



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PURPOSE OF THE THAMES AND WIDER SUB-REGION AQUATIC PROVISION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Assess the needs for future aquatic provision in Thames and the wider sub-region acknowledging there has already been a commitment to relocate Thames Centennial Pool.

KEY DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS

The key development drivers have already been clearly established following a decade of previous work.

IMPENDING CLOSURE OF THAMES CENTENNIAL POOL

Thames Centennial Pool is located on an urupa (burial ground) and under the agreement between Ngāti Maru and Thames-Coromandel District Council, it has been agreed the facility will be relocated by 2027 and the land returned to Ngāti Maru. At 50 years old the Thames Centennial Pool is reaching the end of its useful life and investment would have been needed to address its condition in the very near future.

WAIKATO REGIONAL AQUATIC FACILITIES PLAN 2017

Issues with current aquatic provision in the Waikato Region:

- Limited access to year-round indoor water at the local level.
- Aging facility network.
- Lack of flexible, warm water and learn to swim provision.
- Growing aging population require access to warm, year-round water.
- **Key gaps:** TCDC / Hauraki DC provision of year-round facilities, replacement of aging assets and meet needs of an aging population.
- **Recommends:** additional 987m² of pool area to serve both districts developed through a partnership approach with a focus on meeting the needs of an aging population.
- New facilities include flexible / future-proof spaces.
- Include learn to swim, warmer programme water and income generation within aquatic facilities.
- Careful balance between competition/training and other aquatic users.

OTHER STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In addition to the Waikato Regional Aquatic Facilities Plan, the needs assessment has been undertaken against the backdrop of the following strategic context.

FUNDING

TCDC LONG-TERM PLAN 2021-2031

- A vibrant district, A connected district, A sustainable district.
- Funding for aquatic like for like development 2025-2026.

SPATIAL

THAMES & SURROUNDS DRAFT SPATIAL PLAN

- Three Major Challenges:
- 1) More Housing.
- 2) Economic Development.
- 3) Coastal inundation - Shoreline Management Plan.

SPORT

THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT SPORT & ACTIVE RECREATION PLAN

- Priority action to investigate aquatic provision.

HAURAKI

LONG-TERM PLAN 2021-2031

- Considering options to provide funds for transport, to enable people to travel to a sub-regional aquatic facilities (e.g., Thames) when the outdoor pools are closed.

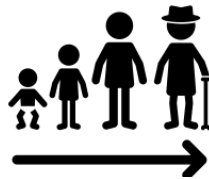
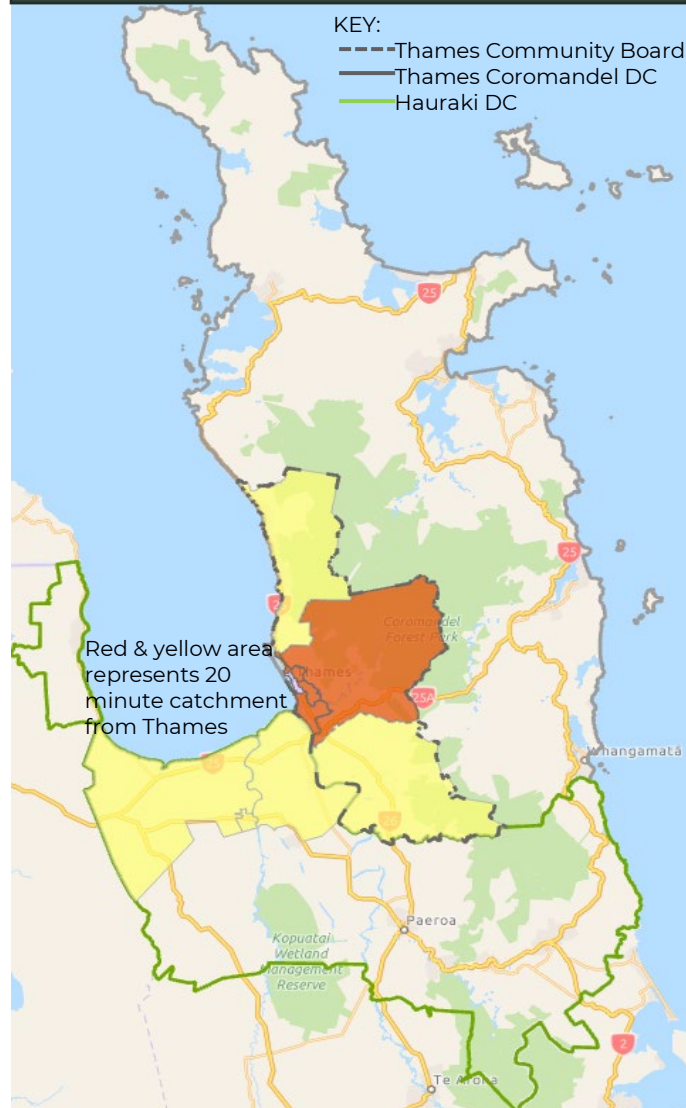
REGION

WAIKATO REGIONAL ACTIVE SPACES PLAN

- Strategic framework for facility planning and optimisation.
- Encourages collaboration.

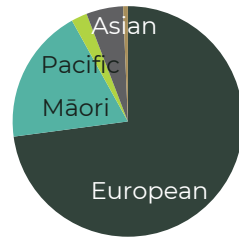
DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

THAMES 20MIN CATCHMENT	SUB-REGION
2018 14,616	2018 49,917
2048 15,210	2048 54,600



AGING PROFILE

People over 65 years are forecast to increase by 32% in Thame catchment and sub-region by 2048.



ETHNICITY PROFILE

Thames Town has a higher proportion of Māori compared to the district and New Zealand. Forecast for more Māori to live in Thames.

MEDIAN INCOME

Thames Town median income is \$25,560 indicating high socio-economic constraints.

THAMES CENTENNIAL POOL

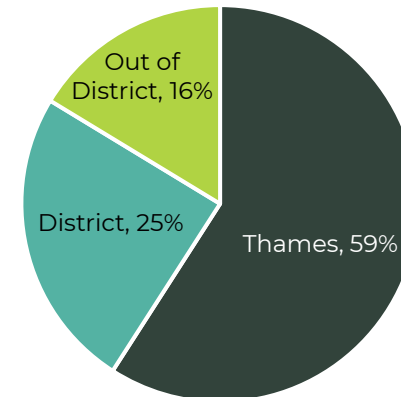


Thames Centennial Pool was constructed in 1970s by a group of passionate residents, with the building added in 1973. It includes:

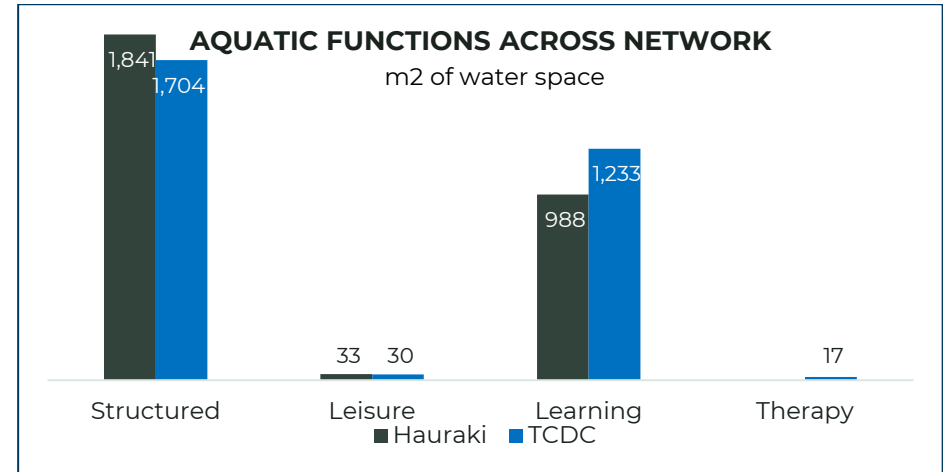
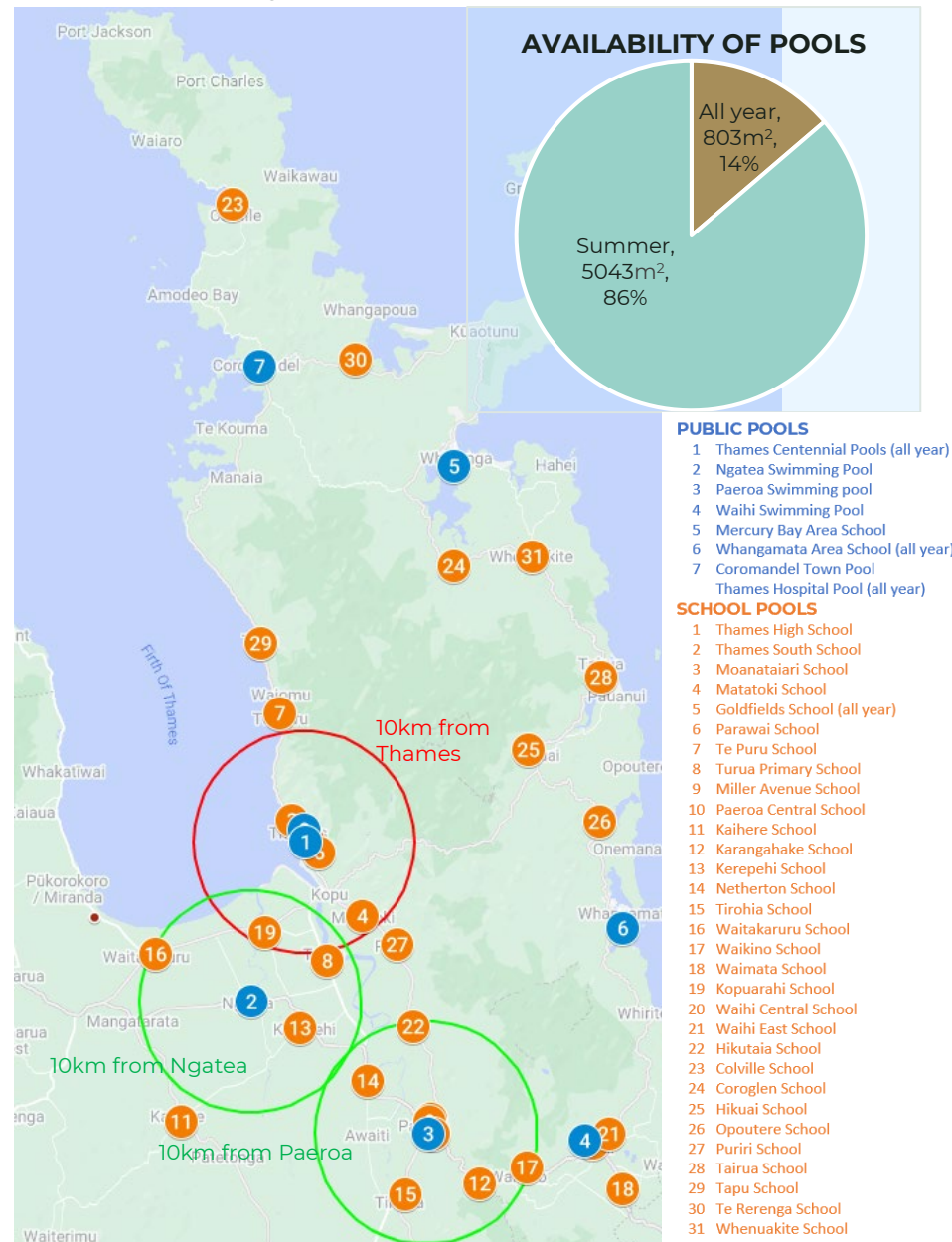
- 25m x 7 lane outdoor heated pool at 28 degrees.
- A small outdoor splash-pad (recently added).
- One building housing changing rooms, office and plantroom on the lower level and grandstand and clubroom on the upper floor.
- Set in a park setting with grass and ample storage facilities.

Historically, attracted 30,000 visits per annum, but this has declined in the last few years due to the Covid Pandemic. Learn to swim accounts for 30% of visits, followed by squad swimming (22%) and concessions (13%).

HOME LOCATION OF POOL VISITS 2020-2022



SUB-REGIONAL AQUATIC NETWORK



The map shows all public pools (blue dots) and school pools (orange dots) along with 10km distance circles for pools in Thames, Ngatea and Paeroa.

Insights on sub-region aquatic provision:

- The aquatic network across Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki is almost exclusively outdoor and available only in summer months. This means the community misses out on aquatic opportunities in the winter months.
- Only four pools in the sub-region are available all year (14% of the water-space): Thames Centennial Pool and Whangamata Pool (both outdoor heated), Goldfields Pool (indoor learning) and Thames Hospital Pool (indoor therapy).
- More than half the network (54%) is in school pools. Many school pools are aging with most built between 1920 and 1970. This represents a significant risk to asset failure and loss of provision.
- The network's provision is dominated by structured and learning pools with hardly any provision of leisure or therapy pools. Given the aging population, the lack of therapy options is a significant gap, as is lack of leisure provision for children, youth, and families.
- The network's learning function is almost exclusively located in school pools. While learn to swim does occur in structured pools, the depth is often not suited to learning and portable in-water platforms are used. Given the age of the school pools, this represents a significant risk of declining provision for the development of the essential life-skill.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

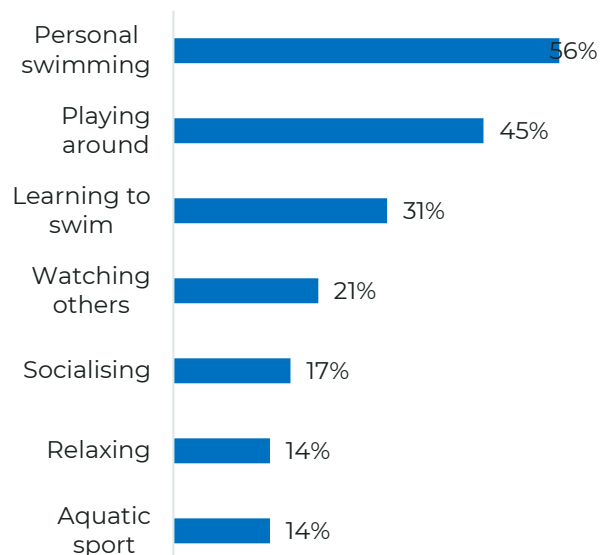
Pool, 347 Sports, 267 **494 total responses**

88% of respondents used Thames Centennial Pool, 12% used other pools. Thames Pool respondents use other pools, 16% Ngatea Pool, 5% Paeroa Pool and 2% others. 10% of Thames Pool respondents came from outside the local 20 minute catchment.

HOME LOCATIONS OF RESPONDENTS

	% THAMES POOL USERS	% ALL POOL USERS
Thames Town	72	68
Wider Thames 20m Catchment	16	15
Other Hauraki District	6	8
Other Thames-Coromandel District	4	9
Beyond Local Districts	0	1

ACTIVITIES AT THAMES POOL



LIKE ABOUT THAMES POOL

38% convenient location.
23% friendly staff.
19% heated pool.

DON'T LIKE ABOUT THAMES POOL

39% cold experience.
28% outdoor pool.
19% no cover.
16% run-down.

90% SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED AQUATIC PROVISION IN THAMES

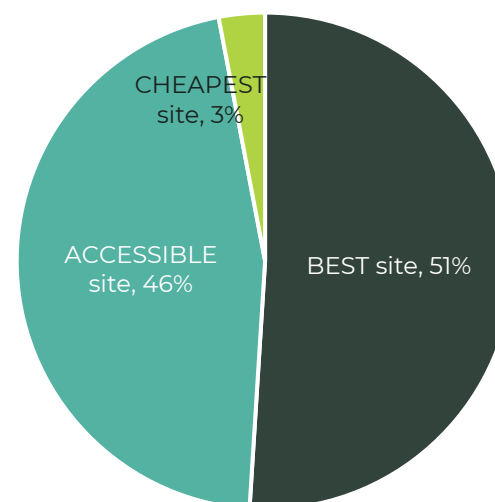
IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES / 5

Activity	Score	Notes
Personal swimming	4.09	Future desired activities
Learn to swim	4.05	
Playing around	3.80	
Relaxing	3.74	
Aquatic sport	3.57	
Socialising	3.44	

IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE FACILITIES / 5

Facility	Score	Notes
Learn to swim	4.11	Clear priorities for local aquatic provision
Lap pool	4.07	
Shallow pool	4.02	
Indoor pools	4.01	
Outdoor areas	3.86	Desire for sub-regional aquatic provision
Hydro pool	3.4	
Deep pool	3.34	
Splash-pad	3.26	
Spa pool	3.18	
Function area	3.14	

SITE SELECTION



LOCATION IS CRITICAL

Need to identify a site that is both the best site for a swimming pool and is accessible to the community.

Being free from the risk of flooding is also another factor.

CONCLUSIONS

This needs assessment has been undertaken to understand the need for improved aquatic provision facilities in Thames. The drivers for development have already been clearly established through over a decade of previous work.

DRIVER 1: IMPENDING CLOSURE OF THAMES CENTENNIAL POOL

The Thames Centennial Pool is located on an urupa (burial ground) and under the agreement between Ngāti Maru and Thames-Coromandel District Council, it has been agreed the facility will be relocated by 2027 and the land returned to Ngāti Maru. At 50 years old the Thames Centennial Pool is reaching the end of its useful life and investment would have been needed to address its condition in the very near future.

DRIVER 2: GAP IN PROVISION OF ALL-YEAR AQUATIC PROVISION

The Waikato Regional Aquatic Plan 2017 (supported by other investigation work) confirms under-supply of all-year aquatic provision in the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki Districts. The Plan recommends additional 987m² of pool area to serve both districts developed through a partnership approach with a focus on meeting the needs of an aging population.

KEY QUESTION: SUB-REGIONAL VERSUS LOCAL PROVISION

A key question identified in this needs assessment is resolving the purpose of the facility to serve either a local or sub-regional catchment. The Waikato Regional Aquatic Facility Plan provides clear direction to consider a facility to service the entire sub-region and developed in partnership with Hauraki District Council.

There is good evidence to support a sub-regional approach with Thames Centennial Pool already appearing to perform a sub-regional function with 60% of visits from Thames and 40% from a wider catchment.

However, a sub-regional approach suggests a partnership with Hauraki District Council to be effective. To enable Hauraki to consider this question, analysis of the location, scope and cost of potential sub-regional aquatic facility is required to provide the robust information to inform both Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki's decision-making. It is recommended this work is undertaken in the feasibility study and is shared with Hauraki District Council to support their conclusion about a potential partnership.

INDOOR POOL

Regardless of whether the pool is sub-regional or local, there is a clear call for quality indoor aquatic provision for all-year access. The minimum scope to serve the local catchment, there is strong support to provide:

- Learn to swim for children and adults.
- Structured pool which provides for personal swimming (to provide for fitness, health, and well-being) and aquatic sport training.
- Casual play opportunities for families, children, and youth.

For a sub-regional facility, consideration of:

- More substantial provision for aquatic sport activities.
- Hydrotherapy options including a spa and/or hydrotherapy pool.
- Leisure features to ensure the facility provides for a wide cross-section of the community, recognising the current aquatic network has almost no leisure aquatic provision.

AGING POPULATION

As Thames and the sub-region is forecast to become increasingly older, it is important to include appropriate warm water and all-pool accessibility to cater for this age-group.

LOCATION IS CRITICAL

Finding a site that is accessible and the best site for an aquatic facility is critical, which is also free from flooding risk.

AFFORDABILITY

Given the socio-demographic make-up of the local and sub-regional catchment, the affordability of aquatic provision, in terms of the capital cost, the ongoing operational cost, the cost of entry and the cost of transport are all critical elements to the success of future aquatic provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Thames Aquatic Facilities Needs Assessment recommends:

1. The Thames-Coromandel District Council endorse the key drivers for aquatic development are:
 - The Thames Centennial Pool is located on a urupa and the Council has agreed with Ngati Maru to relocate the facility by 2027 recognising the facility is coming to the end of its useful life at over 50 years old.
 - The Waikato Regional Aquatic Plan 2017 recommends development of sub-regional aquatic provision to serve Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki Districts developed through a partnership approach, with a focus on meeting the needs of an aging population.
2. While the needs assessment has found there is good evidence to support Thames being the location for a sub-regional aquatic facility, there needs to be further consideration and discussion with Hauraki District Council to determine if future aquatic provision in Thames should be scaled to serve a sub-regional or local catchment.
3. The next stage of the process, being the Thames Aquatic Facilities Feasibility Study should consider the location, scope, and cost of sub-regional versus local aquatic provision.
4. The analysis in the feasibility study should be shared with Hauraki District Council to help inform potential partnership discussions and decisions regarding sub-regional aquatic provision.

5. Thames-Coromandel District Council adopts the following key success factors to inform the next stage of considerations in the feasibility study.

SUB-REGIONAL CONSIDERATION

Test as the first priority, the potential location, scope and scale of sub-regional provision compared with local provision. Engage with Hauraki District Council and complete financial analysis to inform this decision-making.

BEST AND MOST ACCESSIBLE LOCATION

Find the best and most accessible location for aquatic provision, whether local or sub-regional, which is not at risk of flooding.

INDOOR QUALITY PROVISION

Indoor all-year provision which provides opportunities for learn to swim, personal swimming, aquatic training, and casual play. If sub-regional provision is determined, then consideration of aquatic sport, hydrotherapy, and leisure provision.

DIVERSE COMMUNITY NEEDS

Reflecting on the aging population now and into the future ensure there is sufficient warm water provision to suit the needs of older people, and taking account of the needs of families, children, and youth.

COMPLEMENTARY

Ensure there is a range of complementary amenities to support high use of the aquatic facility.

AFFORDABILITY

The goal is delivering the most affordable development, both in terms of the capital cost to develop facilities, the on-going affordability to maintain and operate facilities and the cost for users to access aquatic opportunities.