

**STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**2 JUNE 2008** **POLICY AND PLANNING**

**A6** **LIFESAVING CLUB STRATEGY UPDATE**  
**LOCATION/ADDRESS:**  
**RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** **GEOFF OULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND**  
**PLANNING**  
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**RECREATION COORDINATOR**  
**FILE NO.:** **12/05/33**  
**ATTACHMENTS:**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. In 2003 Council endorsed a Life Saving Club Strategy that provides some guidance on the best way to support sustainable life saving clubs (LSC's) into the future.
- 1.2. One of the key links is between the quality of facilities and participation in life saving. As an example following the redevelopment of the Elwood Lifesaving Club the club's membership has increased from 300 members in 2004/05 to 500 in 2007/08.
- 1.3. Since 2003 there has been substantial process in the implementation of the LSC Strategy.
- 1.4. In 2008, as part of implementing the Lifesaving club strategy a feasibility study is being conducted which investigates the most viable model of sustaining a strong lifesaving presence in the South Melbourne and Port Melbourne locations for the next 50 years.
- 1.5. This report provides an update on the implementation of the South Melbourne / Port Melbourne study and the implementation of the Lifesaving Club Strategy more broadly.

**2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1. Council developed a Life Saving Club Review in 1999 to evaluate the number and use of facilities in the municipality and determine directions for their future. Council adopted this in May 2000.
- 2.2. Council's adopted principles for implementing the Strategy for Life Saving Clubs are:
  - Increasing viability of clubs

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- Integrating/co-locating activities and functions, within existing buildings
- More foreshore open space
- Less foreshore buildings
- Establishing clear priorities for future development of Life Saving Club buildings

2.3. At an Ordinary Meeting of 26 May 2003, Council determined the following in relation to the Lifesaving strategy:

*That Council supports the need for 1 life saving facility on each of the 5 beaches on City of Port Phillip's foreshore. The 5 beach areas are:*

- Sandridge Beach - extending from Perce White Reserve to Princes Pier, where Webb Dock and Princes Pier act as boundaries to an area of beach usage covering approximately 1 kilometre.
- Port Melbourne Beach - extending from Station Pier to Kerferd Road Pier, where the piers act as boundaries to a popular area of beach covering some 2 kilometres of foreshore.
- Middle Park Beach – extending from Kerferd Road Pier to West Beach, where the Pier and the Cowderoy Street drain act as boundaries to a beach area covering some 2 kilometres of foreshore.
- St Kilda Beach – extending from St Kilda Pier to St Kilda Marina, which act as boundaries to one of the City's most popular beach areas, extending for a kilometre.
- Elwood Beach– extending from Point Ormond to Head Street Pier, which act as boundaries to a popular beach area covering some 1.5 kilometres of foreshore.

*Council seek the cooperation and collaboration of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and St Kilda Life Saving Clubs in giving effect to the strategy.*

*Council encourage all clubs and the peak bodies to engage in an ongoing process for the provision of life saving services to the beaches of Port Phillip, and be involved in determining the location and design of appropriate facilities at the 5 defined beach areas.*

*Council identifies that the 5 beach areas are to be serviced in the following manner:*

- Sandridge Beach - a service continue to be provided from the current Sandridge Life Saving Club facility. It is proposed that Council retain the existing Sandridge Life Saving building, unless the existing context changes, primarily as a consequence of the Surf Lifesaving Headquarters development proceeding at Perc White Reserve, and at that stage Council should reconsider this matter specifically.
- South/Port Melbourne Beach – the existing South Melbourne LSC building be demolished, but not until a replacement facility is developed for housing of the South Melbourne Life Saving Club. Council's preferred position at this stage is that this beach area be serviced from the existing Port Melbourne Life Saving Club building, subject to building improvements in line with specifications of the

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peak bodies (Royal and Surf Life Saving). However, in determining cost effectiveness and the precise location and the design for housing a LSC along the Port / South Melbourne Beach area, Council will remain open-minded to options and instruct officers to engage in further discussion with the affected LSCs and peak bodies.

- Middle Park Beach – demolish or refurbish the existing Harold Alexander pavilion, and develop a contemporary/refurbished, purpose built facility to house life saving services, at an appropriate location within this beach area, to a specification agreed to between Council and the life saving peak bodies, and subject to –
  - adequate State Government funding and support and
  - the involvement and support of local life saving clubs
  - such a facility being developed in proximity to Middle Park Beach between Kerferd Rd Pier and West Beach and this facility may take the form of a:
    - stand alone new facility
    - addition to an existing facility
    - redeveloped Middle Park Life Saving Club
- Council actively pursue the re-nourishment of Middle Park Beach to provide a high standard recreational facility for the inner metro region, subject to adequate State Government funding and support.
- St Kilda Beach – Council demolish the existing St Kilda Life Saving Club building and pursue a replacement, contemporary, appropriate facility to house life saving services at St Kilda Beach, between St Kilda Pier and Brooks Jetty, to a specification agreed to between Council and the life saving peak bodies, and subject to-
  - adequate State Government funding and support
  - the involvement and support of local life saving clubs
  - such a facility being developed in the St Kilda Beach area and this facility may take the form of a:
    - stand alone new facility
    - addition to an existing facility
    - redevelopment of an existing facility
- It is proposed that the St Kilda Life Saving Club building would not be demolished until a suitable replacement facility has been determined, with the exception that the club ceases to exist or fails to maintain a viable and active life saving activity or membership.
- Prior to such a facility being pursued or developed it is understood and agreed that St Kilda Life Saving Club commits to developing and demonstrating the club's long term viability as an active life saving club to the satisfaction of City of Port Phillip and the life saving peak bodies.
- Elwood Beach – Council pursue and support options for the redevelopment of the Elwood Pavilion to house the Elwood Life Saving Club

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- 2.4. The following has occurred to implement the Lifesaving Club Strategy:
- 2.5. In 2003
  - 2.5.1. The former Middle Park Life Saving Club merged with the Port Melbourne Life Saving Club, in the Port Melbourne LSC facility
- 2.6. In 2004
  - 2.6.1. Elwood Life Saving Club was redeveloped by a public private partnership, and the Elwood Club now resides in a new facility valued at some \$800,000. The participation and membership of the club has consequently increased by from 300 to 500
  - 2.6.2. Life Saving Victoria was created by a merger of the former Surf Life Saving Victoria, and the Royal Life Saving Society of Victoria. The State Government provided \$3.2 million toward the development of a State Headquarters.
  - 2.6.3. Sandridge Life Saving Club was reinvigorated as a club with a new Committee focused on club membership and activity development.
- 2.7. In 2005
  - 2.7.1. The Council was successful in its requests to State Government to fund the permanent renourishment of Middle Park Beach which resulted in a Government announcement of \$5 million in the 2005 State Budget.
  - 2.7.2. St Kilda Life Saving Club had \$15,000 of basic repairs undertaken on the building to keep the building operational in the short term.
  - 2.7.3. Life Saving Victoria vacated the A.W. Walker building (former Surf Life Saving Victoria HQ) at West Beach and the building was demolished along with the adjoining kiosk, with the sites being returned to public open space.
- 2.8. In 2006
  - 2.8.1. The Harold Alexander Pavilion (former Middle Park Life Saving Club) was demolished and the site returned to public open space.
  - 2.8.2. Life Saving Victoria completed their new \$6.5 million headquarters at Perce White Reserve, in Port Melbourne.
  - 2.8.3. Council received \$30,000 from Sport and Recreation Victoria to undertake a Design and Feasibility Study for housing life saving services at South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Beaches.
- 2.9. In 2007
  - 2.9.1. A steering committee with representatives from Port Melbourne and South Melbourne Lifesaving Cubs, Lifesaving Victoria and Council Officers was established for the South Port Lifesaving Club Feasibility Study
  - 2.9.2. The first phase of this project was completed, which included consultation situational analysis, consultation with key stakeholder opportunities

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2.9.3. Sandridge Lifesaving Club commenced the development of a business plan as the club continues to grow with an increase in members at from 85 in 2004/05 to 150 in 2007/08.

2.10. In 2008

2.10.1. South Port Lifesaving Club Feasibility Study is undertaken to investigate facility development opportunities and options with four (4) strategic options considered:

Option A - Decommission both club houses and rebuild one new facility to house the club(s);

Option B - Decommission one club, rebuild and redevelop the remaining facility;

Option C - Redevelop one clubhouse in a new location and refurbish the remaining club house; and

Option D - Refurbish both of the existing clubhouses.

2.10.2. The steering group indicated that it supported option (a) – with the following caveats:

- That any new development meets Life Saving Victoria (LSV) Guidelines for “Clubhouses of the Future”;
- That part of existing Port Melbourne LSC be retained for storage of water craft.

2.10.3. Council was successful in obtaining \$30,000 from Sport and Recreation Victoria to undertake a Feasibility Study for housing of St Kilda Lifesaving Club

2.10.4. Concept planning had begun on options for the future housing of Sandridge LSC, with some minor maintenance undertaken at the existing clubhouse including landscaping, lighting, repairs to kiosk and replacement of fencing

2.10.5. Middle Beach renourishment is scheduled to occur in the later part of 2008 at an a cost of between 1M -2M dollar (90% Of the cost being met by the State Government)

2.10.6. In 2008/2009 a landscape plan will be developed for the site where the former Harold Alexander Pavilion was sited. This landscape plan will consider options for passive recreation, public amenities and servicing of the middle park beach once renourished / established.

2.11. The next steps in implementing Lifesaving strategy

2.11.1. St Kilda Lifesaving Club

- Establish a working party with representation from St Kilda Lifesaving Club, Lifesaving Victoria and Council
- Engage a consultant to undertake the study to investigate the options for St Kilda Lifesaving Club
- The completed report will be referred to Council in February 2009

2.11.2. South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Lifesaving Club

- Completion of the final phases of the South Port Lifesaving Club feasibility study which include development of concept plan; assessment of community benefits; development of funding strategy and development of Business Case/Financial Plan; and
- (Subject to Council) Undertake detailed design and cost benefit analysis on the development of one Lifesaving facility to service the Port Melbourne and South Melbourne Beach areas, including investigating a Life Saving 'summer weekend' service to be provided to the newly renourished Middle Park Beach.

2.11.3. Sandridge Lifesaving Club

- Undertake more detailed planning for the facility looking at a preferred option for future clubhouse consistent with the Life Saving Club Strategy 2003.

**3. RECOMMENDED OPTION**

3.1. In relation to the South Port Lifesaving Club feasibility study it is recommended that one clubhouse be developed consistent with the principles of Council's Life Saving Club Strategy and the Life Saving Victoria Future Clubhouse Guidelines to service the Port Melbourne and South Melbourne Beach areas

**3.2. Criterion for recommendation**

The Life Saving Club Strategy in 2003 was developed to determine future investment in buildings and the best way to support sustainable clubs. A key component of this was investigating the most effective provision of life saving services at South Melbourne /Port Melbourne foreshore, given that there are two clubs within 400 metres of each other.

The development of one facility to service the Port Melbourne and South Melbourne beach areas is consistent in achieving the principles that were established to guide the Lifesaving Club strategy

Whilst the steering group indicated that it supported the development of one facility with the caveat that part of the existing Port Melbourne Lifesaving Club be retained for storage of water craft this is not likely to be feasible, and should not be necessary if the club house is built to the standards outlined in Lifesaving Victoria 'Clubhouse of the Future Guidelines'

**3.3. Sustainability assessment**

Social Equity	<p>Bay Life Saving activities are unique to coastal municipalities. They provide an important avenue for community participation, and through the nature of the activity undertaken, they provide an important social function in both teaching young people water skills and improving the recreational safety of the beaches. There are approximately 1150 people that participate in Life Saving within the Municipality.</p> <p>Previous experience in providing new and more sustainable housing of life saving clubs (ie: Elwood LSC) has demonstrated that there are significant increases in participation that can be derived.</p> <p>Any development plans would be consistent with Council's community hub policy which recognises the value and potential of council's community facilities to provide opportunities for participation and to contribute to social cohesion and well-being.</p>
Economic Viability	<p>The development of a business case would investigate how to maximize external funding sources and maximise the level of community benefit derived from any Council investment</p>
Environmental Responsibility	<p>Any development would be designed to ensure that environmentally sustainable design features are included and that the design is suitable for a foreshore location</p>
Cultural Vitality	<p>The City is a foreshore municipality. Life saving is an integral service for any foreshore environment. The Life Saving Club Strategy highlights the Council's ongoing commitment to Life Saving, but identifies that if the cultural significance of this service is to be sustained options for housing life saving into the future need to be investigated, whilst respecting the past heritage of clubs</p>

**3.4. Policy and legislative implications**

The recommendations in this report are consistent with the Lifesaving Strategy and Council's Community Hubs Policy and Principles which seeks to broaden the activities and utilisation of buildings.

**3.5. Risk implications**

Council has been unique in respect to taking a municipal lead on addressing life saving service provision in a strategic manner.

There is risk that for effective implementation of any agreed new building, Council may be seen as the key and possibly only agency responsible for funding. Funding needs to be properly apportioned amongst all key stakeholders in order that responsibility for supporting of life saving and any future development can be. Key stakeholders that should be engaged in supporting the future development of a new facility at South/Port include State Government, Life Saving Victoria, local Club(s) etal.

As part of the feasibility study for South Port Lifesaving Club feasibility a business case will be developed to investigate the best option of funding any development.

**3.6. Resource implications**

3.6.1. The immediate resource implication of the recommendation in this report are:

- \$150,000 in 2008/09 to undertake further detailed investigation into the development of one facility to service South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.
- \$30,000 in 2008/09 to match the State Government's Grant contribution of \$30,000 for the St Kilda Lifesaving Club feasibility study.
- Both the above are currently allocated in the draft 2008/09 Budget.

3.6.2. Alternative funding sources will be sought however Council may be requested to make a contribution to future facility development or redevelopment.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1. Alternative 1**

Council could determine to cease its commitment to the Life Saving Clubs Strategy, and either continues to undertake minor maintenance work on the facilities that house the existing clubs, or require the clubs to move from their facilities to other locations or merge.

**4.2. Sustainability assessment**

Social Equity	There is a strong link between the quality of facilities and participation. As an example the Elwood Lifesaving Club increased its membership by over 150% when the facility was redeveloped since the clubs membership has increased from 300 in 2004/05 membership to 500 in 2007/08. It would be anticipated that as facilities deteriorate then community participation in Life saving may reduce and viability of clubs be threatened.
Economic Viability	Buildings will continue to deteriorate and Councils financial commitment to ongoing maintenance is likely to increase in order to maintain buildings as safe Not investigating options could reduce any possible need for major capital investment now, however it or could conversely, as buildings deteriorate, force Council into a position of having to react and fully fund replacements should existing buildings become a risk and totally unfit for purpose.
Environmental Responsibility	Buildings beyond their serviceable life will continue to perform badly in respect to environmental performance. Risk will continue to increase as buildings age and deteriorate The only opportunity to regain public open space and reduce building footprint will be through demolition of existing buildings with no consideration for replacement.
Cultural Vitality	The provision of life saving has significant cultural fit and history within the municipality. If the current state of facilities is not addressed it is likely that life saving activity along the foreshore will reduce and this cultural link lost.

**4.3. Policy and legislative implications**

Council would need to re-determine its strategic position on life saving clubs if it chose to withdraw its commitment to the implementation Lifesaving Club strategy

**4.4. Risk implications**

Council's commitment to its strategy may be questioned. There is a risk that should Council not continue to investigate possible options and funding solutions proactively, that as buildings deteriorate it will be forced in a position to respond reactively to crisis in the future.

Buildings will continue to deteriorate increasing the potential exposure to public risk.

**4.5. Resource implications**

Investment in existing buildings would have some initial capital costs associated with such a decision. As the buildings are old, there is likely to be continual maintenance requirements for the foreseeable future.

**5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

**5.1. Internal**

5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to the South Port Lifesaving Club Feasibility Study are:

- Councilors
- Coordinator Open Space Services
- Place Manager Port Melbourne
- Strategic Planning
- Culture and Recreation Manager
- Coordinator Community Development Policy and Programs
- Community Development Officer – Sport, Leisure and Recreation
- Joint Council Access for All Abilities

**5.2. External**

5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- South Port Lifesaving Club Feasibility Study Project Steering Committee Belinda Porter President South Melbourne LSC, John Sheridan South Melbourne Lifesaving Club, Nigel Taylor Lifesaving Victoria, Darrel Gill Port Melbourne LSC President
- South Melbourne Lifesaving Club
- Port Melbourne Lifesaving Club
- Lifesaving Victoria
- Office of Emergency Services Commissioner
- Department of Victorian Communities Sport and Recreation
- Victoria
- Beach Tennis
- Beach Volleyball
- Korf Ball
- DSE Port Phillip Region Coastal Unit

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5.2.2. Consultation also occurred through conducting resident surveys (158) in September 2007 and infield Surveys in October and September 2007 (170)

**6. COMMUNICATION**

- 6.1. In 2003 City of Port Phillip took the difficult decision to adopt the Life Saving Club Strategy with a view to secure sustainable and viable clubs into the future.
- 6.2. Participation in life saving continues to increase in Port Phillip, with membership at the new Elwood LSC facility having almost doubled since 2004
- 6.3. In 2008 Council's will invest a further \$180,000 to investigate sustainable and viable options for the future of St Kilda, South and Port Melbourne LSC's.

**7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1. That the Council notes the report providing an update on the implementation of the *Lifesaving Club Strategy 2003* and requests officers to continue with the implementation of the remainder of the strategy
- 7.2. In relation to the South Port Lifesaving Club feasibility Study, Council resolve that;
- 7.2.1. the option of one clubhouse to service the South Melbourne / Port Melbourne Beach areas be further investigated as the preferred option;
  - 7.2.2. \$150K be committed in the 2008/2009 budget to undertake further detailed investigation of this option, development of a funding strategy that investigates funding from key stakeholders / agencies and a cost and community benefit analysis;
  - 7.2.3. further detailed design of the 'one clubhouse' option be undertaken in a manner consistent with the principles of Council's Life Saving Club Strategy, Community Hubs Policy, City of Port Phillip Financial Principles and the Life Saving Victoria Future Clubhouse Guidelines;
  - 7.2.4. any further detailed investigation requires consideration of a LSV 'summer weekend' service to be provided from the newly renourished Middle Park Beach.
- 7.3. In relation to the St Kilda Life Saving Club, Council resolve that;
- 7.3.1. an investigation be undertaken into options for housing of the St Kilda Life Saving Club in a manner consistent with the principles of Council's Life Saving Club Strategy, St Kilda Urban Design Framework, Community Hubs Policy, City of Port Phillip Financial Principles and the Life Saving Victoria Future Clubhouse Guidelines;
  - 7.3.2. \$30K be committed in the 2008/2009 budget to undertake this investigation of options, including development of a funding strategy that investigates funding from key stakeholders / agencies and a cost and community benefit analysis.