

Derwent Valley Council

Bushy Park Community Workshop – Facilitator's Report

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July 2026

Purpose and Scope

This report has been prepared by Michael Stedman of Timmins Ray Public Relations in my capacity as independent facilitator of the community workshop held on 22 July 2026 at the Glenora District School Gymnasium, Bushy Park.

This workshop was the second community engagement session convened by Derwent Valley Council in relation to the future of the Bushy Park War Memorial Swimming Pool site and the broader Bushy Park and Glenora township. The first meeting, held on 1 June 2026, focused on the circumstances of the pool's closure, Council's accountability, and the community's response to the decision not to reopen the pool.

The purpose of the 22 July workshop was to engage the community constructively in identifying ideas and priorities for the pool site and the broader Glenora and Bushy Park area.

This report does not make recommendations. It records the questions raised during session and the outcomes of the workshop to inform Council's deliberations and the next stages of the engagement process.

Meeting Overview

The workshop was held on Wednesday 22 July 2026 at the Glenora District School Gymnasium, Bushy Park, from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.

Attendance included:

- Independent Facilitator: Michael Stedman, Timmins Ray Public Relations
- Council Officers: CEO Wes Young, Community Development Officer Ava Raku, Executive Manager Development Laura Ashelford, Director Infrastructure and Engineering Meg Kluver
- Member for Derwent and Legislative Council President, Craig Farrell.
- Elected Members: Cr Wayne Shoobridge, Cr Phillip Bingley, Cr Justin Derksen
- Community Members: 34 attendees

The workshop followed a different format to the first public meeting. Following a welcome and introduction from the facilitator, a question-and-answer session was held to address community questions and matters arising since the first meeting. Community members then rotated through stations to contribute ideas under themes informed by the Upper Derwent Valley Precinct Plan, sentiments and outcomes from the Bushy Park Pool Community Meeting held on 1 June 2026, and the facilitator report that came out of that meeting, along with additional engagement regarding the Bushy Park War Memorial Swimming Pool.

- Community Health and Wellbeing

- Child and Youth Engagement and Safety
- War Memorial and Veterans
- Connectivity and Accessibility

Opening Questions

The CEO responded to questions on behalf of Council. Many questions reflected continuing community concern about the pool's closure and the integrity of the engagement process, consistent with the sentiment expressed at the 1 June meeting.

The following is a summary of the questions asked and answers provided:

Speed limits and road safety

A community member raised road safety and speed limits as a priority concern for the township. The CEO confirmed that while speed limits on state roads were set by the State Government, Council was prepared to take the matter up on the community's behalf.

Focus on passive recreation

Questions were raised about the concept of passive recreation and how it related to the car parking constraints that had prevented the pool from reopening. Council officers clarified that under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme there is no requirement to provide on-site parking for a passive recreation use. This is the key distinction between a passive recreation facility and a swimming pool, which requires car parking and emergency vehicle access under the planning scheme.

Footpaths in Bushy Park and Glenora

The absence of footpaths in Bushy Park and Glenora was raised as a significant safety concern, particularly for children travelling to and from school. The CEO acknowledged this as a major infrastructure issue for the Upper Derwent Valley, confirmed it had been identified in the Precinct Plan, and committed to continuing advocacy with the State.

Workshop purpose

The purpose of the workshop was also questioned, with one participant noting that the majority view remained that the pool should reopen. The CEO reiterated that the pool would not reopen and acknowledged the frustration this continued to generate. He indicated that the purpose of the workshop was to explore what else could be achieved for the community at the site and in the broader township.

Impact of local government elections

Concern was raised about whether the proposals and commitments arising from these meetings would be carried through after the local government elections. The CEO advised that there were two further Council meetings before the caretaker period, that he intended to move quickly, and that he planned to bring a report to the August Council meeting to begin formalising the pathway forward.

Community trust

Several participants asked why the community should trust that anything would change, given what they described as a long history of being ignored and misled. The CEO acknowledged the legitimacy of

this concern and committed to continued accountability and ongoing engagement with the community.

Determining priorities

A question was asked about what would happen next and how priorities would be determined following the workshop. The CEO advised that Council would collate the ideas generated at the workshop, an online survey would be opened to allow the broader community to contribute further ideas before bringing a final report to Council.

Other land in Bushy Park and Glenora

A community member asked whether other underused land in the area (including the Bushy Park Showground, the Glenora District School and Crown land) could be made more accessible and activated for community use. The CEO noted that Council does not own this land but committed to engaging with the relevant landowners to explore how community benefit could be increased.

Council budget allocation for Bushy Park

A community member asked how much had been allocated in the 2026/27 budget specifically for Bushy Park. The CEO advised that there was no dedicated budget line item for Bushy Park and Glenora but that a \$1 million contingency fund existed that could be partially directed to this area and to the pool site once community priorities had been identified.

Public toilets at the site

The provision of public toilets at the site was raised. Council officers clarified that public toilets provided by a Council or State Authority are exempt from requiring planning approval under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Children's recreation and safety

The impact of the pool's closure on children in the community was raised directly. The CEO acknowledged the significance of this loss and indicated that Council and its partners in the Derwent Valley Collaboration for Youth were committed to delivering more programs and services to the Upper Derwent Valley, alongside whatever was ultimately developed at the pool site.

Community purchase of the pool for \$1

A community member asked whether the community could purchase the pool for \$1 and reopen it. The CEO confirmed that the off-market proposals framework remained available as a mechanism for community groups to pursue but was direct in advising that any community organisation that acquired the site would face the same planning scheme constraints as Council and that the pool could not be reopened under current requirements. He stated that Council's preference was to see the site developed in a way that was accessible and beneficial to the whole community.

Planning permit process

The question was also raised of whether an individual could initiate a planning permit application to reopen the pool. Council officers confirmed that any person may apply for a planning permit under the Act. However, where an application is made on land owned by Council or the Crown, the consent of the relevant Minister or General Manager must be provided for the application to be valid.

Free or subsidised access to the New Norfolk Pool

Free or subsidised access to the New Norfolk pool for Upper Derwent Valley residents was queried. The CEO said the contract for management of the New Norfolk pool was coming up for renewal, providing an opportunity to consider that proposal.

Retained funds

A community member asked whether funds associated with the pool had been retained, including the compensation paid by State Growth to Council for the acquisition of a strip of land on which the crash barrier is now located. Council committed to providing a transparent account of this paper trail.

Willow management and the Derwent Catchment Project

A community member asked whether the Council was working with the Derwent Catchment Project on willow management along the river. The CEO advised that the Derwent Catchment Project has weed management plans in place, including willow removal across the Valley, and works with the volunteer group Willow Warriors to carry out this work.

Community Ideas and Priorities

Following the opening session, participants rotated around four themed stations. The themes were drawn from the Upper Derwent Valley Precinct Plan and supplemented with ideas raised at the 1 June meeting and prior community feedback. A Council officer facilitated each table and recorded contributions from participants.

The following is a summary of ideas raised under each theme:

Community Health and Wellbeing

Proposals focussed on transforming the pool site into a flexible, welcoming space that could serve community members and visitors across all seasons. Ideas included:

- Public toilets
- Dog on lead area
- Green open space with 24/7 public access
- Free BBQ facilities and picnic areas
- Nature-based shelter suitable for all seasons, including shade structures, trees and fire pits
- Safe, accessible river access
- A tree and bush-covered park environment
- Bike stands and active transport infrastructure
- Facilities designed to serve both local residents and visitors year-round

Reference was made to Oatlands as a model of well-designed community facilities in a small town.

Child and Youth Engagement and Safety

This table generated significant discussion about the needs of young people in the community, the safety risks created by the pool's closure and the importance of designing any new facility for contemporary use. Ideas included:

- Playground equipment including climbing structures, swings and a spider's web
- Bike and scooter track
- Half basketball and half netball court
- Skate park or pump track, potentially using the existing pool structure
- Water play area, potentially incorporating the pool structure
- Fire pit in the style of Mt Field National Park
- 24/7 lighting
- Free Wi-Fi hotspot
- Public toilets
- Improved access to the Bushy Park Showgrounds and Glenora District School
- Business case for a pool based on employment and skill development opportunities for local youth
- Free access to the New Norfolk pool as an interim measure

Howard Springs Nature Park and Adventure Playground in the Northern Territory was cited as an aspirational reference – incorporating rock climbing, native animal interpretation, fire pits and water play. Participants emphasised that any new facility should be broadly accessible and useable year-round, not designed solely for children. One participant noted: "Community space cannot be based only on the past. It needs to be contemporary for our children and for the future."

Concern was raised about vandalism, given past experience at the Showground toilets, and about the safety risks of young people swimming in the river in the absence of a pool.

War Memorial — Importance, History and Veterans

Participants were clear that the war memorial must be preserved, made accessible and properly maintained, regardless of what else happens at the site. Ideas included:

- Lighting for the memorial
- 24/7 public access
- Pedestrian access to the memorial
- Built-in provision for flowers and acts of remembrance
- Reactivation of access to the buildings on the site
- Relocation of the memorial to the hall carpark land or to the cemetery
- Use of the pool structure as part of an expanded war memorial
- Site interpretation and storytelling to preserve and communicate the history of the site
- The hall repurposed as a memorial space

One participant noted that the pool should be recognised as an integral part of the memorial: “It is in the name of the memorial.” Questions were also raised about ongoing maintenance responsibility for the war memorial, which will need to be clarified as part of any future plans for the site.

Connectivity and Accessibility

This table focused on the broader infrastructure needs of Bushy Park and Glenora — not only access to the pool site but connections within and between the two townships and to surrounding attractions. Ideas included:

- Footpaths throughout Bushy Park and Glenora, including along Glenora Road
- Pedestrian crossings
- Speed limit reductions and traffic calming between Bushy Park and Glenora
- Parking for pool site and the rail trail
- Access to the Rail Trail from Glenora via Kenmore Road
- Riverbank rehabilitation and improved safe access to the river
- Multipurpose courts for community sports
- Bridleway providing a shared path for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists
- Mobile phone reception
- Free Wi-Fi
- RV dump point and rest area for travellers
- Community and tourist information facilities
- Activation of the Showground site year-round, including parking, river access and BBQ facilities
- Bridleway providing off-road access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian riders
- Access improvements for older people and carers with young children

Participants noted that walking on the road in both townships was currently unsafe. The Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program was identified as an opportunity to think more ambitiously, including the potential use of Crown land and unused school areas for recreational purposes. Kingston’s parks were cited as a quality benchmark for what a well-invested small community can achieve.

Next Steps

The following next steps were outlined at the close of the workshop:

Facilitator’s report: This report will be provided to Council to inform its deliberations.

Online survey and written submissions: An online survey will be made available to allow the broader community to contribute further ideas and indicate their priorities. Written submissions will also be accepted.

Council report: The CEO committed to bringing a report to the August 2026 Council meeting to begin formalising the pathway forward for the pool site and broader township, drawing on the outcomes of both community meetings.