

## **Aquatic centres and splash parks; design and management for sustainability**

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Aquatic centres are the most expensive community asset a Council is likely to build and maintain and arguably one the community is most passionate about retaining. These provide significant benefits at a time when the number of people drowning is increasing in Australia, and the demand for different types of water spaces is also increasing with changes in demographic profile and leisure and fitness pursuits.

In Australia we have a range of different type of aquatics centres and models of funding and managing public pools, that reflect differences in population size, remoteness, proximity to the coast and thermal springs, and local resources, for example. However, there are also increasing pressures related to risk management of aquatic environments and sustainability of aging aquatic infrastructure and the rising cost of new fit-for-purpose aquatic infrastructure.

Many very small communities have pools and struggle to keep them sustainable. Other communities have introduced or replaced community pools with splash parks which present a different suite of maintenance and risk issues and benefits very different to a standard swimming pool.

What is sustainable to facilitate swimming and water play, and how it can be cost effectively managed, is a reflection of the nature and size of the market, physical context and competition, as well as design.

This paper will discuss some of the different types of provision and management models adopted to make pools sustainable and implications for risk management, as well as the trend towards splash parks and what has been learn about their provision, design and managements in recent years.