**Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre project background:**

The renewal of the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) is part of the Darebin Council Plan 2017–2021, supporting our goal to expand opportunities for participation and social connection through sport, physical activity and other leisure activities.

In late 2017 through to early 2018, Council sought feedback from NARC users and members, local residents, community groups and local schools who use the centre. The feedback received from this consultation contributed to a feasibility study.

The feasibility study and community consultation found that NARC is a highly valued and utilised community asset, however it is not meeting the current needs of the community. While the facility has been upgraded over the years, as it was built in 1968, a new facility needs to be developed to cater for existing and future needs. This brings with it an opportunity to make significant improvements to the functionality and services offered at NARC.

The feasibility study was considered by Council in September 2018, and in June 2019 Council awarded the contract for the design of the new facility to Warren and Mahoney Architects Australia.

Development of the concept designs took place between July 2019 and April 2020. Council was excited to share the proposed plans for the new NARC facility with the community and key stakeholders and seek feedback between April 15 - May 3 2020.

We received over 400 responses and which was overwhelmingly positive in sentiment.

To find out more about the community consultation, please feel free to browse [the Northcote Aquatic and Recreational Centre Consultation Summary Report.](https://www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/30458/widgets/304036/documents/176437)

This valuable feedback has been reviewed and has informed some changes to the design with detailed drawings now in progress.

A summary of key responses to the feedback captured during this process can be found in the table below:

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| **Item** | **Feedback** | **Design Response** |
| Amenities | To ensure change rooms provided for all users’ needs and not only gender-neutral spaces | Gender specific, family, ambulant, additional needs, changing places as well as gender neutral facilities are included in the design. |
| Toddler Pool | Concern around the outdoor aquatic space for small children and the size of the aquatic play area | The outdoor aquatic play space is designed to include nature-based play spaces with multiple water levels and sensory activities. There will be space to allow adults to connect with each other while watching children play and will be of an area no less than the existing provision level. |
| Multipurpose Room | Multipurpose space for use by clubs, groups and community | Two multipurpose rooms, one small and one larger room have been integrated into the facility design.  The smaller room will be used as a prayer room, a quiet space and a breastfeeding space.  The larger room will be available for (swimming) clubs, school groups, community groups and birthday parties. |
| Shade | Shading is needed over the outdoor splash play area | Design include a canopy area, providing shade for the outdoor aquatic activities, lifeguards, swim coaches and public. |
| Parking / Green Travel | Sufficient bike racks and provision for sustainable transport options | A green travel plan will be developed for the facility |
| Pool Wall / Boom | Consider pool wall / boom for sports and community usage | The inclusion of a boom is being tested but is likely to be cost prohibitive. Should future investment for NARC be contemplated, a boom might be considered at this time. |