

19 June, 2020

Mingara Aquatics Centre

At Mingara, we are very proud of our Aquatic Centre and what it gives to our local community. Since 1996 we have taught tens of thousands of children to swim, we've had countless swimmers including kids doing laps staying fit and healthy, our squads have been traversing the lanes and we've been the venue of choice for lots of family fun, particularly on a hot summer day.

While we love supporting our community by operating this facility, the reality is, the Aquatic Centre is not a commercial operation. An average electricity bill costs thousands of dollars per week before wages and other costs are accounted for. As you can appreciate, running the centre is an expensive exercise and, under normal circumstances, we are able to absorb these losses. Unlike council run pools, we don't have the benefit of ratepayer funds therefore Mingara Aquatics Centre is entirely funded by Mingara for the benefit of the public. We do not receive any operational funding from council or government. Please understand, this is not a criticism, I'm just stating the facts, as it would seem that this is not widely known.

When we were directed to shut down our Aquatics Centre, we were informed it would be for a period of up to six months. It wasn't feasible for us to run the pool systems for the entire centre for that period of time and as such, we made decisions in regards to the vast machinery required to operate our massive volume of pool water. The water has been maintained with the appropriate chemicals manually, however last week a complete test was conducted of all of our aquatic systems to ensure they are in perfect running order. During this test the water in the balance tanks was mixed in with pool water which has caused some discolouration. Rest assured I can guarantee the water you see in our pools is cleaner than the water coming out of your tap at home.

As we've started to emerge from this devastating worldwide pandemic, guidelines from the government, both state and federal, have been changing rapidly particularly for gyms, clubs and aquatic centres. We have been closely monitoring these guidelines to ensure that we are aware of government requirements.

This pandemic is completely new for all of us and no one can fully appreciate what is happening behind the scenes for every individual, every household and indeed every organisation. I'm personally very proud of our team who have been working extremely hard over the last few months to ensure that we emerge with an even better offering for our members in our four clubs (the fifth is currently closed due to a pre COVID-19 fire), Mingara One Fitness and Mingara Aquatics Centre.

Unfortunately, we have received some unwelcome comments and even abuse on social media, via telephone and also in person. This feedback has come straight to our frontline team members and many of these comments, posts and discussions have been unhelpful, disrespectful and in some extreme cases disgusting - and I don't use that word lightly. Of course, it is always a minority of people who are behaving in this way, and I also understand that we all want to get back to living normal lives as soon as possible, but that is never an excuse for such poor behaviour.

Please be assured, we are all working hard behind the scenes at Mingara Aquatics and we are looking forward to reopening Mingara Aquatics Centre as soon as possible, however we will need to ensure that we are operating within the government guidelines, that our water quality is great and the temperature of the water is optimal. Believe it or not, it can take up to three weeks to reheat pool water in a pool of this size to prevent thermal shock to tiles as well as structural elements of the pool. We also need to ensure the financial stability of the organisation as a whole. I'm sure that's what we all want.

I am as keen as you are to have the Mingara Aquatics Centre reopened and I commit to you, to continue to monitor the status and make a progress announcement no later than 3 July.



Paul Barnett
Chief Executive Officer
Mingara Leisure Group

