

Media Release

1 September 2021

Gladstone Aquatic Centre's upgraded playpark reopen for spring

Upgrades to Gladstone Aquatic Centre are continuing with another exciting piece of the puzzle, an upgrade to the aquatic playpark Splash Zone, reopening on the first day of spring.

Gladstone Aquatic Centre facility managers, BlueFit, have reopened the Splash Zone to the public today to coincide with the new swimming season.

The journey to upgrade Splash Zone began in December 2020 via a piece of community engagement regarding the upgraded playpark's colour scheme.

Three colour options were offered – Orange, Yellow and Blue – with blue the most popular choice, receiving 73 per cent of the vote via Council's online *Conversations* platform.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett said once the onsite works commenced, floor grinding and concrete surface preparation of the Splash Zone site took place first, followed by surface coating and installation of the activity tower that was complemented by a state-of-the-art tiling system.

"The upgraded Splash Zone features two innovative products – Tuffcoat and CombiTile – that are used for surface coating and fall protection respectively," Councillor Burnett said.

"The company tasked with the design and construction of the upgraded Splash Zone, Playscape Creations, selected these products as their properties allow for a safe and durable non-slip surface with the added benefit of reduced ongoing maintenance."

Gladstone Aquatic Centre's upgraded Splash Zone is one of several upgrades that took place at the facility funded under the COVID Works for Queensland program.

The \$1.2m COVID Works for Queensland upgrade – the first of three stages to upgrade Gladstone Aquatic Centre – also included the installation of a 230m boundary fence, installation of a new main electrical switchboard and upgrades to the filtration and chemical dosing plant.

Member for Gladstone and Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water Glenn Butcher said the enormously successful Works for Queensland program is designed to help our Council deliver infrastructure that will not only create jobs, but continue to make Gladstone the best place to live, work and play in Australia.

"So far, \$26.01 million in funding has supported nearly 400 jobs in Gladstone through Works for Queensland," Minister Butcher said.

"It's works like this that is all part of Queensland's plan for economic recovery, delivering jobs in Central Queensland by partnering with local councils.

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"I'm proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor Government that has invested \$1.2 million in this project alone, as part of our COVID Works for Queensland program.

"While it might have been a bit cold during winter to make the most of it, we're now ready to go for the next season of aquatic adventures for the kids.

"We also have a new round of funding of \$7.79 million that Council estimates will support 47 jobs in our region."

BlueFit Group CEO Todd McHardy thanked the Queensland Government and Gladstone Regional Council for delivering Stage 1 of the Gladstone Aquatic Centre upgrade.

"Upgrades will improve the leisure and recreational experience for many local families and allow us to continue to provide local youth employment pathways," Mr McHardy said.

"Providing valuable water skills is often about learn-to-swim classes but starts with confidence around water, and the new splash pad activities provide the colour and fun that make our job of inspiring community activity much easier.

"Our local team is very much looking forward to summer and seeing the smiles on kids' faces when they see their upgraded Splash Zone."

More works at the Gladstone Aquatic Centre are in the pipeline for the coming months, with Stage 2 works set to be funded under the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI).

The LRCI Program will fund \$1.6m in upgrades including building renovations to the 25m pool amenities, building renovations to the 50m pool amenities and external pool lighting upgrade.

Stage 3 works, funded to the tune of \$2.4m under the 2021-24 Works for Queensland program will include 25m pool tile replacement, 25m pool heating system upgrade, 25m pool enclosure upgrade, 50m pool tile replacement, 50m pool heating system and grandstand and shade sail upgrades.

These works are forecast to commence next year and will be completed in stages in order to minimise disruption to Gladstone Aquatic Centre patrons.

The Gladstone Aquatic Centre stage 1 upgrade has been supported by the Queensland Government through the COVID Works for Queensland program.

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