



Media Release
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Plans underway to improve safety at community pools

Selwyn District Council will work with local communities to improve supervision and safety for people using community swimming pools this summer.

The Council has undertaken an assessment of its nine swimming pools to ensure their operations comply with the Health and Safety in Work Act, which came into force in April 2016.

Selwyn has one year-round swimming complex, the Selwyn Aquatic Centre, and two pool complexes at Darfield and Southbridge which open over summer and are supervised by lifeguards. At its meeting yesterday the Council confirmed these three facilities would operate as normal this summer.

There are also six Council-owned community swimming pools at Halkett, Leeston, Prebbleton, Courtenay, Killinchy and Sheffield. Supervision arrangements at these pools are variable, and in some cases there are no systems in place to prevent unsupervised children from accessing the facilities.

“Our local swimming pools are very important to local communities and we want people to be able to use their pool over summer” says Selwyn Mayor Sam Broughton. “However as the owner of these facilities the Council also has a duty of care to people using the pools. Nobody wants a child to be injured or drown at a local pool.”

“This isn’t just a Selwyn issue – Councils, schools and community groups all over New Zealand are all dealing with the impact of new Health and Safety legislation. We’re taking our responsibility seriously to ensure that facilities are safe for people to use.”

As part of the health and safety assessment, the Council inspected each facility and met with the local committees that manage the six community pools to discuss safety issues, particularly water testing, access and supervision of swimmers.

The Council has agreed to work with communities in Halkett, Leeston, Prebbleton, Killinchy and Sheffield to enable those pools to open for the summer season. The Council will seek commitment from local pool committees and users to agree on plans which include regular water quality testing, ensuring that unauthorised users can’t access pools, secure chemical storage, signage and having first aid resources on site.

Plans will also require active supervision to be in place when swimmers use these pools. Active supervision could include trained lifeguards, community supervisors who have received appropriate training or parents, who have received information about their responsibilities, supervising their own children.

At Halkett, Killinchy and Leeston, Council staff will work with pool committees to ensure that the required level of supervision is available, which is likely to be provided by community members and users.

At Sheffield and Prebbleton, which are both busy facilities, the Council will supply trained lifeguards. Prebbleton was previously a diving pool with a maximum depth of 2.2 metres so has a higher level of risk associated with its operation. Sheffield will operate from 1 to 7pm, in line with Darfield pool hours.

The community pool at Courtenay will not be able to open unless issues around active supervision and ageing plant and equipment are resolved. The pool's filtration, circulation and chlorination systems need to be replaced and other repairs and maintenance carried out. The total cost of these works is estimated at between \$60,000 and \$80,000. Last summer the pool had around a dozen families using the facility. The Council recommended that the pool committee works with the neighbouring Halkett pool committee so that these families still have access to a nearby facility. Longer term, the Council will look at whether it is viable to spend a significant amount repairing this pool, given the current low usage.

Opening dates for the community pools will be advised as soon as the new operational arrangements have been confirmed with local pool committees.

Ends

For media enquiries, please contact:

Allanah Jarman
Selwyn District Council
03 347 2807
allanah.jarman@selwyn.govt.nz