
**MM13/25 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND NEXT STEPS - RYDE
AQUATIC LEISURE CENTRE FEES AND CHARGES -
Mayor Trenton Brown****File Number:** CLM/25/1/1/8 - BP25/429

As Mayor, I want to acknowledge the strong community interest and feedback received regarding the proposed changes to the 2025/26 fees and charges for the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre (RALC), particularly the proposal to remove free entry for Ryde resident pensioner concession card holders.

To date, Council has received 110 submissions during the public exhibition period, which remains open until **Sunday, 1 June 2025**. Of those submissions, 104 – or 95% specifically address the proposed change to removal of the free pensioner concessions for Ryde residents. The feedback can be broadly summarised as follows:

- **91%** (95 submissions) strongly oppose the change and wish to retain free access;
- **6%** (6 submissions) oppose the change but are open to a compromise;
- **3%** (3 submissions) support the removal of the free pensioner concession.

As the leader of this Council, I have also personally heard from many members of the community who feel the change was not communicated clearly or transparently. Quite simply, many do not believe Council has made a compelling or well-explained case for the proposal.

We must acknowledge that. While the underlying intention may have merit, the execution of our communication has not met community expectations. We need to do better and we will.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the growing financial pressures Council faces in operating and maintaining the RALC. Between 2021–22 and 2023–24, the Centre has experienced:

- A **110% increase** in gas and electricity costs;
- A **12.4% increase** in staff salaries;
- A **52% increase** in materials, supplies and contractor costs; and
- A **13.4% increase** in depreciation, largely due to accounting standards and the ageing condition of the facility.

The Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre is a much-loved and iconic community asset. But it is now over 25 years old and no longer reflects the modern standard to which the citizens of Ryde aspire. Significant investment is required to maintain and ultimately redevelop the Centre for the future.

MM13/25 (continued)

We also need to consider the equity implications. Subsidising one group of residents means those costs must be borne by other residents and users. I believe we need to look at this issue fairly and transparently, recognising both the value of concessions and the broader responsibility to manage costs sustainably.

That said, this is a sensitive matter and we must take the time to get it right. That means ensuring that any changes are clearly explained, properly justified, and genuinely informed by community views.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- (a) Acknowledge the feedback received to date regarding the proposed changes to the 2025/26 Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre fees and charges.
- (b) Commit to further consultation with the community on the proposal, including more targeted communication and engagement beyond the official period for submissions.
- (c) Confirm that the current provision of free access to the RALC for eligible City of Ryde residents holding a concession (pensioners or health care cardholders with proof of residency) will remain unchanged for the next financial year.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:

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Mayor