

# SPLASH PALACE REDUCTION OF WEEKEND OPERATING HOURS

**To:** Community Wellbeing Committee

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 14 February 2023

**From:** Stephen Cook, Manager – Aquatic Services

**Approved:** Steve Gibling, Group Manager - Leisure and Recreation

**Approved Date:** Wednesday 8 February 2023

**Open Agenda:** No

**Public Excluded Agenda:** Yes

**Reason(s) for the Public Excluded (choose – can be more than one)**

Section of the Act	Subclause and Reason under the Act	“Plain English” Reason	When Report Can Be Released
s7(2)(a) s7(2)(b)(ii)	Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.  Would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.	Protection of privacy of natural persons, Prejudiced commercial position	As this request pertains to current staff members, a change proposal process may need to be followed prior to the report being released.

## Purpose and Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on why Splash Palace plans to reduce weekend operating hours to create operational savings and efficiencies.

## Recommendations

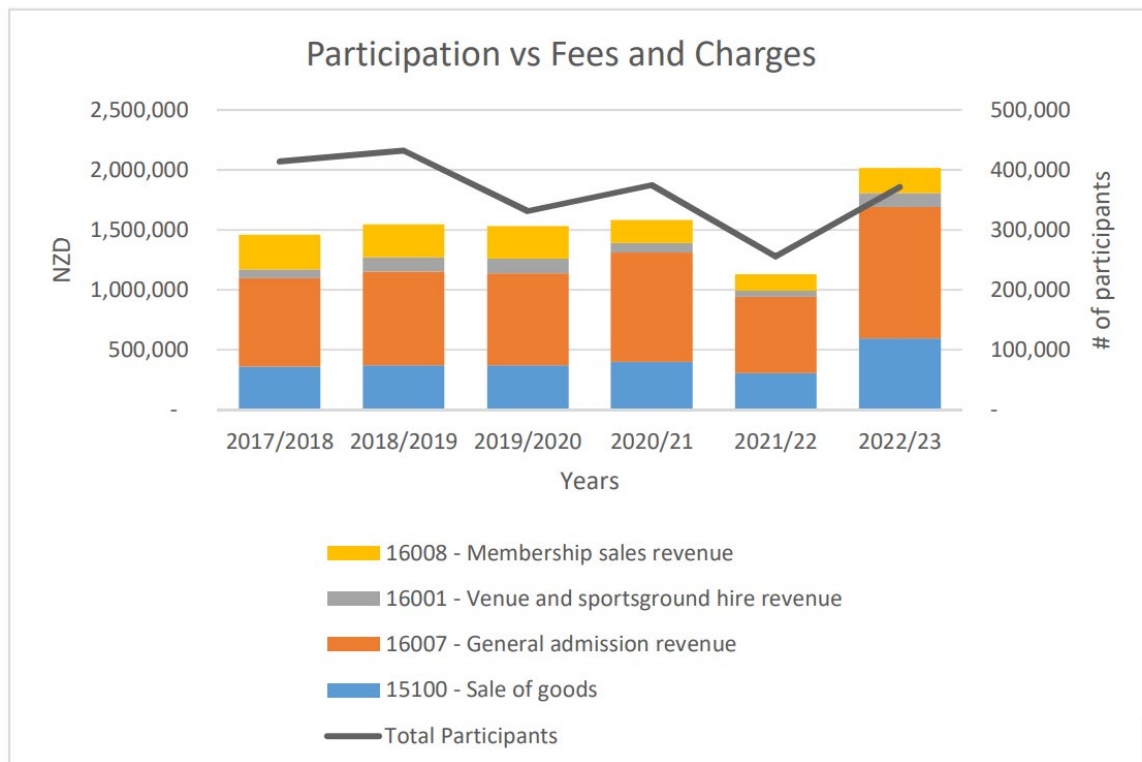
That the Community Wellbeing Committee:

1. Receive the report “Splash Palace Reduction of Weekend Operating Hours”.
2. Note and endorse the changes proposed and their impact on staffing levels and community access.

## Background

Splash Palace is funded through a combination of user pays and rates subsidised activity, combined with the invaluable support from the ILT and the ILT Foundation for the Schools Learn to Swim Programme. Although revenue has increased and is forecast to be circa \$2 million for 22/23, it hasn't increased enough to meet the budget forecast. Participation is also increasing but is not yet back to pre-covid19 numbers which have also contributed to the lower revenue whilst increased operational costs have also contributed to the budget deficit.

The graph below shows the breakdown of revenue against participation levels.

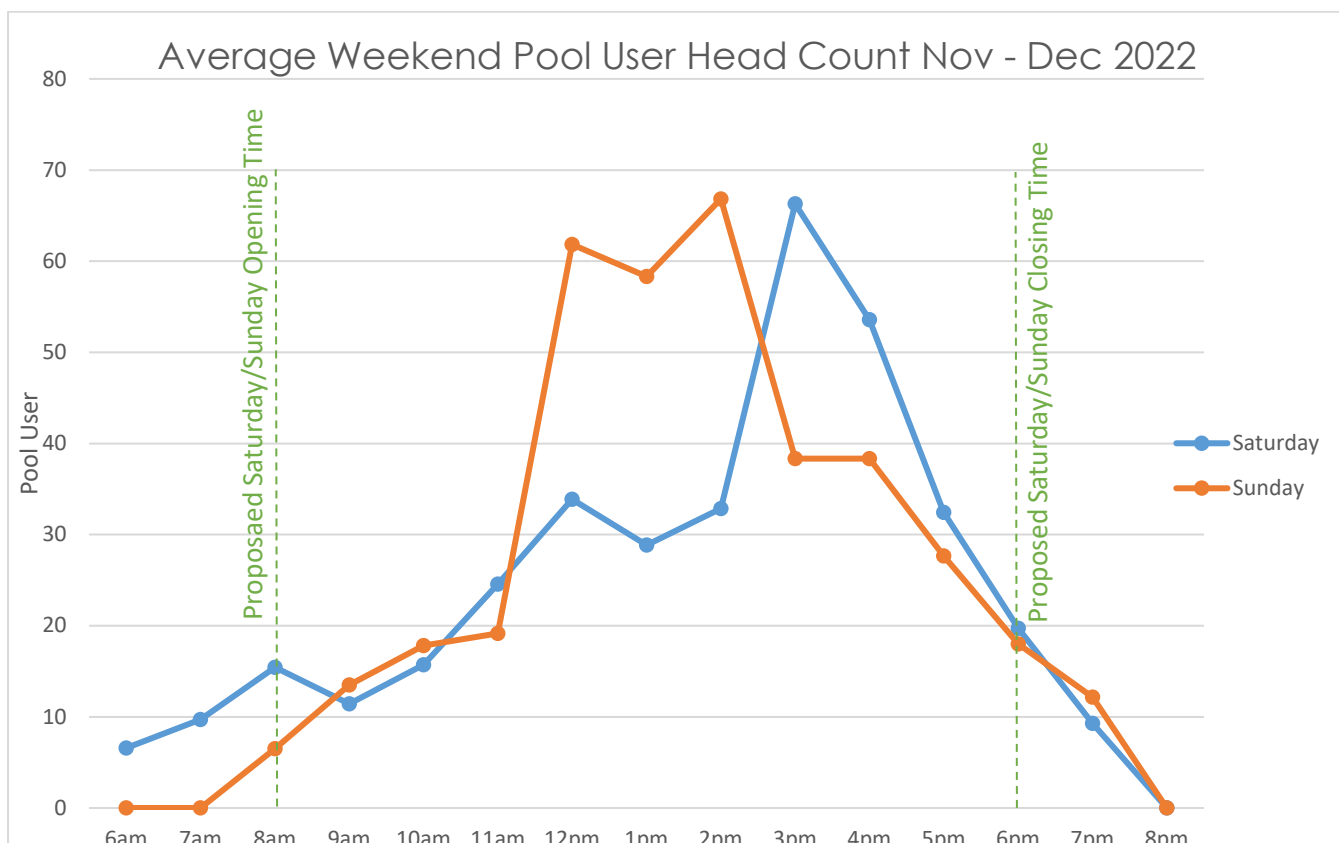


### Proposed reduction in operating hours – weekends

As part of the ongoing process to ensure the service runs as efficiently and effectively as possible, the team have reviewed a range of participation and use trends. Based on this usage data, weekend hours have been identified as having very low engagement by the community and so the team have proposed to change the weekend opening hours to:

Current Opening Hours	Proposed Opening Hours
Saturday 6 am – 8 pm	Saturday 8 am – 6 pm
Sunday 8 am – 8 pm	Sunday 8 am – 6 pm

The graph below shows the average participation numbers through the weekend and that the impact on the community is minimal, in fact, we may find that those that currently swim after or before the proposed opening and closing times may change their swimming times to fit within the new opening period instead of not swimming at all.



## Advantages

The main advantage of reducing the opening hours of Splash Palace would be cost savings on salary and wages. The impact shown in the pool user graph demonstrates that this impact would be minimal and there is a possibility that these customers accept the change and move their swimming time back within the opening hours instead of not swimming at all.

Splash Palace would still have the ability to book the pool out to private groups after hours which could create additional revenue.

Due to the employee demographic at Splash Palace, opening later and closing earlier on a Saturday may also benefit employees and the facility where it is generally more difficult to fill shifts during those times.

For Splash Palace to remain Poolsafe compliant, there is a requirement to undertake quarterly training. This is currently done on a Sunday night when the pool is required to close early. Reducing the closing time back to 6 pm would enable Splash Palace to carry out this training as required without the need to advertise to the community.

As reported in the media recently, the issue of staff shortages throughout New Zealand has led to some aquatic facilities having to reduce hours as they are not able to operate safely. The most recent facility to do this is in Queenstown where they are closing the facility at weekends from mid-February. Minimally changing Splash Palace's weekend opening hours would reduce the demand on staff and assist with being able to maintain a constant operation through periods of low unemployment levels.

## Disadvantages

The disadvantage of reducing the opening hours of Splash Palace at the weekends is that it also reduces the level of potential access to the community through the reduced opening hours.

Usually, once operating hours change it is difficult to make a case for them to be changed back to what they were so consideration of this change should be taken as permanent and any decision should take into account the future use of the facility.

Customers who currently use the facility in the times that would sit outside of this proposal may be inconvenienced by the change.

Of the few bookings Splash Palace has each year that would go past the proposed closing times of the facility would incur additional costs of staffing and pool hire, this could be seen as a barrier to holding events at Splash Palace.

Staffing hours would need to change which may impact employees' hours and contracts and therefore a change proposal would need to be undertaken.

## Savings

Below is a breakdown of potential savings from reducing weekend operating hours:

Savings Type	Hours per week	Hours per year	AVG Rate	Sub Total	Leave	Total
Lifeguard Weekend Hours (Reduced opening hours)	48	2496	██████	██████	██████	██████
Senior Customer Services Hours	1.5	78	██████	██████	██████	██████
PPT Customer Services Hours	12	624	██████	██████	██████	██████
Contract Cleaners	8	416	███	██████		██████
<b>Total Savings</b>						██████

## Timeline

The below timeline is approximate for how long it is expected to take to implement the required change proposal to reduce weekend hours.

The date is based on there being no requirement for public consultation. If this were to change and consultation is required then the next likely date for a decision would be when the Annual Plan is adopted on 27 June 2023.

- Change proposal preparation 13 February to 10 March 2023 (four weeks).
- Arrange staff meetings 13 March to 16 March (four days).
- Change proposal process 20 March to 12 May (eight weeks).
- Arrange communication to stakeholders 15 May to 26 May (two weeks).
- Communicate changes to stakeholders 29 May to 18 June (three weeks).
- Implement changes 19 June 2023.

## **Next Steps**

Implementation of the change of hours will be undertaken in line with the approximate timeline above. Although, where possible staff will refine this timeframe to ensure the change can be implemented as quickly as possible.