



# Shire of Three Springs

*Three Springs is a healthy and unified community with a bright future.*

## **Three Springs Aquatic Centre Master Plan 2025-35**



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# 1. Overview

The Shire of Three Springs is committed to enhancing and investing in its aquatic and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles, encourage community participation, and improve residents' overall well-being. The Three Springs Aquatic Centre is a vital community asset that fosters physical and mental health, social connections, and access to quality recreational opportunities in a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment.

## Introduction

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) is an important community facility within the Shire of Three Springs, located at 38 Mayrhofer St, Three Springs, WA 6519, adjacent to the Three Springs Eco Caravan Park. Established in 1961, the centre has served as a key venue for recreation, education, and community activities, particularly during the summer months.

Over the years, TSAC has undergone various improvements to enhance accessibility, safety, and functionality. Several facility audits and assessments have identified ongoing maintenance and renewal needs, ensuring the centre continues to meet community expectations and operational standards.

In 2018, a safety audit conducted by the Royal Life Saving Society WA confirmed TSAC's compliance with water quality, circulation, and general operations. However, the audit also identified gaps in chemical safety management, emergency preparedness, and facility administration, requiring further improvements to maintain compliance with industry best practices and regulatory standards.

In response to these findings and to align with future community and operational needs, this Master Plan has been developed as a long-term strategy for the maintenance, enhancement, and sustainable operation of TSAC. It ensures that the facility continues to support recreational, social, and economic opportunities while addressing key challenges identified in previous assessments.

This plan is also aligned with the Shire of Three Springs Strategic Community Plan 2024-2034, supporting the Shire's broader objectives in the

following areas:

**Community Wellbeing:** Ensuring accessible and well-maintained recreational spaces for residents.

**Economic Development:** Enhancing the facility's capacity to support local tourism and community events.

**Governance & Planning:** Implementing sustainable and transparent management practices.

**Environmental Responsibility:** Incorporating energy-efficient and water-saving measures to improve sustainability.

Through planned infrastructure upgrades, expanded programming, and sustainability initiatives, the Three Springs Aquatic Centre will continue to provide recreational and social opportunities for the community. This Master Plan outlines a structured approach for future investments, ensuring the facility remains functional and responsive to community needs in the years ahead.



## 2. TSAC Facilities Review

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) is located at 38 Mayrhofer St, Three Springs, WA 6519, adjacent to the Three Springs Eco Caravan Park. The facility was originally established in 1961 and has since undergone multiple upgrades and maintenance works to improve its functionality, accessibility, and safety.

The facilities available at TSAC are detailed in the following table:

**Table 1: Facilities at TSAC**

| Area                                  | Facilities                                       |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Aquatic Facilities</b>             | 50m x 9-lane swimming pool                       |
|                                       | Kid's pool with shade and accessibility stairs   |
|                                       | Toddler pool with shade cover                    |
|                                       | Inflatable play equipment                        |
| <b>Support Facilities</b>             | Amenities and change rooms                       |
|                                       | Accessible toilets and showers                   |
|                                       | Kiosk                                            |
|                                       | Air-conditioned function/recreational room       |
|                                       | Spectator seating (200-250 capacity)             |
|                                       | BBQ area with shaded seating                     |
| <b>Security &amp; Safety Features</b> | Public announcement system for safety and events |
|                                       | CCTV surveillance system                         |
|                                       | Pool hoist for improved accessibility            |
|                                       | Pool entry stairs for safer access               |
|                                       | Secure perimeter fencing                         |

TSAC provides a range of aquatic and leisure-based services, including:

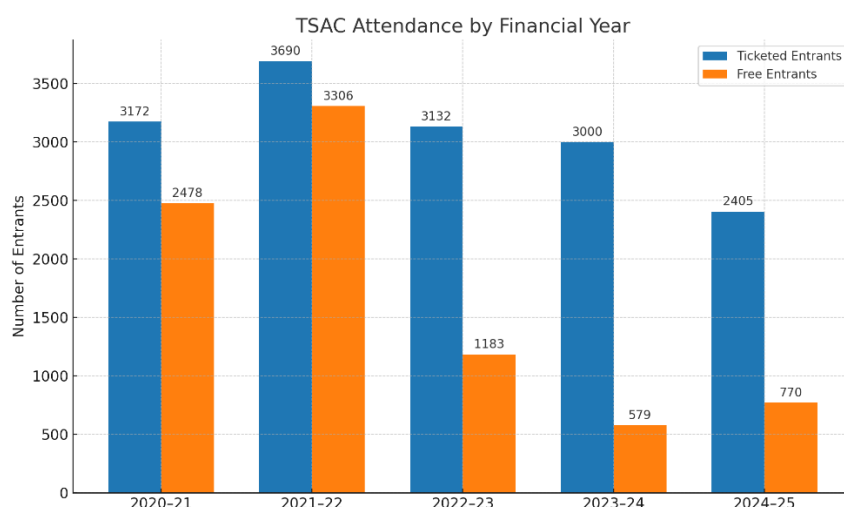
- Recreational swimming and lap swimming
- School-based swimming programs (in partnership with local schools)
- VacSwim and Learn-to-Swim programs
- Casual and seasonal membership options
- Pool hires for schools, organisations, and community groups
- Inflatable fun days and family-friendly activities
- BBQ and picnic area hire for private and community events
- Community seasonal events

### 3. Who uses our facility?

During the 2023/2024 season, the Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) recorded an estimated 3,579 visitations based on daily attendance trends, school program participation, and community engagement activities. While TSAC serves as a key recreation facility, attendance figures fluctuate due to seasonal variations, population trends, and program offerings.

The following table provides a summary of estimated annual visits across key user groups:

#### TSAC Visits



**Table 2: TSAC Visits by Key User Groups**

| User Group                                 | Estimated Visits (2023–2024)                            |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| General Public Visits (Casual & Season)    | 3,000                                                   |
| School Programs (Local & Regional Schools) | 500                                                     |
| Community Events & Group Bookings          | 79 (based on free entry difference from previous years) |
| Total Estimated Visits                     | 3,579                                                   |

#### Attendance Trends and Considerations

- **General Public Attendance:**
  - Peak season weekends see a maximum of 30 visitors daily, while weekdays average 10–15 visitors.
  - The facility is open for approximately 96 days per season, contributing to an estimated 1,760 visits annually from casual swimmers and season pass holders.
- **School-Based Swimming Programs:**
  - TSAC serves Three Springs Primary School (50 students) and other neighbouring schools.
  - Each student typically participates in 10 sessions per season, resulting in approximately 800 student visits annually.
- **Community Events & Programs:**

- TSAC hosts annual community events, including the Australia Day Celebrations and school holiday activities.
- The recent budget allocations for a new turnstile entry system and inflatables suggest plans to enhance community engagement.
- Attendance figures for special events and bookings are not formally recorded but contribute to additional visitations.

**The above usage trends indicate that the future development of TSAC should prioritise:**

- Expanding community programs, such as school partnerships, and seasonal events.
- Enhancing sustainability with solar energy solutions and cost-efficient facility operations.
- Access to leisure water to encourage casual /social users, including children and families.



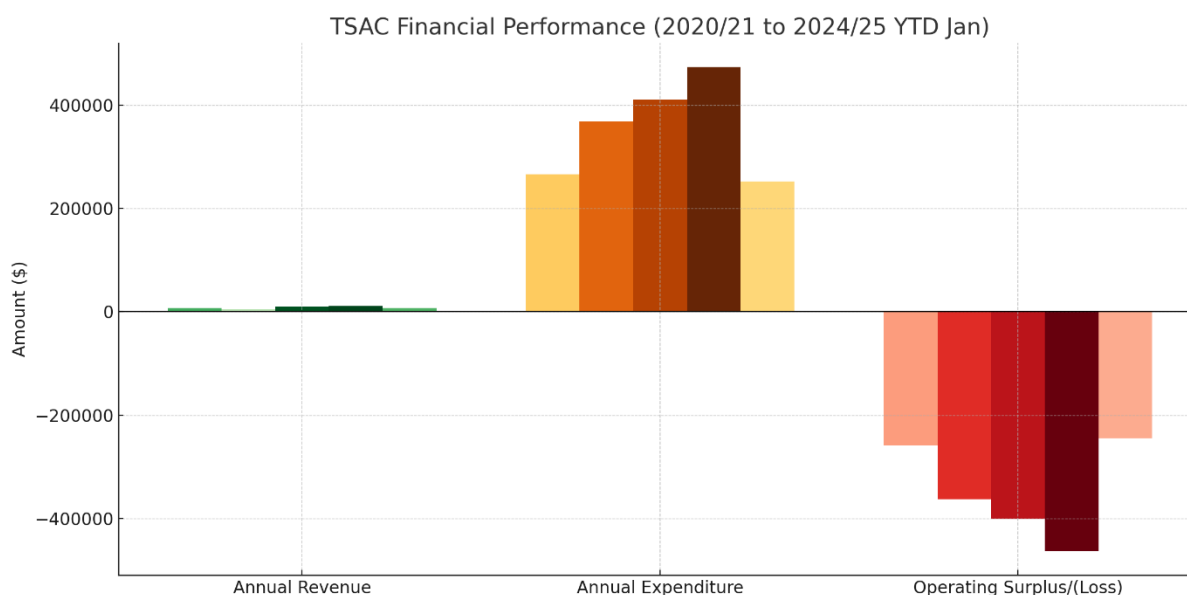
## 4. Financial Performance

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) is managed by the Shire of Three Springs, operating as a community service rather than a commercial enterprise. The facility's financial sustainability depends on membership fees, casual entry charges, and Shire funding, supplemented by grants for maintenance and upgrades.

The following table provides an overview of the estimated financial performance of TSAC over recent financial years based on available budget reports and assumptions.

**Table 3: TSAC Financial Performance**

| <i>Metric</i>               | <i>2020–21</i>       | <i>2021–22</i>       | <i>2022–23</i>       | <i>2023–24</i>       | <i>2024–25<br/>(YTD - Jan)</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Income</b>               | \$7,755.19           | \$5,161.67           | \$10,470.41          | \$10,844.67          | \$7,539.63                     |
| <b>Expenditure</b>          | \$266,019.08         | \$367,867.98         | \$410,950.24         | \$473,367.76         | \$251,961.42                   |
| <b>Net Operating Loss</b>   | <b>-\$258,263.89</b> | <b>-\$362,706.31</b> | <b>-\$400,479.83</b> | <b>-\$462,523.09</b> | <b>-\$244,421.79</b>           |
| <b>Attendance</b>           | 5,651                | 6,996                | 4,315                | 3,579                | 3,175                          |
| <b>Revenue per User</b>     | \$1.37               | \$0.74               | \$2.43               | \$3.03               | \$2.37                         |
| <b>Expenditure per User</b> | \$47.07              | \$52.58              | \$95.24              | \$132.26             | \$79.36                        |
| <b>Subsidy per User</b>     | <b>-\$45.70</b>      | <b>-\$51.84</b>      | <b>-\$92.81</b>      | <b>-\$129.23</b>     | <b>-\$77.00</b>                |
| <b>Revenue as % of Exp.</b> | 2.92%                | 1.40%                | 2.55%                | 2.29%                | 2.99%                          |



## Business Indicator Review

The business indicator review provides the following findings:

*Total income has fluctuated over the five-year period, with a notable decline in 2021/22 followed by a gradual recovery.*

*Total expenditure has increased consistently year-on-year, rising from \$266,019 in 2020/21 to \$473,367 in 2023/24 – an increase of 78%. Contributing factors likely include rising utility costs, maintenance requirements, and staffing support.*

*The total cost to operate the centre before depreciation has increased by over \$200,000 from 2020/21 to 2023/24, with the YTD 2024/25 figure already exceeding \$250,000. This reflects the growing investment needed to maintain community access to aquatic facilities.*

*Revenue per user has remained low, ranging from \$0.74 to \$3.03 per visit over the five years, with a modest increase in recent years. These figures remain well below national benchmarks for community aquatic facilities.*

*Expenditure per user has increased significantly, rising from \$47.07 in 2020/21 to \$132.26 in 2023/24. The figure for 2024/25 YTD stands at \$79.36, indicating ongoing financial pressure associated with operational delivery.*

*Council's subsidy per user remains high, ranging from \$44.86 to \$129.23 per user per year. While this underscores the Council's commitment to equitable access, it highlights the challenge of maintaining financial sustainability in a small regional community.*

*Revenue as a percentage of expenditure has consistently remained below 3%, except for 2024/25 YTD, which improved to 2.99%. This metric reinforces the centre's function as a community service rather than a commercial entity.*

## Strategic Infrastructure Assessment

Royal Life Saving Society WA has conducted periodic safety audits of the Three Springs Aquatic Centre, identifying key areas for ongoing operational and capital investment. These independent assessments, most recently in 2022–23, confirm strong compliance in core safety areas such as water quality, supervision, and staff qualifications.

The reports highlight a clear need for continued investment in:

- Building and access improvements
- Mechanical and hydraulic systems
- Water treatment, plant, and pool structure upgrades

Notable improvements have been achieved since the 2018 audit, including installing CCTV, inflatables, and accessibility enhancements. These upgrades have contributed to TSAC achieving a compliance score of 94.38% in the latest safety audit.

## 5. Project Area

### Demographics

The Shire of Three Springs is a rural community in Western Australia's Mid-West region, covering 2,657 square kilometres. The 2021 Census recorded 586 residents, compared to 608 in 2016 and 633 in 2011, indicating a gradual population decline. This trend, along with an ageing population, impacts future planning for the aquatic centre.

### Key Demographic Insights for Facility Planning

#### Age Profile & Population Trends:

- The median age is 42 years.
- 23% of residents are aged 65 and over, increasing demand for low-impact aquatic programs and accessibility improvements.
- 18% of the population is under 15 years old, supporting the need for school swimming programs and youth engagement activities.
- 8% of residents identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, highlighting the importance of inclusive community programs.

#### Economic & Social Factors:

- The agriculture sector dominates employment, with 36 local agricultural businesses generating over \$42 million annually.
- The Talc Mine, operated by Imerys S.A., contributes significantly to local employment.
- A large portion of residents are self-employed farmers or retirees, influencing when and how they engage with recreational facilities.

#### Access to Aquatic Facilities & Recreation:

- The declining population may impact attendance, but partnerships with neighbouring schools and towns can sustain usage.
- Older residents benefit from gentle exercise programs and heated water options, if feasible.
- Younger families and school groups rely on the centre for swimming lessons, social activities, and school sports.

#### Planning Considerations:

- Improving accessibility, including enhanced pool entry points, hoists, and shaded seating areas.
- Expanding community programs to attract regional visitors and increase participation.
- Ensuring long-term sustainability by exploring energy-efficient upgrades and cost-effective operations.

## Facility Catchment and Regional Facility Provision

In small regional communities like Three Springs, Western Australia, the catchment area for aquatic facilities often extends beyond the typical 5 km to 10 km radius observed in urban settings due to lower population densities and greater travel distances. The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) primarily serves the local community, with additional usage from neighbouring areas lacking similar facilities.

### Primary Catchment Area (0 to 25 km radius):

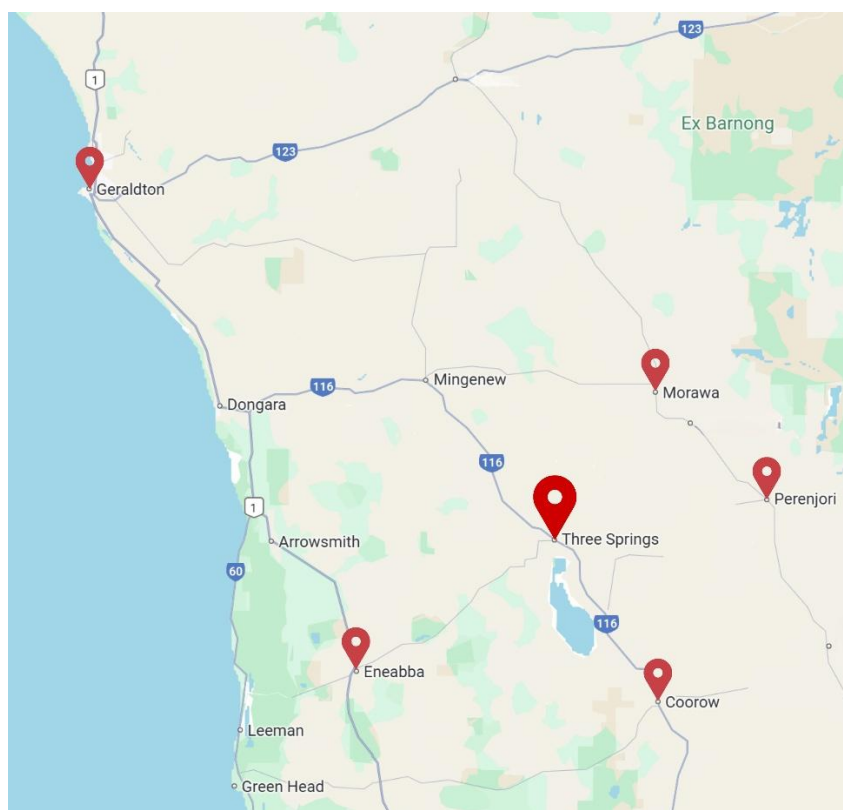
- **Three Springs Township:** According to the 2021 Census, Three Springs has 356 residents. This group constitutes TSAC's core user base, relying on the facility for recreational and fitness activities.

### Secondary Catchment Area (Beyond 25 km radius):

- **Mingenew Community:** Located approximately 35 km from Three Springs, Mingeneu does not have its own aquatic facility. Consequently, Mingeneu schools and some community members utilise TSAC for swimming programs and activities.
- **Visitors and Seasonal Users:** The facility also experiences occasional use from tourists and short-term workers residing in the area, such as those staying at the Three Springs Caravan Park.

### Surrounding Shires:

- **Neighbouring Towns with Their Own Facilities:** Towns such as Carnamah, Coorow, Perenjori, Morawa, and Eneabba have their own aquatic centres. Therefore, residents from these areas typically do not utilise TSAC.
- **Larger Centres:** Cities like Geraldton and Moora offer more extensive aquatic facilities and beach access, making it unlikely for their residents to travel to TSAC.



### Travel Time Considerations:

In regional settings, residents may be willing to travel longer distances to access essential services. For TSAC, the primary users are within a 5-minute drive, encompassing the Three Springs township. Secondary users from Mingeneu are approximately a 30 to 35-minute drive away.

### Strategic Implications for TSAC Planning:

- **Focus on Local Community Needs:** Given that the primary users are Three Springs residents, facility planning and programming should prioritise local preferences and requirements.
- **Strengthen Partnerships with other towns:** Enhancing collaborations with neighbouring town schools and community groups can help maintain and potentially increase usage from this secondary catchment area.
- **Consideration of Population Trends:** With a modest population base, it's essential to implement strategies that ensure the facility's financial sustainability, such as diversified programming and community events to attract broader participation.

Table 4: TSAC Catchment Area Population 2016 - 2036

| Catchment Population           | 2016 | 2021 | 2036 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Three Springs (0-25 km radius) | 594  | 356  | 340  |
| Mingenew (above 25 km radius)  | 455  | 249  | 240  |

### Three Springs Aquatic Centre

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC), established in 1961, has been a cornerstone of the community, offering essential aquatic and recreational services. Given its aging infrastructure, evolving community needs, and financial sustainability considerations, a strategic approach is necessary to ensure its long-term functionality, accessibility, and viability.

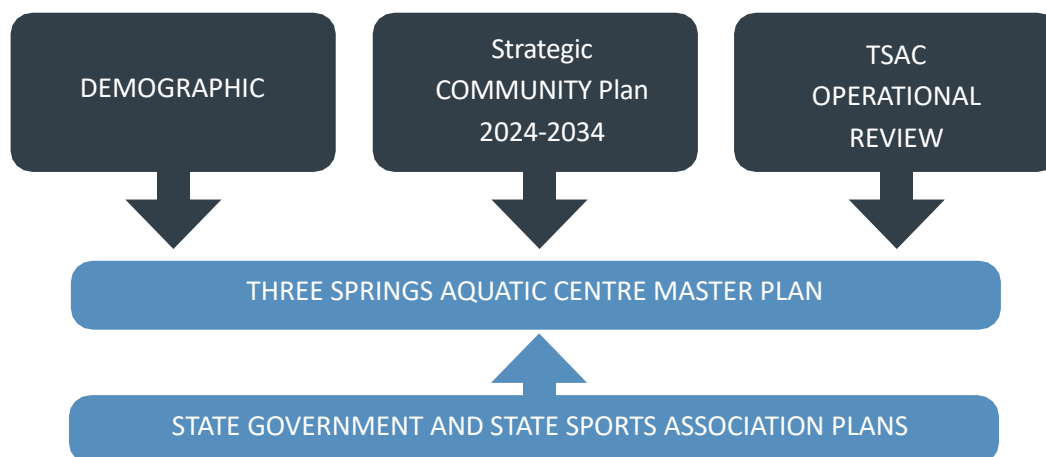
### Key Findings Supporting This Strategy

- ✓ TSAC was established in 1961 and requires ongoing upgrades to meet modern safety and accessibility standards.
- ✓ Neighbouring shires, including Carnamah, Morawa, Coorow, Perenjori, and Eneabba, operate their own aquatic centres, reducing external demand for TSAC.
- ✓ Mingeneew does not have an aquatic facility, leading Mingeneew schools to rely on TSAC for their swimming programs.
- ✓ The 2024-2025 budget includes \$164,000 for pool basin renewal, \$60,000 for facility improvements (turnstile entry, inflatables), and \$80,000 for security upgrades (CCTV, general enhancements).
- ✓ TSAC primarily serves Three Springs residents with limited external reliance, reinforcing the need to focus on local needs rather than regional expansion.
- ✓ Strategic investment is required to improve financial sustainability, enhance programming, and optimise facility operations to meet future demand.

By implementing this Master Plan, the Shire of Three Springs aims to ensure TSAC remains a valuable community asset, supporting both current and future aquatic and recreational needs.

## 6. Strategic Context

The Shire of Three Springs has a number of service planning and strategic documents that are pivotal to the planning and delivery of aquatic and leisure facilities in the area.



### Shire of Three Springs Strategic Community Plan 2024-2034

The Strategic Community Plan provides a clear vision for the future of community spaces, ensuring that the aquatic centre remains a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable facility. The following key objectives guide the development of this Master Plan:

- **Community Wellbeing** – Ensure accessible and high-quality recreation spaces that support an active and connected community.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure** – Maintain and enhance public facilities with a focus on long-term sustainability and cost-effective management.
- **A Welcoming & Inclusive Community** – Provide facilities that cater to all ages, abilities, and demographics, including the ageing population and school groups.
- **Future-Focused Planning** – Proactively seek funding opportunities, partnerships, and community-driven programs to increase facility usage.
- **Environmental Responsibility** – Integrate energy-efficient solutions such as solar power and water-saving technologies to reduce operational costs.



## 7. What we have heard and learnt from the facility users

### Survey and Community User Feedback

The Shire of Three Springs conducted a targeted community survey in April–May 2025 to inform the development of the Aquatic Centre Master Plan. The consultation focused on usage patterns, facility preferences, access needs, and future priorities. The survey gathered 22 complete responses from residents, seasonal users, and families.

### Key Findings and Insights

#### *Programs and Services*

- Primary uses of the Aquatic Centre include casual swimming (64%), season pass holding (55%), school programs (32%), and attendance at community events (41%).
- The shaded BBQ area (55%) and recreation/meeting room (36%) are well-used by community members, though over 40% have never booked them.
- Priority user groups identified for future planning include seniors, children and youth, families, people with disability, and school groups.
- Feedback suggests demand for night swims, extended hours, and more inflatables and water play options, particularly for younger children.
- Community members consistently expressed interest in heating options for year-round use, especially for older adults and early-morning swimmers.

#### **Infrastructure and Access**

- Respondents prioritised safety and compliance and infrastructure upgrades (e.g., pool basin, filtration) as the top areas for improvement.
- Accessibility and inclusiveness ranked highly, with some feedback noting a preference for ramped entry in addition to stairs for people with mobility needs.
- Many users emphasised that the centre is well-managed, clean, and welcoming, with positive comments about staff and the free use of BBQ and showers.
- Respondents also highlighted the need to address antisocial behaviour and suggested monitoring, clearer signage and enforcement of pool rules.

#### **Community Interest in Usage**

- Over two-thirds of respondents expressed interest in using TSAC for swim programs and community events.
- 59% indicated they would consider booking the facility for private events or sports club activities

## 8. What Industry Trends Do We Need to Consider?

Aquatic and leisure facilities play a vital role in community well-being, offering recreational, health, and social benefits. For the Three Springs Aquatic Centre, understanding current industry trends and challenges is essential in ensuring sustainability, relevance, and community engagement.

### Key Industry Trends Impacting TSAC

- Health and fitness services that encourage physical activity and social wellbeing.
- Safe and welcoming spaces that support community inclusion and intergenerational participation.
- Aquatic education and water safety programs to reduce the risk of drownings and water-related incidents.
- Sustainable infrastructure to address rising energy and water costs while ensuring long-term affordability.
- Diverse recreational options to accommodate varied user preferences, including families, seniors, and school groups.

**Table 8: Trends and Challenges**

| <b>Sport and Recreation Trends</b>                                                                        | <b>Challenges for Providers</b>                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| An ageing population requires accessible facilities and low-impact exercise options.                      | Rising energy and water costs impact long-term operational sustainability.            |
| Increasing demand for flexible recreation hours and diverse programming.                                  | Need to balance affordability while maintaining high-quality services.                |
| Shifts in leisure participation, with people seeking social, fitness, and aquatic activities.             | Limited funding availability, requiring grants and external partnerships.             |
| Growing school engagement in aquatic programs.                                                            | Labour and maintenance costs continue to rise, impacting financial viability.         |
| Rising expectations for technological integration, such as automated entry systems and modern filtration. | Maintaining and upgrading ageing infrastructure while reducing costs.                 |
| Increased focus on sustainable facility designs, including solar energy and efficient water management.   | Limited regional population growth, affecting long-term facility demand.              |
| Community interests in affordable, family-friendly activities.                                            | Need to ensure a skilled workforce of lifeguards, instructors, and operational staff. |

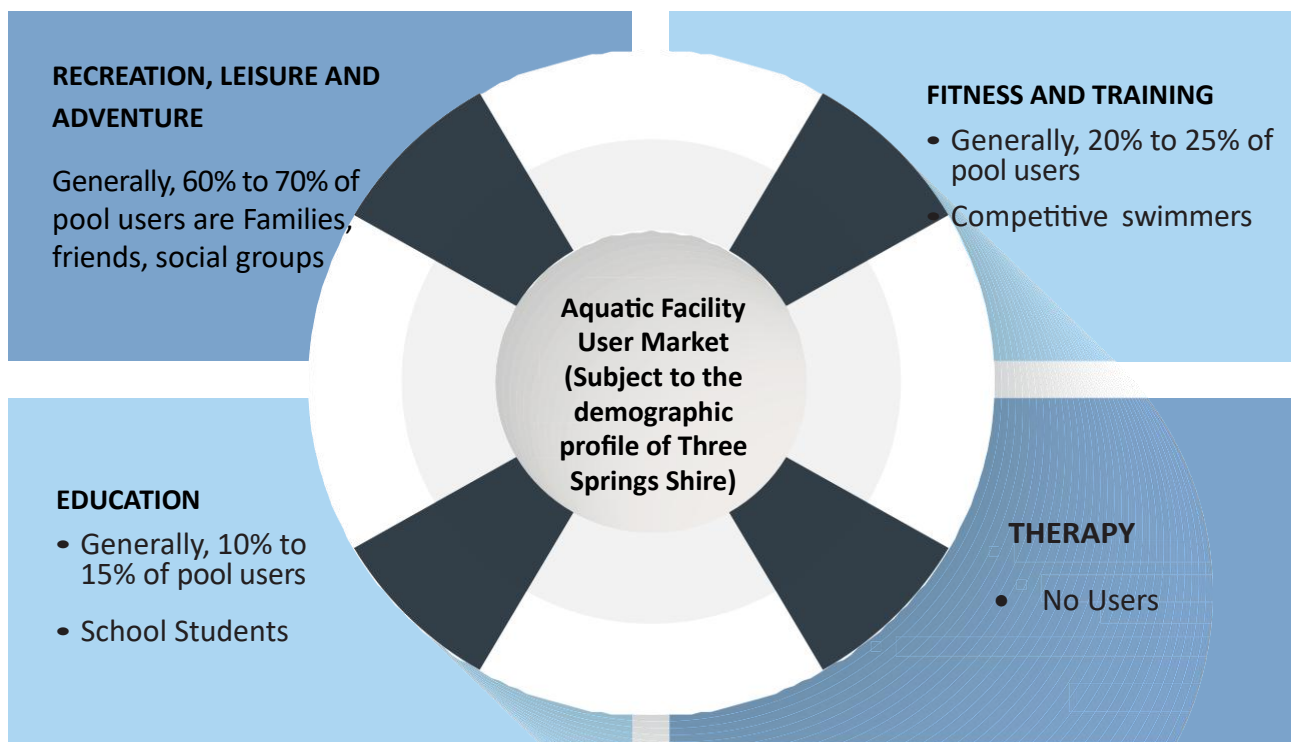


Figure 5: Main aquatic and leisure facility user markets

TSAC currently focuses on training and education programs, primarily providing summer season swimming, school group training sessions, and general aquatic access. To ensure the Shire provides a modern and inclusive aquatic facility that meets the needs of all community segments, future planning should address existing gaps by expanding recreational, leisure, and wellness opportunities. This includes introducing community wellness programs, low-impact exercise options for seniors, and family-friendly recreational activities such as inflatable play days and social swimming events. Additionally, accessibility enhancements and therapy-based aquatic programs should be explored to cater to all ages and abilities.



## 9. Three Springs Aquatic Centre Master Plan

### The Plan

The review of community consultation, operational assessments, catchment analysis, and technical evaluations highlights the need for upgrades to the Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) to meet the current and future aquatic, leisure, and wellness needs of the community.

The demographic analysis indicates that while the local population is gradually declining, there remains a consistent demand for aquatic

and recreational facilities, particularly for youth programs, school-based swimming lessons, and low-impact exercise for seniors.

There are five public aquatic and leisure facilities within 100km of Three Springs, including facilities in Morawa, Mingenew, Carnamah, Perenjori, and Coorow. Some of these facilities have undergone recent upgrades, while others are in need of redevelopment.

### Vision for Three Springs Aquatic Centre

#### VISION

"The Three Springs Aquatic Centre will be a safe, accessible, and well-maintained facility that fosters community well-being, encourages active lifestyles, and provides inclusive aquatic and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors."

### Objectives

In line with the Shire of Three Springs Strategic Community Plan 2024-2034, the objectives for the redevelopment of TSAC are:

| Key Objective                     | Strategic Focus                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safe & Sustainable Infrastructure | Ensure TSAC is well-maintained, environmentally sustainable, and cost-efficient.                              |
| Livable Communities               | Provide a high-quality, engaging, and flexible space that meets the needs of the community.                   |
| Inclusive & Accessible Recreation | Maintain an affordable and welcoming facility that supports all ages and abilities.                           |
| Future-Focused Development        | Plan for long-term operational sustainability, ensuring TSAC remains relevant and financially viable.         |
| Governance & Leadership           | Align TSAC's management structure with industry standards, maximising funding opportunities and partnerships. |

## Master Plan Indicative Capital Cost

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) Master Plan outlines a staged approach to facility upgrades, ensuring financial sustainability while addressing infrastructure needs, accessibility improvements, and program expansions.

### Proposed Future Projects\*

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Short Term (1–3 Years)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trial Free Entry for the Community</li><li>• Trial Adjusted Morning Swim Hours</li><li>• Water-Friendly Community Events</li><li>• Solar Energy Installation</li><li>• Picnic Area + Shade &amp; Bbq Expansion</li><li>• Outreach To Swim Clubs / Weekend Water Sport Events</li></ul> |
| <b>Medium Term (3–5 Years)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purchase of New Inflatables and Family-Friendly Equipment</li><li>• Accessibility Upgrades</li><li>• Mini Golf Installation</li><li>• Shade for Carpark – consider planting trees for early-stage implementation</li></ul>                                                             |
| <b>Long Term (5–10 Years)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addition of a water play area</li><li>• New Diving Boards (optional and only if supported by demand and compliance capacity)</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                 |

\*Please refer to the 12. Appendix: Summary of Proposed Projects and Execution Strategy for more information.



## Master Plan Operating Performance

The operational performance of the Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) has been assessed based on historical visitation data, financial modelling, and projected community engagement trends. The Master Plan improvements aim to increase attendance, enhance financial sustainability, and reduce operational costs through energy-efficient solutions and expanded programming.

### Key Operational Projections

- **Revenue Growth**
  - Revenue is expected to increase annually due to enhanced programming, school partnerships, and improved facility offerings.
  - The introduction of inflatable play sessions and expanded community events is projected to boost casual entry and membership sales.
- **Expenditure & Cost Management**
  - Operational costs are expected to rise slightly due to maintenance and staffing needs, but will be partially offset by energy-efficient upgrades (solar power and improved water heating systems).
  - The pool basin renewal and filtration system upgrades will improve water management efficiency, reducing long-term operational costs.
- **Attendance Growth & Community Engagement**
  - Attendance is projected to increase gradually over the next five years due to facility improvements, program expansion, and marketing efforts.
  - School partnerships will remain a key driver of visitation, with an expected increase in participation from regional schools.
  - Community events and recreational activities (e.g., fitness programs and school holiday activities) will attract a broader demographic.
- **Sustainability & Long-Term Viability**
  - Implementing solar energy and sustainable water heating solutions will help reduce energy costs, making the facility more financially sustainable.
  - A long-term asset management plan will ensure ongoing maintenance and upgrades are carried out efficiently without placing undue financial strain on the Shire.

## 10. Strategic Issues

The Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) is a key community asset, providing essential aquatic and recreational services to the residents of Three Springs and surrounding areas. To ensure its continued success and relevance, several strategic issues must be addressed:

### Aging Infrastructure

- **Facility Age:** Established in 1961, TSAC's infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades to meet current safety and accessibility standards.
- **Maintenance Challenges:** The aging facility demands increased resources for upkeep, impacting the Shire's budget and operational efficiency.

### Financial Sustainability

- **Operational Costs:** Maintaining and staffing the aquatic centre is costly, especially given the limited revenue from a small user base.
- **Funding Constraints:** Securing external funding for upgrades and operations is challenging, necessitating innovative financial strategies.

### Community Engagement and Usage

- **Declining Population:** With a modest and decreasing local population, user numbers may dwindle, affecting the centre's viability.
- **Program Diversification:** Programs and services must be expanded to attract a broader audience and increase community involvement.

### Regional Competition

- **Nearby Facilities:** Neighbouring shires such as Carnamah, Coorow, Perenjori, Morawa, and Eneabba operate their own aquatic centres, limiting TSAC's catchment area.
- **Unique Value Proposition:** TSAC must identify and promote unique offerings to distinguish itself and attract users from within and beyond the local community.

### Seasonal Operation

- **Limited Operating Months:** Currently open from late November to the end of March, the centre's seasonal nature restricts year-round community access and revenue opportunities.
- **Climate Considerations:** Weather conditions influence attendance and operational planning, requiring adaptive strategies.

### Accessibility and Inclusivity

- **Facility Access:** Ensuring the centre accommodates individuals with disabilities and mobility challenges is crucial for inclusivity.
- **Community Outreach:** Efforts are needed to engage all demographic groups, including the elderly and culturally diverse populations, to foster a welcoming environment.

### Environmental Sustainability

- **Eco-Friendly Initiatives:** The centre's operations consume significant water and energy resources; therefore, implementing green technologies and practices can reduce the environmental footprint and operational costs.

## 11. Aquatic Plan Recommendations

Based on community feedback, stakeholder discussions, safety audits, and strategic planning, the following actions are recommended to support the long-term sustainability and improvement of the Three Springs Aquatic Centre (TSAC) in alignment with the Shire's available resources and growth capacity.

| STRATEGY                                  | TASK                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TSAC Master Plan</b>                   | Adopt the TSAC Master Plan to guide staged infrastructure development, safety compliance, energy efficiency, and improved public access.                                                                                          |
| <b>Infrastructure Upgrades</b>            | Prioritise staged upgrades such as: - Shade structures and BBQ areas - Solar energy and sustainable water heating systems - Purchase of inflatables and new diving boards - Accessibility and safety features (ramps, CCTV)       |
| <b>Open Space &amp; Recreation</b>        | Expand surrounding land use with: - Kids' Park and picnic shelters - Mini golf installation and family activation space - Passive shade-covered recreation and designated parking zones.                                          |
| <b>Concept Plan Development</b>           | Prepare scalable plans to guide development: - Short-term: practical layouts for minor works - Medium-term: schematic designs for funded submissions - Long-term: integrated design for full site and multi-use activation.       |
| <b>Funding Strategy</b>                   | Apply for relevant grants, including CSRFF, Lotterywest, CEUF, and Healthway. Align capital works planning to staged upgrade priorities.                                                                                          |
| <b>Community Engagement &amp; Usage</b>   | Build stronger partnerships with local schools, sporting clubs, and regional neighbours. Promote inclusive usage through family events, programmed activities and fitness sessions, and expanded use of the recreation room.      |
| <b>Financial &amp; Operational Review</b> | Regularly review financial sustainability by tracking operational savings from upgrades (e.g. solar, reduced hours), evaluating cost-per-visit trends, and exploring shared staffing, contract models, and program-based revenue. |

## 12. Appendix: Summary of Proposed Projects and Execution Strategy

### **Trial Free Entry for the Community / Trial Adjusted Morning Swim Hours**

These two initiatives are scheduled as immediate short-term actions. Free entry will improve accessibility and allow the pool manager to focus on supervision rather than kiosk operations. Adjusting morning swim times from 6:00 am to 10:00 am will test whether later access results in increased attendance and reduced staffing needs. Both will be reviewed after the trial season.

### **Solar Energy Installation**

This project proposes the installation of solar panels at the Three Springs Aquatic Centre to reduce ongoing operating costs and support long-term sustainability. Given its financial and environmental benefits, it has been identified as a short-term priority. While external funding will be explored (Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES), Community Energy Upgrades Fund (CEUF), Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)), it is acknowledged that waiting for grant availability may cause delays; therefore, internal budgeting may be required to initiate this work.

### **Sustainable Water Heating Upgrades**

Sustainable water heating options, such as heat pumps or solar thermal systems, may be investigated as a second phase following solar installation. These systems would enhance early-season comfort and accessibility, especially for seniors. (Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES), Community Energy Upgrades Fund (CEUF), Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) grants may support implementation if aligned with access-focused programming.

### **Water Play Area**

This opportunity aims to activate the Aquatic Centre by adding a small-scale water play area inspired by successful regional models (e.g., Geraldton Foreshore), especially if strong community interest is identified.

### **Picnic Area + Shade & BBQ Expansion / Mini Golf Installation / Shade for Carpark**

These projects aim to enhance the usability and visitor appeal of the broader precinct. Shade and BBQ expansions will support longer visits and family events. Mini golf may provide an all-ages attraction for off-season use. Shade for the carpark could be achieved through a mix of permanent structures or tree planting. All projects are subject to design feasibility, funding such as Lotterywest, Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF), and staged implementation.

### **Programmed Water-Friendly Community Events & Outreach to Swim Clubs / Weekend Water Sport Events**

The Shire will continue to deliver seasonal events and explore opportunities to host training camps or regional aquatic sports activities. This builds on the success of inflatable events and is a low-cost initiative to increase community engagement and regional visibility. Partnerships with swimming clubs, youth groups, and external facilitators can be explored.

### **Purchase of New Inflatables and Family-Friendly Equipment / New Diving Boards**

Inflatables will be reviewed annually to assess condition and relevance. New purchases will be considered only when linked to planned programs. Large inflatables are not currently prioritised, and shared use with neighbouring Shires may be explored. Diving boards remain a low priority due to cost, risk, and compliance requirements, and would only be implemented if clearly supported by community demand and operational feasibility.

### **Accessibility Upgrades**

This project supports inclusivity and ensures the facility is accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Potential upgrades include pool hoists, handrails, improved entry points, and pathway enhancements. Implementation will be based on community feedback and compliance with disability access standards (DAIP), prioritised according to local needs and available funding.