

Remote Community Combined Aquatic and Recreation Centre

Shire of Halls Creek Aquatic and Recreation Centre

Aim

To incorporate the unique needs of the social, cultural and geographical environment of Halls Creek into the design of the Halls Creek Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

Project Background

The Shire of Halls Creek (population 3,500) is located 2,850kms north east of Perth in the Kimberley region. The Shire's combined wet and dry centre features two undercover courts for team and individual sports such as basketball, netball, indoor cricket, aerobics, yoga, dance, weight training, snooker/pool and darts; and a outdoor aquatic facility that has both a lap pool for fitness, competition and learn to swim programs; and a leisure pool designed to promote fun activities for non-swimmers. Additionally the facility provides a crèche, disabled access and a management structure that provides access for low income individuals, seniors, people with disabilities and Indigenous user groups.

Approach/Process

Swimming pools in communities with high Indigenous populations have been shown to provide health benefits that can reduce the burden of disease.

The Shire's objective was to provide a swimming and recreational facility that is both highly functional for the needs of the local community and complies with the relevant statutory requirements. Regular swimming has been linked to a reduction in ear disease, respiratory conditions and skin infections.

An initial needs assessment was completed in December 1988. The feasibility study and community consultation report was prepared by a consultant on behalf of the Shire in 1999.

Strengths

- The combined wet and dry facility provides opportunities for the asset to deliver services to the maximum number of users.
- Multi-purpose facilities reduce the infrastructure required to meet similar needs, improving the sustainability of the facility.

- The local Indigenous community was consulted throughout the project planning phase to ensure that the centre was designed in a culturally appropriate manner.
- The centre has been located in the heart of the townsite and integrated with existing recreational facilities.
- Administrative and working areas were included in the facility that allow for the shared use by agencies that provide recreation, health and community programs.



Challenges

The initial budget was \$3.2m to construct both the aquatic centre and the recreation centre as one discrete project. Cost escalation occurred between the initial concept phase and the design phase being implemented, with the construction cost increasing to \$5.8m. The project had to be staged to allow the Shire time to source additional funding. Stage 1 incorporated the aquatic centre and Stage 2 the recreation centre.

Further Opportunities

The centre has the capacity to become a regional training centre for community health projects and Recreational/Pool Managers for remote Indigenous communities.

case study

Project Partners

- Shire of Halls Creek
- Lotterywest
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- Argyle Diamond Mine

Budget Implications

- Total Project Cost \$5,853,568 - delivered in two stages with separate CSRFF applications for each stage. Total CSRFF funds invested in the project were \$2,350,000. NB - The Shire of Halls Creek was deemed to be disadvantaged and therefore eligible for a CSRFF special assistance grant.
- The impact of operational costs, combined with the increased borrowings of the Shire during construction, remain undetermined, with the Centre opening in 2006.

Sustainability Principles

- Both pools are solar heated to allow for year round use.
- Landscaping and wind breaks were included in the design to reduce wind chill from easterly winter winds.
- The dry centre was designed as an undercover multi-purpose court rather than an air-conditioned indoor centre.
- The complex incorporates energy efficient skylights which reduce the overall running cost by using the available natural light.

Key Lessons

- On projects in remote regional areas there is a clear need to incorporate regional building cost index estimates into construction budgets. Additionally, cost escalation and contingency fees should be included in the proposed budget.
- The length of time allocated for the design phase for large infrastructure projects is generally underestimated. This inevitably impacts on the construction cost of the project, as cost escalation occurs while planning is being undertaken.
- Appreciation of the ongoing management issues and operational costs for pools in remote communities needs to be considered when planning this type of facility.

Who to contact for further information

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