

8.20. Swimming Pool Enclosure

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ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PURPOSE:

This report details the outcomes of preliminary discussions held with representatives of Transport for NSW (Maritime) on potential locations for a tidal swimming pool enclosure in Sydney Harbour.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following discussions with Transport for NSW (Maritime), two potential tidal pool enclosure sites are being considered namely Hayes St Beach Neutral Bay and Berry Island Reserve Balls Head Bay Wollstonecraft.

In order to determine whether those sites pose any human health risks to the community in their proposed use, it is proposed to undertake a human health screening assessment that would be conducted by a suitably qualified consultant. It is further proposed to undertake those studies on the Hayes St Beach site in the initial instance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The funding of the human health screening level assessment be considered in the draft 2021/22 budget and due to the nature of the project, the funds be sourced from the Environmental Levy.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1.THAT** Council employ the services of a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a human health screening level assessment on Hayes Street Beach water and sediments in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the location for a tidal swimming pool enclosure
- 2.THAT** Council staff prepare a further report to Council on the results of the initial human health screening level assessment conducted on Hayes St Beach.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment
- 1.3 Quality urban greenspaces

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 26 October 2020, Council resolved:

- 1. THAT Council make contact with appropriate staff from Transport for NSW (Maritime) in order to discuss the viability of the proposed locations for any proposed swimming pool enclosure in Sydney Harbour;*
- 2. THAT Council staff provide a further report to Council on the outcomes of discussions with Transport for NSW (Maritime) on a proposed swimming pool enclosure in Sydney Harbour.*

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

DETAIL

Consistent with the aforementioned Council resolution of 26 October 2020, Council staff corresponded with the staff from Transport for NSW (Maritime) regarding a number of possible locations for a tidal pool enclosure in Sydney Harbour namely:

- Quarantine Depot Berrys Bay;
- Hayes St Beach Neutral Bay;
- Quibaree Park Lavender Bay; and
- Berry Island Reserve Balls Head Bay Wollstonecraft

The feedback provided from Transport for NSW (Maritime) staff outlined that they were not in favour of a tidal pool enclosure being located in the vicinity of the Quarantine Depot Berrys Bay and Quibaree Park Lavender Bay for a variety of reasons including impacts on existing moorings, contaminated sediments, future infrastructure restrictions and impacts on ferry services. To reiterate, the previous Council report stressed that any Development Application for a tidal pool enclosure needed Transport for NSW (Maritime) landowners' consent.

As a consequence of that advice from Transport for NSW (Maritime), the remaining sites left for Council to consider siting a tidal pool enclosure include Hayes St Beach Neutral Bay and Berry Island Reserve Balls Head Bay Wollstonecraft.

Next Steps

Both of the remaining potential tidal pool locations at Neutral Bay and Wollstonecraft have positive and negative aspects but the next step that Council needs to consider before submitting a Development Application for approval for a specific site would be to undertake a Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) of the respective sites

A Human Health Risk Assessment addresses risks to human health related to potential exposures to contaminants that may be present in sediments and/or surface water in areas where recreational access and use is proposed. For the purposes of this exercise, “recreational use” includes boating, wading and swimming.

For members of the community to be exposed to any potential contamination is largely dependent upon the location, layout and water access. For both remaining sites, the exposure pathways include areas where sediments may be exposed all of the time and at low tide. For these locations, the assessment of exposure needs to address ingestion and skin contact with both the sediments and the surface water.

Unlike in the assessment of land contamination where Council and consultants can rely upon a suite of guidance documents from enHealth, the National Health and Medical Research Committee and the National Environmental Protection Council to determine the public health suitability of particular sites for a specific use, Council has no such guidance when determining a potential tidal pool enclosure site for environmental contamination.

As a result of interest in developing similar swimming sites along the Parramatta River, Sydney Water commissioned a consultant to develop a framework for the conduct of Human Health Risk Assessment work in relation to this use. This document “Framework for Human Health Risk Assessment: Recreational Areas” prepared by EnRisks outlines a State Government accepted methodology for determining the human health risks associated with a specific site tidal pool enclosure. This methodology is considered appropriate to allow for the same assessment in the Sydney Harbour context.

Site Selection and Cost

Given the existing use of the Hayes Street Beach for informal swimming and recreational purposes, it is logical to prioritise this location for an initial screening assessment under the aforementioned human health risk framework.

It is estimated that to engage a consultant to undertake the initial human health screening assessment of the site that examines, over a period of time, a number of water and sediment samples that a budget of \$65,000 would be required.