



Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion and preparation for Electrification

Brunswick

Our ask:

Invest \$8.75 million to expand Brunswick Baths Gym to allow more community members to access the facilities, and prepare for the future electrification of the Baths.

Brunswick Baths Gym is at capacity. Located in the heart of Brunswick, Brunswick Baths offers year-round fitness and swim programs and facilities to the growing local community.

The existing gym building was originally a 1960s school sports hall converted for temporary use in 2012 and then repurposed as a 24-hour gym in 2020 with minimal structural upgrades.

The gym currently has 3,600 members, 11.25 members per square metre, which is more than double the recommended industry benchmark of 5.1 members per square metre.

Brunswick is home to more than 65,000 people and that number is forecast to increase by 32 per cent to more than 83,000 by 2051.¹⁹ Additionally, the Victorian Government, in its effort to address housing shortages and affordability, has earmarked Merri-bek to be home to an additional 70,000 to 80,000 dwellings by 2051 (subject to Ministerial feedback). With Brunswick and Coburg identified as Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres, these suburbs will welcome much of the new housing in Merri-bek and even more of the increased population. Demand for gym and fitness facilities in Brunswick will only increase.

As more people call Brunswick and Merri-bek home, providing community infrastructure, including a fit-for-purpose Brunswick Baths Gym, is critical to contribute to the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of our current and future community, helping foster healthier and more connected populations.

Future electrification

Brunswick Baths currently contributes 10 per cent of Council's corporate gas emissions, primarily from pool heating. Council is actively transitioning its public swimming pools from gas to electric heating as part of its Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 framework.

In an inner-suburban facility where ground space is limited, the gym expansion provides an opportunity to integrate space for rooftop heat-pump infrastructure to pave the way for electrification of the Baths in the future.

Engineering assessments have confirmed the former 1960s sports hall is not suitable for future expansion due to the extensive structural work needed to meet current building codes and strengthening works would be required to support an additional level, even if just housing heat pumps.

Expansion works would also address a range of functionality issues that would improve usage and access including better accessibility and flexible spaces for diverse community to utilise and train such as women's only and LGBTQIA+ zones.

New double storey gym

Council has developed a concept and costing report for a new double storey building within the footprint of the existing sports hall. The design offers around 1,200m² of floor space including an 845m² gym, with a new extended foyer and a cantilever roof over the existing outdoor training zone to allow for year-round use. The design also includes the roofing infrastructure needed to transition from gas to electric in the future.

Construction could take place in 2030.