WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

WHITEHORSE

Leisure Services Engagement 2024

What you told us



Leisure Services Engagement 2024

Executive summary

This engagement sought to understand the needs and wants of the Whitehorse community in the delivery of programs and services at Aqualink Box Hill and Aqualink Nunawading to help shape decisions regarding a future operating model.

The engagement ran for six weeks from the 22 January 2024 and provided a number of opportunities for participants to get involved, including:

- An online survey
- A total of eight pop-ups at a variety of locations (Aqualink Box Hill and Aqualink Nunawading, Brentford Square Shopping Mall, Box Hill Mall, Nunawading Community Hub and Sportlink).
- Two community focus groups
- Two sessions with Leisure Leadership staff.

Approximately 2,536 people participated in the engagement, with representation from members, non-members and casual users, current and former members of clubs and organisations that use the facility (including Surrey Park Swim Club and Nunawading Swim Club), and current staff.

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Where it was promoted

Engagement promotion

The engagement program was promoted on various channels, including eNewsletters, the January and February editions of Whitehorse News, the Whitehorse City Council Facebook page and the YourSay webpage. These channels included calls to action to complete the survey, details about consultation events and frequently asked questions.

There were approximately 180 participants across the eight pop-ups events located outside of the Aqualink facilities at Brentford Square Shopping Mall, Box Hill Mall, Nunawading Community Hub and Sportlink.

Posters and flyers were also displayed and distributed across Whitehorse featuring a QR code redirecting people to the YourSay page to complete the survey.



Whitehorse City Council staff member at one of the pop-up events at Box Hill Mall 2024

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Key engagement findings

Programs and activities

Overall, participants were positive about the variety and availability of programs and activities delivered at Aqualink. The social connection, inclusivity and expertise of staff were highlighted as key drivers for participation.

Most popular existing programs and activities (top 3)

1. Learn to swim programs
2. Lap swimming
3. Recreational swim and waterplay

Desired future programs and activities (top 3)

1. Outdoor wellness classes
2. Reformer Pilates
3. Running club

What do people value about programs and activities delivered at Aqualink?

- Instructors that address different levels of fitness and engage with the class
- Inclusive atmosphere and modifications for levels of ability and age
- Variety of classes
- Affordability
- Proximity to residence and ease of access
- Cleanliness

Service provision

Overall, participants were positive about current levels of service provision; however it was noted that opening hours currently are more limited than other nearby facilities, and that membership and pricing information is not available in Simplified Chinese which is a barrier to some.

Top 3 most important factors when choosing a leisure facility:

1. Facility quality, water quality, storage and security
2. Quality of programs and security
3. Affordability
4. Availability of equipment, swim lanes and classes

Top recommendations for improvement:

1. Earlier opening hours on weekends and Public Holidays (6am instead of 8am)
2. Improved cleanliness and maintenance of the facility
3. Information available in multiple languages (particularly membership information)

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Summary

Summary themes

A summary of the feedback can be categorised into the below themes:

- **Satisfaction:** There was high satisfaction with Aqualink and the offered programs and services.
- **Opening hours:** There is a spread of typical visiting hours to Aqualink, with the mid-morning being the most popular time. There was high satisfaction with current opening hours but longer weekend opening hours was the most popular response for improving the experience of accessing the facilities.
- **Programs and activities:** Overall, participants shared they value the class variety, booking system and instructors, and the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere. Learn to swim programs, lap swimming, recreational swimming and waterplay were the most popular offered activities. There was future interest in wellness classes, group fitness classes, outdoor wellness classes and reformer Pilates.
- **Service provision:** When choosing a leisure facility, facility quality, water quality, storage and security, affordability, availability of equipment, swim lanes and classes, cleanliness and welcoming staff were most important to participants.

There was a significant level of out-of-scope feedback received during the engagement process that related to the process Council is undertaking to explore future management of its Aquatic facilities. Included in this feedback was concern about:

- The continuation of clubs and organisations at Aqualink Nunawading and Aqualink Box Hill
- Concerns around any potential staffing changes
- The cafe at Aqualink Box Hill.

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Next steps

Information taken from the engagement program will be used to inform any procurement decisions relating to the future provision of programs and services.