

# Post Implementation Review of the Bluewater Lagoon

Including Economic and Social Benefits

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## 1 Executive Summary

Mackay Regional Council (and former Mackay City Council) are to be congratulated on their strategic approach to the management and development of aquatic facilities. Strategic plans and reviews conducted during 2002 to 2005 culminated in the development of the Bluewater Lagoon.

The Post Implementation Review conducted qualitative and quantitative research to determine whether the development of the lagoon has met its objectives, and to specifically determine the economic and social benefits of the Bluewater Lagoon.

A total of 379 exit surveys were conducted at the lagoon surveying a total of 1,651 persons. A further 129 surveys were completed at the various libraries.

This post implementation review of the lagoon has determined that it is a functional community facility that meets the needs of a large cross section of the Mackay community. It is viewed as being good for Mackay and whilst some improvements are recommended, there is overall a high level of satisfaction with the facility.

The development of the lagoon has met all objectives and is a resounding success. The only target group not fully addressed is seniors and that is due to the incompatibility generally of seniors groups with large numbers of young children. You cannot please all of the people all of the time, and the family focus of the facility is a winner with the major demographic of the region's population.

The lagoon is the widespread success largely because it is free of charge. With the two speed economy in Mackay, the availability of community facilities free of charge is a huge attractant for lower paid workers who might be struggling to meet housing costs in the region. The tangible community benefits of the facility would decline and attendance would decrease if it was a fee based facility.

The lagoon attracts tourists, but these are largely visiting friends and relatives therefore increasing the attraction of Mackay to that sector of the market, which also benefits the region's residents. Whilst some residents have the perception that the lagoon is largely patronized by tourists that is not the case with 85% of those surveyed residing within the Mackay Council area.

The lagoon is visually appealing and images of the lagoon are prevalent on many websites. Organisations attracting investment into Mackay use images of the lagoon to portray our lifestyle and liveability of the region. The Bluewater Lagoon is becoming the face of Mackay.

Tangible economic benefits total \$3.8 million per annum and intangible benefits have a potential value of a further \$60.9 million per annum.

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Secondary spend at lagoon and surrounding cafes and restaurants	\$322,341
Employment	\$1,307,290
Tourism	\$2,123,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,752,631</b>

The lagoon has delivered on the outcomes and associated performance measures in the Funding Agreement with the Australian Government.

	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
a)	Permanent Employment	Direct employment equates to 22.8 FTE at the average wage for Mackay Regional Council 2008/09 <sup>1</sup> . Indirect employment is difficult to assess as surrounding businesses cannot determine proportion of lagoon related business. A conservative estimate of 2 FTE has been used for indirect employment in the economic benefits. Higher direct employment than projected is largely due to higher lagoon visitation than anticipated resulting in increased lifeguards and other support services.
b)	Improved community services	<p>The lagoon definitely provides increased recreational opportunities for people with disabilities both individually and group outings. The lagoon caters for a wide range of mobility impairment including provision of a water wheelchair. Some additional facilities are identified in the study but the satisfaction level with people with disabilities is very high.</p> <p>Youth (under 15) are well catered for with a variety of activities. Over 50% of lagoon visitors are under 18 and they generally visit as family groups.</p> <p>Over 50% of visitors attend on a regular basis and would therefore derive benefits for active recreation, increased social interaction and family cohesion.</p> <p>Seniors only account for 3.5% of lagoon visitors, and the majority of these are as family groups. Research indicated that unless they are visiting with grandchildren, seniors do not find the lagoon an attractive recreation environment due to the large numbers of children.</p> <p>98% of surveys stated that the lagoon was good for Mackay and 29% said that it needed no improvement. The lagoon has certainly delivered on improved community services.</p>
c)	Expansion of infrastructure	<p>There is not a strong linkage between the lagoon and the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, mainly due to current council policy on alcohol and restricting access to areas of the lagoon therefore ruling out corporate functions associated with conferences.</p> <p>There is a very strong linkage between the lagoon and the Bluewater trail to the recent \$230 million expansion of the nearby Caneland Central shopping centre.</p> <p>The Lagoon has contributed to other redevelopments on the western end of River Street which has been transformed into a bustling vibrant recreation and shopping precinct.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics Wage and Salary Earner Statistics for Small Areas, Time Series, 2003-04 to 2008-09

## 2 Purpose

This study was commissioned by Mackay Regional Council in October 2011. The primary purpose of the study is to conduct a post implementation review of the Bluewater Lagoon, with particular emphasis on whether it met its objectives as well as an assessment of the social and economic benefits. The latter was a condition of the funding provided by the Australian government.

### ***Bluewater Lagoon objectives:***

1. To develop a lagoon-style aquatic facility for the residents of the Mackay Region to provide a safe alternative to beach swimming.
2. To attract (and retain) more workers and families to the region by increasing lifestyle attractiveness.
3. To provide alternative recreational, social and lifestyle opportunities for residents and tourists, including senior citizens, people with disabilities and youth to promote a healthier community.
4. To provide a response to community demands and expectations.

An assessment of whether the implementation of the Bluewater Lagoon has met these objectives will be made in Section 10 of this report.

## 3 Background

Mackay Regional Council (and former Mackay City Council) are to be congratulated on their strategic approach to the management and development of aquatic facilities.

Active research and studies into the development of an aquatic facility commenced in 2002 when Mackay City Council commissioned Strategic Leisure Pty Ltd to conduct an Aquatic Facilities review to develop a strategic plan for the future development of Mackay's aquatic facilities<sup>2</sup>. The report's recommendation suggested either redevelopment of Pioneer Swim Centre or development of a new "lagoon-style" facility.

Council commissioned Stratcorp Consulting Pty Ltd<sup>3</sup> in 2003 to conduct an aquatic facilities review of leisure water. The report recommended development of a lagoon-style pool with beach entry points and variable depths including a waterplay area.

The community provided Council with a petition signed by 11,000 residents in September 2003, requesting Council to provide a "stinger free" lagoon. Council also included the development of a lagoon-style facility as a key objective in Council's Corporate Plan 2001 – 2005.

The Mackay City Council Aquatic Leisure Facility Survey was conducted by the AECgroup<sup>4</sup> in 2004. This study looked at community views regarding preferences for construction of an aquatic leisure facility with the following key findings:

- 76.2% of those surveyed thought a new Aquatic Leisure Facility was a priority for Council
- 75.5% of those surveyed thought the Aquatic Leisure Facility should be at a new location as opposed to being located at the existing public pools

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<sup>2</sup> Aquatic Facilities Review Final Report July 2002 – Strategic Leisure Pty Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> Aquatic Facilities Review of Leisure Water Final Report October 2003 – Stratcorp Consulting.

<sup>4</sup> Mackay City Council Aquatic Leisure Facility Survey Final Report June 2004 – AEC Group.

- Of those indicating the new facility at a new location, 32.9% of those surveyed thought the facility should be in the Harbour Area. Town Beach, Pioneer River and other locations rated almost equally at around 20%
- The preferred funding mechanism for operational costs was user pays (48.1%). This preference was similar across all new locations

The research and conclusions from community surveys during this period overwhelmingly suggested developing the “lagoon-style” facility at a new location as opposed to being located at the existing pools and for the new facility to be adjacent to the river or beach. Mackay City Council selected Caneland Park in January 2005 based on the results of a site selection study by Lamberts Recreational Planning<sup>5</sup> as the most suitable location for a new lagoon-style facility. This site rated best for access including public transport and was deemed to suit the majority of Mackay residents. The harbour location was seen to be relatively inaccessible except by private vehicle for much of the city’s population, as well as being out of the way and relatively inaccessible for tourists.

Key reasons for the necessity of a lagoon-style facility for the Mackay region include:

1. The presence of dangerous marine life at the beaches during September to April.
2. The requirement to provide alternative recreational, social and lifestyle opportunities for residents, tourists and specific groups to promote a healthier community.
3. Strong regional growth and a high need for additional lifestyle related infrastructure.
4. The requirement to attract and retain more workers and families to the region<sup>6</sup> by increasing lifestyle attractiveness during a period of strong economic growth and skill shortages.
5. A perceived lack of facilities for the youth, who represent a high percentage of the region’s population.
6. Existing swimming enclosures that are of limited recreational value due to local environmental factors.
7. Limited water space at existing aquatic facilities.

Council had strategically reviewed the community’s requirements for a number of years before determining the most appropriate development was a lagoon style facility at Caneland Park.

### **3.1 Funding**

Council succeeded in obtaining funding from the Australian Government (\$4 million) and Queensland Government (\$4 million) towards the \$12.7 million required to develop the lagoon. The balance of funding was provided by council. Funding by the State Government was part of negotiations around State Land in Caneland Park that was sold to Lend Lease for the expansion of Caneland Central Shopping Centre.

Funding by the Australian Government was through the Regional Partnerships program. The Funding Agreement indicated the outcomes for the project and the performance measure to be used to determine their success which will be assessed in Section 10.

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<sup>5</sup> Mackay City Council Aquatic Leisure Facility Survey Final Report June 2004 – AEC Group.

<sup>6</sup> The attraction and retention of professionals to regional areas”, Institute of Sustainable Regional Development, Central Queensland University.

	Outcome	Performance Measure
a)	Permanent Employment	Creation of 8 direct and an additional 90 jobs from indirect developments that require the lagoon as a catalyst such as cafes, restaurants, sidewalk retail establishments and residential developments in the near vicinity
b)	Improved community services	Increased recreational opportunities for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The lagoon will cater for a wide range of mobility impairment and additional recreational and social integration opportunities for youth in the region.  Providing increased opportunities for exercise and improved lifestyle activities.
c)	Expansion of infrastructure	The development of the lagoon will compliment the development of the 1,800 capacity convention centre and improve the ability for Mackay to attract the boutique convention market to the region.

### 3.2 Council Policy – Use of the Bluewater Lagoon

Council developed the Policy on the Use of the Bluewater lagoon in 2008. The mission was

*“In the delivery of access to the Bluewater Lagoon aquatic facility, to put the community first and to encourage a high level of usage by the general community with a high level of satisfaction by users.”*

The intent was

- To become the hub of physical and social activity by creating positive active and passive leisure experiences to promote overall attractiveness of the Mackay region.
- Recognise that the lagoon facility aims to deliver direct and indirect social and economic outcomes for the Mackay region.
- To provide a community hub to foster integration of all facets of the community into a cohesive unit, supporting the growth of the region and projecting a positive image to stimulate further population growth.
- To involve our community in the development of activities and events through community engagement to further enhance our region’s social capital.

Usage Parameters

- The Bluewater Lagoon is intended to be used for community recreational swimming purposes.
- Community activities and events are to be prioritised over commercial activities and events.
- Organised lesson and instruction-type activities, such as (school) swimming lessons, aqua aerobic classes, group training sessions and personal fitness training are not to be conducted at the Bluewater Lagoon, and should continue to operate from the facilities provided at the Memorial, Pioneer, Mirani and Sarina public pool facilities.
- Activities and events, which aim for health, physical and social wellbeing are to be prioritised over activities and events that do not aim for this objective.
- Activities and events are to address the targeted demographic of families, youth, people with a disability and senior citizens, whilst preserving the existing Bluewater Lagoon environment.



### 3.3 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy 2010-2016

Strategic Leisure Group completed the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy in November 2010 which was adopted by council in December 2010. This includes aquatic facilities but looks at the total picture of open space, sport and recreation rather than a segmented approach looking at aquatic facilities in isolation of the rest.

### 3.4 Relationship to Other Strategic Plans

#### 3.4.1 Tomorrow's Mackay

Tomorrow's Mackay is the Community Plan for Mackay Regional Council for the period 2011 to 2031. The vision of the community plan is summarized as "*A vibrant prosperous lifestyle today – held in trust for tomorrow's generations*". Key parts of the plan that relate to the Bluewater Lagoon and the associated Bluewater Trail are detailed below.

Section of the Plan	Aspiration
<b>What do we want as a community?</b>	Infrastructure of active, healthy living – a variety of recreation and leisure opportunities
<b>Strong Communities</b>	We develop infrastructure, program and policies that support healthy lifestyles for all sectors of the community.
	Provide social facilities and services to serve the lifestyle needs of our communities
<b>Economic Development</b>	Develop and promote tourism to support the region's business and industry sectors
	Attract and develop a skilled workforce by promoting our region as a lifestyle destination with quality education facilities

#### 3.4.2 Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan

Section	Principle
<b>Strong Communities</b>	Social and locational disadvantage in communities is recognised and addressed
	Quality of life is enhanced by offering healthy and safe environments that promote active living and healthy lifestyles
<b>Strong Economy</b>	Sustainable land, infrastructure and facilities are available and managed to enable sustainable economic and employment growth in the region
	Continue to develop the region's distinctive and sustainable tourist destinations, which offer a diverse range of activities and unique experiences to attract domestic and international visitors
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Social infrastructure is planned and located, accessible, adaptable and responsive to demographic change

### 3.4.3 Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland

<b>Strong</b>	Create a diverse economy powered by bright ideas
<b>Healthy</b>	Make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people
<b>Fair</b>	Support a safe and caring community

### 3.4.4 Queensland Regionalisation Strategy (QRS)

<b>People</b>	Promoting regional communities as centres offering residents the full range of opportunities in life through career and education, as well as the amenities that contribute to liveability
<b>Business</b>	Supporting business to attract new investment to generate sustained employment opportunities and strengthen the economic base
<b>Partnerships</b>	Fostering partnerships at the local, state and national levels to promote coordination and drive local leadership

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Qualitative Research

Interviews were conducted with selected individuals to determine their perceptions of the social and economic benefits of the lagoon. Focus groups were conducted with target sectors of youth, seniors and disabled persons to further identify the benefits of the lagoon. Interviewees generally agreed that there were significant social and economic benefits but had difficulty in quantifying these.

### 4.2 Quantitative Research

The findings from the qualitative research were used to develop the surveys to be used at the lagoon and the libraries. The surveys are in Attachment A.

Surveys were conducted at the Bluewater Lagoon on a range of days including weekends and weekdays during school holidays and school term and a public holiday (Australia Day) to try and capture a representative sample of lagoon visitors. These were conducted by trained interviewers to ensure consistency of data collected.

A smaller survey was also conducted at the four libraries within Mackay Regional Council being City, Gordon White, Mirani and Sarina. As these surveys were not supervised, there was a disparity in quality of data compared with the lagoon surveys.

## 5 Marketing/Promotion of the Lagoon

The opening event for the lagoon 10 August 2008 attracted 9,200 people over the four hour event which included music, food and drinks, aerobatics, circus performers and a spectacular display of fireworks. Council conducted a range of targeted advertising prior to the opening of the lagoon, culminating in the impressive attendance at the opening event.

Council continues to market the Bluewater Lagoon as a "free family friendly facility" and an integral part of the Bluewater Trail. Billboards at Mackay's entry points promote the facility, and it features prominently on websites and brochures for a large range of Mackay businesses.

Since its opening in 2008, the lagoon has been promoted widely in all media as a visual representation of the lifestyle of Mackay.

## 5.1 Recognition

The Bluewater Lagoon and nearby Bluewater Trail have featured in a number of awards, articles and other recognition mechanisms including:

- 2010 National Overall Winner and National Category Winner (Planning for Active Living) – Health Foundation Local Government Awards – *Bluewater Trail*
- 2010 North Queensland Regional Architecture Awards – Regional Recommendation AECOM - *Mackay's Bluewater Lagoon*.
- RACQ 150 Must-Dos in Queensland.
- State Housing and Construction Awards 2009 – Sporting & Community Services Facilities \$4-\$15 million – *Mackay Bluewater Lagoon Facility*
- Queensland Master Builders Awards 2009 – Project of the Year – Woollam Constructions for *the Bluewater Lagoon*
- Top 10 businesses for customer Service in Mackay – Hayes Business Pulse Survey – *Bluewater Lagoon*.

## 5.2 Magazine Articles

- Australian Leisure Management 2009 – *Reopening of Mackay's Bluewater Lagoon*
- Australasian Parks and Leisure Autumn 2011 – *Mackay's Bluewater Trail*
- Australian Leisure Management – *Blue Horizon*

# 6 Operation of the Lagoon

## 6.1 Facilities

The facility comprises a 3,000m<sup>2</sup> (equivalent to three 50m pools) three tiered lagoon with

- children's interactive waterplay feature;
  - two small slides
  - jets
  - water curtains
  - water drop-bucket
- children's lagoon;
- middle lagoon:
- 19.5m waterslide in the middle lagoon; and
- upper lagoon overlooking the Pioneer River.

Beach entry points and handrails provide people with a disability safe access to the water and a café is located near the children's water play area.

Free electric barbecue facilities are available to encourage social interaction and family outings.

The facility is open 7 days per week and only closes for around 4-6 weeks during winter for scheduled maintenance work. The lagoon attracted approximately 400,000 visitors during the 2009/2010 financial year as ascertained by headcounts taken by the lifeguard services providers.

## 6.2 Operations

Due to its proximity to high rise residential developments, Council decided to maintain opening hours from 9 am to 6 pm in summer and 9 am to 5 pm in winter. This allows noisy maintenance and cleaning to be conducted after 7 am weekdays and still be completed prior to opening time. There have been many requests for earlier opening and later closing, and that also came out in the surveys conducted, however this cannot be accomplished if council is to maintain their current good neighbor policy.

Council conducted a trail of extended opening hours however it was not really successful for the following reasons:

- Can be contrary to the free family friendly facility image as different clientele tend to present during nighttime than during the day which is not always consistent with the family focus;
- Current lighting is not sufficient for appropriate supervision by lifeguards during total darkness; it would require a substantial upgrade of lighting to meet appropriate standards; and
- Alcohol free becomes an issue with some evening visitors and can be difficult to police given nearby licensed facilities.

Council has also determined that the lagoon will be an alcohol free and smoke free area. Whilst there has also been numerous discussions on the perceived benefits of allowing corporate functions in the lagoon area outside of normal operating hours including temporary liquor license, council has determined that this is not an appropriate function of the lagoon at this point in time and once again is consistent with their policy for operation of the lagoon and their good neighbor policy. There is no doubt that the linkage between the lagoon and the MECC would be stronger if there was the opportunity for corporate events, however at this point in time the negatives outweigh perceived benefits.

## 7 Survey Results

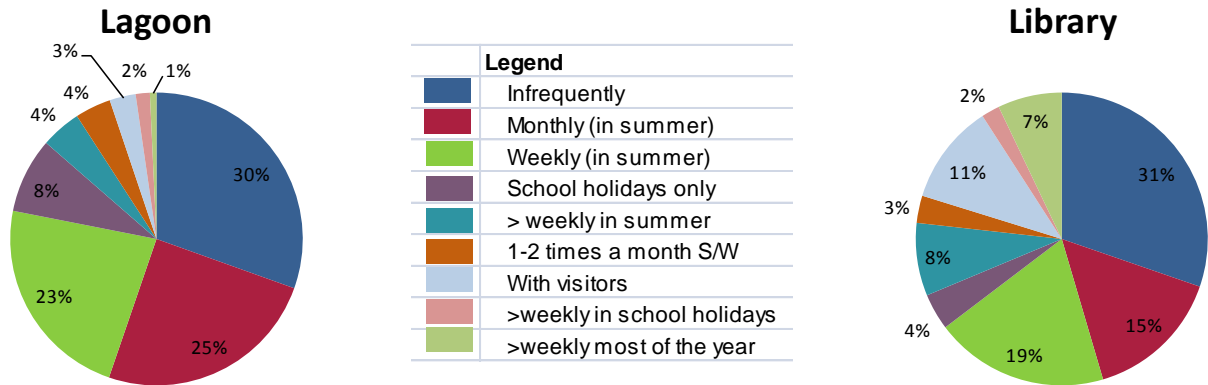
### 7.1 Key survey statistics

	Lagoon Surveys	Library Surveys
<b>Surveys completed</b>	379	129
<b>Number of persons surveyed</b>	1651	129
<b>Average group size</b>	4.36	n/a
<b>Have you visited the lagoon</b>	100%	78.3%
<b>Males</b>	47%	30%
<b>Females</b>	54%	70%
<b>Under 18</b>	53%	14%
<b>19-24</b>	7%	7%
<b>25-40</b>	28%	37%
<b>41-55</b>	8%	25%
<b>56-65</b>	3%	14%
<b>66+</b>	1%	4%

## 7.2 Comparison between survey areas (lagoon and libraries)

There were a couple of questions that were common between the surveys conducted at the lagoon and the libraries.

*How often do you generally visit the lagoon?*



Even though the figures vary, the top three are consistent between surveys at the lagoon and the library. The majority of persons visit infrequently however there is a large proportion (52% and 42%) that visit at least monthly in summer (includes monthly, weekly and more than once a week in summer). Frequenting the lagoon with visitors is 3% of the lagoon and 11% of library responses, indicating that this is their primary reason for visiting the lagoon. Of course this does not mean that those who attend more frequently wouldn't also attend with visitors.

*What do you like about the lagoon?*



Note: This is a multiple response question therefore percentages will total more than 100 as up to three responses were required. Surveys conducted at the lagoon ranked the preferences from one (best) to three, however although this was indicated on the library surveys, many only ticked boxes rather than numbering them. Also a number of survey responses at the library were rejected because they ticked most or all boxes. This is the difficulty when conducting unsupervised surveys where the quality of responses can vary greatly.

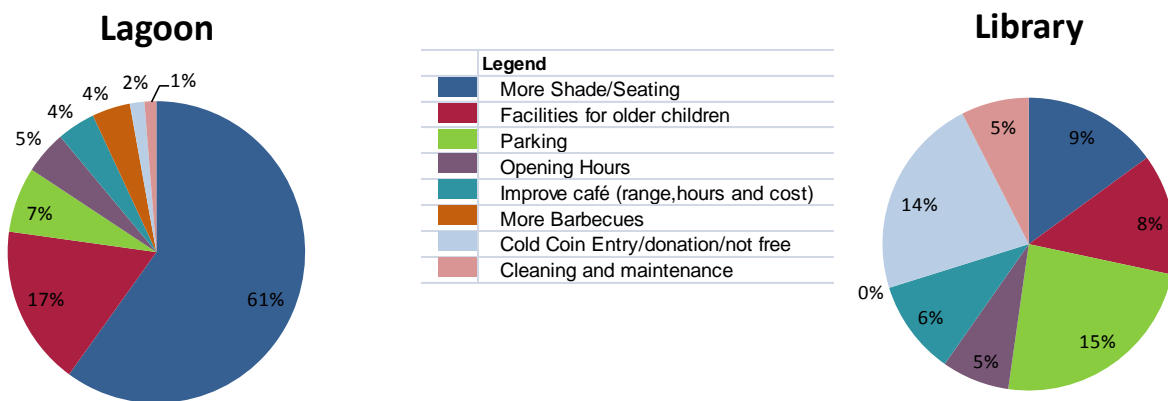
Once again the top three responses are consistent between surveys at the lagoon and library. The fact that the lagoon is free is undoubtedly a major draw card, followed by the fact that it is family friendly and you can cool off in summer. Interestingly the fact that you can bring your own food featured more strongly at the library than the lagoon.

*Is the lagoon good for Mackay?*

	Lagoon	Library
<b>Yes</b>	100%	91%
<b>No</b>	0%	4%
<b>Did not answer</b>		5%

Nearly all people surveyed felt the Lagoon was good for Mackay. The ones who said no at the Library were generally those that felt that it should not be free or should be located out of the city. Two males under 18 said the lagoon was not good for Mackay, however it is difficult to tell whether this is a genuine negative as the tone of the other comments on the survey were flippant. The others were all females in the 41 to 65 age bracket.

*What could be improved?*



The responses for more shade and more seating were combined as these could not always be separated in the library surveys. This was clearly the most important improvement for those surveyed at the lagoon, probably because it was top of mind at the time. This is a common theme for any outdoor recreational facility. Given that an objective of the lagoon is to provide a safe alternative to beaches in summer, it greatly exceeds the provision of shade and seating normally found at the beach.

Something that featured quite strongly was facilities for older children. Many people felt that younger children were well catered for but there were few activities for older children. Some were restricted from using facilities due to height restrictions in using the equipment.

Parking featured strongly at the library, this may be due to the fact that they have not been to the lagoon more recently since the Caneland development was completed. During the construction period there was a shortage of parking in the vicinity, but on completion there is more on street parking to the west of the lagoon.

There were a number of negative comments regarding the café. This ranged from the opening hours as it is not always open when the lagoon is open, to the limited range of food available and the prices.

In both surveys 5% didn't like the opening hours, wanting them to be extended particularly in summer to allow evening access when it is cooler.

The need for a gold coin donation or some other form of recouping expenses featured strongly in the library surveys but not as strong in the lagoon surveys. It is interesting to note that many people surveyed at the lagoon were not aware of the donation box, and expressed willingness to make a donation.

### 7.3 Lagoon Surveys

*Where do you live?*

Suburbs	Number	%	% Mackay's Population 2011
<b>Mackay City (North, South, East, West Mackay)</b>	480	29.2%	38%
<b>Mount Pleasant, Andergrove, Beaconsfield, Slade Point, Mackay Harbour</b>	426	25.9%	29%
<b>Northern Beaches (Blacks Beach, Eimeo, Rural View, Dolphin Heads, Bucasia, Shoal Point)</b>	209	12.7%	19%
<b>Pioneer Valley including Marian, Mirani, Pleystowe, Finch Hatton, Eungella Eton, Homebush, Walkerston, Te Kowai</b>	155	9.4%	6%
<b>Sarina region including beaches and Koumala</b>	85	5.2%	7%
<b>Farleigh, Seaforth</b>	29	1.8%	<1%
<b>Kuttabul to Bloomsbury including Midge Point</b>	17	1.0%	1%
<b>Isaac Regional Council</b>	62	3.8%	
<b>Whitsunday Regional Council</b>	22	1.3%	
<b>Other Queensland</b>	95	5.8%	
<b>Other Australia</b>	41	2.5%	
<b>Overseas</b>	25	1.5%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1646</b>		

Percentages are of the total who answered this question (1,646) rather than the total surveyed as some declined to state where they lived. Over 50% of attendees lived in the vicinity of the lagoon or nearby suburbs being Mackay City, Mount Pleasant, Andergrove to Slade Point and the Harbour. In total 85% of visitors reside in Mackay Regional Council LGA. It is interesting that 3.8% were from Isaac Regional Council and 1.3% from Whitsunday Regional Council showing that it is a regional facility.

The initial business case for the lagoon was developed prior to amalgamation and presented the Lagoon as a regional facility, and in fact nearly 20% of visitors are from the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW) region but outside of the previous Mackay City Council LGA. Nearly 10% of attendees at the lagoon were from outside the MIW region.

Comparing the percentage of visitors to the percentage of Mackay's population, the visitation rate from the Pioneer Valley is particularly high.

*How long have you lived in the Mackay Region?*

<b>Less than 2 years</b>	99	31%
<b>Two to five years</b>	73	23%
<b>Six to ten years</b>	40	13%
<b>More than ten years</b>	108	34%
<b>Total</b>	320	

This question was only answered by people living in Mackay Regional Council area, one response per survey group by the nominated group spokesperson. The sample was fairly even between newer residents less than five years and longer term residents.

*What is the composition of your group generally when you visit the lagoon?*

	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Seniors</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Single person</b>	3%	3%	0%	6%
<b>Parent(s) with children</b>	23%	18%	0%	42%
<b>Primarily family Group</b>	22%	19%	4%	45%
<b>Non Family Group (i.e. friends, social, sporting, play group)</b>	4%	3%	0%	7%
<b>Mainly with visitors</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%

As anticipated from the previous questions, 87% people attending the lagoon are family groups. No one responded that they mainly visit the lagoon with visitors, identifying that all respondents come to the lagoon for other purposes. This reinforces the benefits of the lagoon in terms of family cohesion.

*How often do you visit the lagoon per year?*

This question was tallied by age categories of youth (less than 18) adults (18 to 54) and seniors (55 and over).

	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Seniors</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	15%	14%	2%	31%
<b>Monthly (in summer)</b>	14%	10%	0%	25%
<b>Weekly (in summer)</b>	11%	12%	0%	23%
<b>More than weekly in summer</b>	2%	2%	0%	4%
<b>More than weekly in school holidays</b>	1%	0%	0%	2%
<b>More than weekly most of the year</b>	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>1-2 times a month summer and winter</b>	2%	2%	0%	4%
<b>With visitors (friends/relatives not resident in Mackay)</b>	1%	1%	0%	3%
<b>During school holidays only</b>	5%	3%	1%	8%

Percentages are of the total number of persons surveyed. There are only minor differences between visitation patterns of youths and adults, probably because it was mainly family groups attending the lagoon at the time of surveys, including both youth and adults.



*How long is your visit generally?*

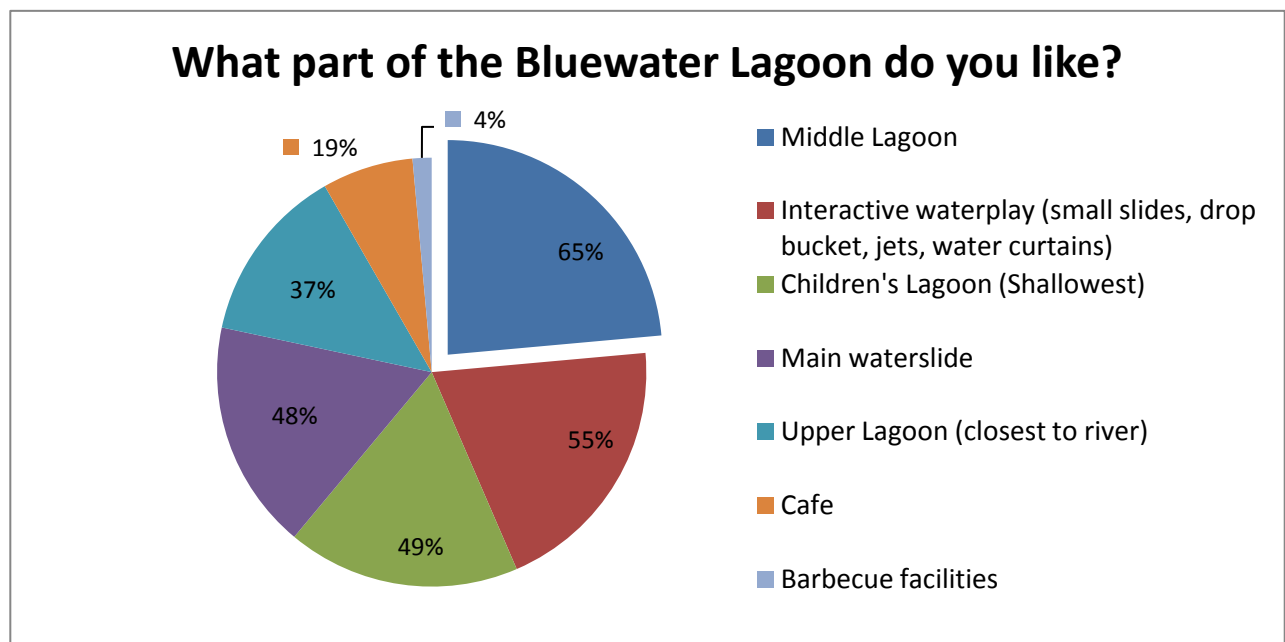
	Youth	Adult	Seniors	Total
One hour or less	9%	10%	1%	20%
Half day (two to four hours)	41%	29%	3%	73%
Four to Six hours	1%	2%	0%	3%
Full day (greater than six hours)	2%	0%	0%	2%
Varies depending on circumstances	0%	0%	0%	0%

Once again, length of visit generally the same between youth and adult once again due to largely family groups present.

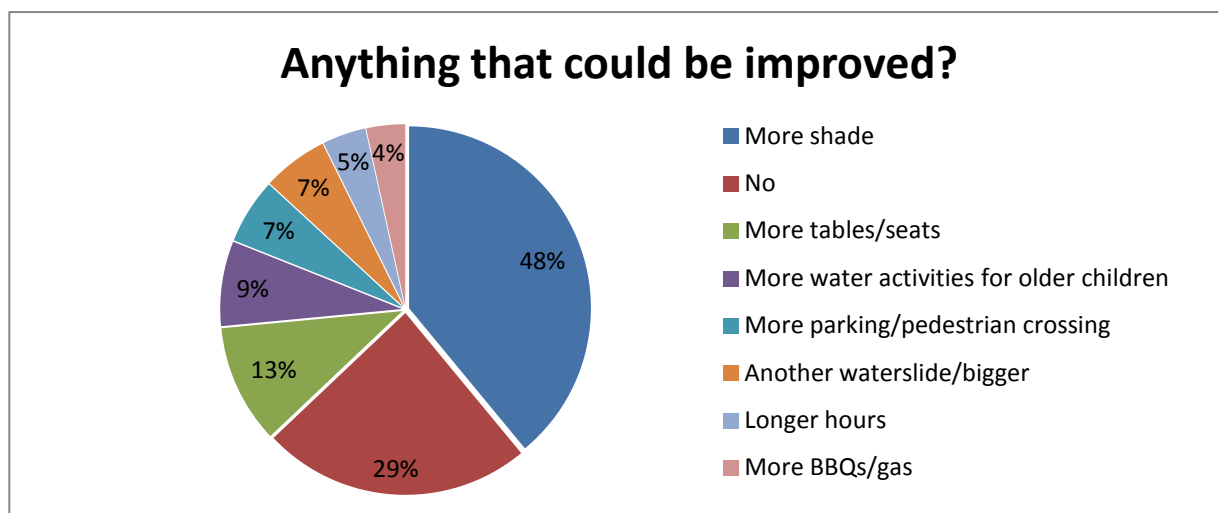
*What part of the Bluewater Lagoon do you like?*

Respondents were asked to rank this response 1 (most liked) to three. The graph below is the total of responses regardless of ranking. Ranked responses are shown in the following table. The middle lagoon is a clear favourite, probably because it caters for a greater diversity of age groups, followed by the interactive waterplay, children’s lagoon and main waterslide.

Part of Lagoon	Total	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Middle Lagoon	65%	26%	21%	18%
Interactive waterplay (small slides, drop bucket, jets, water curtains)	55%	19%	25%	11%
Children's Lagoon (Shallowest)	49%	21%	18%	10%
Main waterslide	48%	12%	16%	19%
Upper Lagoon (closest to river)	37%	22%	8%	8%
Cafe	19%	0%	4%	15%
Barbecue facilities	4%	0%	1%	3%



## Anything that could be improved?



It is interesting that 29% of surveys said that no improvement was needed at the Lagoon. The major responses as seen in the comparison with library surveys is more shade (48%) and more seating (13%). It is interesting that 9% of people wanted more activities for older children.

## 8 Social Benefits

### 8.1 Target Groups

#### 8.1.1 Youth

There are few low cost or free facilities for youth in Mackay. It is generally felt that the Bluewater Lagoon is a good facility for younger children however older youth find it a bit limiting due to lack of facilities targeting older children. Various youth groups have approached council about conducting particular functions such as movie nights at the lagoon but this is against the current policy on opening hours.

Qualitative research shows that playgroups and pre-school social groups use the lagoon on a regular basis. Playgroups find the lagoon a good facility because it is free and they can take their own food there. It allows the parents to socialise whilst the children interact with one another in a cool, safe environment. The only negative for play groups is the parking facilities, with the car parks in the lagoon park being small and difficult to setup prams. If the lagoon carpark is full it can be difficult and dangerous negotiating across the road from Caneland with small children/prams. This focus group was held in October prior to the completion of the upgrades to Caneland Central. The access via public transport is also good, but would be improved if there was a bus stop outside the lagoon.

Primary and high schools also use the lagoon on a regular basis including schools in the Pioneer Valley, Sarina and points further south, west including Valkyrie and Clermont and northern areas to Calen and Pindi Pindi.

Period	Primary School	High School
Opening to December 2009	27	15
2010	20	10
2011	5	3

There is overwhelming evidence from qualitative and quantitative research that the lagoon provides an active recreation facility for youth, with a particular emphasis on the younger age groups from pre-school through to around year 10.

### 8.1.2 Seniors

There was limited attendance by seniors at the pool, generally in family groups. Seniors tend to visit the lagoon with grandchildren, particularly visiting grandchildren from outside Mackay. The lagoon is very busy generally with lots of children, and is not particularly attractive to seniors without grandchildren.

One group stated that there may be the potential to attract some of the aged care facilities to utilise the lagoon for outings for the residents that would provide safe active recreation and the potential to interact with other age groups at the lagoon. There was agreement that seniors would not use the lagoon much if it wasn't free, but they probably wouldn't mind a gold coin donation.

Whilst there is the potential to increase seniors' attendance at the lagoon by some active land based recreation facilities such as Tai Chi or Yoga classes in the quieter times at the lagoon this is contrary to council policy for structured activities to be held at the swimming pools rather than the lagoon.

### 8.1.3 Disabled

A focus group included a disability support group whose members use the lagoon on a regular basis; one member uses it every day. As well as personal attendance, the group uses it as a social facility for barbecues and social outings. The feedback was generally positive; the group found the lagoon a safe environment where they could recreate without requiring special facilities due to the beach entry in the lagoon. None of the group required a hoist to access the lagoon facilities.

The only issue for the group was parking. There are three disabled parks, and when the group visits they require 6 or more disabled parks. Parking in Caneland is not an option for the group members with current access facilities, but this group was held prior to opening of the Caneland Central expansion.

Lagoon surveys asked additional voluntary questions of persons with physical disabilities. Only three people volunteered to answer these questions. There were more attendees with disabled persons; however the carers were usually not in a position to answer the survey given their carer situation. There was mixed feeling as to whether there were adequate facilities for disabled persons. Some were not even aware of the all terrain wheelchair that could be used in the lagoon.

Suggested improvements were:

- More poles railings for support around the lagoon
- More water wheelchairs
- Better advertising of water wheelchair
- Bathroom too small for wheelchairs
- Need support bars in toilets

On the whole the perception is that the facility is very good for disabled persons, not just those with physical disabilities. It provides a safe environment where they can interact with other people. There has been a request for a hoist to enable severely disabled people to access the water wheelchair and whilst this didn't feature with those surveyed, it is possible that the lack of this facility means that people requiring a hoist do not currently visit the lagoon.

It also seems that there needs to be better advertising of disabled facilities such as the water wheelchair with disabled groups and support services to increase visitation by this target group. Notwithstanding this, there is already significant access by disabled persons and a general agreement that the lagoon provides a valuable facility for disabled persons.

#### 8.1.4 Families

The general feedback was that the lagoon is very good for families. This was reinforced by the surveys with the majority of attendees being family groups. The feeling was that the lagoon was a useful facility to promote active recreation and family cohesion, whilst also providing people with an opportunity to socialise with family and friends and also meet new people.

## 9 Economic Benefits

### 9.1 Tourism

Tourism Queensland conducted research on social indicators in Mackay in 2010<sup>7</sup>. The study found that 64% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists. The majority of those surveyed indicated that they “really liked” tourists, wanted to see more coming to the area and thought the city should be doing more to attract visitors. They thought tourism improved the local economy, and lead to increases in the region’s profile and feelings of local pride.

Key tourism economic facts for Mackay in November 2010 include<sup>8</sup>:

- Directly employs 3,400 Queenslanders;
- Contributes nearly \$261 million to the Queensland economy;
- Attracts nearly 650,000 visitors to the region;

Mackay Tourism Limited was surveyed for their impressions of the impact of the Bluewater Lagoon in tourism. Visitors generally visit the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) on the way into town, not generally after their visit to the town; therefore limited feedback from visitors is available. There were some negative comments from tourists such as:

- Water slide not always open;
- Top Pool not always open;
- Not open long enough in winter;
- Not enough shade

However the general feeling was that the Lagoon was a major asset to the city. Increasing numbers of tourists at the centre are already aware of the Lagoon when they come to town, and are keen to find out more including the opening times. Many are surprised to hear that it is free, and it is generally thought that this increases its attraction to visitors.

The Mackay Tourism market is comprised of Holiday (23%), Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) (29%) and business (48%). Of those surveyed at the lagoon, 3% said that they mainly attend the lagoon with visitors however this does not preclude more frequent lagoon users to also attend with visitors.

A conservative figure of 10% of the leisure tourists to the region extending their stay by half a day to visit the Bluewater Lagoon was used to determine tourism benefits based on the fact that

<sup>7</sup> Mackay Social Indicators 2010, Tourism Queensland

<sup>8</sup> Mackay Tourism Economic Facts November 2010, Tourism Queensland

the usual length of stay at the lagoon was half a day. The 10% figure was determined in consultation with Mackay Tourism, analysis of survey data and anecdotal evidence particularly from surrounding accommodation on usage by leisure tourists. Some people surveyed at the lagoon mentioned that their family visit them more frequently since the lagoon was completed, particularly children and grandchildren. Holiday and VFR visitors would tend to extend their stay to visit the lagoon but business tourists are not likely to extend their stay whether or not they visit the lagoon.

Evidence suggests that the 10% figure is very conservative.

## **9.2 Property Related**

There are mixed feelings about the contribution of the lagoon to nearby developments such as Rivage and Lanai. Whilst some people feel that the scenic amenity of the lagoon contributes to the value of these locations, this can be offset by the noise that emanates from the lagoon on a busy hot summer's day. No one was willing to volunteer any figure for the economic contribution.

Lanai apartments are short and long term rental apartments next door to the lagoon. Their current occupancy is well over 95% and many visitors are visiting both the Bluewater Lagoon and nearby Caneland Central. The attraction of Lanai is greatly enhanced by its proximity to these facilities.

Discussions were held with Lend Lease, the managers of the nearby Caneland Central Shipping centre which underwent a \$230 million redevelopment in 2011. There are definite synergies between the Bluewater Lagoon, Bluewater Trail and Caneland Central. Council's vision of the Bluewater Trail and Caneland Park drove the design of the expansion, with Lend Lease making the river frontage the "Front Door" to Caneland Central, overlooking the Bluewater Trail, Bluewater Lagoon and of course the Pioneer River.

The proximity of the Bluewater Trail and Bluewater Lagoon resulted in a focus on family eateries including outdoor dining along the river frontage of Caneland Central, catering for the families also visiting the nearby Bluewater facilities. Lend Lease is unable to put a \$ value on this relationship at this point in time, partly because the redevelopment was only completed in October 2011. It is recommended that some targeted surveys could be conducted at both Caneland Central and the lagoon to help quantify this benefit.

## **9.3 Employment including attraction and retention of regional workforce**

All persons surveyed felt that facilities like the lagoon have a part to play in attracting and retaining the regional workforce. Large employers generally took potential applicants to the lagoon as part of a familiarisation tour of the city. The Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDC) included the lagoon on their tour for potential investors in the region.

REDC conducted a liveability audit published in 2009, however the data collection was largely completed prior to the lagoon opening in August 2008 so the lagoon does not feature in this audit. REDC hopes to update the audit after release of 2011 census data and council should liaise with REDC to capture the contribution of the lagoon to liveability in the region.

Anecdotal evidence from recent arrivals to Mackay reinforces that the lagoon has a key part to play in the initial acceptance of the relocation, particularly families with small children in temporary accommodation with limited recreational opportunities for the children. Many relocations occur in the summer months to allow children to commence the school year, at a

time when beaches are often closed due to jellyfish or other causes. The lagoon is a safe swimming location that provides a variety of recreation options for children and parents, helping them to become a part of the Mackay community.

One person with small children went so far as to say if it hadn't been for the lagoon, they probably would have hopped on the next plane back to Melbourne as they arrived in late January.

In an effort to quantify this benefit, the turnover figures for Mackay Regional Council were analysed for the past five years.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turnover	21.9%*	17.6%	13.3%	17.3%	25.2%

\*Mackay City Council prior to amalgamation

Whilst this shows a decline in turnover after the lagoon opens in 2008, the reality is that other factors are probably affecting the turnover more so than any role the lagoon has in the attraction and retention of staff. Key factors include the GFC and workforce demand in other sectors such as resources and engineering.

There is sufficient anecdotal evidence to demonstrate a positive impact on attraction and retention of workforce to the region however without a detailed survey this cannot be reliably quantified and must therefore remain an intangible benefit.

#### 9.4 Benefits to Council

The associated developments of the Bluewater Lagoon, Bluewater Trail and Caneland Central expansion have turned a "dead end" of the city into a vibrant bustling public space frequented by residents and tourists. This area features on promotional material and is regularly included in familiarisation, recruitment and investment tours of the city.

Whilst this can only have had a positive impact on the valuation of land in the vicinity once again it is difficult to quantify this as it is impossible to separate the effects from other contributing factors.

The western end of River Street has become a vibrant and attractive part of the City over the past six years, contributing to the overall liveability of the city. One of the greatest challenges facing the region is the attraction and retention of skilled workforce to meet the growing demands in the resources sector and associated industries. There is agreement that the Bluewater Lagoon has a positive impact on the attraction and retention of this workforce and therefore a positive impact on the overall growth of Mackay which grows the ratepayer base for council.

Part of council's charter is economic growth and the Bluewater Lagoon has had a positive impact on economic growth and will continue to contribute as it is the image of the wonderful lifestyle Mackay has to offer.

## 10 Assessment of Objectives and Outcomes

### 10.1 Objectives

*Objective: To develop a lagoon-style aquatic facility for the residents of the Mackay Region to provide a safe alternative to beach swimming.*

Results of both qualitative and quantitative research support the fact that the lagoon is a safe alternative to beach swimming that is appreciated by all residents of Mackay, particularly new residents recently relocated.

*Objective: To attract (and retain) more workers and families to the region by increasing lifestyle attractiveness.*

The lagoon plays an important role in the attraction and retention of workers and families to the region. Not only those resident in Mackay, the lagoon is also visited by residents of the region from Isaac and Whitsunday council areas.

*Objective: To provide alternative recreational, social and lifestyle opportunities for residents and tourists, including senior citizens, people with disabilities and youth to promote a healthier community.*

The lagoon provides alternative recreational, social and lifestyle opportunities for a wide range of residents. It is particularly good for people with disabilities, providing them with a safe recreational experience where they feel integrated into the community. The lagoon is not however a particularly attractive location for seniors unless they have grandchildren. It certainly provides a wonderful recreation experience for seniors with grandchildren, being a safe environment with plenty of activities to keep the grandchildren occupied. Seniors without grandchildren however find it a noisy and not very welcoming environment on busy days in particular.

Youth are particularly well catered for at least up to early teens. After that the recreational experience is viewed as a bit limited with lack of variety of experience for older children.

Over 50 % of visitors to the lagoon come on a regular basis and would therefore derive health benefits from this active recreation.

Tourists that visit the facility are very complimentary and pleasantly surprised to find that a quality facility of this type is free.

*Objective: To provide a response to community demands and expectations.*

Community demands and expectations would appear to be met by the lagoon with 100% of those surveyed at the lagoon and 91% of those surveyed at the libraries stating that the lagoon is good for Mackay. Whilst there were numerous suggestions for improvements to the lagoon, the majority of these were positive rather than being seen as a criticism. Nearly 30% of those surveyed at the lagoon said no improvements were needed, indicating a high level of satisfaction.

The only negative around community expectations was a small percentage that indicated they thought the lagoon was in the wrong location. Many of these did not elaborate or indicate where might be the right location. Some indicated the beach and there were those from areas such as Sarina or the Northern Beaches that would like the facility closer to home. The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy 2010-2016 has already identified the potential need for additional facilities in these locations that would meet these community expectations.



## 10.2 Outcomes

Assessment of the following outcomes and performance measures were a condition of the funding agreement with the Australian Government.

	Outcome	Performance Measure
a)	Permanent Employment	Direct employment equates to 22.8 FTE at the average wage for Mackay Regional Council 2008/09 <sup>9</sup> . Indirect employment is difficult to assess as surrounding businesses cannot determine proportion of lagoon related business. A conservative estimate of 2 FTE has been used for indirect employment in the economic benefits. Higher direct employment than projected is largely due to higher lagoon visitation than anticipated resulting in increased lifeguards and other support services.
b)	Improved community services	<p>The lagoon definitely provides increased recreational opportunities for people with disabilities both individually and group outings. The lagoon caters for a wide range of mobility impairment including provision of a water wheelchair. Some additional facilities are identified in the study but the satisfaction level with people with disabilities is very high.</p> <p>Youth (under 15) are well catered for with a variety of activities. Over 50% of lagoon visitors are under 18 and they generally visit as family groups.</p> <p>Over 50% of visitors attend on a regular basis and would therefore derive benefits for active recreation, increased social interaction and family cohesion.</p> <p>Seniors only account for 3.5% of lagoon visitors, and the majority of these are as family groups. Research indicated that unless they are visiting with grandchildren, seniors do not find the lagoon an attractive recreation environment due to the large numbers of children.</p> <p>98% of surveys stated that the lagoon was good for Mackay and 29% said that it needed no improvement. The lagoon has certainly delivered on improved community services.</p>
c)	Expansion of infrastructure	<p>There is not a strong linkage between the lagoon and the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, mainly due to current council policy on alcohol and restricting access to areas of the lagoon therefore ruling out corporate functions associated with conferences.</p> <p>There is a very strong linkage between the lagoon and the Bluewater trail to the recent \$230 million expansion of the nearby Caneland Central shopping centre.</p> <p>The Lagoon has contributed to other redevelopments on the western end of River Street which has been transformed into a bustling vibrant recreation and shopping precinct.</p>

## 10.3 Summary

The lagoon has met all of its original objectives and outcomes and has clearly delivered a quality lifestyle facility to meet the needs of residents and visitors to Mackay. It is well supported by residents and tourists with many residents visiting the facility regularly.

<sup>9</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics Wage and Salary Earner Statistics for Small Areas, Time Series, 2003-04 to 2008-09



## 11 Potential for Improvement

There were numerous suggestions for improvement as detailed on in section 7.2 (page12) and section 7.3 (page 14). Ranking of improvements varied between surveys conducted at the lagoon and the libraries, but the following were consistently mentioned.

- **More shade.**

This included specific comments about shade over the middle lagoon in particular and more shade surrounding the lagoons and picnic areas. As an objective was to provide a safe alternative to beach swimming, the lagoon certainly also delivers much more shade, particularly over some of the swimming and recreation areas such as the children's play area than would ever be experienced at the beach.

- **More tables/seating.**

Certainly seating is provided where possible however there is nothing stopping people bringing their own tables and seating if required.

- **Café improvements.**

This included opening hours, limited range and cost.

- **More water activities for older children.**

This is probably hard to deliver on the existing site and is probably left to private enterprise to provide on a fee for use basis. Water activities for older children will generally require a larger site with restricted access to younger children from a safety point of view. This would be contrary to the current family focus.

- **More parking and/or pedestrian crossing to Caneland.**

This situation may have been alleviated with the additional on street parking to the west of the lagoon now that the expansion of Caneland is complete. However the two hour parking limit could be a bit low given that most people visit the lagoon from 2-4 hours. Perhaps a three hour limit on the northern side of Matsuura Drive would be better.

Whilst there is a pedestrian crossing by the front entrance to Caneland, this is a long way for a family with children to walk to get safe access to the lagoon from parking within Caneland. Some felt that a pedestrian crossing closer to the roundabout at Mangrove Road would be useful. This may be difficult to achieve safely with the traffic flows around the Caneland expansion. It would be interesting to revisit this in six months time to see if the situation is perceived to be relieved to some extent from the parking provisions supplied as part of the Caneland expansion.

- **Opening Hours**

Some people would like the lagoon open earlier in the morning so they could walk/ride the Bluewater Trail and cool off in the lagoon prior to going to work. Others would like to utilise the cool of the evening particularly in summer.

This is difficult to accomplish without causing problems with the nearby residents. Council facilities must observe council by laws with respect to noise and this limits the operating hours of this type of facility.

- **Gold Coin Entry/Donation/Not Free**

There was a larger percentage suggesting this in surveys at the library than the lagoon. It seems that people are genuinely prepared to provide a donation towards the upkeep of the lagoon as they appreciate the costs involved and the fact that it is currently free entry. The interviewers at the lagoon found that many people did not see the donation box or recognise it as a donation box. The signage should be much clearer, perhaps a sign

above saying donate here with an arrow. It would be worth trialing this, perhaps with an associated publicity campaign in council newsletters and media to see if donation levels increased at all.

Whilst there were a few comments that the lagoon should not be funded by ratepayers, it was much less than anticipated. Only one (out of 379) lagoon surveys and seven (out of 129) library surveys said that the lagoon should not be funded by taxpayers. This equates to 1.6% of surveys as a top of mind unprompted response. It should be noted that the surveys did not specifically pose the question whether they thought the lagoon should be funded by taxpayers or not.

- **Facilities for disabled persons**

The availability of the water wheelchair should be actively promoted as many persons surveyed were not aware of its existence. Depending on increased demand, acquiring an additional wheelchair could be considered particularly to encourage disabled groups requiring this facility to utilise the lagoon.

Other suggestions for additional disabled facilities were:

- More poles railings for support around the lagoon
- Better advertising of water wheelchair
- Bathroom too small for wheelchairs
- Need support bars in toilets

- **Increase visitation by seniors**

Council could liaise with aged care facilities to see whether there are opportunities for outings to the lagoon during identified quiet periods such as weekday mornings during school term.

## 12 Summary

The lagoon is a functional community facility that meets the needs of a large cross section of the Mackay community. It is viewed as being good for Mackay and whilst some improvements are recommended, there is overall a high level of satisfaction with the facility.

The development of the lagoon has met all objectives and is a resounding success. The only target group not fully addressed is seniors and that is due to the incompatibility generally of seniors groups with large numbers of young children. You cannot please all of the people all of the time, and the family focus of the facility is a winner with the major demographic of the region's population.

The lagoon is the widespread success largely because it is free of charge. Parents don't have to consider their finances when considering a family visit to the lagoon therefore it is the ideal "off pay week" family activity. With the two speed economy in Mackay, the availability of community facilities free of charge is a huge attractant for lower paid workers who might be struggling to meet housing costs in the region. The tangible community benefits of the facility would decline and attendance would decrease if it was a fee based facility.

The lagoon attracts tourists, but these are largely visiting friends and relatives therefore increasing the attraction of Mackay to that sector of the market, which also benefits the region's residents. We all like to be proud of where we live and we like our friends and relatives to have pleasant memories of their visit. Whilst some residents have the perception that the lagoon is largely patronized by tourists that is not the case with 85% of those surveyed residing within the Mackay Council area.

The lagoon is visually appealing and images of the lagoon are prevalent on many websites. Organisations attracting investment into Mackay including the Regional Economic Development Corporation and Real Estate Agents use images of the lagoon to portray our lifestyle and liveability of the region. The Bluewater Lagoon is becoming the "face of Mackay".

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## 13 Economic Benefits

Economic benefits have been assessed against the 2010/11 financial year. There seems little point in trying to project benefits into the future; they can reasonably be expected to be in the same order.

### 13.1 Tangible Economic Benefits

Benefit	2010/11	Rationale
Secondary spend at lagoon and surrounding cafes and restaurants	\$322,341	Includes expenditure at the lagoon cafe and estimated expenditure at nearby cafes and restaurants that is directly related to their attendance at the lagoon.
Employment	\$1,307,290	Includes council staff, lifeguards, contractors engaged in cleaning, security, pool plant services, water testing, ground maintenance and cafes. This equates to 22.8 direct FTEs at the average wage 2008/09 and 2 indirect FTEs.
Tourism	\$2,123,000	Calculated that 10% of all leisure tourists (holiday and visiting friends and relatives) spend additional 0.5 nights in Mackay due to the lagoon. Whilst some business tourists in nearby accommodation also visit the lagoon and were picked up in the surveys, we do not anticipate they extend their stay to visit the lagoon.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,752,631</b>	

### Employment Breakdown

Category	Value	Comment
Council Staff (Aquatic Facilities)	\$80,000	1 FTE (averaged salary only)
Lifeguards	\$606,500	Contracted to Surf Lifesaving Qld
External contractors (outside council)	\$347,000	Cleaning, security, pool plant services
Contract services provided by other sections of MRC	\$113,790	Water testing, ground maintenance
Café's	\$160,000	Includes lagoon café and nearby café's with direct impact from lagoon

## 13.2 Intangible Economic Benefits

Benefit	Potential value	Comments
Community Benefits	\$29,710,500	Based on 50% of residents derive a benefit of \$500 per person. These benefits are detailed below.
Attraction and retention of workforce	\$29,373,000	1% saving on total annual wages and salaries for the Mackay Regional Council area based on 2008/09 figures (latest available)
Property Related	\$1,854,000	Increase of 5% occupancy in surrounding short term rentals due to presence of the lagoon
Property Related		Relationship to recent Caneland Central expansion. This figure is not available at present
Increased land values	N/A	Difficult to separate from other factors
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,937,500</b>	

### Community Benefits

- Health benefits from active recreation
- Social interaction/social inclusion
- Family cohesion
- Improved liveability
- Mental health benefits
- Community pride

## 14 Attachment A – Survey Sheets

### Bluewater Lagoon Survey

**Introduction:** Good morning/afternoon, I am conducting a survey of attendees at the lagoon for Mackay regional Council, and I am wondering if you would mind answering a few questions. This should only take about ten minutes.

For groups: Who would like to be the spokesperson for this group? There are places where we want individual answers as well so all members of the group will get their opportunity to present views different to the spokesperson

1. How many in the group?

2. Where do your group live?

*Option Card*

*Numbers in boxes - One response per person in the group*

- Mackay City (North, South, East, West Mackay)
  - Mount Pleasant, Andergrove, Beaconsfield, Slade Point, Mackay Harbour
  - Northern Beaches (Blacks Beach, Eimeo, Rural View, Dolphin Heads, Bucasia, Shoal Point)
  - Pioneer Valley including Marian, Mirani, Pleystowe, Finch Hatton, Eungella Eton, Homebush, Walkerston, Te Kowai
  - Sarina region including beaches and Koumala
  - Farleigh, Seaforth
  - Kuttabul to Bloomsbury including Midge Point
- 
- Isaac Regional Council
  - Whitsunday Regional Council
  - Other Queensland
  - Other Australia
  - Overseas

3. How long have you lived in the Mackay Region (Mackay Regional Council residents only – Group spokesperson)

- Less than 2 years
- Two to five years
- Six to ten years
- More than ten years

**4. What is the age group and gender of the group**

*Option Card*

*Enter number in table*

*Separate group into age categories for next three questions*

Age group	Category	Male	Female
Under 18	youth		
18-24	adult		
25-40	adult		
41-55	adult		
56-65	senior		
66+	senior		

**5. How often do you visit the lagoon per year?**

*Option Card*

*Multiple responses per person allowed - Keep to the nearest category*

*Enter numbers in the table*

Youth	Adult	Senior	Frequency
			Infrequently
			Monthly (in summer)
			Weekly (in summer)
			More than weekly in summer
			More than weekly in school holidays
			More than weekly most of the year
			1-2 times a month summer and winter
			With visitors (friends/relatives not resident in Mackay)
			During school holidays only

**6. How long is your visit to the lagoon generally?**

*One response per person in the group - Enter numbers in tables*

Youth	Adult	Senior	
			One hour or less
			Half day (two to four hours)
			Four to Six hours
			Full day (greater than six hours)
			Varies depending on circumstances

**7. What is the composition of your group generally when you visit the lagoon**

*Option Card*

*Single response per person in group - Keep to the nearest category*

*Enter numbers in the table*

<b>Youth</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Senior</b>	
			Single person
			Parent(s) with children
			<b>Primarily</b> family Group (incl Grandparents, cousins, aunts etc – may have some friends)
			Non Family Group (i.e. friends, social, sporting, play group)
			Mainly with visitors

**8. What part of the Bluewater Lagoon do you like?**

*Option Card*

*Group consensus ranked 1, 2 and 3, Enter ranking number in table*

<b>Rank (1,2,3)</b>	
	Upper Lagoon (closest to river)
	Middle Lagoon
	Children's Lagoon (Shallowest)
	Main waterslide
	Interactive waterplay (small slides, drop bucket, jets, water curtains)
	Barbecue facilities
	Cafe

**9. What do you like about the Bluewater Lagoon?**

*Option Card*

*Group consensus ranked 1, 2 and 3, Enter ranking number in table*

<b>Rank (1,2,3)</b>	
	Free
	Convenient Location
	Parking
	Proximity to Caneland
	Safety (lifeguards)
	Diversity of experience to suit all ages
	Meeting people/ socialising
	Good for families
	Cool off in summer
	Disabled access and facilities
	Can bring own food



**10. Is the Bluewater Lagoon good for Mackay?**

*Group consensus*

- Yes  
 No

*Do not volunteer this option, but use this space to capture any volunteered comments*

Optional: Any qualification to the statement?

**11. Is there anything that could be improved in the Bluewater Lagoon?**

*List any responses supplied*

**I have some questions for people with physical disabilities, does anyone in the group wish to answer these questions?**

1. How many in the group with physical disabilities?

2. Are there suitable facilities for your disability?

- Yes  
 No

3. Are there any other facilities that would make your visit to the lagoon more enjoyable? In addition to anything mentioned above in Q 11?

**Close: Thank you very much for your time today.**

## Bluewater Lagoon Survey to be completed at the Library

**1. Have you visited the Bluewater Lagoon**

Yes (go to Question 2)

No (go to Question 4)

**2. If yes to Question 1, how often do you generally visit the Bluewater Lagoon?**

Infrequently

Monthly (in summer)

Weekly (in summer)

More than weekly in summer

More than weekly in school holidays

More than weekly most of the year

1-2 times a month summer and winter

With visitors (friends/relatives not resident in Mackay)

During school holidays only

**3. If yes to Question 1, what three things do you like about the lagoon, ranking from 1 (best) to 3**

Free

Convenient Location

Parking

Proximity to Caneland

Safety (lifeguards)

Diversity of experience to suit all ages

Meeting people/ socialising

Good for families

Cool off in summer

Disabled access and facilities

Can bring own food

**4. Is the lagoon good for Mackay?**

**5. What don't you like about the lagoon?**

**6. Age and Gender**

**Gender**

Male

Female

**Age Group**

Under 18

18-24

25-39

40-54

55-65

66+