

Aquatic sites watered down

Final decision still three months away

WODONGA Council will undertake a \$70,000 detailed design and costings investigation into two of its shortlisted options before making a final choice for the site of its planned multi-million dollar aquatic centre.

Last night's council meeting, which had been mooted for several months as the date for a final decision on the site, recommended that a decision made last August to locate the facility at Willow Park be permanently set aside.

That recommendation was carried unanimously and five of the seven councillors went on to accept a further recommendation that the council take three months to pursue detailed investigations and full costings for the Elgin Boulevard-Stanley Street and the White Box Rise sites.

The council has unanimously directed that stage one of the development be an outdoor aquatic facility with a heated 50m pool.

The city's chief executive officer, Peter Marshall, said council staff had come to the conclusion following the six month public consultation that the White Box Rise and Elgin Boulevard-Stanley Street options were superior to the remaining two options at Racecourse 1 (Pearce St) and the split site redevelopment of the Stanley Street outdoor facility and the Wodonga Sports and Leisure Centre.

"We're recommending that we home in on the superior options," Mr Marshall said.

"The reason we are making the recommendation to go to the next stage analysis is that before we put this to you as councillors you need to have seen the schematic design phase for both options and until we do that you will not have the accuracy of information we think you need to make a final decision."

Mr Marshall said further analysis would cost the council up to \$70,000.

"We suspect the choice will be the Elgin Boulevard-Stanley Street site because we think it will provide the most community advantages," he said.

Cr Brian Wicks asked if it was necessary for the council to incur a \$30,000 to \$35,000 cost for each site for the schematic designs.

Mr Marshall said such an investment would ensure the best decision was made for the city.