

HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL AQUATICS STRATEGY

Te Rautaki Hoopua Wai o Kirikiriroa
2021-2031



Hamilton Pools





Waikato awa, he piko he taniwha, he piko he
taniwha, Waikato taniwharau

*Waikato river, on every bend a taniwha/chief,
Waikato of many taniwha/chiefs*

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INTRODUCTION/ OVERVIEW

Tiimatanga Koorero

Swimming, water sport and play has been a common feature of life for many in Hamilton, and is an important contributor to wellbeing. Residents have long sought out and valued spaces and places where our community can interact with water.

The Waikato River has traditionally been a place for swimming and water play. For Māori, water is paramount to taha tinana (physical) and taha wairua (spiritual) hauora (well-being), a taonga (treasure) of considerable value bound in a mauri (life force) of whakapapa (genealogy) and ancestral histories. The role of the river is especially important given Hamilton's location as an inland city where coastal swimming is not possible.

For others, aquatic facilities have met the need for swimming and water fitness. Public pools have been a key part of Hamilton for several decades.

Waterworld was opened in 1976 and continues to be the premier aquatic location in the Waikato, supported now by council-owned Gallagher Aquatic Centre and a

large number of privately owned facilities and school pools. The network of pools within Hamilton provides opportunities for participation within 20 minutes of community members' homes. As the city grows, transportation options that enable accessibility will need to be considered.

Over time, these facilities have grown to become more than just spaces for swimming, but venues for events, classes, and social interaction and can be viewed as critical community facilities.

Hamilton City Council has made significant investment into keeping these facilities open and operating to a high standard. However, there has not been a strategic direction that clearly defines what council's role is in the provision of aquatics facilities and strategies in Hamilton. The development of this strategy addresses this issue, and will allow council to make more consistent decisions that align to a vision for aquatics now and into the future.

The strategy does not sit in isolation but is connected to many existing strategies, plans

and policies. It is also supported by non-council owned facilities as well. Although the strategy is focused on what the roles of Hamilton City Council is in the provision of aquatic facilities and services, there are many other relevant organisations contributing to this and we will need to work together with our partners and the whole community to deliver the outcomes in the Aquatics Strategy.

Funding for specific initiatives will be considered through our annual planning cycles and we will also use this document to encourage others to lead initiatives that deliver on our shared aspirations for Kirikiriroa/Hamilton.

The Strategy has been designed as a long term and broad vision for council's role in aquatics from 2021-2031, it is not intended to be a detailed workplan. It is supported by relevant statistical information and goals to start to bring the strategy to life. If successfully implemented, the strategy will help to guide all future decisions made around council's investment in aquatics and better explain what we do and why.

Water recreation in natural sources

The primary focus of this strategy is on the provision of aquatic facilities and services. However, recreation in and on natural water sources is a common pastime of many in Hamilton, largely the Waikato River.

An 11km stretch of the river runs through the heart of Hamilton and is commonly used for recreational purposes. Council will strive to align outcomes and activities between recreational water use and activities of aquatic facilities where possible.

Activities on, in and around the Waikato River are a key component of the River Plan. Significant investment

is being made into river infrastructure that will allow greater access to the river for recreational use, while also considering issues relating to water safety.

The Aquatics Strategy can complement the work of the river plan by an increased focus on water safety and building of skills to enable people to recreate in the river safely.

The Strategy will also ensure that Hamilton City Council keeps a strong focus on national and regional actions relating to recreational use of natural water sources and aligns activities where possible.

VISION

Hamilton's aquatic facilities and services are viewed as vibrant and exciting community spaces and programmes that residents and visitors want to visit.

PURPOSE

Hamilton City Council is recognised as a leader in safety and best practice whilst providing high-quality facilities and services to the community.

OUTCOME AREA 1

COMMUNITY Hapori

Facilities and services are welcoming and inclusive to all.

OUTCOME AREA 2

COMPETITION AND TRAINING Haakinakina

Clubs, high-performance swimming and events are promoted and supported at our facilities.

OUTCOME AREA 3

PLAY Taakaro

Informal recreation, leisure and play is embraced, promoted and planned at our facilities.

OUTCOME AREA 4

WATER SAFETY Haumarū Wai

Aquatic facilities complement the use of the natural water sources for swimming and recreation and support safer use of these spaces.

Our Vision and Purpose – what do they mean?

The vision and purpose guide the facilities and services and where we plan to take them in the future.

Vision

Hamilton's aquatic facilities and services are viewed as vibrant and exciting community spaces and programmes that residents and visitors want to visit.

The vision describes the intended future vision for aquatic services and facilities. This is what pools will look like in the future if the strategy is successfully implemented. The vision acknowledges the critical role that aquatics play in the wellbeing of a large number of Hamilton residents and visitors.

Purpose

Hamilton City Council is recognised as a leader in safety and best practice whilst providing high-quality facilities and services to the community.

The purpose describes what council's role will be in delivering to the vision for aquatic facilities and services. Although Council are not the only providers of these facilities and services in Hamilton, publicly-

owned facilities at Waterworld and Gallagher's Aquatic Centre are central to Hamilton's overall provision.

The following pages describe in more detail how each of the outcome areas contributes to the vision and purpose of the strategy.

Engagement

This strategy has been developed through a mixed methodology engagement process.

Targeted consultation: Key stakeholders (including current user groups and groups who were identified as low users of aquatic facilities) were contacted for a targeted consultation.

Stakeholders were provided the opportunity to either provide feedback through a one on one discussion with staff members or through an online survey platform.

Our customers at Waterworld and Gallagher Aquatic Centre were provided the opportunity to provide feedback through a survey. Two posts were shared

on the 'Hamilton Pools' Facebook profile which had 171 comments and a total of 200 engagements.

What we heard

The themes of the feedback related mainly to the strategy being more aspirational, more encompassing of aquatic sport rather than just competitive swimming and demonstrate how the outcomes will be achieved.

The social media feedback highlighted an improvement in how we communicate with our customers in regards to operational matters and improved consistency in the delivery of our programmes and services.

Our customers want Waterworld and Gallagher Aquatic Centre to deliver more opportunities for fun and play. From this consultation the vision was developed to reflect the future focus of aquatics as a visitor destination and outcome area 2 to be inclusive of aquatic sports.

Goals and focus areas were added as a measure to each outcome.



OUTCOME AREA 1: COMMUNITY Hapori

Facilities and services are welcoming and inclusive to all

Aquatic facilities already attract a wide variety of users at all stages of life.

- Learn to Swim classes (all age groups)
- Hydrotherapy pool (older people, people with disabilities, people rehabbing from injuries)
- Fitness classes, both in the pool and in the on-site gym at Waterworld

It is likely that the demand for these facilities and services will grow into the future. Hamilton's population is ageing (currently 11.6% of the population is aged 65+, expected to grow to 12.5%

by 2043), and the number of people who identify as having a disability is one in four.

Ensuring that these users are considered in future planning will be critical to achieving the vision of enhancing wellbeing through aquatic facilities and services.

However, it is not just about facilities and services in and of themselves. Waterworld and Gallagher Aquatic Centre are both seen as critical community facilities in their own right – places for gatherings and social interactions.

The relatively low entry cost and network of facilities makes them an affordable and accessible option for large parts of the community to take part in physical activity, but also to connect with friends and family.

Hamilton also has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in New Zealand. This provides opportunities to consider how aquatic facilities can be more welcoming to all cultures and communities – services and programming may be different for various groups.

Goal A

We enable different users to access our facilities and services

Focus Areas:

- We will understand and continue to monitor, who our users are and what they use our facilities for
- Using this information, we will plan for the future and changing needs of our customers
- We will promote inclusion of all our customers
- We will remove barriers to participation
- We will ensure that our facilities can be accessed by everyone

Goal B

We partner with other organisations to deliver aquatic services to our customers

Focus Areas:

- We will update partnership agreements to deliver specific outcomes
- We will seek new partnership opportunities to improve access for sectors of our community to aquatic facilities and services

OUTCOME AREA 2: COMPETITION & TRAINING

Haakinakina

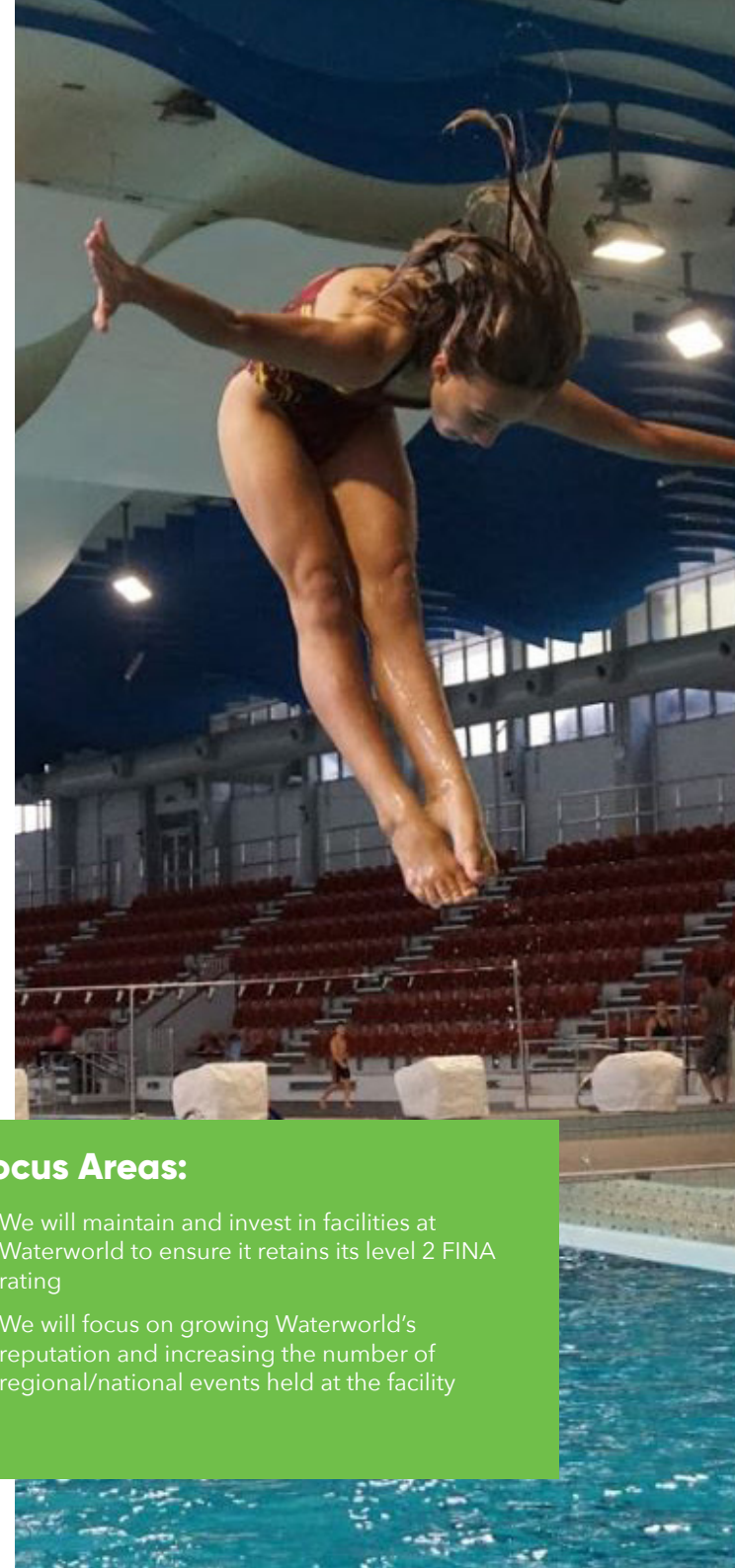
Clubs, high-performance swimming and events are promoted and supported at our facilities

Whilst the way that aquatic facilities are used is constantly changing, a critical part of this has always been competitive swimming and water sports, and will continue to be.

Waterworld especially is an essential facility for local and regional swim meets, but also for associated lane swimming and club training. Other aquatic sports such as water polo and diving are also frequent users of the space.

Waterworld is the largest aquatic facility in the Waikato and currently has Level 2 FINA Rating, allowing it to hold regional and national swim events. Water polo, surf lifesaving and diving events are common features at Waterworld.

These events create economic benefits for the Hamilton economy, and there is potential to grow Waterworld's reputation and increase its use for events over time.



Goal A

We work with sports clubs and organisations to ensure that our facilities continue to support high performance athletes and competitive swimmers

Focus Areas:

- We will understand and continue to monitor who uses our facilities and what they are used for
- Using this information we will plan for the future and changing needs of sports clubs and organisations

Goal B

Waterworld is recognised as a key facility for regional and national events

Focus Areas:

- We will maintain and invest in facilities at Waterworld to ensure it retains its level 2 FINA rating
- We will focus on growing Waterworld's reputation and increasing the number of regional/national events held at the facility

OUTCOME AREA 3:

PLAY

Taakaro



Informal recreation, leisure and play is embraced, promoted and planned at our facilities

Aquatic spaces are routinely used for non-competitive activities. Approximately half of the users attending Waterworld and GAC are doing so for informal recreation, leisure or play purposes. This is especially true in summer months.

Council's Play Strategy (2019) provides clear evidence that a larger number of people are engaging in play and informal recreation as a means of staying physically active as opposed to organised sporting pursuits. This is a trend that can clearly be seen in aquatic spaces, both locally and more widely.

Aquatic facilities are a key part of Hamilton's "Play Infrastructure" - they provide a low cost opportunity for play and physical activity for all ages.

Currently, facilities are provided for play purposes. These include hydrosides, inflatables and splash pads but more investment will be needed in the future. Council also provides regular funding to "partner pools" around the city to meet the increased demand for pool space in summer months, almost entirely for play and informal recreation.

Goal A

We actively improve and increase recreation, leisure and play opportunities

Focus Areas:

- We will seek to understand our user's requirements both now and into the future for informal recreation, leisure and play
- We will work together with our partners to provide relevant programmes and services
- We will work together with our partners to identify and provide additional aquatic space where needed through initiatives such as the "partner pool" initiative

Goal B

We provide the infrastructure required to support play at our facilities

Focus Areas:

- We will monitor trends to understand future requirements for play and plan infrastructure provision and renewals around this

OUTCOME AREA 4: WATER SAFETY

Haumaru Wai

Aquatic facilities complement the use of the natural water sources for swimming and recreation, and support safer use of these spaces

As New Zealand's largest inland city, Hamilton's residents have a different experience with recreation in natural water bodies compared to other parts of the country.

The Waikato River is of course a key source for those who want to experience recreation in natural water, but also has inherent risks as a flowing body of water. From this perspective, pools and aquatic facilities play a different role than they may do in other cities.

This strategy acknowledges that the river is an important feature for recreation in the city. A large amount of recreation occurs either in or on the river already and there are several places in Hamilton where swimming is common in summer months, including Hamilton Gardens and Wellington St Beach.

Aquatic Facilities have an important role in promoting swimming skills and water safety to ensure that residents know how to access the river safely.

Goal

Together with our partners, we provide programmes and services to support safer water use

Focus Areas:

- We will actively look for better ways to deliver the safer use of water message to the wider community along with our partners
- We will provide programmes that address the skills and knowledge required for accessing a variety of water sources, including the Waikato River



HE POU MANAWA ORA

Pillars of wellbeing

is another council strategy which outlines Hamilton City Council's vision for a city that celebrates its whole history, including its unique Maaori heritage, and ensures everyone has a voice in developing its future.

Due to the significance of water for Maaori we have linked this strategy to He Pou Manawa Ora, using the pillars of History, Unity, Prosperity and Restoration to support our vision of aquatic facilities and services that are viewed as vibrant and exciting community spaces and programmes that residents and visitors want to visit.

PILLAR OF HISTORY

HE POU MANAWA KOORERO

A pillar that reminds us of the value of our unique history of language, people, place and our commitment to acknowledge and respect our uniquely different values and qualities.

The Koorero pou links with the ongoing influence of the strategy through the inclusion of Maaori stories, weaving of Maaori language and local narratives at the Hamilton pools. One way that this is planned is through the inclusion of signage at the pools to help bring the histories of Te Rapa, and of Waterworld as a place, to life.

PILLAR OF UNITY

HE POU TOORANGAPUU MAAORI

A pillar that gives recognition to Maaori values, knowledge and aspirations.

Maaori are equal partners and contributors to the wellbeing of people, place, environment and our shared future.

The Toorangapuu pou links to the strategy through the opportunity to increase Maatauranga Maaori (Maaori knowledge) to inform infrastructure, community, and organisational development.

Staff will be involved in professional development to help develop cultural capability and foster the organisation's bicultural commitment.

PILLAR OF PROSPERITY

HE POU MANAWA TAURIKURA

A pillar that provides safety, security and opportunity for individuals, whaanau, and communities to live their best lives and prosper spiritually and economically.

The Taurikura pou links to Hamilton Pool's facilities and services supporting Maaori wellbeing and the Maatauranga Maaori developed through programmes and classes.

For instance, the development of new 'learn to swim' programmes Akona te kauhoe and through increased employment/career opportunities for Maaori staff members at Hamilton pools to promote representation.

PILLAR OF RESTORATION

HE POU MANAWA TAI AO

A pillar that reminds us of our connection to, reliance on, and responsibility to care for the natural and physical world.

The Taiao pou links to the integration of environmental projects, issues, and outcomes.

Through the water safety pillar we support interaction with natural water like Waikato river, lakes, and wetlands, which promotes protection of these spaces.

We will also look at how our sites embrace the natural areas that surround them, promoting engagement with these spaces too.

HE ORANGA TOO TE WAI - water as the source of life

Water is the source of life, vital to all living things. Most our human body is water, much of the earth's surface is covered by water, and each day we need to consume water to survive.

For Maaori, water is paramount to taha tinana (physical) and taha wairua (spiritual) hauora (well-being), a taonga (treasure) of considerable value bound in a mauri (life force) of whakapapa (genealogy) and ancestral histories.

Water is also linked closely to identity (ko wai koe?), food (kai), healing and ritual, protection (kaitiakitanga), transport, play and place. Water stems from the relationship of Papatūānuku (Mother earth) and Ranginui (Sky father).





Hamilton Pools



**Hamilton
City Council**
Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa