Department of Sport and Recreation

Swimming Pool Refurbishment - Manjimup Regional AquaCentre

To construct an indoor heated aquatic facility open twelve months of the year to the Manjimup community and surrounding towns.

Project Background

Manjimup (population 10,000) is located 304kms south of Perth. Community members were travelling up to four hours to access heated water in Donnybrook, Bunbury or Busselton. In March 2002 the Shire of Manjimup was approved a CSRFF grant of $420,302 to assist with covering and heating half of the existing 50 metre outdoor pool, using a hydraulic boom, based on a project completed in Inverell in New South Wales.

Approach/Process

In 2002 the Shire of Manjimup appointed a consultant to undertake a Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan. The Plan identified a 'heated indoor aquatic complex accessible to all of the community all year round' as the number one facility priority for the Shire. The Shire surveyed 4,500 households; community, service and sporting clubs and conducted eight public meetings. Community consultation and feedback emphasised the need for 'warm water' for leisure and health purposes. In 2002 Council appointed an architect to prepare conceptual plans for heating and enclosing the 50 metre pool at Manjimup. A Heated Swimming Pool Advisory Committee was formed and included representatives from health care professionals, education sector, local government, current pool manager and community representatives. In August 2004 the Shire sought and was approved a change of purpose to vary the design of the swimming pool redevelopment. In April 2005 the Shire was approved an additional CSRFF grant of $49,330 to construct the multi-purpose health and fitness room. The project was completed in 2006 and includes a 25 metre x 8 lane lap pool and leisure pool constructed inside the existing pool shell, multi-purpose fitness room, crèche; and refurbished public amenities, entrance, kiosk/café, store area and plant equipment.

Budget Implications

- Original project cost was $1.2 million, final project cost was $4.4 million.
- Community provided voluntary labour in demolition of the old pool surrounds, removal of shade structures, children's pool and equipment from the site.

Strengths

- Heated water has increased pool usage from five months of the year to all year round.
- Extensive consultation has resulted in a high level of community ownership of the project.
- Created employment of four permanent staff and 20-30 casuals.
- Traineeships and school based traineeships are reducing staffing costs.
- Project will retain existing users and attract new users through innovative programming for girls, youth and multi-cultural programs.
- Crèche attracts mid-week users.
- Facility catchment area encompasses users from Bridgetown, Nannup, Boyup Brook and Balingup.
- Inter-relationship with nearby facilities was considered.

Challenges

- Manjimup Shire residents had an 8% rise in Council rates to cover project construction cost (6% of rate base).

Further Opportunities

- Incorporate existing sports hall (currently 500 metres from the Aqua Centre) and new primary school being constructed north of the facility into the venue's programming
- Strengthen partnerships with local health, education and community agencies.
- ncorporate larger dedicated gymnasium facility if demand exists after 'honeymoon' period has past.

Project Partners

- Shire of Manjimup
- Lotterywest
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Department of Education and Training
- Australian Sports Foundation
- Department of Transport and Regional Services
- South West Development Commission
- Bunbury Port Authority
- Ray White Real Estate
- Local Community

Sustainability Principles

- Hoecker see-through roof structure has reduced lighting costs.
- Hoecker structure has minimal maintenance requirements, with no painting or rust implications.
- Life cycle costing determined that heat pumps, rather than gas boilers, would result in a longer term cost saving.
- Centre has become a key employer with over 30 individuals employed on full time and casual basis.
- Low maintenance/high durability finishes used in ablution areas.

Key Lessons

- The Shire's management philosophy considered the degree to which a financial return and a social benefit were sought.
- The Shire used a life cycle cost approach when planning the project which provided a solid information base from which to make the most effective financial, economic and operationally sustainable decisions.
- Project cost escalation can be attributed to changes in design and subsequent community consultation, 'change of purpose' grant approval periods, difficulties in obtaining builders in a limited competitive market and significant rises in material costs such as steel and concrete.
- On projects in 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 can impact on the construction cost of the project, as cost escalation occurs while planning is being undertaken.

Who to contact for further information

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