



Save Mayfield Swimming Pool Campaign

A Community Group Supporting Community Resources

www.mayfieldpool.com

Mayfield Swimming Pool Kiosk Proposal

May 2010

Objectives

To develop the Kiosk at Mayfield Swimming Pool so that:

- it becomes a cafe that offers a variety of food and beverages to both pool users and passing drivers and pedestrians;
- it becomes an effective promotional tool that raises awareness of the pool as a hub of social activity and attracts new patrons;
- it becomes a sufficiently profitable operation that the currently subsidy can be removed and the prospect of rental fees can be considered;
- over the long term, it significantly reduces the cost to Council of providing the pool for the community.

Rationale

The existing kiosk at Mayfield Pool is not a revenue-generating venture for the council. Currently council pays fees or subsidies (which we believe to be \$20,000- per annum) to the operator to manage pool admissions, and the operator keeps all profits from sales.

The need for this subsidy is largely because the kiosk is limited to a single internal window, thereby restricting its customer base to only those people who have already paid admission to the pool. This limited market cannot sustain the full cost of running the operation.

However, there is a much larger potential market for the kiosk just outside the entrance gates. Ingal Street is always busy with road and pedestrian traffic, and connects two of Newcastle's main arterial roads, Maitland Road and Industrial Drive.

Previous discussions with a successful operator of a council pool in Sydney have confirmed that secondary spend in the form of food, beverage, and retail sales is an important part of mitigating the inevitable costs of running a public pool.

Several excellent recent improvements to the pool—including the play equipment, shade structures and solar heating—have made the centre much more useful and attractive, but there is a lack of awareness in the community of what an excellent location we have behind the bland entrance wall.

An outward facing kiosk counter would increase the public exposure of the pool, present an image of a centre of activity through the attraction of passing customers, and would be a very effective ongoing tool to promote awareness of the pool and substantially increase its patronage.

Proposal

We propose that an additional roller door be installed on the exterior wall of the kiosk thus allowing service to public as well as pool patrons.

In addition we propose the installation of a commercial espresso machine so that café-quality coffee is available from the kiosk. There is a strong demand for quality coffee, which is a highly lucrative product, offering most of the retail price as profit margin.

This would immediately improve the business case for the kiosk tender, due to a greatly increased market of potential customers, a more profitable product line, and generally attracting more patrons to the pool area with the improved facility.

It is quite possible that under these terms, interest from a commercial operator could be found without the need to offer a subsidy.

It is also possible that the kiosk could continue to operate during the winter season when the pool is closed. Winter weekend sport played on the oval at Dangar Park would for example create an opportunity in terms of catering to this crowd.

The counter itself would be a valuable service to passers-by, both as pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Mayfield pool has easy parking right at the front making it viable for people to make a regular stop for a coffee on the way to work or an ice cream on the way home from school.

However it could also be enhanced further to become a simple café-style operation, with the addition of a few tables, chairs and umbrellas, to increase its exposure and pull from the street.



Proposed location for the new service counter and roller door

There are several successful takeaway cafes in other areas of Newcastle that operate with this roller door model, including Rolador in Beaumont Street, Hamilton; Swells at Merewether and Bar Beach; and Scotties in Scott Street, Newcastle East.

An important reason for the success of the Rolador cafe in Hamilton is the ease of parking, so it provides almost a 'drive through' takeaway option.



Rolador and Scotties, popular takeaway window cafes

This is exactly the situational benefit that Mayfield Pool enjoys, with clear public visibility and easy parking right at the front, making it attractive for people to make a regular stop for a coffee on the way to work or an ice cream on the way home from school.

In recent years, Mayfield has seen very popular two cafes opened. Clearly there is a substantial and growing 'cafe culture' within Mayfield, and it is common to see people walking to their local cafe to get their morning coffee.

Council Investment and Community Support

This proposal would require an initial investment from council:

- Installation of a roller door and counter and awning in existing front wall of the kiosk
- Relocation of the deep fryers and exhaust fans
- Purchase and installation of a coffee machine
- OPTIONAL - Installing a new back wall in the kiosk to take approximately 4m² from the women's change rooms to increase the cafe internal preparation space.

The SMSP Campaign group is more than happy to be involved in this project to assist in any way which would be helpful, such as with drawing up specifications for the tender, or using our networks to canvas interest in the revamped kiosk tender proposal with local cafe owners.

We would be looking for someone who wants to create a special look and atmosphere for the kiosk, and to grow their business in partnership with the increasing patronage of the pool.

Benefits to Council and the Community

Changing the service focus of the kiosk to include external sales serves a number of purposes:

1. Increases the range and quality of food and beverage options available to existing and future pool users, and the passing public in general.
2. An upgraded cafe service would attract new pool user groups. For example, Mother's groups are looking for locations to meet in the middle of the day, have coffee and a splash around with their children. The pool is a perfect location for this, with the kid's pool, playground and shaded areas. Similarly it would foster the creation of an 'early birds' swimming culture where people have a morning swim and coffee/breakfast on the way to work.
3. Better food and beverage options would broaden the range of value-added services the pool could offer, such as catering for kids birthday parties and other private or corporate events, or offering do-it-yourself "barbecue packs".
4. The increased activity and visibility of the pool due to the kiosk would provide powerful and ongoing cost-free promotion of the pool precinct to the public, and overcome the perhaps rather uninviting impression that the solid brick façade currently creates.
5. Allowing the public to access the kiosk would greatly increase its business potential, making it much more attractive to potential operators, even under terms which are more favourable to the council. It is quite possible that a subsidy would no longer need to be paid, and even that rental could be charged, while still allowing the operator to run a profitable enterprise.

Conclusion

The Save Mayfield Swimming Pool Campaign is committed to finding ways to improve the facilities, patronage and financial position of Mayfield Swimming Pool. The kiosk regularly comes up in community discussions as a key vehicle through which this could be achieved.

This proposal makes a strong business case for a more vibrant café-style operation with a public counter, which reduces the long-term costs to council of the pool complex, and better meets the needs of the local community.

We look forward to working with council staff to make this a reality, bearing in mind the current kiosk contract has finished and is due to be out for tender in June.

Please feel free to contact us at your convenience to arrange more detailed discussions.

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