

Is a new pool being built?

No. New filtration and pumping systems will be installed, requiring significant work and funding. These upgrades include the filtration and pumping equipment itself, as well as the replacement of all associated piping and plumbing.

Accessing the existing plumbing and piping requires cutting through the pool shell. The shell will have to be rebuilt once this work is complete.

Council has applied for approval to use any remaining grant money on other upgrades at Cooma Pool.

If approved, funding that remains after the completion of the filtration and pumping upgrades will allow be used to address accessibility and regulatory compliance problems with the current facility.

Hasn't a development application (DA) been lodged for a "new pool"?

No. A DA has been lodged for the following: Alterations and additions to the swimming pool/aquatic centre. Demolition of existing single story plant room building and construction of new single story plant room building, plus alterations to the existing pools and surrounds. New covered walkway.

In the statement of environmental effects within the DA the contractor developing that statement refers to a "new 25 metre pool and rehabilitation pool" as part of the works. The filtration and pumping upgrades mentioned above require cutting through the existing pool shell (the sides and bottom of the pool). The most structurally sound and economical option is expected to be to replace the current pool shell with a new one, which is what the above statement actually refers to.

A pool's worth of water puts a huge amount of pressure on the shell. If we just patched up the holes in the pool shell after the filtration and pumping upgrades, it would only be a matter of time until these patched areas start to leak.

Why isn't this money being spent on roads? Can Council really afford to spend millions in ratepayer's money on a pool in one town?

These works are being funded by the NSW Government. Council previously accepted a grant to enclose Cooma Pool, but the funding received was not sufficient to cover the cost of enclosure.

Early investigations into this project identified that, due to the age of the facility, Cooma Pool is not compliant with current regulatory standards. These compliance problems must be fixed before the pool can be enclosed. It was also found that the pool's treatment equipment are struggling to meet the minimum standards for water treatment. The upgrades that Council is looking to make will fix these problems.

Alternatively, Council could have returned the grant. These compliance and treatment works would still have needed to be done at some stage, which would have had to be funded from general rates and revenue. Instead, it was considered a better outcome for the community to bring Cooma Pool up to current standards using this grant funding. The NSW Government agreed to allow this to occur.

Any significant upgrade to a building requires the full facility to be brought up to the existing standards, which are often much higher than when the facility was built.

Do we really need a new filtration system?

Yes. Like anything, pool filtration systems eventually need replacing. The current system can only filter water at about half the rate it needs to and is well past the end of its planned life. There are numerous issues and maintenance works required to be dealt with each season to keep the current equipment operational.

Does the pool need a new shell?

Pool shells or linings last around 10 years. We cannot find any record of when the pool was last relined. We know that Cooma Pool is dealing with significant water losses, which shows that the current lining has failed and there are areas where the lining has separated from the pool structure.

Reducing water loss will save a lot of money. If we don't stop the water from leaking into the concrete structure of the pool, it will eventually fail. This would be extremely dangerous, and very expensive to fix.

Why is the depth of the pool being changed?

The pool was built to cater for a high diving board that is no longer there.

The more water in the pool, the more water that needs to be pumped, treated and heated. Since the high diving board is gone, it wouldn't make sense to pay all the extra costs associated with pumping and treatment, just to keep the depth the same.

The 1.8 metre depth is more than enough for the diving blocks in place, and will save ratepayers a significant amount of money.

Why does the DA cover more than just the filtration system?

There may be grant funding left over after the filtration and pumping upgrades that we can use to fix other problems with access, safety and accessibility at Cooma Pool.

We won't know for sure until the quotes for the tender are submitted, but by applying for development approval all in one go, we can move straight on to these extra upgrades if the money is available.

Not everyone in our community can access Cooma Pool in its current condition, and we are looking forward to addressing this problem as much as we can through this upgrade project.

Council is also investigating a new undercover pool grandstand, based on requests for seating for students during school swimming carnivals – as well as other pool users and visitors. At this stage the request is only being investigated.

Before asking for grants, Council needs to understand the full cost of the works required. Putting this through the development application process ensures that the costing done for the grandstand includes everything that will be required. The current investigation work ensures that we understand those costs before proceeding.

Funding would need to be identified to cover the cost of providing the grandstand before this improvement can be added.

If the current pool needs so much work, why don't we just build a new one?

A new enclosed pool facility is estimated to cost around \$50–\$75 million, based on other council's projects. We only have a grant of \$3.8 million to spend on specific upgrades to pumping, filtration and possibly access, safety and accessibility.

What value do we get from the pool?

Pools help keep us safe, especially our kids, by giving our community a place where they can learn to swim. The health benefits of exercise, recreation and social connection that community facilities like Cooma Pool provide are another significant benefit.

Council provides five public swimming pools across the region. We have one public pool for every 4,332 people. On average, comparable councils in NSW have one pool for every 12,386 people (*Office of Local Government comparative data 2022*).

For more information about this project please contact us.

Call 1300 345 345 or email council@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au to get in touch.