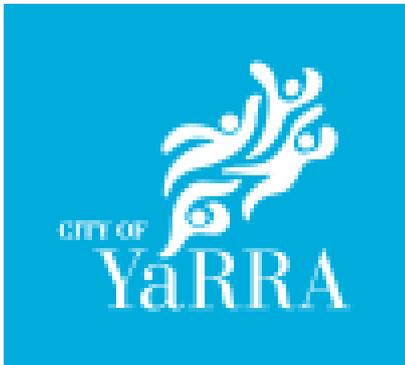
Participation by Life Stage - Organised



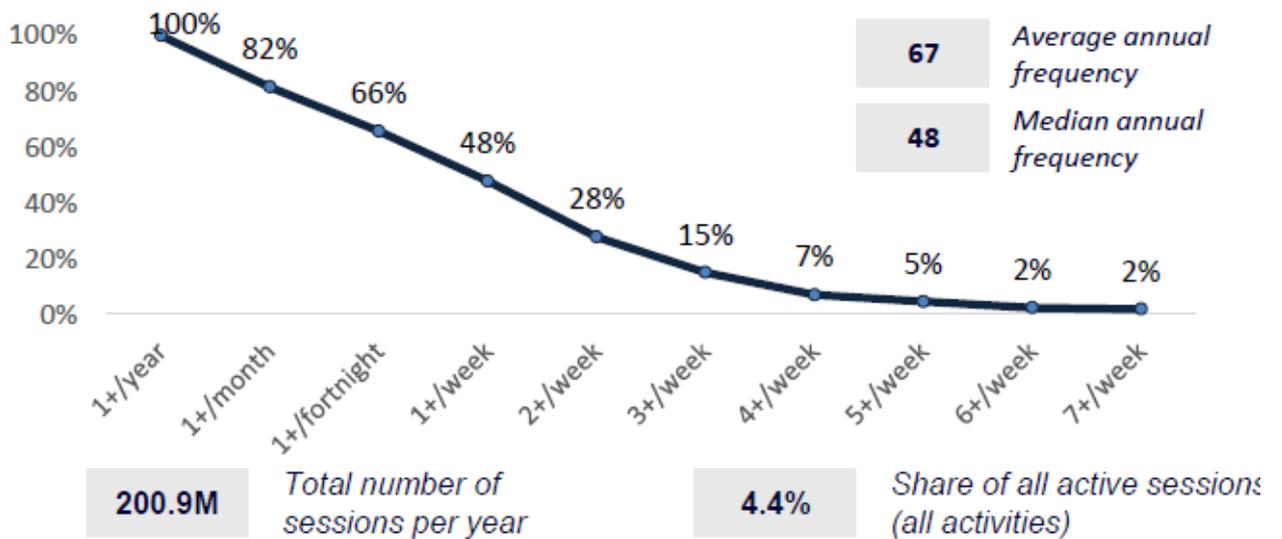
Participation by Life Stage - Club



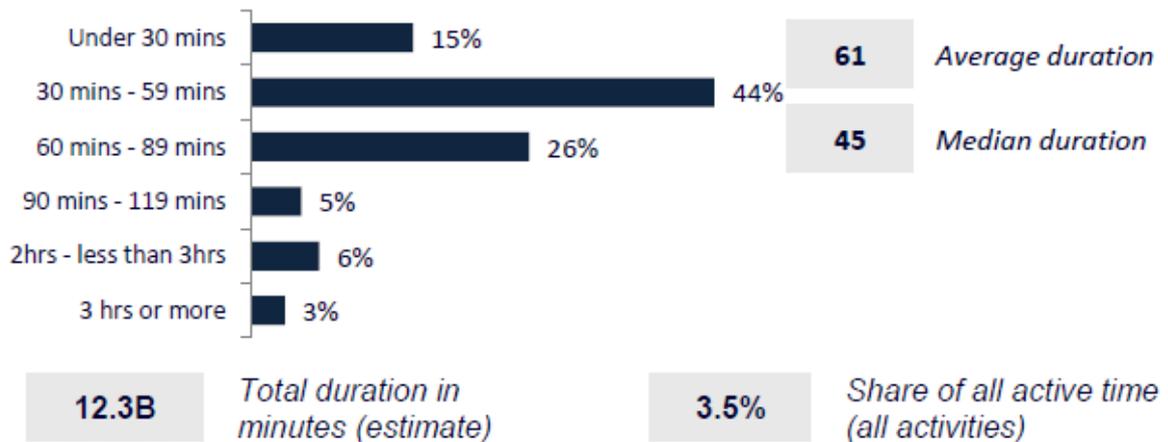
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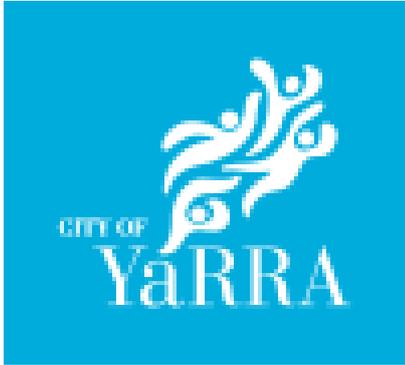
Participation Levels by Age and Gender



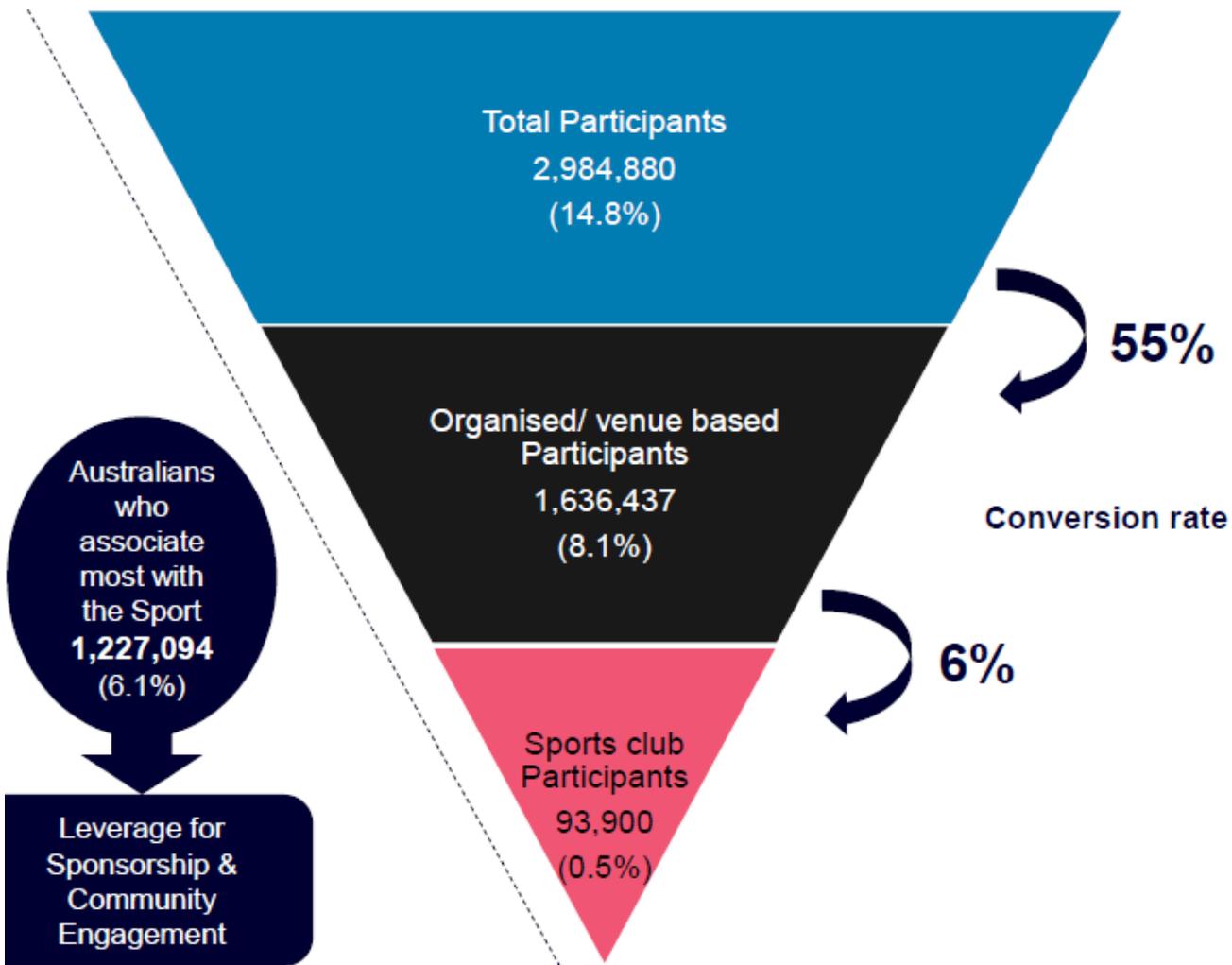
Participation Levels by Age and Gender



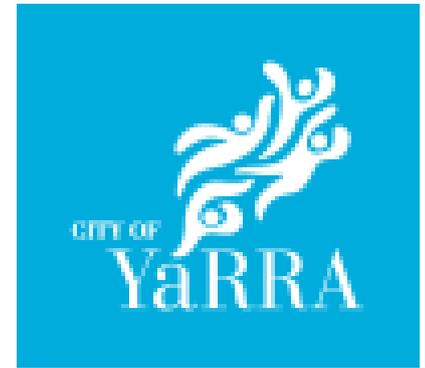
Aquatic Training Programs Review



Swimming Association & Participation Levels



Aquatic Training Programs Review



City of Yarra – Community Profile

The City of Yarra estimated resident population for 2018 is 98,521

The City of Yarra community profile provides demographic analysis for the City and its suburbs based on results from the 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991 Censuses of Population and Housing. The profile is updated with population estimates when the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) releases new figures.

Age of Population

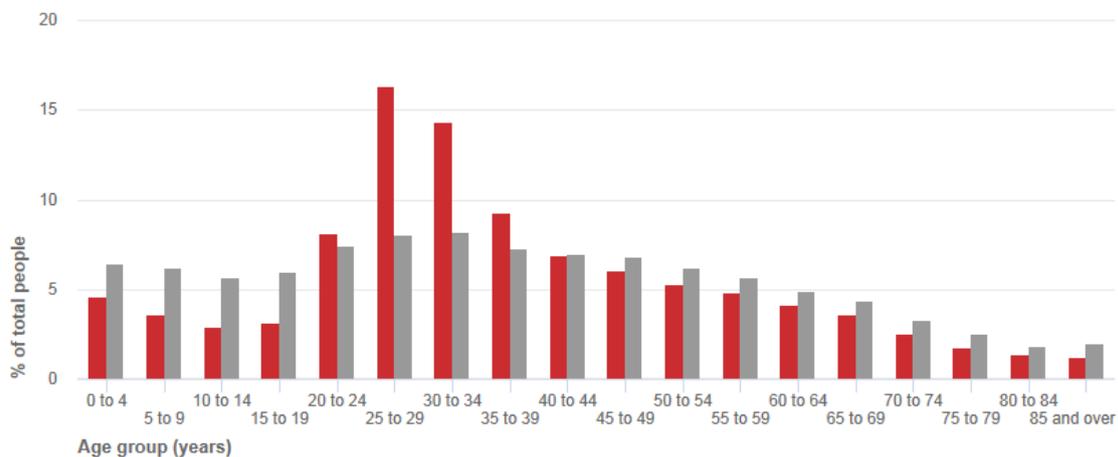
The age structure of the City of Yarra provides key insights into the level of demand for age based services and facilities. It is also an indicator of the City of Yarra's residential role and function and how it is likely to change in the future.

Age structure - five year age groups, 2016

export

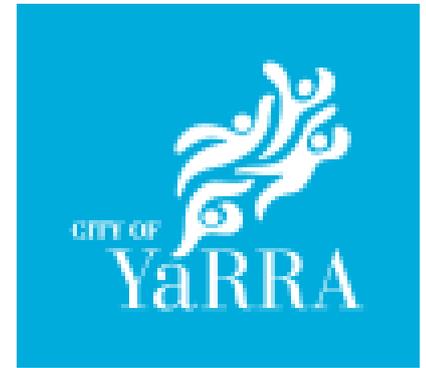
Total persons

■ City of Yarra ■ Greater Melbourne



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Dominant groups

Analysis of the five year age groups of the City of Yarra in 2016 compared to Greater Melbourne shows that there was a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (under 15) as well as a lower proportion of people in the older age groups (65+).

Overall, 11.2% of the population was aged between 0 and 15, and 10.5% were aged 65 years and over, compared with 18.3% and 14.0% respectively for Greater Melbourne.

The major differences between the age structure of the City of Yarra and Greater Melbourne were:

- A *larger* percentage of persons aged 25 to 29 (16.3% compared to 8.1%)
- A *larger* percentage of persons aged 30 to 34 (14.3% compared to 8.2%)
- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 15 to 19 (3.1% compared to 6.0%)
- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 10 to 14 (2.9% compared to 5.7%)

Emerging groups

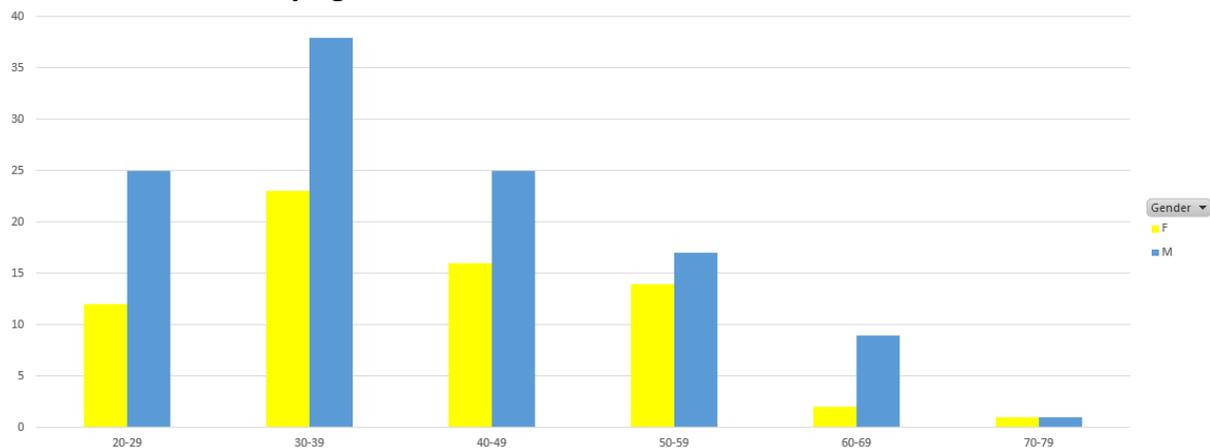
From 2011 to 2016, City of Yarra's population increased by 12,566 people (17.0%). This represents an average annual population change of 3.18% per year over the period.

The largest changes in age structure in this area between 2011 and 2016 were in the age groups:

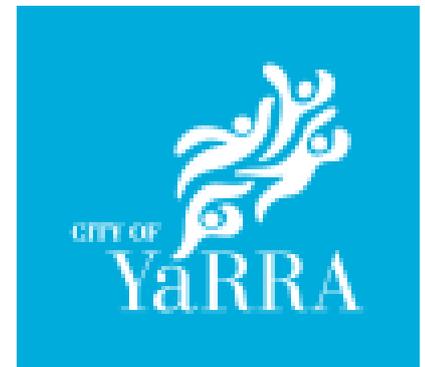
- 25 to 29 (+2,782 persons)
- 30 to 34 (+2,463 persons)
- 35 to 39 (+913 persons)
- 65 to 69 (+845 persons)

City of Yarra - Yarra Leisure Members Profile

Triathlon Members by Age and Gender

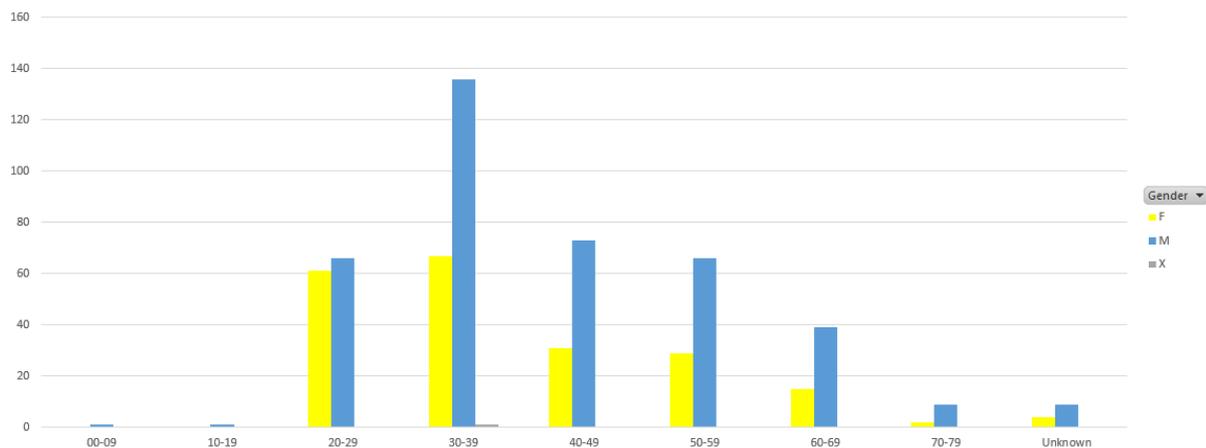


Aquatic Training Programs Review



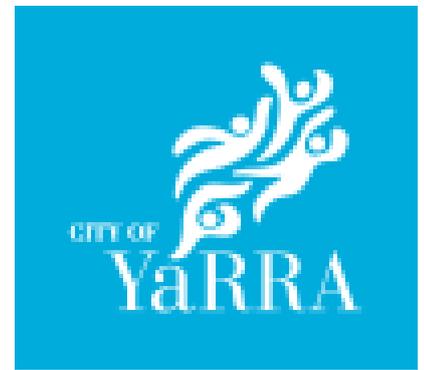
Age Group	F	M	Total
20-29	12	25	37
30-39	24	38	62
40-49	16	25	41
50-59	14	17	31
60-69	2	9	11
70-79	1	1	2
Grand Total	68	115	184

Aquatic Members by Age and Gender

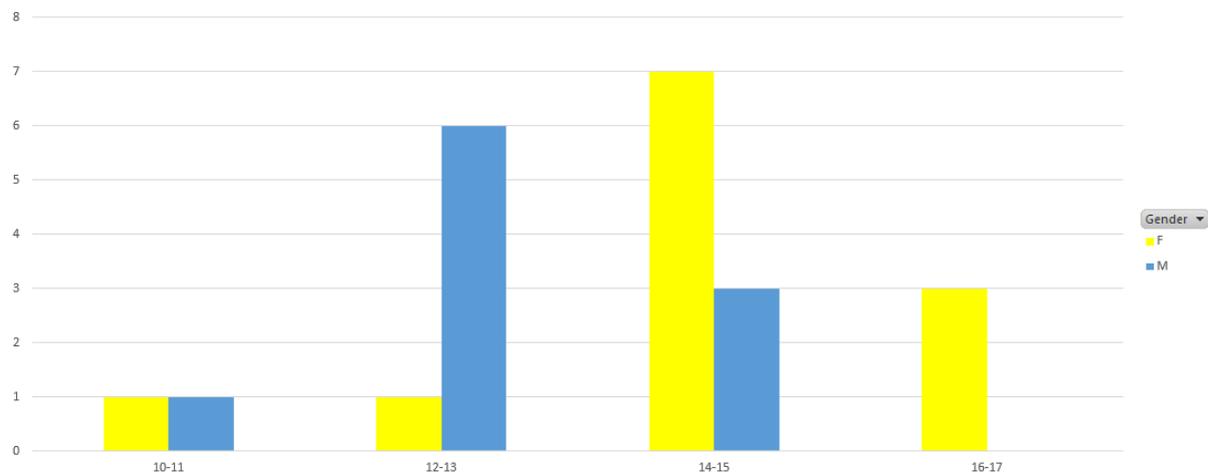


Age Group	F	M	X	Total
10-19		1		1
20-29	61	66		127
30-39	67	136	1	204
40-49	31	73		104
50-59	29	66		95
60-69	15	39		54
70-79	2	9		11
Unknown	4	9		13
Grand Total	209	399	1	609

Aquatic Training Programs Review

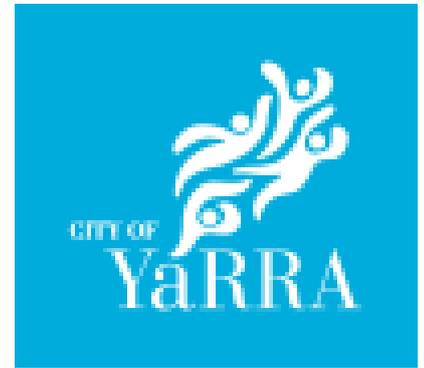


Open Age Squad Members by Age and Gender



Age Group	F	M	Total
10-11	1	1	2
12-13	1	6	7
14-15	7	3	10
16-17	3		3
Grand Total	12	10	22

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Findings

Overall, a combined total of 220 individuals participated in the consultation process.

1. Survey Results

190 participants undertook the survey with a very high completion rate of 77.4% (147 completed responses, 43 partial responses).

The main activity identified by respondents were;

1. 53% Recreational Swimming (100 responses)
2. 30% Triathlon Program (73 responses)
3. 8% Open Age Squads (15 responses).

The respondents identified their main leisure/recreation centre attendance as being;

1. 57% Fitzroy Swimming Pool (100 responses)
2. 31% Richmond Recreation Centre (55 responses)
3. 12% Collingwood Leisure Centre (22 responses).

The average session per week respondents are swimming is;

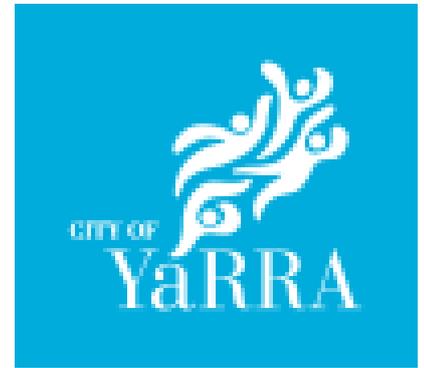
1. 2-3 times (48%)
2. 1-2 times (29%)
3. 4 or more time (20%).

The top three reasons for participating in the aquatic training programs at Yarra Leisure were;

1. Health
2. Fitness goals
3. Coaches.

80% of all respondents indicated a 'high' and 'very high' level of satisfaction with the overall timetable and training sessions offered.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Aquatic Sports Clubs

Half of the total respondents indicated that they were currently a member of a Yarra-based aquatic sporting club. Of these;

- 50% were members of Yarra Roughies
- 43% were members of Yarra Tri
- 5% were members of Inner City Aquatics (ICA)
- 30% of respondents had never been a member of a Yarra-based aquatic sporting club
- 16% had previously been a member of a Yarra-based aquatic sporting club.

85% of respondents who were not a member of a Yarra-based aquatic sporting club, had no intention to join one in the future. The main reason cited for not joining a club was, *'Not competing and therefore don't need to'*.

It was perceived by these respondents that club membership was solely a vehicle for eligibility to enter competitions. This notion is supported through club feedback sessions, where it was identified that competition-related benefits are often the primary or only tangible offering of each club.

The top three things identified that the aquatic training programs were doing well;

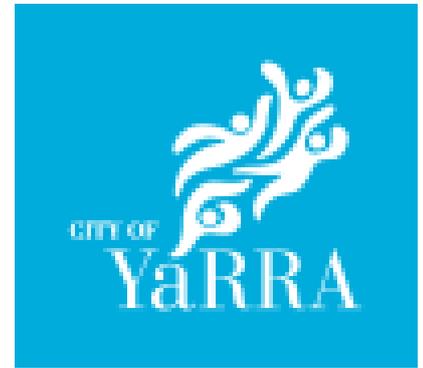
1. Coaches (90% of respondents agreeing that the coaching provided to them was of a quality standard)
2. Variety of Sessions (both timetabling and type of focus of session)
3. Quality of sessions.

The number one characteristic of a coach was, *'Motivating'*, followed by *'Approachable'* and *'Friendly'*. These characteristics were rated higher/above specific industry qualifications coaches may hold.

Top three improvement suggestions for the aquatic training programs were;

1. Coaching (more, consistent, ensure coaches understand the participants needs)
2. Sessions (clearer delineation with session differences, earlier, later, extra/more)
3. Coaches (secure coaches employment, retain, support).

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Program Membership

Some feedback noted the confusion about the name of the aquatic training program compared with the activity an individual wanted to do (i.e. swimming for fitness in a squad versus triathlon squad training). Consequently comments/feedback often stated, *'I am a swimmer, not a triathlete'*.

The aquatic training program identity theme flowed through to a variety of feedback including session type and focus, coach understanding reflected in session approach, delivery and timing of sessions.

Another major theme was that respondents sought a clearer and more easily understood membership type related specifically to squad swimming. Many comments noted a negative connection with the triathlon specific membership they, *'Had to'* purchase in order to train in the swimming squads. The majority of Triathlon members feel, *'Forced'* to take out this membership but aren't interested in attending the bicycle or running components of the fitness program.

Additionally, a desire for more individual stroke correction from coaches was an emerging theme.

Recreational Swimmer respondents

The feedback from self-identified recreational swimmers was overwhelmingly positive but consistently polarised (i.e. for as many respondents that praised the clean facility, excellent staff and water temperature, there were as many whose feedback suggested that these elements needed to improve).

- 77% of recreational swimmer respondents said they attended the pool to swim laps either one to two, or two to three times per week.
- There was a close split between time of the day chosen for swimming with early morning making up almost 40% of respondents, 34% at midday and almost 27% during the evening.
- 78% of recreational swimmers stated weekdays as the day most often attended to swim. The 'medium' speed lanes were the most common speed self-selected by over 46% of survey respondents.
- Over half of the respondents stated that there were always scheduled programs or lessons on during the time of their swim, with another 37% stating this occurred to them some of the time.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



- Many comments said that the scheduled programs or lessons affected their experience some of the time.
- Some lap swimmers reported feeling intimidated by the squad lanes, speed, rough water conditions and negative attitudes of squad members.
- Additionally, the volume of music associated with aqua exercise sessions was reported at times as being, *'Too loud'*.
- There was a recognition from many respondents that the consequence of structured programs is the crowding in public lanes. Most said this wasn't, *'A big deal'*, but something to continually manage. Most respondents found the on-line lap lane availability communications useful for helping to decide when to attend and swim.
- Friendly staff came out on top as the number one element Yarra Leisure were doing well, followed by the pool and facility itself. Respondents highly valued the affordable price of entry and the multi-visit pass option. Another strong theme that came through in the comments from this user type acknowledged the value placed on their safety by the lifeguards and overall supervision at the facilities.
- 67% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with the management of the lanes from staff. The number of lanes available for public lap swimming was the number one factor of importance to this group.

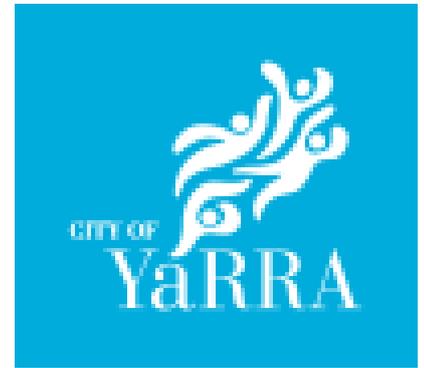
When asked, 65% of lap swimming respondents said they would consider joining an aquatic training program. When asked why they have not yet joined, the top three responses were;

1. Didn't know they existed / not sure who to ask
2. Not sure if I am good enough, fit enough, intimidated
3. Timing of sessions, availability.

For those respondents who answered that they were not interested in joining an aquatic training program, the top reasons why not, were;

1. Prefer to swim on own, at own times
2. Extra cost
3. Perception of how difficult it/session lengths, etc.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



The most highly rated aspects Yarra Leisure could do to improve the experience for recreation swimming respondents were;

1. Make sure the pool and changes rooms are clean
2. More lanes for swimming
3. Manage lane allocations and swimmer etiquette better
4. Open earlier.

2. Stakeholder Group Feedback Sessions

Yarra Roughies Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 17 December 2019.

The Yarra Roughies (Roughies) is a masters swimming club affiliated with Masters Swimming Victoria, whose focus is on both open water and pool swimming competitions. As a result of increased focus on open water competitions, Roughies have grown their club membership base to 50 members.

Roughies are an inclusive club, and with the current model, cost of participation is not seen as a barrier.

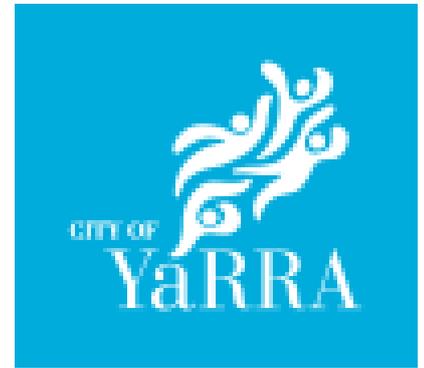
The operating model of Roughies is different to most other masters swimming clubs;

- Swimmers can participate in Roughies training without joining as a club member
- Other Masters swimming clubs hire lanes at pools for training sessions and contract coaches directly
- Consequently, as club coaching is not exclusive to Roughies, it can be challenging to convert regular participants to club members, if they have no desire to compete.

Roughies have had annual MOUs with Yarra Leisure in the past, which have lacked in detail;

- Other sports clubs in Yarra are on more comprehensive agreements - The terms and conditions of these agreements are designed to protect both the club and Yarra, provide clarity on roles and responsibilities and work towards best practice operations
- Yarra's Recreation Unit are currently reviewing and updating all Yarra sporting club agreements to establish a standardised suite whilst meeting the needs of different arrangements.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



The importance of *'good coaches'* was seen as a critical success factor with the most desirable attribute of a coaches rated *'personality'* above teaching skills.

'Affordability' was highlighted as a key concern if Roughies were to employ their own coaches. Further, the human resources involved in managing coaches/administrators was highlighted as challenge for any hiring organisation/club.

The current aquatic training program positives include;

- Squad caters for all abilities
- Squad covers a broad range of disciplines.

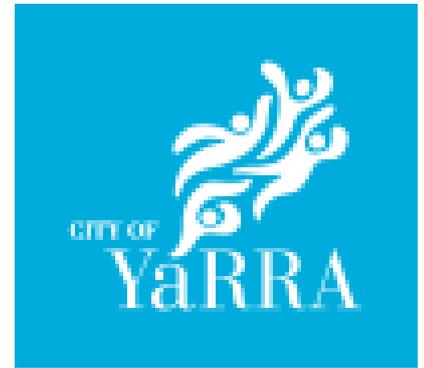
Top opportunities for aquatic training program improvement include;

1. Branding – confusing for customers (e.g. triathlon focus)
2. Swim squad only membership.

Fitzroy Swimming Pool has a strong swimming identity, with Richmond Recreation Centre being acknowledged as more, *'Triathlon-orientated'*. Many participants of the Yarra Triathlon Program do not realise (until informed) that there is a masters swimming club participating at the squad sessions.

Roughies are respectful that Yarra Triathlon Program is a community program and not a specific service for their club.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Yarra Tri Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 23 December 2019.

Yarra Tri is affiliated with Triathlon Australia and has members of all abilities, from beginners to national representatives with a vision to provide endurance participation opportunities for people to achieve fitness goals and competitive challenges.

Yarra Tri has stated that it is one of the most successful clubs in Australia, having produced four World Champions, many World Championship medalists, numerous Australian Champions and over a 100 athletes who have represented their countries at the World Championships. Perhaps more importantly they have helped members to improve their self-image, physical and mental health by training and competing in a supportive environment

Yarra Tri offer training sessions to members externally and in addition to the Yarra Leisure Triathlon training program;

- Open water swims
- Open road bicycle sessions.

Many members of Yarra Tri club choose not to compete and rather, participate in club activities for the added social benefits.

Yarra Tri partnership with Yarra Leisure is key to success of the club;

- The Yarra Leisure Triathlon Program offsets the workload of the volunteers, enabling the club to focus on other activities
- Yarra Tri currently has 63 members
- The sport of triathlon has evolved significantly since the club was established in 1996, both in popularity and risk management of disciplines.

The operating model of Yarra Tri is different to most other triathlon clubs;

- Triathletes can participate in club training (i.e. through the Yarra Leisure Triathlon Program) without joining as a club member
- Most other triathlon clubs hire lanes at pools for club training sessions and contract coaches directly, whether commercial or volunteer led
- Coaching in triathlon is split between commercial and volunteer models
 - Triathlon Australia recognise commercial operators under an affiliation model.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Yarra Tri have an MOU with Yarra Leisure, which lacks in detail;

- Other sports clubs in Yarra are on more comprehensive agreements - The terms and conditions of these agreements are designed to protect both the club and Yarra, provide clarity on roles and responsibilities and work towards best practice operations
- Yarra's Recreation Unit are currently reviewing and updating all Yarra sporting club agreements to establish a standardised suite whilst meeting the needs of different arrangements.

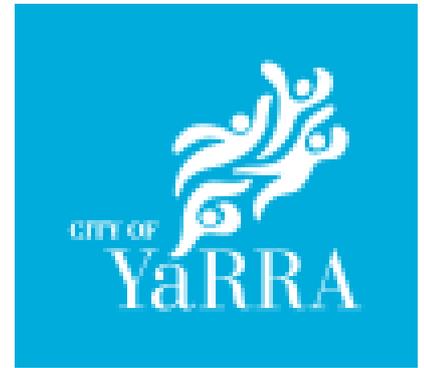
The importance of, '*Good coaches*' was discussed as pivotal to the success of the club. The top trait was the coach's ability to engage with people, including providing constructive feedback and empathy. Again, '*Personality*' was valued above teaching skills.

Current aquatic training program positives include; Good value for money and structure of sessions. The club's view is that participating in the program provides both development of technical skills and fitness, as well as fostering a sense of community and social wellbeing amongst participants.

Opportunities for program improvement included;

- Reinstating open water swim and open road bicycle sessions, which are seen as a requirement for a true, comprehensive triathlon training program
- Marketing of program, including delineation between Yarra Tri and Yarra Leisure membership, as participants of the Yarra Triathlon Program fail to understand they are not automatically members of Yarra Tri
- The Tri club's 'optimum' number of training sessions per week is recommended by the sport to be six to seven. The importance of triathlon athletes working on weaknesses, which is typically in the swimming discipline, was highlighted. However, it appears that less than 20% of the survey respondents train to the 'optimum' level. Instead, the overwhelming majority or survey respondents (80%) train between one to three times per week.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Inner City Aquatics (ICA) Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 16 January 2020.

ICA is a member of Swimming Victoria and has members of all abilities, from beginners to national representatives. ICA operate virtually with four committee members. The club does not have an existing strategy or a formal business plan. ICA does not have dedicated club facilities, which is considered a key challenge for the club. ICA currently has approximately 40 members (plus parents, who are non-swimming members);

- Membership is declining
- Two years ago the club had circa 100 members.

This can be further evidenced in the participation levels at a recent Metro North District Juniors competition in February 2020, where ICA was represented by the following club swimmers;

- Three swimmers in the 11 years and Under / from 165 swimmers across 12 clubs
- Seven swimmers in the 12 – 16 years / from 167 swimmers across 12 clubs.

2019 was dominated by challenges that negatively impacted the club. ICA is now rebuilding which includes growing membership base through committee planning and recreating a desirable environment for all;

- The atmosphere has changed at the club (previously highly positive)
- Members have a lack of peers to train with
- Previous issues hindered proactive planning on other club business.

ICA's partnership with Yarra Leisure is critical to the clubs viability. Elements working well for ICA include;

- Current Yarra Leisure coach is fundamental and contributes a considerable amount of effort and provides coach-led support at competitions
- Current club structure is different to the previous two aquatic based clubs in Yarra
- ICA committee are happy to accommodate the payment of a fee for additional coaching services (whereby ICA pays the coach to attend meets each year)
- Welcoming and friendly environment.

The main barrier ICA currently faces is retention and growth of membership. However, ICA are keen to recruit participants via swim school pathways, social activities and frequent club activities.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Program positives include;

- The current coach exhibits the desirable attributes of a coach that the club seeks. coaches are an important presence at events/competition in swimming
- Yarra Leisure provides good coaches who cater for squad and club participants
- Open to all the community and accessible by people with a disability.

Opportunities for improvement include;

- Linking ICA Club to a learn to swim program
- Social opportunities /space for club participants
- Club association with brand
- Growth of program participants (and club members) via strong pathway.

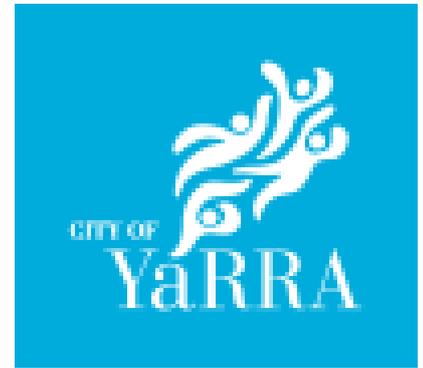
Yarra Leisure Tri Coaches Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 5 December 2019.

Overall the feedback received was varied, with coaches trying extremely hard to understand and meet participants'/customers' needs. For example, coaches identified their primary market as Triathlon, as well as every other type of person looking for swimming squad training. Whilst able to identify their customers'/participants' needs, they were unable to rank these in order of priority because the aquatic training program's objectives had changed from inception and was now unclear. Consequently, the collective overall perception of the aquatic training program's objectives was seen from two distinctly different angles - participation and wellbeing versus training and athletic performance. This conflict could be seen in every response (i.e. number of average weekly sessions recommended for a participant, the types of members included and the main objective of the program). Each response that elicited a triathlon specific and/or athletic performance focus had as many coaches identifying the opposite need/requirement.

Key requirements identified to deliver a successful aquatic training program were varied and discussions prioritised a lack of defined program focus. Overall, the coaching team were seeking more definition to the annual program, levels, session/s and planning approach to ensure clarity.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Yarra Leisure Open Age Coaches Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 10 January 2020.

Overall, the feedback was extremely positive. The Yarra Leisure Open Age coaching team feels supported by both Yarra Leisure and the ICA club. The majority of feedback linked to ideas to grow the program, streamline some aspects of session timetabling and requests for training equipment.

The relationship between the coaching team and Yarra Leisure was observed as positive with a clear objective to grow and improve the quality of the program and experience of participants.

Yarra Leisure Aquatic Leadership Staff Feedback

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 29 January 2020.

The Yarra Leisure Aquatic leadership team is knowledgeable on past and current stakeholder feedback related to the programming areas and identified the following issues;

1. Misalignment of changed aquatic training program objectives and the current name for the triathlon program (not adult swimming squads)
2. Lack of variation in triathlon session planning across all Yarra Leisure sites
3. Lack of focus on value for recreational swimmers
4. Lack of conversion of Learn To Swim to Open Age squad and low growth of this program
5. Overall confusion from staff, members, swimmers and public on all the club and program connections. This is seen as a barrier for entry.

3. Peak Sporting Association Feedback

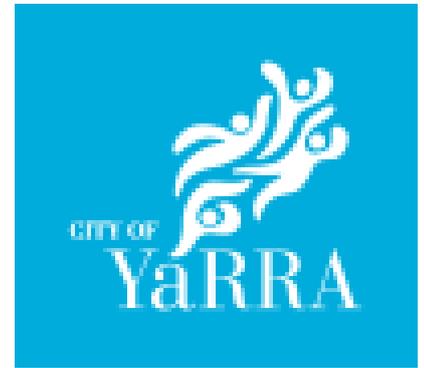
Swimming Victoria

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 5 March 2020.

Swimmers are generally be divided in to two cohorts:

- Participation only (non-club)
- Competition (club).

Aquatic Training Programs Review



There are currently 146 affiliated swimming clubs in Victoria. The competitive swimming season traditionally runs from September through to April. Swimming as a sport has a challenge with retaining members from the ages of 11 and 12. Swimming Victoria (SV) are exploring participation and retention models to change/challenge perceptions (i.e. don't have/need to train five days a week to participate competitively). Another misconception that currently exists as a result of Masters Swimming Victoria/Australia is that once you are an adult you technically have no reason to be involved with SV. However, there is no age limit to participate in SV Open competitions.

There are a number of pathway/talent development programs delivered by the sport;

- Highest level in states is the State Championships (age group or open)
- Qualification times are required for National Championships
- Participation fees at a competitive level are considered to be high
 - SV research shows average expenses to participate in competition can be upwards of \$5,000 per year. Typically consisting of;
 - Club fees - \$192
 - Squad fees - \$2,120
 - Entry fees - \$682
 - Swimwear and uniform - \$620
 - Equipment - \$450
 - Other expenses (i.e. travel) - \$890.

Victorian swimming clubs are not highly regulated. Clubs need to provide constitution when first register with SV. Once registered, every year clubs need to provide minutes of AGM and financials. Clubs are fined if they don't provide this.

SV's current licensing system is *Everproof*, which manages club qualifications including their Working With Children Checks (WWCC). The system links to Department of Justice and updates every 7 days. Clubs have access to this and the system is set up so clubs decide who needs WWCC or other qualifications. Compliance rate from clubs is generally low. However, it should be noted that ICA are 100% compliant for the 28 people, who all have WWCC.

SV rarely affiliate coaches as there is deemed to be no benefit for coaches in doing so. Coaches are insured through ASCTA (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association). ASCTA is a professional membership organisation responsible for ethical and educational standards of coaches. Coach Members of ASCTA are also members of Swimming Australia.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



SV affiliation benefits for swimmers include; insurance and access to competition and some discounts via commercial partners. SV offer affiliated clubs a series of webinars on strategic planning (register/subscribe for free).

The current ICA operating model (club fully utilising Council swimming program and coaches) is uncommon. Typically, clubs directly employ coaches and rent pool space.

A challenge for swimming clubs is finance, due to the fact the majority of coaches are paid;

- A high level estimate is less than 10% of coaches are volunteers
- Swimming coaches are required to spend significant time with athletes
 - Compared to other codes that have a much lower number of sessions per week
 - Swimming coaches are required to be present due to the technical elements.

Most swimming club social activity happens at training/in the pool (participants train with their peers). Lack of social elements is a challenge for swimming clubs as they are primarily an individual sport, rarely have pavilions/social space and have limited opportunities to generate revenue.

Both clubs and individuals pay to affiliate with SV. Individual fees 2019/20 are;

- Dry member - \$10
- Junior Swimmer (8 years and under) - \$111
- Swimmer (9-15 years) - \$123
- Senior swimmer (16+ years) - \$108

ICA club membership fee is \$110. ICA swimmers pay;

- \$110 + SV fee + Yarra Leisure Squad Fees + competition entry fees.

Comparing a larger club with full service (MLC Aquatic) club membership fee is \$122. Therefore, MLC swimmers pay;

- \$122 + SV fee + \$50pw squad fee + competition entry fees

Squad training fees are usually costed per term and depend on the number and level of sessions provided.

Competition fees are \$16 per race. Swimmers enter multiple races depending on their disciplines and will usually participate in four to five races per competition.

Some swimming clubs have collaborative relationships and others are fierce competitors. Swimmers can be members of multiple clubs.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



This means there is an opportunity for ICA to partner with other clubs that offer services they don't. ICA currently has 48 members (includes 23 dry members/guardians). SV has discretion to wave part affiliation fees to swimmers in this position. ICA could be a feeder club to development/elite pathway clubs. SV do not partner clubs so as to remain impartial/ non-biased but could guide clubs looking for additional/different services.

Triathlon Victoria

A stakeholder feedback session was held on 18 December 2019.

Triathlon Victoria (TV) noted that the Yarra Tri Club are '*highly unique*' insofar as the Club has access to a full triathlon training program with coaches fully funded by Yarra Leisure.

TV estimate there is a 50/50 split between private and volunteer run triathlon programs in the state. Although classified a club, Yarra Tri does not fit in to either category easily as it utilises a public/community program for training sessions.

TV and Triathlon Australia offer the following services to affiliated triathlon clubs;

- Resource provision
- Promotion
- Accreditation (events and coaches)
- Affiliation (clubs and private operators)
- Both clubs and individuals can affiliate with the State or National Sport Association
- General support.

Triathlon participation costs can be high depending on the level of investment and include;

- Competition entries
- Equipment/kit
- Specialist coaching fees
- Access to facilities
- Medical services (e.g. massage, physio)
- Coaching fees.

The cost can be a barrier to entry for many, particularly in relation to competition entry fees and the minimum start-up equipment required to outlay as an individual competitor.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



TV indicated that club/coach arrangements are complex in the sport due, in the main, to the high participation costs outlined above. It was also noted;

- Yarra's Triathlon Training Program is extremely affordable/'cheap' compared to other operators/providers
- Yarra's Triathlon Training Program provides employment opportunity for the sport
- Yarra Leisure contributes to the financial sustainability of the club
- Yarra Tri participates in a water safety initiative as a 'Champion Club' for TV.

TV is a peak body partner to the funding from Victorian Government '*play it safe by the water*' campaign. The partnership program aims to provide clubs access to funding and support to enable them to deliver best practice water safety in their open water swimming activities.

Requirements of all clubs going forward will be to log their aquatic activities on the specified app, WAATER, which is the tool to support Triathlon Australia's open water swim guidelines.

Impacts and Analysis

There are four key themes emerging from the consultation process as follows;

1. Aquatic training programs identities
2. Current club systems
3. Competing/conflicting interests
4. Facilities programming and operations

1. Aquatic Training Programs Identities

The core issue underlying the aquatic training programs seems to be one of identity.

Feedback received from all stakeholders (participants, non-participants, clubs, Yarra Leisure staff and contractors) is that the majority of participants in the Triathlon program do so in order to join an adult swimming fitness squad, not to train as a triathlete. This confusion, flows through all aspects of the program and can be seen to harm the experience for participants, communication and branding of the program. Further, it also appears to be the major barrier for entry to structured adult swim training at Yarra.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



This point is explained by a stakeholder comment in reference to the swimmer/coach dynamic;

- *'When the 'participants' are seen by a coach as a 'swimmer' who attends for a variety of reasons, then the sessions and camaraderie flow on positively'.*
- *'If a coach fails to see the participant beyond the lens of triathlon, this is where break downs may occur'.*

When recreational swimming survey participants were asked why they have not joined an aquatic training program, after they identified that they would, the responses were predominately; *'Didn't know', 'Can't work out how to join',* or even *'Is there is a program for me?'*.

Feedback was also received that demonstrated a variance of focus between training based on the different venues. For example, Richmond Recreation Centre coaches currently have a strong triathlon swim training focus, compared with Fitzroy Swimming Pool, where coaches take a broader swimming training focus.

In the feedback from program participants it appears that over time, unofficial lines of understanding about identity have developed, consequently resulting in the creation of a lack of cohesion amongst all stakeholders to the program. This unofficial understanding creates difficulties for the coaching team to act as a single cohesive unit and meet the needs of the varied customers/participants at each venue.

The identity issue is further compounded by the membership structure, with participants who only want to access swim squad training needing to pay for a premium membership to the triathlon program.

2. Current Club Systems

Yarra Leisure's current provision of service and system of operating with the three main aquatic-based sporting clubs is an outlier in the contemporary Australian sporting environment and a deviance from industry norms/practice. Yarra does not provide these services or systems for any other clubs of any other codes. Clubs, State and National Sporting Associations typically act as the training provider and/or development and pathway provider for sporting activities. Further to this, the current model as it stands does not provide for or allow newer or emerging clubs and sports within Yarra to access equal or similar arrangements, which creates an inequitable arrangement that may present a risk for Council.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Additionally, the MOU agreements for all aquatic-based clubs lack detail and consistency in comparison to agreements with other sporting clubs in Yarra. Whilst it is understood that these arrangements have been long standing agreements made at a time when the landscape was less restricted, this is not a sustainable or recommended practice for Council to continue with. Further, it is not an equitable, transparent arrangement that is consistent with Yarra's other sporting clubs.

Yarra's Recreation Unit provides advice and support for approximately 100 clubs across a wide range of sports. It is anticipated that the three aquatic based clubs would be aligned with all other sporting clubs and be managed and supported by the Recreation Unit.

3. Competing/Conflicting Interests

Potential conflicts of interest have been identified between individuals who have director or other roles on club committees whilst working as a paid coach/contractor for Yarra Leisure's aquatic training programs.

These arrangements, if not carefully managed, pose a risk for Yarra Leisure, particularly when there is an organisational need to review programming, programs and operations, as well as undertake confidential discussions in relation to employment, contracts, KPIs/performance, etc. Conflicts arise when there is an inconsistency in understanding of and separating roles, responsibilities, agendas, priorities and/or boundaries.

4 . Facilities Programming and Operations

Triathlon

Feedback received from survey respondents indicated that some swim squad sessions (predominately Richmond Recreation Centre based) are pitched too high for entry level swimmers. This was identified in several ways by respondents; session length of 90 minutes was off-putting, along with the warm-up distance of 1km average. Entry level or new starters often have a requirement to, '*Work up to this level*'. Over the years, Yarra Leisure have worked to bridge this gap through provision of stroke correction short five week courses and a shorter session called, Inter-swim. However, attendance for Inter-swim sessions has been poor, due in part to the overall lack of awareness, as well as lack of ability to offer enough session options to suit the varying individual needs. For example, there are only three inter-swim sessions to choose from across the seven day program at the three leisure centre sites.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



In comparison, some Fitzroy Swimming Pool swim squad sessions are highly attended, so much that a second/assistant coach and/or a second session is required to fully accommodate the need. Feedback from these sessions state that the popularity is due in part to the coach's ability to, '*Recruit emerging swimmers in to the squad*', '*Providing stroke correction over time*' and '*Making participants feel welcome*'. This is an example of the program working well.

The dry sessions of the overall triathlon program;

1. Ergo – a specialist style of spin/cycle training
2. Brick - focuses development of running and cycling combination
3. Run – consists of three training styles; run, track and long run.

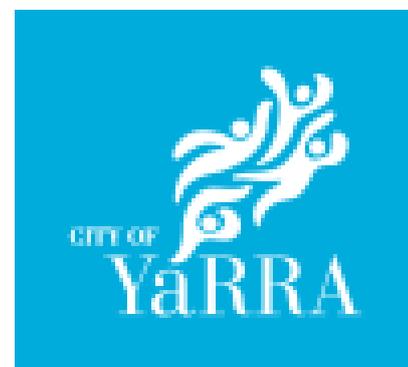
All dry sessions are underperforming in comparison to the swimming sessions (i.e. session occupancy below 20%). This is reflective of the declining number of program participants who are actually training for triathlons. The greatest need is overwhelmingly for swimming fitness sessions.

The survey feedback showed that a relatively small number of overall respondents (16/190) disagree or strongly disagree with satisfaction related to the '*ride*' aspect of the program and 7-9 out of 190 respondents disagree or strongly disagree with satisfaction related to the '*run*' component. This feedback is unsurprising as several session types were removed from the schedule in 2019 due to declining interest and the low occupancy rates. It should be noted that the Group Exercise program offering on the '*dry side*' of the leisure facilities apply a methodology whereby all sessions that consistently attract less than 40% occupancy rate over a specified period are cancelled and replaced with a more popular session type.

Sessions occupancy summary;

- Swim squad sessions averaged 40%+ occupancy in 2019
- All swim squad sessions have seen three years stability and/or significant increases
- All 'dry' session types (Brick, Ergo and Run types) do not achieve a 10% occupancy and continue to decline over the last three years.

Aquatic Training Programs Review



The below table outlines the average occupancy per session for each component of the triathlon training program over the last three years including the percentage increase (green) or decrease (red);

Program	Ave Occupancy %	2017	2018	2019	2019 vs 3-yr Ave Occupancy %
Brick	16.918	16.918	0.00	0.00	-16.92%
Tue	16.918	16.918	0.00	0.00	-16.92%
Ergo	12.356	17.362	13.75	7.001	-5.354%
Tue	13.544	21.527	16.38	6.865	-6.679%
Thu	11.693	15.279	12.69	7.106	-4.587%
Inter Swim	20.889	15.005	22.79	23.880	2.991%
Tue	22.888	7.260	26.68	29.483	6.595%
Thu	19.095	20.217	18.90	18.169	-0.926%
Inter Swim Squad	18.931	18.506	18.26	19.985	1.054%
Tue	19.025	18.506	18.26	20.283	1.258%
Thu	4.200	0	0.00	4.200	0.000%
Long Run	15.532	0	24.18	8.264	-7.268%
Fri	15.532	0	24.18	8.264	-7.268%
Run Squad	13.397	19.969	13.00	7.233	-6.165%
Mon	13.397	19.969	13.00	7.233	-6.165%
Swim Squad	31.164	26.260	28.17	40.484	9.320%
Mon	26.019	23.007	19.70	37.829	11.810%
Tue	34.488	28.540	30.73	53.102	18.614%
Wed	33.523	35.578	32.66	32.227	-1.296%
Thu	19.968	0.000	14.66	45.239	25.272%
Fri	35.748	36.584	34.76	35.988	0.241%
Sat	55.912	51.213	58.18	58.338	2.427%
Track Run	2.072	0.000	6.22	0.000	-2.072%
Wed	2.072	0.000	6.22	0.000	-2.072%
TOTAL	24.348	21.421	22.68	29.542	5.194%

Aquatic Training Programs Review



Open Age Squad

Currently Open Age Squads cater for 24 children in total.

Of the 190 survey respondents, 15 identified the Open Age Squad program as their main activity. Of these 15, two identified as current members of ICA, two had previously been a member of ICA, eight had never been a member of ICA and the remainder of the surveys were only partially completed. Comments related to why individuals haven't joined a club or ceased being a part of a club, were; *'The current squad has satisfied the child's goals to-date'*, *'Early morning training didn't appeal, nor the competitions'* and *'Little time for competitions'*.

The Open Age Squad program changed in January 2020 following the review of the Yarra Learn To Swim curriculum, which identified a significant issue whereby students who had completed the entire Yarra Learn To Swim program and entered the Open Age squad program were still not proficient in all four strokes or the competitive aspects of swimming. Yarra Leisure introduced Mini Squads to the top end of the Learn To Swim program, which aims to ensure all children are proficient in all competitive strokes and in all aspects of swimming squad training. The intent is to create a stronger swimmer who is ready for recommendation to the sport of swimming, training and a competitive environment, should they so desire.

Recreational Swimming

The contradicting feedback received from recreational swimmers is not surprising and is likely attributed to two main factors;

1. The individualistic nature of recreational swimming allows for the lens through which they experience the activity to be true to themselves, on any given entry; and
2. The variance to which recreational swimmers undertake their activity (slow, fast, hot and cold, indoor and outdoor) combined with the personal value being placed on these opposites.

Comments from some recreational swimmers in the survey noted that when squads are training, it negatively affects their experience. One major issue highlighted was the reduction of lanes and retraction of space for recreational swimmers, compared with a perceived inconsistent approach to the lanes allocated for squad participants. Additionally, many noted that the behavior of some squad participants was, *'intimidating'*, *'pushy'* and *'aggressive'*, which resulted in an unpleasant and/or negative experience for recreational swimmers.

There is a clear need to ensure an improved balance of peak and off-peak recreational swimming options to the Yarra community.

Recommendations

Program:	Issue / Opportunity:	Feedback Source:	Recommendation:
Triathlon	Confused identity / creating barrier for participation	Survey respondents, Yarra Roughies, Coaches workshop, staff workshop	1. Upon re-opening all Leisure venues, introduce weekly instructor-led adult swimming 'squad'/fitness sessions at all Yarra Leisure venues.
			2. Situate the current adult swimming 'squad'/fitness sessions within the existing Group Fitness Exercise Timetable.
			3. Clarify aquatic training programs identity to reduce confusion.
			4. Refer pathway and elite level participants to sporting clubs for high level and competition support in their sport of choice.
			5. Continue to work with State Sporting Associations so as to be able to present appropriate options and referrals to participants.
			6. Adult swimming 'squad'/fitness sessions to cater to a range of levels of swimming ability and fitness levels within the Group Fitness offering; 1 – Beginner/New/Emerging 2 – Intermediate/Developing 3 – Advanced/Experienced. Swimming ability/fitness levels may be offered in separate squad sessions, and/or be included in separate lane allocations with multiple levels catered for in a single squad session.
	Programs to suit varying fitness and ability levels	Survey respondents, Coaches workshop, staff workshop	

			7. Work with coaches to develop training plans for each level of adult swimming 'squad' and fitness level to support a cohesive delivery to participants across sites and sessions.
	Individual stroke correction advice	Survey respondents, Coaches workshop, staff workshop	8. Work with coaches to update existing stroke correction/improvement courses, which can support participation in the adult swimming fitness sessions.
			9. Private swimming tuition would remain available for those individuals looking for tailored needs.
	Squad session availability	Survey respondents, Coaches workshop, staff workshop	10. Ensure options continue to be available for adult swimming sessions in the early morning, evening and daytime across all venues to support equitable access.
			11. Offer back-to-back sessions during in-demand times to enable greater access and participation (i.e. Saturday morning).
			12. Extended facility opening hours to align all facilities during peak seasonal times and therefore cater for participation needs to remain in place.
	High cost of membership type	Survey respondents and Club workshops	13. Adult swimming 'squad'/fitness sessions to be included in the full Yarra Leisure membership type, to align it with all other Group Fitness Exercise programs and therefore, reduce costs to participants and barriers to participation.
	Lack of support to coaching team	Survey respondents, Club workshop, Coaching workshop	14. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop instructor/coach terms and conditions tailored for swimming 'squad'/fitness training environments. ii. Continue implementation of the swim coach "framework" which outlines minimum meeting, training, communication and other key check point timeframes across a year.

			iii. Recruit additional coaches to further support the program changes, level expansion and to provide adequate coverage across the team during periods of leave.
			15. Foster and develop a cohesive coaching team that provides swimming squad fitness training, stroke correction/improvement and private tuition to participants.
	Improve communication methods, frequency and channels amongst participants	Survey respondents, Club workshops, staff workshop	16. A new Workforce Management System, Deputy, and POS system, Perfect Gym, will be implemented by Yarra Leisure in June 2020 that will facilitate meaningful communication and engagement with both participants and staff.
Open Age Squad	Linking Open Age Squads to Yarra Leisure Learn To Swim program	Survey respondents, staff workshop	17. Following a review of the Yarra Leisure Learn To Swim curriculum and advice from Swimming Victoria and aquatic industry experts, 'Mini Squads' were introduced to the program and Open Age Squad members successfully transferred across in January 2020 in order to ensure all children will be proficient in all competitive strokes and in all aspects of swimming squad training.
			18. Yarra Leisure engage a third party to deliver Junior/Senior Swimming Squad pathway and elite level programs per industry standards/norms.
			19. Continue working with the aquatics clubs, State Associations and aquatic industry experts to develop and encourage club-led programming in the pathway and competition space.
	Social spaces for club to access	Club workshop	20. Align the aquatics clubs with all clubs within the municipality so that they can be advised, managed and supported by Yarra's Recreation Unit including the provision of information to access

			community grants, allocations and other forms of assistance offered to support sustainable clubs.
Recreational swimming	Improved management of lane allocation	Survey respondents, staff workshop	21. The POS system, Perfect Gym, being implemented by Yarra Leisure in June 2020 will facilitate an up-to-date lap lane availability back-end processes thus enabling the publishing and communication of lap lane availability across the three leisure facilities in real time.
	Improved lane management/etiquette techniques	Survey respondents, staff workshop	22. Continue Yarra Leisure training and development programs for Lifeguards, Customer Service staff and instructors/coaches to grow skills in management of lanes; effective communication, conflict resolution, effective decision-making, etc.
	Uncertainty/intimidation about joining training programs / bettering their skills	Survey respondents	23. Yarra Leisure's Member Experience and Aquatic Program teams continue to develop marketing, communications and support materials so that recreational swimmers gain the most from their swimming at Yarra.
	Cleanliness and presentation of facilities	Survey respondents	24. Per the Platinum Pools Internal Audit Process, review the Facility Inspection processes to ensure regular cleaning, spot cleaning and peak period cleaning requirements are continually monitored with any opportunities for improvement logged as tasks.
Sporting Clubs	Lack of rigor to MOU system	Clubs workshops, staff workshops	25. Complete the alignment of aquatics clubs with all clubs within the municipality to the standard Yarra Hire Agreement model by October 2020, led by Yarra's Recreation Unit so that they can be advised, managed and supported in line with City of Yarra practice,

			community grant opportunities and other key processes offered to support sustainable clubs
	Marketing and communication opportunities with clubs	Clubs workshops, staff workshops	26. In line with City of Yarra practice, the Recreation Unit will work with all aquatics clubs during the Agreement development period to build communications plans, referral information and updated club information so that the local community can find out about aquatic clubs, programs and services in the municipality.