

ITEM NO: 1

SUBJECT: POOL HOURS DURING SUMMER HEAT WAVES

FILE NO: F11894 - 19/165168

Delivery Program Link

Principal Activity: Civic Leadership

Service: Governance and Risk

Recommendation:

That the Council delegates to the Chief Executive Officer the authority to extend operating hours at Blue Mountains Leisure Centres during the event of forecasted hotter than average weather as detailed in this report.

Mayoral Minute**Background provided by Councillor**

Nil

Councillor comment on funding

Nil

Operational response

Extending the hours of operation at Blue Mountains Leisure Centres during periods of high temperatures is supported as it benefits the community and promotes a healthy lifestyle and wellbeing for the residents of the Blue Mountains.

Extending the operating hours based on temperature does present operational challenges as it is essential that the centres are operated to comply with the required guidelines. Team members working on these days are operating in high temperatures and as a duty of care for the team it is necessary to bring in additional staff to enable safe supervision and adequate breaks for team members. The availability of team members to assist in delivering extended hours may on occasion present an issue as this requirement will occur on an ad-hoc basis. Other operational activities such as cleaning will also need to be reprogrammed at short notice.

For the reasons above it is proposed that extended operating hours will be considered based on forecasted temperatures so the relevant planning can occur to ensure staff can be rostered on and cleaning schedules can be amended.

Application of Extended Opening Hours

It is recommended that the application of extended hours will be targeted and generally apply during the summer months (December, January and February).

A targeted approach would see Council generally apply extended opening for weekends and school holiday periods, however it will be beneficial to have the flexibility to extend opening outside of these times during lengthy periods heat.

The facilities do have a program of weekly bookings including swimming and waterpolo club events and will not be able to extend opening times during periods of bookings. These bookings generally occur during the week and outside of school holidays. There are also facilities that do not have suitable lighting to continue operations after sunset.

Due to operating and safety issues the extended hours could be applied to the following centres as detailed in the table below.

| Centre | Current Summer Season Close | Possible Hot Weather Close |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Glenbrook Swim Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7pm Monday to Friday • 7pm Saturday & Sunday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9pm Tuesday and Thursday • 9pm Saturday & Sunday |
| Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8pm Monday to Friday • 6pm Saturday and Sunday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9pm Mon, Tues, Wed, Friday • 9pm Saturday and Sunday |
| Lawson Swim Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8pm Monday to Thursday • 6pm Fridays • 8pm Saturday and Sunday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9pm Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs • 9pm Saturday and Sunday |
| Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre | Indoor Aquatic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8pm Monday to Friday • 6pm Saturday and Sunday Outdoor Aquatic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7pm Monday to Friday • 6pm Saturday and Sunday | Indoor Aquatic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9pm Monday to Friday • 9pm Saturday and Sunday Outdoor Aquatic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8pm Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs • 8pm Saturday and Sunday |
| Blackheath Pool | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday to Friday 7:00am – 6:30pm • Weekend & Public Holidays 9:30am – 6:30pm Extended hours already in place for an 8pm close Fridays and Saturdays during the Christmas school holiday period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8pm Monday to Friday • 8pm Weekends |

There may be occasions when Council is unable to provide adequate staffing levels to enable the extended operating hours across all of the Councils aquatic facilities. These occasions would be uncommon however may occur if the heat wave was extended over many days.

It is recommended that staff have the discretion to close the centres early should patronage be low. This may be as a result of an unexpected change in weather conditions, storms, cool change etc. and it is simply not practical to continue operating the extended hours.

Financial Implications

There would be a small increase in staffing costs that may be covered by additional visitor entry fees. The extension of the operating hours does provide an opportunity to positively advertise and actively market the centres on social media which will encourage visitation and the take up of memberships.

Alignment with the Delivery Program Operational Plan

This approach would meet with the strategies aligned to the Care objective 3.2 which are:

- 3.2a - Facilitate community access to recreational a sporting services and facilities that meet needs, and support health, wellbeing and an active lifestyle; and

- 3.2b - Support increased community participation in physically active, fit and social lifestyles, including the provision of supporting infrastructure.

Furthermore the implementation of this approach is supported in the aquatic and leisure centers service 4 year focus which states:

- Identify and promote active living opportunities in the Blue Mountains;
- Implement the Open Space and Recreation Strategy to ensure the leisure and aquatic facilities meet the current and future needs of the community; and
- Continue to develop and refine programs to meet the changing needs of our community.

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