

A pond in a park: Social Geographies of adolescents at public swimming pools in Tasmania.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Environmental Management by coursework in the University of Hobart Geography department

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ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that there are significant nourishing social and physical health benefits from being outdoors in natural environments, such as parklands, beaches and forests. While a public outdoor swimming pool is traditionally identified as a sporting venue, I propose in this study that it can be considered as a body of water in a community parkland setting. This broader description focuses attention on how public outdoor swimming pools can contribute to the physical and social health of a community in diverse ways, as an outdoor public space. A finding from the field research, is that public outdoor pools are a common space for people of diverse social groups to interact and co-exist. Getting into the water or being around the pool, is the reason for being at the spaces of a pool rather than a waterless park, but the research showed that swimming in a horizontal position was, usually, not the reason for getting in the water. The main reason for being at the pool was social - to be amongst other people with friends, in or out of the water. However the focus shape of the pool for competition may inhibit inclusive social uses.

This research was undertaken at four public outdoor pools in Launceston, Tasmania, in the summer school holidays of January 2010, on warm to hot afternoons. Out of 30 direct observations and 100 indirect observations, for an average of 33 minutes duration, just 21 seconds or 1% was spent swimming in a horizontal position – in chunks of 2 to 4 seconds. Chatting, watching and playing occupied 82% of the time at the pool and 71% was spent in the water or at the edges of the water. Another finding was that the swimming abilities of all people at the pools (excluding the competitive swimmers observed) when they did swim horizontally, was of a poor standard for adequate life preserving skills in a critical situation. Tasmania with a population of 500,000 people has 9 x 50 m swimming pools and at least 80 swimming pools where school lessons are taught and the public can use. Swimming skills noted in field research do not reflect the use of these venues for skill acquisition. Only 50% of 11 year old Tasmanian children achieve national swimming skill benchmarks.

This study explores the potential for enhancing social capital in public spaces, in the context of one specific social grouping – adolescents. Youth tend to be marginalised and criminalised for their play in public spaces, a process of exclusion that can inhibit their citizenship behaviours and reduce social cohesion. This censure is evident at the

public pools studied. One research question asked: “how would you make the pool more user friendly?” revealed that the play and social needs of youth were inadequately catered for. I conclude this is due to the shape of the pool - designed for competition, not enough deep water, restrictions on risky activity, not enough semi-private spaces, and under staffing of pools by lifeguards/activity supervisors.

Many of the pools in Australia and Tasmania are old and in need of renovation or demolition. Outdoor pools are valuable amenities worthy of preservation and regeneration, but how they are to be renovated requires a re-conception of their functions and uses. The research indicates that re-imagining an outdoor pool, as a metaphorical ‘pond in a park’ is one archetypal model. Historically, swimming pools originated as public bathing houses in England based on angular functionalistic Roman architecture. Socially they were built to get physically and morally ‘clean’, and then later to train young people in an authoritarian militaristic style for nationalistic projects. These ‘moral projects’ are not as relevant in the 21st C. Furthermore, 21st C sedentary lifestyles and privatisation of social life are a rising concern. Both organised and casual activities at pools have adapted to the historical design of swimming pools. These activities are now either culturally accepted or institutionalised so the expectation at many levels is that the design of new swimming pools will serve these activities that originally evolved largely from the design of the pools themselves. For example there are no ‘steeplechase’ obstacle swimming races. Swimming pool designs are not keeping up with other outdoor type playgrounds and parks that are using sensory stimulus, and bio-mimetic features to meet some social and physical health issues that can be eased by contact with nature, in its broadest sense. Children’s play is more inclusive, creative and active, in playgrounds with rocks, logs, ditches and mounds, than on colourful, prefabricated equipment. Aquatic parallels have not yet been fully developed.

The research contributes knowledge to the possible solutions of a dilemma, ‘what to do with the old pool’ by demonstrating that there is more socialising happening at pools than there is swimming horizontally. As there is a decline in public spaces, public swimming pools have the potential to be a nourishing, vibrant space with a high user density, for the building of trust, social networks and self-regulating behaviours that build social capital. Re-imagining a swimming pool as a metaphorical ‘pond in a park’ is stepping stone to this end.

Declaration

This thesis is my own work, except where quotations and direct acknowledgements appear in the text. It has not been submitted for a degree elsewhere.

Signed

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Shane Gould

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I wish to acknowledge a number of people who have assisted me to conduct this research and provide feedback as I tried to 'nut out' my hunches and ideas.

Primarily my husband Milton Nelms who heard me out over the phone, on Skype in different parts of the world, and in the middle of the night providing a patient listening ear and excellent suggestions.

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Copious gratefulness to Annie Milbourne who hosted me in Hobart so I could be at classes. Because of her I'm now a fan of Dr Who, hot water drinks and stand up paddle boarding.

Lastly, my appreciation to the young people who interrupted their swimming time at the pool to willingly answer my questions.

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Biographical preface.

I consider it a requisite to insert this biographical preface in order to alleviate any preconceived ideas about myself as the author and researcher, as well as providing fundamental background information to the topic.

Tasmania has a reputation on the mainland of Australia as a cold place. Cold places are not conducive for swimming. As a visiting mainlander I was therefore surprised to see many small public swimming pools in towns around Tasmania, from the 25m memorial baths at Bushy Park, the Maydena pool built for the Hydro dam construction workers, to the 33yard pool in Oatlands built in the exercise yard of the oldest convict gaol in Tasmania. Once I moved to live in Tasmania and enjoyed the pleasantly warm summers, the numbers of pools was less of a mystery. Cold, Tasmania isn't, and swimming is a popular summer pastime.

The jewel in the crown of pools in Tasmania in my opinion is the Basin pool in the Cataract Gorge Reserve. See figure 1. It is nested in the base of a natural physical amphitheatre of tree covered, steep sided, rocky hills and can be seen from any number of vantage points ringing the gorge. The blue of the chlorine sanitised water contrasts against the green of the manicured lawns and the dark brown of the first basin pool, a deep body of natural water within the South Esk River that flows through the gorge. The First Basin is located 800m before the river's junction with the Tamar River at the city of Launceston. In summer the First Basin is very popular. It is well patronised by groups of friends and families. In the winter only the diehards get in to swim in the unheated water but the park lands are used by locals and visitors. The scene looks like the swimming pool is an attractive blue pond in the parklands.

The swimming pools in Tasmania are mostly rectangular in shape with racing blocks and black lap lines painted on the bottom, suggesting that the pools were built for the main use of competition and training. However a literature review of pool building rationale in Australia and preliminary observations at different times of the day and focussed observations, indicate the main use of the pools studied was for social gathering and water play swimming. The shape of the pools do not appear to adequately facilitate the main use, and youth were under-represented users.



Figure 1. The Basin pool in the Cataract Gorge Reserve Launceston was built in 1937 and renovated in 1950 and 2004, has survived social change and floods the most recent one in August 2009.

I uphold the benefits of swimming for fitness and health, and as an avid swimmer with a keen eye for swimming locations to use and photograph, my curiosity about the many pools in Tasmania was aroused particularly about who used them. Even though I rarely saw anyone swimming in the pools I visited, they were maintained and obviously used at times during the year. However they look more like treasured relics of a bygone era, exuding an abstract dreamed life rather than a real, vibrant public

space with laughing children and parading youths. In addition, there were few older adolescents using the facilities.

Public swimming pools may be a curious artefact about which to do a geographic enquiry. Not so when it is associated with me the researcher¹, who is very prominently identified with the sport of swimming. A mismatch may arise in the readers mind though, because this thesis is primarily about the recreational use of swimming pools not competitive swimming with which I am closely identified. Due to the prominence of my achievements and association with the sport of swimming, this is an important point to make at this early stage, so any preconceived notions are addressed.

I am an advocate of the use of swimming pools for everyone to use, not just fitness or competitive swimmers. Personally, I prefer the ocean than a pool to swim in, but I use a pool when the ocean is not available. Even though I am still an occasional competitor, I believe in social inclusion and equal opportunity at swimming pools. I have the opinion that swimming is a very healthful activity, and advocate benefits of 'taking to the water'. However my observations indicate that pools in Tasmania are neither user-inclusive, nor age-inclusive.

There are 1400 club swimmers registered with Swimming Tasmania. In addition, several other organised groups of swimmers such as masters, triathlon, water polo and

¹ I won 5 Olympic medals in 1972 Munich Olympic Games, held 11 world records in 6 different events, and all 5 freestyle world records at the same time. I was Australian of the Year 1972, an MBE in 1980, World Sportswoman of the Year 1972, and recognised as one of 100 Australian National Living Treasures in 1997. I have an Olympic Order awarded in 2000, and since 2008 a member of the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame.

underwater hockey, total approximately 600 members. I am one of the masters competitive swimmers who revels in the availability of the rectangular pools for competitive type training and racing uses. However the 2000 people who rely on the FINA (the international swimming federation) configuration and design of pools for their sport, are just 0.4% of the population! It appears that the pools built in the configuration for fitness and competition in Tasmania are heavily subsidised by other, non competitive users.

There are an unknown number of lap swimmers in Tasmania who use pools for fitness and health. People learning to swim is another fluid user group of pools, serviced by a solid community of teachers and lucrative businesses of learn to swim. Learn to swim programs tend to subsidise competitive swimming programs. This is a widely accepted practise in the industry. Hydrotherapy, sports recovery, aged mobility maintenance, are other customer categories who use pools. The remaining clients are not organised groups, but can be loosely clustered as families with small or school aged children, school aged friends, working aged friends, and assorted individuals enjoying the public facilities.

My curiosity about the very existence of swimming pools was triggered because of my observations of Tasmanian pools, and challenged my assumed belief about some of the functions of swimming pools e.g. people swim at swimming pools. Other questions arose such as why pools were used or not use, why they were built historically and presently, what value they represented to a community, and when they were used, if they could be used more effectively with greater beneficence to the customers.

Swimming pools in my imagination and experience provide many opportunities for activity, swimming, playing and socialising. I believe this presumpt needed testing. This was the beginning of establishing a research question, how are public swimming pools actually used?

I will now provide some more biographical information, to declare my interest and perspective through some of my experiences at swimming pools, before launching in to the academic research I have undertaken. Firstly I will describe, in a diarised style, a fairly typical sort of visit I make to my local pool, as a public lap swimmer and then I will provide some history behind my recent interest in swimming pools. The narrative to follow is an indication of the 'everydayness' of a visit to the pool.

“ This morning in March I went to the Launceston Aquatic centre for a swim at 8am. As I arrived, wet haired youths in crumpled school uniforms shuffled out of the entrance doors to go home for breakfast to refuel after their squad training. Adult workers with goggle-imprinted eyes were also leaving for work in shirts and ties, suits and high heels. That was the first shift of lap swimmers I noted. I didn't see the regular aged users in the warmer pools; they may have left already or not yet turned up. Instead of going in to the pool I went to the café where the light clean quiet spaces I know so well from frequent visits, welcomed me to sit and sup on a hot coffee. I met two fellow masters swimmers who had finished their swim and were looking at the social pages of the paper. We chatted briefly, as I did with the wait staff. After half an hour in the café reading and writing and coffee drinking, I went in to the indoor 50m pool. I changed out of my street clothes in to my swimwear, a new swimsuit to test out. In the change rooms, 3 showers were out of order, a mother and child were discussing this. Out by the side of the indoor pool I placed my bags on the cement seating steps and began a stretching routine, while glancing at the swimmers, only 1 or 2 to a lane, earnestly travelling by, swimming freestyle from one end of the pool to the other. The time was 8.45 by now and a change of occupancy happened, leaving the lanes nearly empty. I few people I knew walked past, who I spoke with briefly and continued my preparation for swimming. A school carnival was scheduled

for that day so the sound system was being tested and plastic seating for officials were laid out. Eventually I was in the water and did a routine, with some exertion for 45 minutes. I practised some dives and race finishes and felt quite energised. The coolness of the water and the sensations of lightness and flow pressures on my skin were delicious. While in the water I spoke to one person I knew about the upcoming masters races. Feeling the wellbeing and heated flush of exercise I left the water, changed into dry clothes in the change rooms. I recognised one lady but she was engaged in drying her hair, getting ready for work, so out of respect for time constraints I didn't catch her attention to say hello. As I walked out of the change room corridors, the schools groups were arriving, filling the quiet spaces with their noisy presence, uncertain excitement and chatter about the days swimming carnival. I then left the building hoping not to have parking ticket at 9.40 am and drove to the town to do some errands. To me I had a rich though maybe thin social experience at the facility, swimming in some ways was incidental."

While each one of the people at the swimming pool that day had a different experience, 'the assemblage of dull and unremarkable activity' (Inglis 2005) p.4 of going to the pool as described, hides deeper significance in this expression of everyday life in a public place. I went to the pool to do laps for fitness and to be in a public space.

My practical experiences of swimming and swimming pools, is multi storied. I learned to swim in Parsley Bay, Sydney Harbour, and in a pool in Fiji. I used various pools in my middle childhood and formative adolescent years for training as a very successful competitive swimmer in the late 1960's and early 1970's. I taught swimming at sea weedy beaches in Margaret River WA, where I lived and in farmers' unheated backyard pools for several years, in the 1980's but there was a gap of about 25 years when I didn't use a public pool very much at all, as there was no pool in the rural town I lived in, besides, me and my family preferred to use the river and sea for aquatic recreation. The few times I did use a public pool was for giving my four

children swims in Bunbury while driving from Margaret River to Perth – so they would wear themselves out and be asleep by the time I got to the city traffic! While in Perth they preferred to use the Ascot Water Playground, rather than one of the six rectangular pools designed for laps and competitions that were available in the north-eastern suburbs of Perth.

In 1997 an indoor heated pool was built in Margaret River WA - after 15 years of the community trying to raise the will and the money to build it. I began swimming with adult lap swimmers who enjoyed ocean swimming, and engaged in a new sport called 'masters swimming'. This led to me racing in masters pool events in USA, Europe, Japan. It also led to ocean swimming races in Australia, USA, and Fiji. In the process I taught learn to swim and swimming improvement in Thailand, Fiji, USA, UK, Iran, New Zealand and Australia. I found through these experiences, that teaching people to swim or improve their swimming was hampered by the design of rectangular pools. Anyone who had swum laps was hard to reprogram their robotic lap counting, so by removing lane ropes and not using the ends of the pools in swim camps, this interrupted old patterns so that learning could occur. Lack of beach entry depths or shallow water for children and frightened inexperienced adults, fostered my creativity to make teaching effective.

My interest in swimming teaching methodologies heightened when I met and married an American Milton Nelms who was and still consults with elite athletes, their coaches and swimming federations. Together we designed a project to make use of swimming pools as a way of assisting parents in aboriginal communities.

This was enacted in partnership with Good Beginnings a National Parenting support charity. The pool program showed the inadequacies of the traditional rectangular 'box' swimming pool for effective learning and aquatic skill development, particularly for indigenous peoples. The Shane Gould Swimming Project (SGSP) is in recess in Australia, but is active in Fiji where it provides a curriculum of drowning prevention for student school teachers. There is just one public swimming pool in Fiji, but several private pools for hire. Milt and I began teaching in Fiji at the beach in 2003 and small hotel pools, but when the beach sand and the seawater quality declined we had to transfer to a private school pool. The beach had greater context for the students – many who had never been in a pool or the Indo Fijians who avoid the water as a drowning prevention strategy. So the pool made it harder to teach real life scenarios. Imagination and storytelling was required to provide contextual grounding.

Over a period of 7 years during which the Shane Gould Swimming Project was being implemented, I travelled interstate and overseas with my husband designing and teaching unique swimming programming for learn to swim, swim improvement and elite performance swimming. This is still in process. One of the founding principles is a systems based approach, using feedback loops, and adaptive design.

Traditional swimming instruction is linear, with mechanical instruction, and endgame focus to swim a certain distance with a recognisable stroke. While travelling we saw many swimming pools; spas in Switzerland, a circular pool in Sweden, highly regulated bathing houses in London, Osaka, Manchester and New York, modernist projects in Denmark and UK. Pool designs were generally sadly lacking in affording optimal results for our systems approach, nearly everywhere we went. The designs that did work though were ones that used biomimetic features. Biomimicry means

copying nature. Examples of this in pools are 'beach entry', curved edges, uneven bottoms, flowing water, fractal patterns and colours of surfaces in and around the water.

We also saw how people attached themselves to these pools as a place of social gathering, meeting and living. Much of the social capital invested was 'thin' – anonymous sharing of spaces, however some social interactions at the pool spaces was very rich in social capital investment in the evidence of relationship building and long time friendship cementing such as the Olympic Club in San Francisco and the Icebergs pool in Bondi, Sydney.

Armed with some questions, observations and life experiences I immersed myself in postgraduate study to apply academic rigour to how swimming pools are really used by one customer grouping, adolescents.

The following are some findings about public swimming pools. There is a comprehensive listing of conclusions and recommendations on page 90.

- Diverse social groups interact and coexist in the shared spaces.
- Swimming pools have embedded meanings as a representation of seashore, beach, lake side and as a place of healing.
- Swimming pools are more of a public social space than a sporting venue.
- Pools are used more like a pond in a park than a competition venue, but the shape facilitates competition, limiting social use, possibly reducing customer numbers.
- There are more than 90 public-use pools in Tasmania, 9 are 50 metres long

- The pools studied are understaffed to supervise adolescent activities.
- Youth activity is censured.
- Semi private social spaces for adolescents are inadequate at the public pools studied.
- Adolescents appear underrepresented at public pools studied.
- Most accidental drowning occur in natural water locations (males represent 80% of total drowning), however this could be reduced by installing bio-mimetic features and programs in pools, which in turn, is utilised for teaching transitions to unpredictable, natural water.

Introduction and Rationale

Public outdoor swimming pools are an assemblage of water, cement, colourful signage, parkland and gardens, where people of all ages, gender and social groups can be in proximity to wade swim, play, meet and lounge in a public social space. This is a unique phenomenon and worthy of investigation, of what sort of social activities and real or imagined spaces (Soja 1996) are created in them. A public outdoor swimming pool is traditionally identified as a sporting venue but I am proposing that it can be considered as a body of water in a parkland setting. This different conception means that public outdoor swimming pools can therefore contribute to community physical and social well being, in more diverse ways than if it were just perceived as a sporting venue. However outdoor pools are in decline (McShane 2009) p.196 because many are being covered or demolished. Two reasons for covering pools are: uncovered water is open to evaporation (scarce water resources are highly valued) and secondly, a large volume of uncovered water loses heat easily and is more expensive to heat than 'closed in' pool water. As a result, outdoor pools are usually open only in the warmer seasons, leaving an expensive facility unused for 5 to 8 months of the year.

A swimming pool building-boom in the 1960's and 1970's produced over 200 in Victoria between 1950 and 1980, so now in 2010 many of these pools are coming the end of their useful life, and are in need of renovation or demolition (McShane 2006). Many of the pools in Tasmania were also built in this era. See an incomplete list of swimming pools in Tasmania in the appendix. When municipal authorities make decisions about what to do with the old pool, financial accounting is the first priority, and social value is a lesser priority. Rationales for building a pool are based on what council and constituents of a municipality wants - a social gathering place to swim

and play. However the swimming pool has embedded meanings based on ideals of the pool as a representation of seashore, beach, lakeside and its representation as a place of healing. Lewi (2008) says - from an architectural perspective - 'pool settings and facilities are an abstraction of the natural 'found' environment. (The term natural is used here in full awareness of its contentions p.278).

In the building or renovation of a pool, social values are subsumed by the reality of financial accounting while still trying to meet the social values of as many people as possible. Youth tend to be marginalised (Malone 2002), and even censured in this process as interviews with key stakeholders indicate. Social values are difficult to quantify, so this research is not an easy task, but the role of public spaces for social interaction and fostering social cohesion is well documented (Gehl & Gemzoe 2006) and (Putnam 2000). Because the spaces of a pool are unique for people of different social groups to co-exist, as mentioned, I propose that the public outdoor pool is a facility worth promoting and preserving. They have the capacity to provide a space for people to build 'social capital' in the communities in which they are located. However they need to be re-imagined in a different way than traditional ideation as a sporting facility in order to attract more patrons as a site for the fostering of social capital value while addressing the financial costs of management.

The rationale for this research could have been investigating skate parks or playgrounds, however public swimming pools were chosen because of the diversity of uses by all segments of (western) societies. They are an ordinary place, for Australians and other westerners. Routines and protocols at a public pool are understood, as they are expressions of the 'everyday' culture of swimming that

Australian children learn about when they do swimming lessons. The everyday banal externalities of life are expressions of the wider social and cultural order (Inglis 2005). Other everydayness includes routines such as going to work, shopping, walking the dog, or playing ball in the park. While not a place of daily 'everyday life' like going to bed, or eating food, public pools are places of regular (of once a month or every summer, or every other day) everyday life. Because of this everydayness, there has been very little social study of swimming pools written (McShane 2009), so there is a knowledge gap, ready to be filled.

In preliminary research, speaking with pool managers, they indicated that they thought youth were underrepresented as users at the new Launceston Aquatic centre. When they did go the pool, Peter Goss operations manager of Launceston Aquatic acknowledged they didn't have a lot to do and would 'like any suggestions'. This was one reason why I chose youth to observe over other user sets, such as families with young children. Another rationale for researching public outdoor pools is because a literature review indicates that recently, public pools have tended to be treated as just infrastructure capital by councils frustrated with their expense, and limited use (McShane 2006). Local government authorities provide 80% of public open space, leisure and recreational and cultural venues (Montgomery 2005), and give them a strong operational focus as their jurisdiction requires. Public demand by organised user groups to provide a council pool, such as health and sports clubs, focuses design and use on just one aspect of a pools' use – fitness and health lap swimming which further embeds the accounting of infrastructure value, disguising other equally valuable functions, such as social gathering and being outdoors in 'nature'. Pools are also sites of 'lap Nazis' competing for shared lane space and rowdy kids who occupy

the same spaces. As such they are a great place to practise citizenship – i.e. how to get along with other. Civic behaviours (Flanagan & Faison 2001) such as trust and reciprocity, social obligations and rights are learned in negotiated spaces, like a public swimming pool.

In order to establish some social values of swimming pools apart from the just their infrastructure value, and lap swimming capacities, I embarked on a process to identify how one user set, adolescents, used and perceived the public outdoor pools they patronise.

Research Method

As already stated, there is very little social research about public swimming pools (Lewi 2008b) p.278 (Methven 1989) p.263 (McShane 2009) p.196 but there is a vast social landscape at pools, so I have constrained this inquiry by mapping it within some limiting parameters. The research is located within the framework of recent academic studies about the importance of experiences in nature for human health and ecosystem health, and traverses through a perspective of the importance of public spaces for exercising citizenship behaviours such as trust, reciprocity and discussion. There is some exploration of how 'space is produced' at public outdoor pools, as already introduced. Other ways of limiting the scope includes parameters of adolescents as the focus group, four seasonal public pools, and summer school holidays in Launceston Tasmania.

The field research consisted of observations and interviews with adolescents at public outdoor swimming pools and key stakeholders – lifeguards, pool managers, and council employees. The observation method was derived from three sources. One was a system of observing how active children are in playgrounds, designed by Tom McKensie (2006). The focus of this pool study is not about how physically active the subjects were, but the observation methods were suitable as a framework for recording what adolescents were doing in different locations, using momentary time sampling – the sampling method that the SOPLAY (McKensie 2006b) system of observation uses. Every minute I noted where the selected research subject was located and what they were doing. For example chatting at the edge of the pool in the water. The subject was observed for at least 20 minutes and up to 70 minutes. The second method of observation is in two parts, 2a and 2b using spatial concepts to map

public spaces. Concept 2a is the idea of ‘traces’; as people wander through the landscape, they leave traces or follow traces. A French psychiatrist and educator Fernand Deligny mapped autistic space – before the nature of autism spectrum disorder was better known – by drawing lines on paper tracing the movements of patients, where they went in relation to objects or spaces in their environment. He was interested in everyday life, including those who were abnormal or incomprehensible. There are indeterminate relationships (Petrescu 2007) between the subjects and the spaces that after time build a pattern of traces such as song lines of aboriginal Australians, or psychogeographic² maps of the situationists. ‘The situationists, were interested in the ephemeral, the randomness, the aesthetisation of the furtive passage, in the ordinary to catch the unique, the exceptional’ (Petrescu 2007) p.91. These traces contain information about relationships that create a milieu – a setting, context, a backdrop. Interpreting the ephemeral traces, and communicating it is part of the research findings.

Concept 2b is locative mapping. Locative mapping of people is similar to tracking animal movements with a GPS enabled device. I designed and tested a tracing method for observing swimmers in the water but without a GPS device, by creating 1 x 1 m grid overlayed on an accurate architects drawing of the pool. I decided this whole method of mapping was too specific, and didn’t take in to account social relationships. I removed the grid and made ‘mud maps’ recording with an x the location of the observed, every 60 seconds. See figure 3 as a sample. However this method was more about spatial location in the water, in relation to the edges of the

² Psychogeography according to Guy Debord is ‘the study of precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not on the emotions and behaviour of individuals’. Quoted in Petrescu (2007)

pool but was helpful in identifying patterns of movement in the spaces of the pool. This could be developed for mapping activity levels, neural experiences in the water, and for architectural uses. It is an area of study that has great merit and very interesting, but beyond the scope of this project, even though the concept does inform the final design of my observation method.

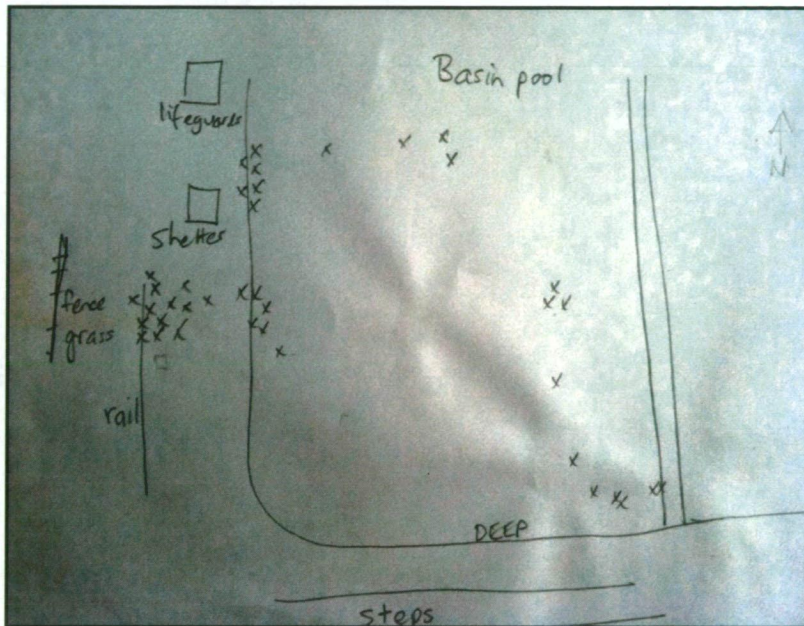


Figure 3. Trace of early to mid teen swimmer at the Basin pool. Each x is where this person was every 60 seconds. He was in a mixed gender group about 10 friends.

The third observation method I drew from did take in to account social and spatial interactions. '*Social Interactions in urban public spaces*' was a year long study in Aylesbury UK which 'focussed on the different uses of public and pseudo public spaces in urban areas using data from observations of how different people use public spaces and how social interactions vary by age and gender or place.' (Holland et al. 2007) p.ix. Trained observers took note of who was at a specific location such as a

street corner or a bench seat and what they were doing. Interactions between people, and between people and the space or site was also noted. Two interesting aims of this study in the context of a public pool study was 'to relate analysis of social interactions to the emerging policy agendas concerning shared and contested spaces, intergenerational interaction; safety and security in public space' and 'the influence local initiatives to develop the use of public space by diverse users' p.6. The results suggested that 'designs development and regeneration of public spaces include people of all social strata and age groups', and 'for people to co-exist in public spaces, they managed through self segregation, so they could be alongside others similar and different and this self segregation can contribute to community development'. (Holland et al. 2007) p.3.

In summary the field observation method used momentary time sampling, noting what the subjects were doing and identifying where they were, every 60 seconds. The interpretation took into account the milieu they were in (public outdoor swimming pools in summer at Launceston) and the milieu the subjects created in their random interactions and wanderings around the facility. After some experimentation, seven actions were defined and seven locations identified. These were placed in a grid/table and used as recording chart. A sample copy of the observation sheet is in the appendix. One chart per person was used. Time of day, temperature, wind speed and cloud cover was noted for reliability of both the subjects and the observations, as the weather can affect pool attendance. Launceston had consistent warm sunny weather in January-February 2010, so reliability of data collection was ensured.

Interviews were also conducted with adolescent users not necessarily with those observed. They were first asked (as ‘icebreaker’ questions) if they could answer some questions about how they used the pools and how they could be improved. All who were interviewed were with someone else, either a pair or a small group. Interestingly, there were no individual adolescents at the research sites during the times of observation. Sample questions are in the appendix.

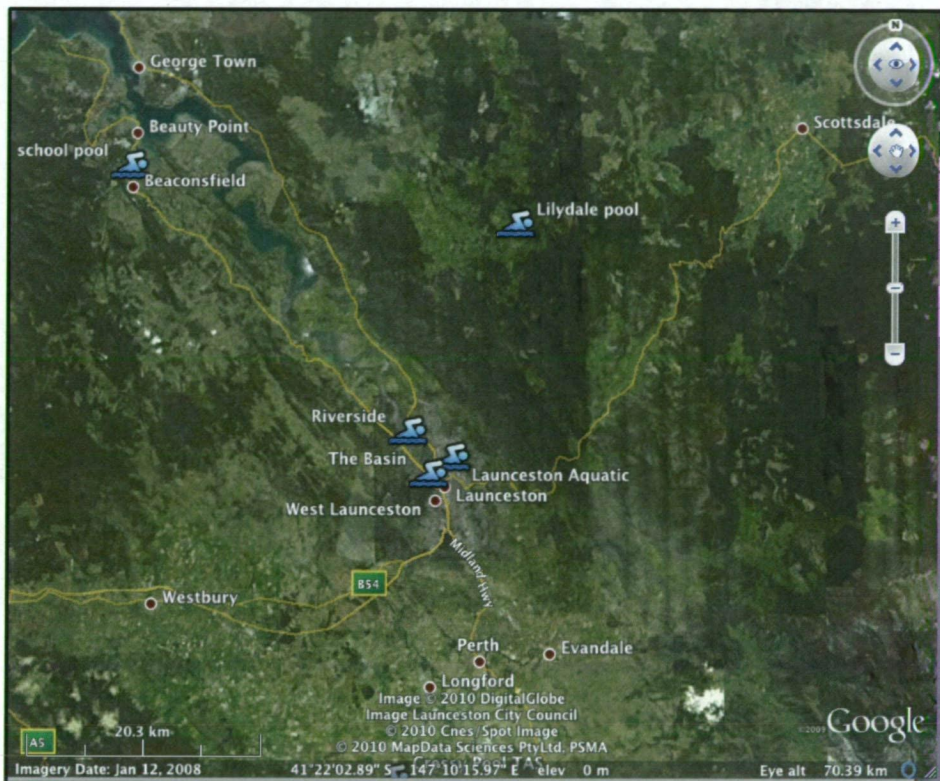


Figure 4 Map of swimming pools in the Launceston area. Created in Google Maps (2008)

The pools selected were all in the vicinity of the Tasmanian city Launceston, where the field researcher resided. See a map figure 4 of pools in the Launceston area. The four pools studied in this research were: Riverside, The Basin, Lilydale, and Launceston Aquatic. The Launceston City Council manages the latter three pools

while the West Tamar Council manages the Riverside pool. All pools are open from November to April. The Basin pool is available to swim in all year round but is unheated. It also is under the jurisdiction of Launceston Council Parks department, but managed by the same people who care for (water quality, staffing, maintenance) Lilydale and Launceston Aquatic. The pools are all different to each other as the following accounts describe.

Riverside pool is a heated 33 metre pool with a small fenced toddler pool area. A small, snack food shop at the entrance, shady grassed areas, and a grandstand, serves it for spectators of club and school swimming races. See figures 5&6. A large water slide was closed due to structural hazards. Observation data from the Riverside swim team (ages 13-17) training sessions was also collected.



Figure 5. Riverside 33m pool



Figure 6. Riverside pool shady spaces & slide

Lilydale pool is located on the main street close to the business area, set back in landscaped shady parkland. See figures 7&8. It is 22 yards long, 12 yards (6 lanes) wide, heated and supervised by one mature lifeguard for the summer season. It also has a small toddler splash pool under sail shade. Built in 1964 it is typical of many other small town pools in Tasmania, built of cement in the era of functionalistic angular design. The water is 1.8 metre deep at one end and .9 metre at the shallow end. The shape of the bottom of the deep end of the pool prevented diving, as it was 1.6 metre at the wall sloping to 1.8 metre at the point of dive entry. Diving is only allowed by regulation, in water over 1.8 metres deep.



Figure 7. Lilydale pool shallow end

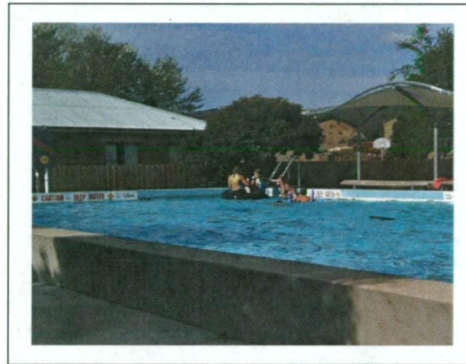


Figure 8. Deep end signage and shade

The Basin pool is set in the southern side of Cataract Gorge Reserve west of Launceston. See figures 9&10. It was built in 1937, renovated in 1950 and again in 2004 (when it was re bottomed to stop a severe leak) and painted. It is unheated and free to use. It consists of a 55 yard pool 12 yards wide. Dives are signaged as not allowed in the deeper end but feet first entry tricks were allowed by lifeguards. Connected to the lap area is an ‘informal’ shallower pool also 55 yard long, but D shaped and 20 yards wide. This has a ‘zero depth’ or beach entry at the southern edge. This area is used most by families with young children. The pool was fenced in

November 2009 for the first time in its history and had lifeguards supervising within the fenced area from 10am to 4pm during summer school holidays and weekends.

Adjacent to the pool is a body of deep natural water called the First Basin, part of the South Esk River, unfenced and unguarded. It was used extensively by older adolescents and young adults - those with good swimming skills for deep dark water.

The favourite activity was playing on floating logs that had been washed down the river during floods in August 2009.



Figure 9. The Basin pool



Figure 10. Beach entry of Basin pool.

The fourth pool studied is the outdoor pool of the **Launceston Aquatic Centre**, the newest aquatic centre in Australia. See figures 11&12. This facility was completed in May 2009 and the outdoor pools were opened for use in November 2009, closed for the winter in April 2010. This area consists of four main features; a 25 metre 6 lane pool, distinguished by half of it 3.9 metre deep for a 1 metre and 3 metre diving spring boards. The third feature is a shallower area with a beach entry and small fountains, used by families and young children. The fourth feature is a water slide, costing \$2 for 3 rides. This cement deck area has plastic tables and chairs in the shade or sun and there is sloping grassed areas without shelter. Barbecues are available for hire beyond the water slide. There is free flowing, two-way access to the inside pools, shop and changing rooms.



Figure 11. Launceston Aquatic outdoors



Figure 12. Diving boards and deep water

With the designed recording charts, a notebook and a GPS enabled mobile phone to gather local weather data and location co-ordinates, the researcher sat unobtrusively in the sun on grass in full view of lifeguards and patrons using the pool, conforming with ethics approval. Most observations were conducted at consistent times, afternoons, on days when the temperature wind and cloud cover were similar. Thirty recording charts were filled out, most of them at the LAC and Basin where the most adolescents swam. Every subject was at the pool with at least one other friend or family member, often in groups of 3 to 5 doing similar things in same locations, so I conclude that I observed over 100 adolescents using the pools even though just 30 were specifically recorded for an average of 33 minutes.

The rest of the study will be structured as follows: a discussion of the field observations, then an examination of social geographies of swimming pools from three perspectives. The first is looking at the significance of pools in history as they developed from bathing houses to aquatic centres. This provides context for current uses and sheds light the production of real and imagined space at public pools. The second perspective is youth in the public space of the swimming pool. The third perspective is the potential or affordances of pools, for social capital, civic

behaviours, contact with nature and the production of social space at public swimming pools.

Lastly, following the 3 chapters, a summary of conclusions of findings and recommendations for action and further investigation will conclude the body of writing.

Field Observation discussion.

The water and the edge of the water was where the youth spent most time. They stood in the water within a metre of the wall or held on to the wall. They transited the wall from the water to the dry edges to what I defined as the edge of land within 1 metre of the water. Time spent on the cement was on the deck from 1-3 metres from the water. These figures were arrived at, by noting where the subject was, every 60 seconds – this is momentary time sampling. At the same time it was also noted what they were doing in a social sense. Figure 13 & 14 graphically represent this.

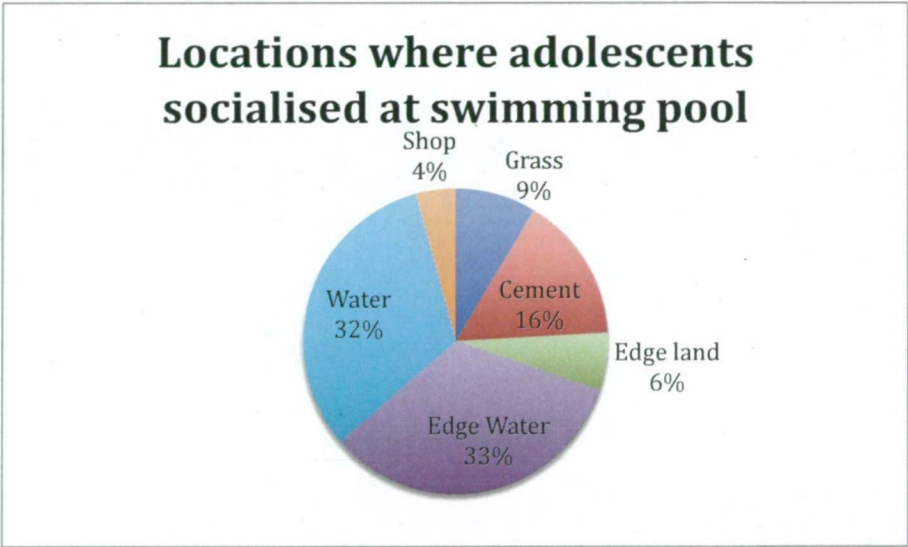


Figure 13. Percentage of time spent in spatial locations where adolescents were observed.

Playing involved 32% of the observations, this play was jumping in, chasing, bottom diving, and general goading, and ‘rough housing’. All this data is rather bland but has significant meanings in their ordinariness. There was physical activity, sharing public spaces, self-controlled behaviour, joyful exuberance, happy talking, whispered secrets shared, social cohesion evident, acceptable physical touching, managing forces in the

aquatic environment, and more. These can't be graphically represented but were subjective observations of interactions with the social and physical environment and the dynamic milieu resulting. Some of this was recorded in note form, and when collated with the chart records, built a pattern of use and social interaction. The degree of activity wasn't recorded in the chart but was noted as specific play, such as exhaling at the wall and sinking to the bottom of the 4m deep water at LAC, bottom bounding, underwater swimming, and a favourite, jumping in.

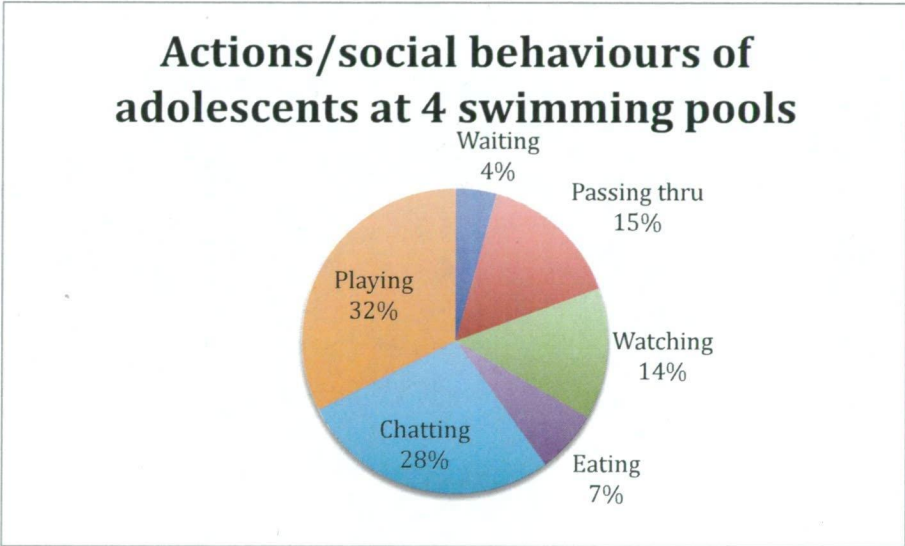


Figure 14. Percentage time spent in different social behaviours

Another feature of pool use recorded was the amount of time swimming in a horizontal position. If a swimmer was observed swimming horizontally on the 60 second time, it was recorded as either playing or passing through and also the duration of the horizontal swimming was counted. It was obvious if the youth were swimming to play or swimming to get from one place to another place. Passing through also

included walking from one location to another. There was less destination swimming than play swimming. This is a little grey in definition, so could be made clearer in the future.

Methven noted that in provisioning pools that the types of swimming and water use that needed to be taken in to account when designing and managing pools (Methven 1989). She distinguished different sorts of uses in an 'activity profile' but I categorise two types as either vertical swimming or horizontal swimming.

I defined two broad types of water use, because the youths said they came to 'swim about' but not to do laps, this distinction is necessary for interpreting data collected. Vertical swimming is wading, walking in the water, bounding off the bottom, or treading water, or moving from one place to another while in a vertical orientation. See photographs in the appendix for examples. Activity is still occurring and managing the forces of the water is occurring. Horizontal swimming, is ambulating in a different orientation to gravity to the usual comfortable vertical position on land. In a horizontal position in the water, the forces of gravity and buoyancy affect the body in different vectors than on land. It is not just the experience of buoyancy that a person learns about to become a swimmer, but also the different orientation.

What was one of the most interesting findings was that in an average of 33 minutes of thirty observations was the small amount of actual horizontal swimming performed - just 21 seconds. Figure 15. doughnut chart shows this as 1% of the time observed, was spent swimming horizontally. When I reported this to key stakeholders, they were very surprised. They were even more surprised when I told them that the swimming

was performed in short chunks of 2-3 seconds or up to 8 seconds. This is 2 to 10 freestyle arm strokes or 1 to 6 breaststrokes.

The quality of the horizontal swimming was poor as far as recognisable strokes are concerned, most of it performed with face above the water not in the water doing rhythmic breathing. This sort of swimming is very tiring and cannot be sustained for very long especially if vigour is applied too, hence the short durations. There is a chemical change in muscles at around 8 to 9 seconds and respiration and heart rate increases. The young people observed were self-regulating their effort, stopping swimming as they became puffed or their muscles started to ache. Three possible conclusions from this are; the purpose of being at the pool and swimming for duration and getting puffed was not what they there for. Alternately their swimming skills were so poor they couldn't swim much further comfortably anyhow or they had no reason to swim any further or longer time.

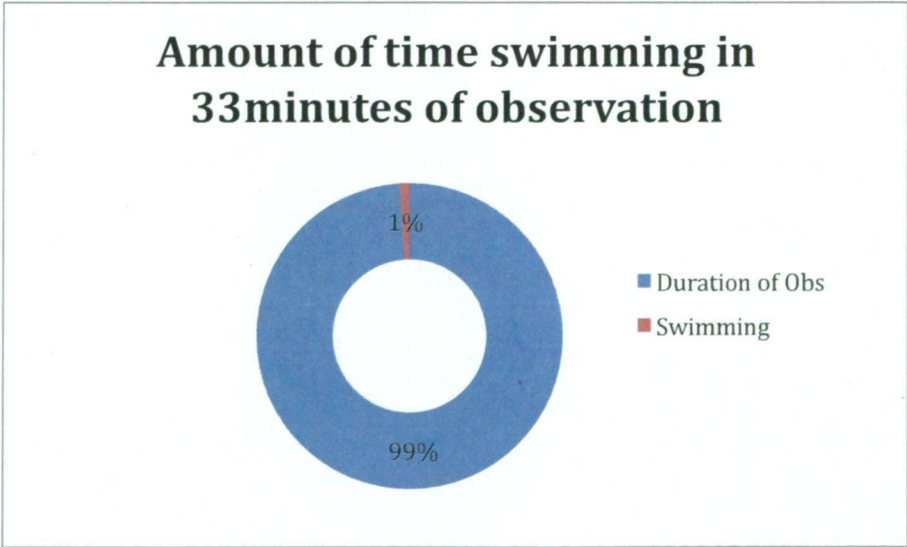


Figure 15. Percentage time spent swimming horizontally during observations.

Anecdotally swimming is considered as an 'individual sport', but observations of the swim team doing swimming training demonstrated that in the practising of swimming for racing, it is very group oriented and social. Certainly with face in the water the swimmer cannot talk while moving through the water, whereas a runner can continue to run and talk. The Riverside swim team observed spent 33% of their time while they were in the water talking or being social between doing their training laps. See photograph of Riverside swim team in the appendix. In addition, while swimming, there are interactions between the swimmers chasing/racing, awareness of others or playfulness when passing. Unless swimming alone, swimming training is a social activity, dense with social reciprocity.

Issues about the body was not in the research criteria but it is useful for the findings of the field research to note what the adolescent recreational swimmers wore when they were at the pool, because it informs their primary intentions of being at the pool – to be social in and around the water. Street clothes – shorts, t-shirts, tank tops, bikini top and shorts, were the most common swimming attire. Anyone with a racing style swimsuit on (no boys) did swim more and with greater confident competency, and their play was more water - swimming oriented than water-people oriented.

There were a distinct difference of play and types of social interaction in the varied ages of adolescents. There were family groups with adolescent boys and girls, so the focus was internal on the family relationships. Play tended to be reserved and sometimes awkwardly constrained, as sons waded with mothers and sons took the lead in games from fathers. Daughters tended to be playing more equally with mothers and fathers and siblings. Boyfriend girlfriend pairs and groups were very

much focussed on each other, and play was more about getting in and out of the water or hovering vertically away from the edges. The water appeared to be a backdrop, incidental in the relationships. Groups of boys and girls not in relationship were more playful, on the deck edges, playing a pushing in game for considerable time, in which grasping body parts was allowed as part of the informal 'rules'. See Figure 3 for a trace map of movements of one person in a group of 10 playing the pushing in game at the deep end and pool edge near the rail. There were periods of extreme boisterousness and periods of quieter body movement while chatting.

There were fewer girls than boys in the older teen years. Andrew Smith of Launceston Parks who manages the 200 parks in Launceston, said that the Basin seemed to be a place to go as a rite of passage in early to mid teen years. The rocks to jump off have names that are passed on to the next generation. He thought other towns and suburbs would have other similar places, but the general Cataract Gorge reserve has been a place for youth for a long time. He had just read about the rowdy youth who went to the Basin in horse and cart in 1896!

Some groups came late in the day after 4pm with food and began games of cricket and soccer when there was no one else on the grassy spaces, and no security guards. Ball games have been banned from the Basin Park and pool because hurling tennis balls has hurt younger children and picnickers have had their meals disrupted by larger balls (told by council employees). Two older youths said: 'we come here to the Basin to meet and hang out, but we come here less cause we cant do stuff here, we hang out at home or mates place instead... we used to come the Basin all the time (about 3 times a week), but we come after the lifeguards leave. If we played with a ball now it

would probably be taken off us. It's boring now, but we do tricks when there's no one around. It says its 1.4 metres deep but its 2 metres so that's deep enough to dive, but they wont let us'. The young men said 'they don't like being told what to do' five times in 7 minutes (Sunday 4.30). Ball games are allowed but controlled at Riverside.

Social class, ethnicity and gender plus the varied ages of 'youth' mean that adolescents are not a homogenous group. This needs to be taken in to consideration when providing inclusive public spaces (Worpole & Knox 2007). At all the pools studied, there were no visible class distinctions but there were swimming skill distinctions. There were some ethnic groups and individuals, but they were included, but the ages were visibly heterogeneous. The younger ones (13-15) moved from location to location destinations for short periods, while the older ones (15-18) staked out a territory such as the steps at the deep end of the Basin, the deep water at LAC and the high side end wall and a corner at Riverside. Youths observed at Lilydale were all under 14, and they played all over the pool most of the time in the water. Another time 2 boys had been to the Gorge to swim in the natural water, but the water was contaminated and unsafe to swim (blue green algae bloom) so they walked to the Launceston Aquatic Centre (it took about an hour on a hot day) to use the diving boards but they were also closed on that day at the time they were there.

Conclusions

Adolescents are wide group of ages and have different but similar ways of using public swimming pools. The difference is the younger adolescents are generally more focussed on actively playing and used the spaces more widely than older youth who tended to remain in one or two locations, creating an occupying territory to chat and

swim. Both groups did not swim very well in a horizontal position and did not swim very much at all, but their focus was to be with their friends at the pool. They felt that they were watched too much and restricted in what they could do, and thought they could self regulate their behaviour to stay safe and not annoy other people.

Key stakeholders know that adolescents aren't catered for at the pools as well as families and lap swimmers, but as the Launceston council had a family friendly policy for facilities, and they thought that adolescents were catered for in other locations, in parks, including river and natural waterholes in Launceston. Deep water and being able to dive and do tricks is what they enjoyed most. Poor swimming skills could be remedied by compulsory swimming lessons in early high school, and some lessons in natural water such as rivers, lakes and beaches as these are where most drowning occurs. Boys particularly need these lessons as 12 out of 13 deaths by drowning in Tasmania were males (RLSSA 2009). See figure 35 in the Appendix. No one drowned in a pool in Tasmania in 2009.

Chapter 1.

From Bathing houses to swimming pools; instruments of profound social change.

Public swimming pools are a significant cultural artifact deeply entwined with the historical development of 21st C cities and urban landscapes. In Australia purpose-built community swimming pools became a symbol of modern living (Lewi 2008b) and ‘the construction of pools symbolised modern progress’ (McShane 2009) p.198. A post second world war building boom of local facilities occurred when government money was made available for recreation facilities such as the Windmill Hill pool in Launceston built in 1957 and building child health centres and libraries. They served the functional concerns of health and education (Lewi 2005).

Construction of pools in Australian suburbs was further entrenched in a second community infrastructure building boom, with the introduction of the *Local Government (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act 1976* all local governing bodies were entitled to a fixed portion of Commonwealth personal income (Culture 2009). This was given in return for local governments allocating resources for developing standard government facilities such as library and recreation facilities (Lewi 2008a; Montgomery 2005). The effect of this is that a swimming pool came to be recognised as a standard community facility, taken for granted - that the facility and the activities at a pool are part of ‘everyday’ social and community life. The ordinariness of a public swimming pool means that what happens there tends to be invisible. Social life at swimming pools have not been scrutinised by academics, providing very little data on which to base research on actually happens at a swimming pool. This project is an attempt to make the invisible, visible, ‘to put it simply the everyday is not as it appears’(Highmore 2002) p.3.

There have been some studies about social uses of swimming pools but there is still a gap about how they are actually used. Hannah Lewi (2005 & 2008) from the Melbourne University's school of Architecture has written about designs and cultural place of pools as public recreational spaces. Sally Methven (1989) has discussed the provision of pools as part of recreation planning in the 1980s' and but also created an 'activity profile' (Methven 1989) p.254 of what sorts of activities were done at a pool, but she didn't have any qualitative data of the numbers in each profile.

Ian McShane (2006 & 2009) examined the planning policies for renovation of pools, suggesting that the social capital value of pools needs to be accounted for not just the infrastructure capital value. Caroline Schmidt (2008) explored swimming from the swimsuit fashion perspective and Jean Allen (2004) completed a comprehensive social history of swimming in Sydney up to the outbreak of the second world war.

C. Love (2007) has made a connection between swimming, health and nationalistic projects but the rest of the literature about swimming is club histories, sport history, backyard pools, the beach, drowning reports, competitive swimmer biographies, council heritage histories, surfing or surf life saving. Hess and Parker (2009) who did a review of literature about aquatic cultures *Against the tide: new work on Australasian aquatic cultures* with a sport focus, say from their research, 'aquatic cultures are much more diverse than existing trends in literature would indicate' (Hess & Parker 2009) p.2060. 'Most academic scrutiny during the last two decades or so have been directed towards investigations of surfing, surf lifesaving and the beach in particular' p.2061.

Leonie Huntsman's (2001) book *Sand in our souls* is one of these studies, but she doesn't go in to any detail of how beach goers use the water, it's mostly about the beach. No studies (that I found) have concluded any qualitative or quantitative studies on how the spaces of public swimming pools are *actually* used, beyond who books lane space, or entry numbers. None of the pools studied recorded repeat users or unique users or age demographics of patrons.

An American study of public swimming pools *Contested Waters* (Wiltse 2007) is a very good historical study of the social role swimming pools had in USA, as places of contestation of space for gender, class then race. Pools were also sites of contest in Australia. Community access to facilities like swimming pools did not, however, extend to Aboriginal people. In 1965 Aborigines did not have access to local Government swimming pools. A large public protest outside the public swimming pool in Moree, New South Wales, led by Aboriginal activist Charles Perkins was successful in letting Aborigines into the swimming pools. Why aborigines were exclude from public pools was to do with cleanliness, as aboriginal children were required to be scrubbed with soap before being allowed into the pool whereas white children didn't (*Freedom Riders*). The rationale was embedded in colonial and racist notions that aboriginal children were unhygienic and would pollute the water with germs that white people could contract. See figure 16, a cartoon from a 1965 Sydney newspaper. This is similar to what Wiltse unearthed in his historical research of pools in USA.

This dearth of social studies of public swimming pools in Australia (Allan 2004; McShane 2009), is mainly I believe because pools are places of folkloric life (Seal

1998), great settings for novels (e.g. *The Story of Danny Dunn* by Bryce Courtenay 2010) and movies (e.g. *Swimming Upstream* 2003 starring Geoffrey Rush) but hard to study academically. The range of people who use public pools, the reasons they use them and the locations and design of the pools make study slippery. But they are important places, as swimming pools have encoded cultural information, passed on from one generation to the next, evolving a little in each generation as social gathering places to recreate, get clean and exercise.



Figure 16. Cartoon depicting racist notions of Moree pool use in 1965. Source: <http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/freedom-ride-blood-brothers/>.

A selective history of the swimming pool is a good place to begin a review of the landscape of social geographies of swimming pools. Ancient Rome used baths extensively for hygiene, Swiss mineral spas and Turkish baths spread throughout Europe in the 18th C, and these traditions still remain in fitness clubs, backyard Jacuzzis and in health spas. Hydropathic practises (warm water, grooming areas, lounging areas) at these pools did influence the design and function of the modern pool, and 'provided an explicit link between bathing and health' (Love 2007) p.693. However the development of public swimming pools took a different trajectory from the spa baths tradition 'that attended to religious, medicinal, illicit and decorative pools' (Lewi 2005) p.204. The historical development of public swimming pool functions and uses over time can be summarised in five different stages as a literature review revealed. They began, as public bathing houses in the 19th C and have become aesthetic multipurpose Aquatic Centres from the late 20thC.

1. Bathing houses for hygiene and cleanliness - 1840's +
2. Bathing houses for moral hygiene, 'muscular Christianity' and freeing the body to expose more skin - 1900's
3. Bathing houses become pools for nationalistic projects - 1930's +
4. Swimming pools are a symbol of prosperity and the good life - 1950's +
5. Pools become Aquatic Centres as a panacea for social ills - 1990's +

I will now expand on each of these broad stages of public pool development.

The history of the current form of public swimming pools began as public baths in the 19th C to get clean, they were not for recreation or sport and getting clean was a different sort of clean than is understood in the 21stC as it wasn't understood that

'germs' spread disease. Hygiene in the 19th C was associated with class status, and moral standing. 'The Great Unwashed' was another name for the working classes (Wright 1868). When cholera epidemics of 1803 1839 and 1848 1882 and 1894, killed both poor classes and the richer classes, it shook the notion of cleanliness in the upper classes to the core. Cholera was not class selective. Although notions of hygiene as a health practice, has its roots in antiquity, hygiene associated with cleanliness is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. Hygiene, washing with water and oils was a moral and spiritual practice not for the prevention of sickness. Most significantly though, new attitudes evolved with a better understanding of hygiene and causes of disease, predicated by William Harvey's publication *On the circulation of the blood* in 1628, stating that blood circulated the body, pumped by the heart. Up until the early 20thC it was thought that sickness was caused by miasma – vapours such as odours, smoke, mist, in the air – entering the body through the skin. This was an extension of the Aristotelian 'four humours' used to diagnose disease and sickness and presumed equilibrium as health. The miasma cause of diseases posited that dirt and body oils prevented miasma from penetrating the skin. If dirt was washed off, it was believed that sickness was sure to follow. Full body, firm-fitting clothing reflected this belief too – keeping the skin covered so vapours couldn't enter the pores of the skin (Ashenburg 2007).

The new science of epidemiology was used to study the problematic recurring epidemics of cholera, particularly the devastating trans-national outbreaks in 1839 and 1848. Consequently, Cholera was discovered to be a water borne disease in 1854, the source of infection being a town well polluted by a putrid leaking cesspit. A cesspit was an onsite pit for the disposal of liquid waste and sewage. Sewerage networks in

cities were yet to be developed; even though there was the engineering capacity, the need wasn't considered until people started using more water.

In Tasmania Launceston and Hobart had Turkish baths from 1856 and the centenary baths in Launceston were built for working class people in the muddy tidal zone at the junction of the North Esk and Tamar Rivers. In 1868 John Le Gay gave a public lecture "the Turkish Bath" in the town hall in Hobart (Brereton 1869). John le Gay was a recipient of the Order of the Bath a military honour for chivalry. It was originally defined and named in the 18thC by the recipient performing an uncommon ritual - bathing before receiving the award. John le Gay in was one of the last recipients of the award who required bathing as a requisite for the award, as washing at bathhouses was quite common by the mid 19th C. In Launceston, Edward Ackerman's Dalhousie floating baths was a ship converted to various bathing and steaming facilities. It sailed the Tamar River for a couple of seasons until some prankster patrons pulled the plug in one pool and sunk the ship. Ackerman built a bathing establishment for paying customers on land after that.

One of the most significant historical shifts in the western world people's relationship to water occurred during the 19thC. This was when new understandings of hygiene and cleanliness, dramatically changed the way water was perceived and used.

Sewerage systems in Paris up until 1870's were mostly for draining storm water, and limited human feces in the sewers, so as the work of 'nightsoil' men was assumed would continue (Gandy 1999). As cities grew bigger in geographical size, it took longer and longer time for the night soil to be carted to the land on the edges of the city, which became unviable cost and time wise. This and a doubling in water usage

from 1870-1890 in Paris, put pressure on the need for making sewerage systems available for household water waste and human bodily waste. By 1894 it was obligatory to connect houses to the sewerage system in Paris, much to the chagrin of landlords (Gandy 1999). Chicago was still building large water supplies and sewerage systems in the 1930's. Pollution of rivers and harbours from tannery's and street runoff (horse manure and human sewerage) in Sydney was a problem from the 1860's. In Sydney raw sewerage was pumped out to sea at Bondi up until the 1970's when Eastern Suburbs real-estate values increased, and environmental awareness of pollution became prominent on lifestyle radars (Allan 2004). Polluted rivers instigated the building of land-based pools.

Around the same time as leaking cesspits were being identified as the source of cholera, English soldiers in the Crimean War survived better when Florence Nightingale and the English Sanitary Commission established practices of washing the patients' bandages and bed sheets. Nightingale believed high death rates were due to poor nutrition, inadequate food, overwork and overcrowding. These conditions were what industrialized England were also experiencing on a larger scale, pressing the need for engineering revolutions and cultural transformations in the social practices of obtaining and using water. Social reformer William Wilberforce campaigning for children rights who were slaving in coalmines, and novelist Charles Dickens wrote about the terrible injustices and living conditions of the new urban areas and cities, evolved from the industrialization. The conditions of industrial life were new to human civilization, so it took a while to adapt. The children's book *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley (1863) is a story of redemption, where water is the redeeming factor.

‘But Tom was very happy in the water. He had been sadly overworked in the land-world; and so now to make up for that, he had nothing but holidays in the water-world for a long, long time to come. He had nothing to do now but enjoy himself, and look at all the pretty things which are to be seen in the cool clear water-world where the sun is never too hot and the frost is never too cold.’ (Kingsley 1863) Chapter 3

This reflected the growing use of ‘water cures’ and seaside bathing ‘taking the water’, ‘the spaw habit’ and full body immersion in public baths (Allan 2004) p.80. Changed attitudes to water, and its use was one outcome from unhygienic, crowded, unhealthy industrial cities. Hygiene and cleanliness methods were developed throughout the 19th C including the development of chemical sanitizers such as chlorine soap and washing off ‘filth’ with water, relegated the miasma theory of sickness to a quaint historical period.

While germ theory developed by Louis Pasteur (1822-1865) and Joseph Lister (1827-1912) put to rest the cause of sickness and disease it wasn’t until Alexander Flemming noticed in 1928 the effects of penicillin mould on a bacterium, and Howard Florey isolated the active ingredient in 1939, that it was understood how bacteria was the prime suspect in transmission of disease. In the history of cleanliness the humble bathing house was integral to modern methods and understanding of hygiene.

Public baths preceded sewerage systems and soap, to manage ‘filth’ and the effects of miasma. The first bathing house was built in 1828 in the UK and a flurry of building bathing houses occurred when the Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846 (Love 2007) was passed, enabling local authorities in every major town to build bath houses. In Launceston, Turkish Baths 1861, public baths and the Dalhousie Baths 1856 were built to meet this new understanding of cleanliness (Servant 2002). However, public baths were strongly linked ‘to aid in the development of an elevated moral character’

and ‘a natural link between the ablution of the body and the purification of the soul’ (Love 2007) p698. Swimming instruction was also recommended ‘to increase the health-giving value of the experience’, and that ‘larger swimming pools should be made available for women, again for health and cleanliness’ *ibid* p698.

The second phase of swimming pool building was in the late 19th C when the use of water for cleaning was more widespread. Engineering capacity for piped water to the inside of a house existed in UK America and Europe from the 1850’s but there was little demand until the cultural practices around body washing changed in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Queen Victoria said she washed 3 times a year even if she didn’t need to: clean linens, was considered cleanliness not clean skin (Ashenburg 2007). When notions of hygiene and cleanliness changed, bathing became a private act in special rooms – the bathroom and toilet - with piped water supplied and only water was removed through underground sewerage networks (Ashenburg 2007; Gandy 1999; Wilson 1991a). Sewerage networks to remove both used water and human excrement were a follow on. One of the most significant scientific discoveries of the last century is sanitation methods and ‘devices’, which helped the human population to gain control over infectious diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis and diphtheria (Gandy 2005). Sanitation and the flushing toilet, washing and the provision of piped fresh water and sewerage networks for human settlements were integral to this. One of the ‘devices’ that helped people gain control over infectious diseases was the public bathing house.

The second phase of pool building blends from the first (for cleanliness) to the third phase (nation building and exposing the body in public), exemplified by ‘muscular

Christianity', a moral project justifying the removal of clothing, for exercise, rationalizing the productive use of free time, and physical exercise for spiritual and moral development. Bathing in Sydney in the 19th C has been documented in detail in a thesis by Allan (2004), and indicates that swimming for pleasure in dedicated bathing sites was well established by the late 1800's. Sydney Harbour pollution and a shark problem in the harbour, spurred the building of fenced off harbour bay, beach rock pools, and pools dug in to the ground. The first non-tidal pool, the Natatorial, was built in Pitt St Sydney in 1888 (Schmidt 2008) Timeline p.3. Swimming was not only a participatory leisure activity but also a spectacle (Allan 2004) p.118 so hundreds of people would watch swimmers. Mixed bathing of gender was not culturally accepted until later in the 19th C but swimming was one form of exercise deemed suitable for women and not too strenuous for them. Swimming clubs, and races and lessons in the art of swimming firmly established the culture of swimming and swimming pools for pleasure and leisure in Australia, well beyond the provisioning of public baths for cleanliness.

In the later 19th C pools evolved from places for moral and physical hygiene, to provide healthy responsible citizens for nation building (Love 2007) and racial purification. This third phase of pool development reveals dual uses of pools, less distinct in earlier eras. The two uses of pools 'bathing' for playing or non-rational activities, and the second was 'swimming' for the rational activity of health through prowess and exertion. The existence of swimming pools in this period reflected the historical culture of a developing middle class, workers rights and subsequent blurring of class distinctions, a keen interest in health and recreation, and paid holiday leave. Schools advocated physical education and outdoor pursuits.

In 1883 the *Book of Health* was published, a compendium of essays on the topic of getting and staying healthy. Included in the tome was an essay entitled 'Health at School' by Clement Dukes, MD, the physician of Rugby School. Dr Dukes was a great proponent of mandatory games for schoolboys, claiming that they combated Idleness, promoted health and instilled good habits rather than 'evil' ones. According to Dukes, access to a swimming pool was important for any public school, and he advised that each school should endeavour to provide one on its site. [17] He did not view swimming as a competitive activity within a school, but rather an activity more for its health-giving qualities (Love 2007) p.697.

Swimming prowess on national scale was quickly turned in to a medium for patriotic sentiment that could be shown off at international events, or long distance swimming feats such as crossing the English Channel. Annette Kellerman swam 10 miles down the Yarra River in 1904 and 17 miles down the Thames River, in 1905, where she earned the admiration and awe of the English public (Gibson & Firth 2005). She did this more as a vaudeville act than a muscular feat, which allowed her to wear a scant costume that she was promoting for safe and easier swimming for women than bulky undergarment types of bathing clothing. Kellerman did compete in races and acted in vaudeville, but swimming for health and beauty was her legacy. Kellerman solidified the explicit connection between swimming and health, when she was declared the most perfect woman in the world in 1908. She also encouraged women to discard the corset so they could be more active and healthful (Gibson & Firth 2005).

Kellerman never competed in the Olympic Games as she was a professional – she earned money for swimming. However others such as Fanny Durack and Myna Wylie, were inspired by Kellerman, competed at the Olympic games and became role models for more women to learn to swim. The Olympic movement and general

swimming competitions fostered the development of pools so they were built in the configuration that the International Swimming Federation determined. This is a rectangular 50m Olympic sized pool or a half size 25m pool with starting blocks and black lines. The Olympic pool size used to be 55yards until 1964 when they became the metric 50 metre length, that is why some of the pools studied in Launceston are sized in yards. While recreational bathing was becoming recreational swimming, and swimming pools were evolving to being called 'baths' shortened from 'bathing house', competitive swimming was gripping the imagination of the public in the 1930's as an opportunity to showcase racial and national distinction especially at the 1936 Olympic Games. Patriotic fervor wasn't limited to the British Empire and its colonies, or with The Third Reich in Germany. It was an international excitement (in western nations) that was fed by a confidence in material prosperity, holidays, travel, motor cars, comfortable looser clothing; that was eventually shattered by the 1930's economic depression and the second world war. Before the depression and war years, two types of pools were built, one was the lido type (*Seaside History; Lidos* 2010) for bathing and recreation, and was a representation of the seashore. The other was the racing pool representing the military quadrangle (Lewi 2005; van Leeuwen 1998). Each fostered a different type of social geography and had crossovers of use.

During this era, 1930's British workers were awarded paid holiday leave. A flurry of building lidos ensued in England spurred by the mayor of London wanting London to be a city of Lidos (*Seaside History; Lidos* 2010). A lido takes its name from a barrier island, Lido sheltering Venice, Italy where bathing became popular in the mid 19th C. The Basin pool in the Cataract Gorge was built in 1937 reflecting a similar celebration of free time. It is essentially a lido. Lidos are different to sea baths and public pools,

because 'they are conceived on a more epic scale and normally incorporate a strong sense of theatre' (*Seaside History; Lidos* 2010).

The cult of sunbathing (Worpole 2000), the acceptance of the Jantzen swimsuit from 1929 with their slogan and logo (see picture this page)

'the suit that turned bathing into swimming' (*Jantzen Timeline* 2010) and a general fashion for healthy



outdoor pursuits such as hiking and rambling, cemented the outdoor swimming pool in a new era.

Some baths were to provide facilities to make (male) citizens healthy and robust in case of another war or invasion. Swimming instruction is still very militaristic because of this (Lewi 2005), as swimming drills in and around the pool in the early 20th C were adopted from army athletic training.

'Architecture of pools was a key agent in the transformation of swimming in to a structured sport for modern pools could provide segregated and comfortable places for spectators and the press, and exacting conditions in terms of lighting water control and measurements to uphold rules and records' 'military undertones have prevailed with the continued adherence to straight lane design, and an emphasis on precision, order and ritual' (Lewi 2005) p.204

'Sport and a cult of outdoorsy muscularity was the defining characteristic of a French-German reconciliation movement and a defining characteristic of French fascism' (Hoberman 1996) p.24 but German fascists thought that the French influences of pacifism and internationalism, feminized the German male. The German Nazis went one way and the French another, but the shared utopian ideals of sport and muscular

bodies for nation building and national identity persists. German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl venerated the Aryan physical body, for racial glorification in her Nazi commissioned film *Olympia* for when Berlin hosted the 1936 Olympic Games. Swimming competition ceremonies still use that idealized reverence for the sportive body, and pool designs incorporate a theatric spectacle of muscular swimming for the nation (Lewi 2008b; McShane 2009). The culture of swimming for health and hygiene for nationalistic projects inspiring international unity (Hoberman 1996) was established in the colonies where it was adopted enthusiastically by Australians.

The fourth phase of pool development was in the mid 20th C when pools were symbols of progress and sites central to a vibrant community life flush with leisure time (Lewi 2008a). Memorial baths (and playgrounds and community halls) were built with community infrastructure building funds in Australia after the first and second world wars. An outbreak of polio in 1950's along with other health scares because of poor river water quality, fuelled calls for artificial pools (not just tidal pools) in WA (Lewi 2008b) p.287. An Olympic pool particularly, was a symbol of progress and patriotism. The 1956 Olympic pool in Melbourne was a monument to modernism, and modernistic newness using high tensile steel and glass to provide an inside outside inside feel (Lewi 2005). However not enough attention was paid to the engineering construction of its main purpose - to hold water - as it was plagued with leaks before and after the Olympics. Competitive swimming was given a boost because of the hosting of the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, and in WA a pool-building scheme to construct pools in towns that were more than 35 miles from the coasts colloquially called 'Ribbon of Blue', was mooted in 1957. Only some were built.

The main justification cited for pools at this time was the teaching of children to swim, although they were also recognised as community-building facilities, along with town halls, and increasingly argued for as a 'right' for citizens in hot climates. Hansard records in Lewi (2008)

Methven (1989) noted that pool building in Australia has no national policy and 'without the measurement and encouragement of participation' (Methven 1989) p.229.

'Australia appears to make vague motherhood statements and assume that active encouragement of facility provision is the same as upgrading the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra' (in Methven) p.229

Methven (1989) goes on to say that 'councils have often not thought out why they should provide swimming facilities but have done so because of movements elsewhere, status having been one common reason' p.230. The legacy of the occurrence of many small pools and the low patronage and high deficits³ in Tasmania could be attributed to the following;

'At the local government level in Australia, the general need for swimming pools has been a vaguely defined presumption that each area should have its own 'Olympic' pool with a kind of intuitive feeling that such a provision is necessary for Australia to win gold medals and keep the youth off the streets. Of course such reasons do not appear in council minutes regarding these decisions. Indeed in the writers' research experience no reasons of any kind usually accompany the recommendation to have a pool. What discussion is recorded at such times is along the lines of ... "it seemed a good idea at the time". Also the main rationale was for the provision of a facility by councils not the provision of a recreation service or opportunity, and few councils ever related the provision to a precise understanding of the activities that might occur therein.'

(Methven 1989) p.230

In the transition to the 5th developmental stage, increasing numbers of backyard pools

³ Totals have not been verified for this project however, three pool managers I spoke to (Hobart, Launceston Aquatic and Riverside) said their pools run at a loss and they would like to increase their numbers.

from the 1970's onwards, deflated the value and the meaning (Wiltse 2007; Worpole 2000) of public pools that they had in the heydays of the 50's and 60's when general incomes (in Australia) were not high enough to build a backyard pool, and life was conducted in more public arenas. Van Leeuwen (1998) in his treatise of backyard pools in America says 'the integration of water into the picturesque garden was a modernizing process' p.4. There were different 'fantasies' in a backyard pool too (Lewi 2005). Public life began to decline from the 1960's (Putnam 2000) as public spaces were appropriated by commercial interests, entertainment was experienced more at home with decks, barbecues and TV. One symbol of the privatization of life was the backyard swimming pool (van Leeuwen 1998). In Tasmania 3.8% of households have backyard pools compared with 11.8% national average – 9.8% in ground and 2% above ground (ABS 2007) . See figure 17. This may have some bearing on the number of council and school pools in Tasmania (over 80) although Tasmanians have a strong 'shack' culture by the beach or lakes and rivers (Newton 2003), so the 'fantasy' of water in the backyard may be superseded by the 'shack by the water'.

5.3 Households with Swimming pool at dwelling, 2001 and 2007

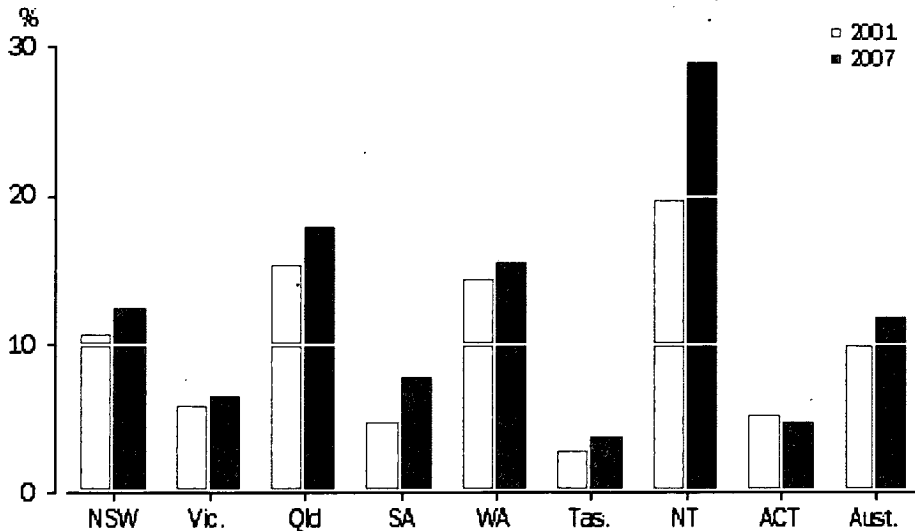


Figure 17. Above and below-ground pools in Australian dwellings (ABS 2007)

The fifth developmental stage of public swimming pools involves a reworking of moral hygiene (McShane 2006) evident in late 20thC pools: marketing of learn to swim as a duty of parents to have their children be drown-proofed, a place to do laps for fitness to be less of a health burden on society or a more beautiful person, play spaces for obesity prevention, and swim clubs to find the ‘golden fishes’⁴ (USASwimming 2000) as well as for ‘nationalistic projects’ (Love 2007) and ‘moral imperatives’ (Jock 2000) p.324 such as the 10 year competition ban in 1964 of Dawn Fraser at the 1964 Olympics for offending the Japanese, and a ban on competing in apartheid South Africa (writers’ personal experience). This current era of pool development is summarised as public swimming pools are ‘a panacea for social ills’.

⁴ a term coined by swim coach Gennadi Touretski when he worked at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra in 1994

Social ills that pools are a remedy for gathered from stakeholder interviews and program advertisements at the pools studied, include; drowning prevention by learning to swim, solutions for obesity and other sedentary lifestyle diseases, keeping youth occupied, a place where mothers can meet in public and talk babies, and where old people can exercise ailing joints in order to remain productive and less of a burden on society. This list of reasons for using the pool are rationales for building new swimming pools, but with very little empirical evidence for a large investment of community funds (McShane 2009; Methven 1989).

Another use of public swimming pools as a nostrum, is for ear and skin health as a moral and physical hygiene formula. Swimming pools since the 1990's are purpose built in Australian aboriginal communities and towns for health, education and social control reasons. It was found in a study confirming anecdotal evidence that chlorinated pools reduced the ear infection rates of children by 60% (Silva et al. 2008). Otitis media is the name of an affliction of the ears caused by infection that results in hearing damage. This creates learning difficulties, as children cannot hear to learn language and communicate.

Swimming pools in aboriginal communities have also been used socially to incentivise children to go to school and create opportunity;

'for engaging in useful tasks for the community such as teaching and supervising swimming, organising competitions etc. Furthermore young people need gathering places, places where they can meet and communicate with other members of the community in a "healthy" atmosphere' (Audera 1999) p.10.

The 'no-school-no-pool policy' has been seized upon by paternalistic authorities

planning to build pools as part of 'shared responsibility agreements', in an attempt to find solutions to complex long-term social problems of Australian indigenous people. Mutual responsibility replaced self-determination in Shared Responsibility Agreements (Anderson 2006). Anderson (2006) believes there are a number of problems for strategy and policy in these new arrangements. The idea of using enjoyment of the pool as an incentive for children to go to school in order to be able to use the pool began around 2002 in a school near Alice Springs (reference details unavailable, personal conversation in Darwin in 2005). It worked well so others in WA and NT tried it with their new pools such as Jigalong, WA, and Wadeye (also known as Port Keats) NT. However anecdotal evidence through Fiona Stanley (personal conversation 2009) notes that the idea works well initially while the pool is new and exciting, but soon loses its effectiveness and children don't go to the pool at all and return to using the local natural water hole, if it has fresh clean water in it (i.e. not polluted by drought, animals, flood runoff or crocodiles).

In the no school no pool policy as a health and education strategy, there is actually NO policy in writing, for how to administer it, how to assess it or how to enact it, or if there is justice in the policy. It just sounds good both to say the words and also what they may mean. It is a reworking of moral hygiene of the early social uses of swimming pools in the 19thC.

No school no pool is meant to mean that in order for children to have the privilege and opportunity to swim at the pool, they have to go to school. In personal communication with Prof Fiona Stanley in Perth in 2009 who supervised the 6 year study of the effect of pools on aboriginal children's' health (Silva et al. 2008; Tenant

2006), she said that this broad brush stroke approach is penalising the children who need the pool most for their skin and ear health and social and recreational opportunities. There may be many mitigating circumstances at home for why a child may not get to school, not just 'wagging' school. The Bartlett Government in Tasmania is contemplating this 'policy', in its consideration of the role and function of a new 25 metre pool, in planning, in 2010 in Bridgewater an outer Hobart suburb. This is another example of swimming pools being perceived in the planning process to be a panacea to social ills, in this instance in poor or aboriginal dominant towns.

Conclusion

That concludes the brief history of the swimming pool as a background for this inquiry about social geographies of swimming pools. To summarise this chapter; swimming pools are a place of everyday life that is in some ways banal, ordinary, so much so, that the activities at public pool have not been scrutinized. However building of public pools are deemed to be an essential, expected amenity in towns and suburbs in Australia, even though the precise activities at public pools are not deciphered.

Five historical stages of the development of the modern swimming pool and their social functions were identified;

1. Beginning in the early 19th C as public bathing houses to wash,
2. to their transformation into places that were used for moral hygiene and physical health.
3. A third phase involved the appropriation of pools for representing 'the seaside', and for places to train citizens for national purification in an era of

interest in racial difference, similarity and superiority.

4. The fourth phase coincided with even more leisure time and wealth, and two distinct types of public pools and uses became firmly established – recreation play and competition uses.
5. The fifth current phase moves toward a more rational approach of pool use, where a pools' existence is justified as a cure-all for many social problems.
6. The next phase requires building aquatic spaces for 21st C lifestyles deficient in nature engagement, with the 'human – nature connection' in mind (Kellert 2005).

Public baths and swimming pools are an instrument of profound social change (Wiltse 2007). Public bathing as it became more popular in the 19th C and 20th C and more bathing houses and swimming pools were built, also gave rise to universal physical recreation, broke down social class distinctions, challenged notions of moral hygiene, provided practical reasons to expose more of the body, liberated women from cumbersome clothing, and provided public spaces to meet, observe and be observed.

Chapter 2

Youth, public space and swimming pools.

I will now examine social geographies of public swimming pools in Tasmania from the perspective of youth in public spaces.

Bathing houses and swimming pools have been sites of territorial contests, displays of anti-authoritarianism, and spaces to challenge existing social norms such as acceptable swimming clothing, and class, race and gender segregation (Horwood 2000; Wiltse 2007). Public baths were built for social and moral training of the working class called the 'great unwashed' (Wright 1868). 'Cleanliness was next to godliness' and the poor exhibited ungodly behaviours such as wearing dirty clothes. The poor may not have had two sets of clothing, worked in filthy occupations, and had limited access to water that had to be bucketed from a well, but this was not considered, as opinion formed about pedigree of industrial working classes. The mid to late 19thC was time when there was a surge of interest in exotic cultures social anthropology, coinciding with the peak might of the British Empire. The spotlight of inquiry was turned on themselves in popular literature, such as Charles Dickens and interest in eugenics, revealing distinctive classes of people beyond the landed gentry, merchants and rural labourers. Moral training for the working class was transferred to youth when the poor did gain rights in social and political reforms late 19thC.

Swimming pools or bathing houses as they were known, became a domain for the moral and physical training of youth. The usefulness of public baths for social and

moral education is questionable then and now, but swimming pools retain this perceived function.

While adults attempted to use swimming places for moral and social training, young people had very different ideas of how swimming places could be used. Youth have used swimming and bathing locations for centuries as place to express independence, see others, be seen and practise being adults (Wilson 1991b; Wiltse 2007). Youth in the early years of the colony of New South Wales copied aboriginal residents habits of bathing in the Sydney Harbour beaches, fishing, playing, getting cool (Allan 2004; Huntsman 2001). Whether it was the warm weather, freedom from authority, freedom from cumbersome clothing or restrictive social behavioural constraints, swimming in the harbour was a popular activity from very early settlement. Vandemonians⁵ also swam and fished with aboriginal people in the Derwent River, Hobart (Boyce 1996). Naked bathing in the early settlement of colonial Sydney (Allan 2004; Huntsman 2001) commanded new laws to control these and other rowdy ‘antisocial’ youth behaviours around the water. Later, Larrikin laws in Australia of 1890’s applied to loitering youth, as curfews (Sercombe 1997), but rowdy youth swimmers were included in the loitering youth. In the Cataract Gorge in Launceston in the 19th C decorum was required in the recreational spaces of the First Basin, including no bathing. Boating was allowed,

but strict regulations were on display “no unseemly boisterousness, no bad language, no discharging firearms or catapults and no playing games”. (Interpretive signage in the Rotunda at Cataract Gorge, April, 2010).

⁵ James Boyce asserts that there was a wave of settlement in Tasmania 1803-1823 distinct from later invasion. He calls this first group of settlers Vandemonians, who used exchange with aboriginal people, not conquest.

Swimming and surf clubs channelled some of the energies and behaviours of youth, according to an adult view, but the swimming pool has remained as a place where young people have tried to find their place in society (Wiltse 2007). Swimming pools, provide opportunity for a sense of territorial ownership, an important aspect of the role of public spaces (Kintera et al. 2005). A 14-year-old Launceston boy and his friends have named rocks at the Basin that they bask on and leap off ‘mamas’ and ‘papas’. The boys were outraged by other user’s leaving broken bottles at “their rocks”. At Deloraine pool as summer 25m pool in north central Tasmania the lifeguard noted the smaller town where ‘everyone knew everyone’, seemed to have more territorial conflicts at the pool than at Riverside where she also worked.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, male ‘youth’ controlled natural waterways in UK, bathing naked (clothing of the era was unsuitable for swimming in), revelling in Rousseau inspired back to nature ethics, and Goethian romanticism, creating territorial spaces for leisure, and play. Some of the most beautiful romantic poetry of the 19th C by the famous English poet Lord Byron was inspired by outdoor swimming places, where he frolicked with lovers and basked by lakes, rivers and seas. Byron was better known in Europe as a swimmer than a poet, having swum the waters of Hellespont (Dardanelles), re-enacting the Greek hero, Leander’s’, ultimately tragic swims for love. Percy Bysche – Shelly a compatriot of Byron, wished he could swim like Byron but couldn’t. Eventually lured by the visual delights of the water, he met his end by drowning. Goethe the German romantic writer also gained much inspiration from bathing in Swiss lakes and rivers. He admitted that the many happy hours of his life that he had devoted to swimming had enriched him poetically (Sprawson 1992). He also swam with other youths who shunned cultural sensibilities,

so swimming became associated with personal independence and freedom, and the swimmers judged as undisciplined by the 'well regulated' locals. A social movement in Germany 'sturm und drang' used swimming in lakes and rivers for pleasure but also to deliberately shock bystanders. Sturm and drang can be translated as storm and stress or impulse/urge. 'The followers enjoyed shocking the bourgeoisie in their enthusiasm to escape the narrowness of their lives in pursuit of personal independence and freedom.' p.202. The social movements of the 1960's had similar motivations to express emotion, outrage and seek independence from rationalism, control, empiricism and universalism. The sturm and drang movement realised the freedom of nature particularly hiking and then swimming in 'wide waters' (Sprawson quoting Goethe, p.202) challenging old institutions and customs handed down from the middle ages, intensifying their longing for pastoral scenes.

Moral laxity was feared and realised at open air swimming places, with barely clad or naked swimmers staking out places on rivers and lakes in England for what is now acceptable and desirable outdoor recreation. However in the 19th C, sun bathing, water wading and swimming, lazy hours not working or producing something, was a challenge to the moral and social mores of the era, neither was homosexuality or mixed gender semi nakedness (Sprawson 1992). When bathing houses were built for moral and physical hygiene, youths attempted to control these swimming spaces too, but in most cases were thwarted by the law, prohibitive costs or social exclusion. In 1900 swimming in both constructed and natural places

'became more than getting clean or spending leisure time, the places where it was performed became testing grounds for issues of dress, sexuality, gender and emancipation' (Horwood 2000) p.655.

Young people went to the bathing houses and early public pools to play, rough house, see, be seen, meet others (Wiltse 2007). Girls gradually joined in swimming, but days of use were generally gender segregated until the 1890's in some places such as Melbourne Australia, (Allan 2004). Contestation of who controls and dominates swimming spaces has continued to the 21st C, with youth often marginalised. 'Scant' bathing dress by young people also challenged social norms at the beach and beach pools where it won out before lesser clothing did at artificial pools (Horwood 2000; Huntsman 2001). Swimming pools appear to have a heritage of two roles, control of youth and moral training.

The adolescents surveyed in Launceston pools were contrite by comparison with 18th and 19th C and early 20th C youth at pools. While they didn't like the surveillance, fencing and rules against adventurous play, they seemed to accept it passively, by changing their play, quickly losing interest in being there or going somewhere else other than the pools. Some of the young people interviewed were resigned to the social norms and regulation surrounding the uses of the pools studied generously rationalising their usefulness for other users such as young children and inattentive parents. However, Goethe representing dissenting youths, felt the same exhilaration as Launceston youths in the fun and refreshment of the water in the 19th C. 'I just like coming here on a hot day, I just like swimming, its fun' (Basin pool youth). However, reflecting the historical time, a cold bathe for Goethe had political and social protest 'transforming bourgeois sensual exhaustion into a fresh and vigorous existence' (Sprawson 1992).

Youth, adolescents, young people, teenagers are social class names given to people in the age range of about 13 to 20. They have been treated throughout recent history (200 years) with suspicion intolerance, moral censure, which limits their spatial world (Malone 2002). Public spaces such as city streets, parks and swimming pools are domains in which social values are asserted and contested. However Malone (2002) states that there has been a failure of the two main strategies to control the presence of youth in public spaces. Youth only activities (p.165) and negotiated youth space (p.165). I note that public pools are complicit with these strategies. Youth specific spaces such as skate parks, youth centres in urban fringes or building basements, scheduled times for youth only activities is one strategy that has failed young peoples rights to be included in public spaces. This is a 'not seen and not heard strategy'. The second strategy is negotiated youth space, where young people have to lobby or negotiate to be included in public spaces. This plan of action implies that youth are 'others' outside of mainstream values and culture that need to 'apply' to be included.

'Democracies must ensure that each new generation of citizens identify with the common good and become engaged members of the community.....public spaces must be inclusive of youth.....the exercise of rights implies obligations....to promote democracy youth need to know the full story not just the good bits of history'
(Flanagan & Faison 2001) p.1

Citizenship and the civic values entwined means a 'member of the polity' (Flanagan & Faison 2001) and can be learned in youth groups at school and sharing public spaces. A desired outcome is 'civic attachment' or social trust. If young people are treated with suspicion or censure how can they learn to trust fellow citizens?

I believe that design and management of swimming pools as public spaces reinforce strategies to control young people in public spaces, not as a proactive strategy, but as

a 'don't know what else to do response'. This effectively denies citizenship and opportunity to learn civic behaviour. Young people are a kind of 'illegitimate' user (Sibley 1995) in Malone 2002 p.161. 'Legitimate' users of pools are there to be responsible members of society: get fit or healthy, to learn to swim, to foster family interaction, have children play away from electronic screens, prevent obesity in children, or train towards patriotic competitive goals. 'Illegitimate' users of pools are the ones there to 'hang out', relax, lounge, or being boisterous, experiment with adult behaviours, testing boundaries of discipline and physical capacities. One of the few legitimate behaviours of young people at swimming pools is an economic citizen, by spending money at the shop. This is possibly one of the first places children and youth plan and budget their money when choosing what snacks and food to buy at the pool. A group of 4 male youths about 14 to 15 spent just nine minutes from arriving at the grassed area of the outdoor pool at the Launceston Aquatic centre, playing on the diving board and the indoor pool area before going to the shop to buy chips. Going to the shop at the LAC or just down the street at Lilydale, appeared to be a major focus of groups of youths, in all venues surveyed.

The Launceston Aquatic centre was opened in May 2009, the outdoor pool in November 2009. The manager of the café at the LAC estimates that he will sell 30 tonnes of chips in 12 months of operation by the end of May 2010. One quieter day they sold 6 x 12 kg boxes of chips cooked up for patrons. In anticipation of the pool opening, the café manager was approached by 10 suppliers of pies, as they were the biggest seller at the old Windmill hill pool that was replaced by the LAC. The café is considering removing pies from the menu now as they sell so few of them. Chips, wraps and quiche are the most popular foods, while smoothies and coffee are the most

commonly sold drinks from the cafe. The manager Bruce says he thinks LAC is a great place for 10-15 year olds and does keep 'kids off the street' and active 'what would they be doing if they weren't here? – at the mall hanging around....They are moving all the time so chips and a drink are for refuelling energy spent.' He believed that the pool would not reduce obesity in obese children, 'that needs to come from home'. One rationale for building pools or renovating them was to address the social health problem of obesity in children (McShane 2009). My research does not back this up as a valid rationale for building and maintaining pools. Activity levels could be measured to test this claim.

One of the concerns key stakeholders had in providing facilities for including young people was the boisterous, risk taking behaviours of adolescents. Young people are distinctive from children and adults but may be being discriminated because of their difference to the playfulness of children and the self-controlled responsibility of adults. Adolescents in Australia along with other marginal groups such as gay and lesbians, indigenous people and refugees, have different cultural values, understandings and needs (Malone 2002). Young people are also natural risk (ABC 2009) and this creates anxiety about fear of crime in the streets when young people are often just expressing their own culture.

'Healthy risk-taking is a positive tool in an adolescent's life for discovering, developing, and consolidating his or her identity. Adolescent risk-taking only becomes negative when the risks are dangerous. Healthy risks -- often understood as "challenges" -- can turn unhealthy risks in a more positive direction, or prevent them from ever taking place to begin with' (Ponton 1997).

Adolescents need physical challenges, for physical development, to learn problem solving and understand consequences. They also need to experiment with identities,

and to explore their boundaries. Healthy risk-taking is a positive tool in an adolescent's life for discovering, developing, and consolidating his or her identity (Ponton 1997). Public swimming pools censure young people, less so if they are in a club or organised group, they need to 'apply' to be spatially and relationally included in the spaces of a swimming pool by self-controlling their behaviour or be sanctioned. Risk management demanded by insurers and statutory bodies such as Royal Life Saving Society, surveillance by lifeguards, security guards and cameras, and signs and symbols of regulation such as barbed wire on top of mesh fences, create an air of police like monitored control at public swimming pools. See figure 18 photograph.

Policing play is consistent with trends in USA, where Louv says that children's unstructured natural play is criminalised (Louv 2008) p.237. A 14-year-old boy said "I don't like going there (LAC) because you are watched all the time, we jump off the rocks at the Basin and know how to stay safe without anyone watching over us". Self-regulation is a key finding in youth studies (Csíkszentmihályi & Larson 1984; Montgomery 2005; Ponton 1997; Robertson 2001) and this study affirms that young people will and do regulate their own behaviour.



Figure 18. St Mary's high school pool fencing is an example of creating 'an air of a policed environment.'

Children and youth are being faced with increasing supervision in public spaces, so much so that their mental and social wellbeing is threatened (Cannon 2007; Flanagan & Faison 2001; Gandy 2006; Louv 2008). Adolescents are made invisible from early teen years then expected to emerge as adult citizens 6 years later (Bullen & Whitehead 2005; Malone 2002) without being able to learn and practise their rights and responsibilities in public.

'Adults feel that adolescents need organising into homogenous group so they don't 'get out of control' so provide groups for them to join, but they are over organised already

with not enough time for unorganised self directed play which is important to children's development (Louv 2008).

Adolescents do need unstructured time, in order to practise self-controlling behaviours they will use as adults. On the whole all of the youth observed regulated their own behaviours such as when pushing-in-the-water-games became rough, they 'backed off' themselves without need for outside interference. Pushing-under-the-water games though were regulated. When young people have free unstructured time, they like four categories of spaces (Robertson 2001):

1. Privacy at home and public spaces.
2. Personal space free of parent's scrutiny of authority figures.
3. Need for socialisation spaces with friends both public and private.
4. Access to nature or clean peaceful environments.

In fact the places most valued by young people in a study in Launceston were natural settings such as beach, rivers and the countryside (Robertson 2001). There was very little personal space in private at public outdoor swimming pools in Launceston.

Adolescents darting from one location to another or going to the change rooms was a way they could break surveillance or find a location away from the eyes of an authority figure. At LAC security guards go in to toilet/change rooms to control behaviour. Andrew Smith of Launceston Parks said the council has a policy of family friendly facilities, this policy appears to work well at the swimming pools studied, but was not entirely inclusive of adolescents.

One group of 4 older youths drove specifically from 80km away to use the diving boards at the LAC pool, but because of lack of lifeguards to supervise on a Saturday afternoon, the diving boards were closed. The group spent much of their time sitting

against a wall appearing dejected. I interviewed them and they were polite but irritated that what they had come to do wasn't possible. They said it was their first time there and they felt 'ripped off' that the boards were closed.

Conclusions

Adolescents at pools in Launceston, regulated their own behaviours, but bemoaned the surveillance at the pools except for 2 groups, one male and one female of earlier teen years, who felt comfortable having the security and lifeguards there when their parents weren't there. They tended to passively accept the controls, whereas it has been documented in other times in Australia, USA and UK that pool spaces have been actively contested by shocking cultural sensibilities, in riots, and as sites for challenging the censure of racist beliefs and social inequalities.

Pool fencing and signage in Tasmanian pools use barbed wire and negative wording that create a sense of restrictive, regulation, not welcoming friendly places. A review of signage especially is warranted. Families are catered for better than adolescents, consistent with Launceston City Council policies. Censuring adolescents without providing or demonstrating alternative suggestions on how to use the pool water and surrounding facilities, caused youth to seek other places than pools to be with their friends. The built for competition, rectangular shapes of public pools, need appraisal. Supplementary, semi-structured activity in deep water areas could be provided by more friendly and mature staff hosting, not supervising adolescent patrons. Additional staffing of the diving board is recommended. Future shapes of pools and landscaping need to include semi private spaces for diverse users of these public places.

Chapter 3.

The potential of a public swimming pool; affordances.

‘The sense that one’s private passions were shared and part of a much bigger vision for lidos, as a movement towards re-inventing public spaces as creative, inspiring places where the love of swimming is the main focus but where there are many secondary spinoffs such as the environment, health etc’ Reviving Lidos report (2006)

There is a renovation or demolish crisis of nationwide breadth surrounding the many ageing public swimming pools in Australia. Pools such as in Kalgoorlie WA, Ryde NSW, Adelaide, SA, Windmill Hill, Tasmania, all built in the 1950’s or 60’s had to be demolished and rebuilt in the last 10 years because of ‘concrete cancer’ creating irreparable leaks. In Tasmania, at least 20 of the 80 pools still in use were built in the 1960’s by Hydro Tasmania in construction towns such as Poatina, Strathgordon, Mole Creek, Wayatinah, Cressy or mining or paper mill towns such as Zeehan, Roseberry, Queenstown, New Norfolk, Smithton, Burnie. These have all had overhauls, new pumps, heated, repainted, but because of their age, high maintenance and low efficiency of old technology, cost even more to run than newer pools with efficient systems. Ian McShane (2009) has documented more evidence of this in Victoria, with the addition of community protest with passions running high when a favourite old swimming pool is threatened with closure (McShane 2009). Large numbers of pools were simultaneously built in the community infrastructure boom of 1950-1970 without thought for the end of life problems this may create. Some pools have their lives extended for a decade or so but will eventually need to be reconceived, and demolished or reconstructed. It is timely therefore to consider what use and value they have, in order to inform the discussion happening now or in the near future, about what to do with ‘the old pool’.

In other countries such as the UK a public campaign to revive outdoor swimming pools and tidal pools, is having an impact with many lidos having been renovated and reopened in the last 5 years. The campaigners recognise the by-products of renovating outdoor pools beyond the heritage value of the buildings and water-for-swimming benefits of renovation.

British Swimming has bemoaned the lack of training and competition swimming pools (personal communications 2006-2010) in the build up to the 2012 Olympic Games, but the Reviving Lidos report(Spreckley & Edwards 2006) suggests that lidos are not just for play, but could be re-imagined and reclassified as sporting venues. This is an interesting notion, firstly that these pools (there are about 100 of them throughout the UK, from a peak of 300) have NOT been classified as a place to do swimming training and racing (a sporting venue). Secondly that there is this existing culture of lidos - outdoor swimming pools/ponds of water in parks, in the UK, a major country of Australia's heritage.

'Lidos and open air pools can deliver significant benefits in various areas of public policy, not least promoting health and fitness, social inclusion in safe public spaces, community action and identity, and by protecting the environment by promoting regional tourism and 'holidays at home'(Spreckley & Edwards 2006) p28.

It is time for public swimming pools in Australia to be re-imagined. The competitive swimming model for pools has great merit for sport swimming functions and lap swimming, but the majority of the populations' need for non-rational play swimming and contact with an aquatic environment, is subsidising competitive swimming.

Public pools are expensive to build and expensive to operate, under the current model of swimming pool conception. Patronage is too low to recover the high costs.

Launceston Aquatic, the newest swimming centre in Australia designed on the traditional model of use, is '\$400,000 behind budget for the year, and only showed half of the 400,000 visitors needed to walk through the door ' (ABC 2010).

I believe a holistic re-imagining of a public swimming pool as a metaphorical 'pond' would serve more people and satisfy many more social needs, both known and emerging. Many aquatic activities occur at a pond, and the variety is only limited by water depth, water quality and temperature, and its size. A pond is a feature to look at, to wade in, to paddle around on, to have a picnic next to, to swim around, to get cool, to race across, to learn water safety. The surface is used, the edges between the water and land are used, the bottom is used to stand on, the water is used to float in, games are played, and the areas are shared.

However there is a different culture of community life around water in Australia, unlike the UK, North America and some European countries where there are considerably more freshwater lakes and ponds natural, and man made. Australians have a very strong beach culture (Huntsman 2001), and river boating heritage but freshwater water play has been mostly in shallow creeks, dams, drains and puddles post thunderstorm. Consequently, conceiving of swimming as a body of water in a park, would require a shift of perception to incorporate pond fantasies with beach fantasies. Southbank Brisbane hosts a free water park, in amongst 17 hectares of parks and shops, called Streets Beach and a water playground Aquativity, suited to a city site, these are the closest to the idea I am imagining. There is an artificial beach

(Brisbane is situated inland and the river is lined with muddy mangroves) and a series of winding ponds and pools.

There is a revival of outdoor swimming amongst adults in UK and Australia with people taking to natural waterways that are no longer polluted; see for example the English Outdoor swimming society (see www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com) and swimming holidays (see <http://www.swimtrek.com/>). Ocean swimming and open water races often attract 3000 participants, such as Cole Classic at Manly beach, the Rottnest Channel Swim near Perth. (See <http://www.thewaterisopen.com>) and (www.oceanswims.com). This heralds a keen interest to have contact with liquid nature, as this poetic call to the water exhorts in the patron statement of the Outdoor Swimming Society (2010).

‘To enter wild water is to cross a border. You pass the lake’s edge, the seas shore, the river’s brink – and you break the surface of the water itself. In doing so, you move from one realm into another: a realm of freedom, adventure, magic, and occasionally of danger....There’s nothing faintly class-based about all of this. What could be more democratic than swimming? What is more equalising than near-nakedness?’
(McFarlane 2010)

Public outdoor swimming pools have the potential to provide opportunities that natural open water can provide. Indoor pools have similar inherent capacities.

Balancing the needs of all users, is a difficult thing as Peter Goss and Rod Sweetenham of Launceston council stated in interviews. In addition, comprehensive community consultation was not conducted for the LAC, only groups who could lobby such as competition swimmers and commercial providers were sought out for input. Because of costs and low patronage, something unconventional needs to be created than the current model of pool building, design and use. I will now explore

the theory of affordances, which is the foundation of this claim.

The theory of affordances developed by Gibson (1977) has also been taken up by other scholars. 'The term "affordances" describes the functional aspects that environmental objects can provide to an individual' (Kellert 2005).

'For example, if a rock has a smooth and horizontal surface, it affords a person a place to sit. If a tree is properly branched, it affords a person the opportunity to climb it. This exemplifies an intertwined relationship between individuals and the environment and implies that people assess environmental properties in relation to themselves, not in relation to an objective standard [Konczak 1990]' (Fjortoft 2004) p.24.

Gibson (1977) described the Theory Affordances in his book *The ecological approach to visual perception* as 'action possibilities latent in the environment'

(Fjortoft 2004) p.24. This idea was appropriated by Donald Norman (1988) in his book, *The Design of Everyday Things* as it related to human-machine interactions.

There is a relational meaning in of both these perceptions though, that are relevant to pools i.e. the object and the person acting on the object have a relationship, complete with feedback mechanisms. It includes both the design of a pool and its spaces but also how life is lived, or could be lived in those spaces. It also is about the perceived or actual properties of a thing and how it could be used. For example water at a pool is perceived as providing opportunity to get in to get wet or play or do laps. The edge of a pool is perceived as a device to sit on, lean on, or jump off.

'In his Theory of Affordances, Gibson (1977) proposed that a close interrelationship exists between the perceptual and motor systems. To be ecologically valid, i.e., applicable to the real world, perception cannot be studied independently of movement, and the individual has to be studied in relation to its surrounding environment (Fjortoft 2004)'. p.24

Affordances have been studied in children's playgrounds in order to establish the best sort of playgrounds that provide opportunity for challenging physical activity and inclusive participation. Fjortoft and Saggie (2000) conclude in their study, that parks and playgrounds can be called 'playscapes' p.84. These ideas are becoming mainstream in the design of natural environments such as parks and playgrounds (Maller et al. 2008). The framing of out door places to be active outdoors as in the 'Blue Gym' program (*Blue Gym* 2010) and 'Green Gym' (which in the UK has become a generic term for physical outdoor activity e.g. Conservation Volunteers Ireland) and makes playscapes identifiable to adults, not just children.

'The Green Gym is a health initiative offering individuals an outdoor alternative to conventional gyms - the opportunity to increase their physical activity levels through direct involvement in practical conservation activities' (*Green Gym* 2010).

Janet Dymont (2008) and Tom McKensie (2006) besides Fjortoft (2004) have also shown that children play differently in natural environments than in open playing fields, bituminised courts, and colourful playground equipment. Rocks, logs, bushes, ditches, and mounds, afford play that is more inclusive, more creative and more active (McKensie 2006a). The Beaconsfield primary school in Northern Tasmania is using federal funding to create community inclusive facilities. One of these facilities is a 'sensory playground', using these principles of affordances (personal discussion and visit with principal, Peter Fraser, May 19th 2010).

'A natural environment as playscape for children may represent a challenge, demanding new attitudes in policy and planning. In existing planning directives, there tend to be three main criteria for playground planning: distance from residential areas, kindergartens, schools etc., area size, and safe access to the sites. The physical planning of playgrounds has not addressed children's needs for a diverse and stimulating playscape. In schools and kindergartens, the outdoor grounds have not been

corresponding with children's needs for affordances and challenges for play, nor has it reflected the policy of the prevailing curriculum (Adams, 1990). It is, therefore, reasonable to suggest some new criteria to be included in planning directives to insure playscapes with landscape qualities representing affordances and challenges for children' (Fjortoft & Sageie 2000) p.93.

Beaconsfield school is trying new planning directives to provide challenging landscape qualities for children with embedded affordances. I believe that public swimming pools are lagging dry playgrounds, in applying best affordances. Aquatic playground affordance features can mimic natural features such as; running water, cool/warm water, curved edges, sloped sides, varied textures, elevated areas, deep water and alcoves. These features are similar to the bushes rocks ditches logs and mounds features that children prefer. Shallow water for toddlers and young children is provided for at all of the pools surveyed, but there were limited biomimetic features purposefully built for sensory stimulation, thereby not taking advantage of the affordances of a swimming pool.

The focus group of this study was adolescents, who are in between childhood and adulthood, exhibiting child like play behaviours and some adult play behaviours. I believe that Fjortoft's commentary on affordances of landscapes as playscapes for children can and does apply to adolescents and adults too, despite the play being motivated differently. Swimming pools conceived as a 'pond in the park' affords the use of landscape features such as edges of water, water surfaces and the water itself, for play and learning activities for all ages. A science lesson about buoyancy could be conducted at a pool, and literacy and maths lessons can be contrived in an aquatic location of a swimming pool. Learning opportunities abound outdoors. There is a

trend emerging of outdoor classrooms, from new understanding of social environmental interactions. Australian chef, Stephanie Alexander's school kitchen garden foundation (Alexander 2010) is one example, providing a link for children to the source of food and is part of the outdoor classroom movement. A swimming pool could be an aquatic classroom. Architect Candy Vanderhoff involved with a program for teenagers at Crestridge Ecological reserve near El Cajon, California, a part day camp part nature reserve says that 'the future of education is outdoors' in (Louv 2008) p.232.

There is a new frontier according to Louv (2008) 'whose characteristics are detachment from the source of food, the virtual disappearance of the family farm, the end of biological absolutes, an ambivalent relationship between humans and other animals, new suburbs shrinking open space, and so on. p.234

Deakin University and Victoria Parks commissioned a review of literature in 2002, of the health benefits of contact with nature in a parks context, which was updated in 2008. A significant outcome was the first International Congress Healthy Parks Healthy People in Melbourne in April 2010. This congress drew together many experts in health, national parks, urban parks, outdoor activity therapy, marine parks, in 7 plenary sessions and a further 400 oral presentations and discussions. There is growing empirical evidence that being in nature or just looking at nature improves physical health, social connectivity, mental health, reducing stress, violence, and depression (*Melbourne Communique* 2010). 'Contact with the natural world through interaction or even passive contemplation has the ability to affect human health and wellbeing in countless positive ways' (Maller et al. 2008) p.55. Improved health and contact with nature are just two of the five significant affordances of public outdoor swimming pools. The third is an enrichment of social capital.

Putnam (2000) identifies dynamics of social capital – where trust, norms, social networks, cooperation can be exercised and built. Social cohesion is an outcome of vibrant social capital. He also identifies two types of social capital; bridging capital and bonding capital (Putnam 2000) p23. A club or identifiable group such as a water polo team is an example of bonding capital, inward looking, exclusive. These would be communities of interest, i.e. sharing the same activity or environmental action concern. The swimming clubs at all of the pools observed are communities of interest, developing the bonding type of social capital. Bridging capital is inclusive, looking outward. These are communities of place. This is sharing a public space, such as the different groups or individuals using the swimming pool at the same time. They are there at the same time cooperating, seeing others and being seen, using the pool spaces but not there as a larger group tied by organisational structures like the swim team or an aerobics class. Putnam (2000) elegantly defines these two types of social capital with greasing or sticking metaphors. 'Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40' (Putnam 2000) p.23. The strong ties of relatives, ethnic groups and clubs or homogenous groups are good for society to 'get by' and the weaker ties of distant acquaintances such as sharing a lane every Tuesday morning with the same lady whose name you don't know, or the café waiter who serves you coffee at the pool. In an economic sphere bridging capital may be more valuable as it is crucial for 'getting ahead'. (Xavier de Sousa Briggs quoted in Putnam p.23) as they are relationships within a heterogeneous 'group' of people sharing the same place at the same time. This builds broader identities, and encounters with people outside of a usual group. Variety or in ecological terms diversity is a hallmark of sustainability and resilience, a highly desirable social dynamic for sustainable communities. Social networks at

swimming pools are primarily of the bridging sort of social capital. This is one reason why they are such a valuable social space worthy of being nurtured and invigorated.

A fourth affordance of a swimming pool is from the perspective of thirdspace as described by Ray Oldenburg (1989), who has identified 'neutral' public spaces (not commercial or industrial or exclusive), such as swimming pools, pubs, cafes, town squares, as third spaces. First space is home, second space is work, third space is between work and home (Oldenburg 1989). Work can be conducted in a third space and family relationships can be expressed in third spaces but it is a different place to home and work. The whole facility of a pool is a general third space but the dry spaces at swimming pools are more typical third spaces as eating and drinking in public is one thing that typifies a third space. Young people see what others eat, and how it is eaten. I overheard youths at the Basin and LAC peering at each other's snacks they'd brought with them and comparing what they bought at the shop. They hear of unfamiliar drinks or food being purchased, while standing in a queue waiting their turn to be served. Putnam says that this sort of social capital bridging network is ideal for information diffusion (Putnam 2000). p.25

Another view of thirdspace is a little different to Oldenburgh (1989). Edward Soja (1996) addresses space by exploring 'the nature of social being, of human existence, and also of the search for practical knowledge and understanding' (Soja 1996) p.70. This is a more philosophical frame than Oldenburgh's more locative frame, though both explore the construction of social space. Soja's ontological and epistemological perspectives arise from his interpretation of Henri Lefebvre's (1991) writing about spatiality as he states 'these conceptualizations and others springing from Lefebvre's creative spatial consciousness infiltrate every chapter of *Thirdspace*' (Soja 1996) p.8.

Soja organises the nature of social being in a trialectic of historicity, sociality, and spatiality p.71. He warns 'there is a persistent tendency during the last century to over privilege in another 'double illusion' the dynamic relations between the 'making' of Historicity and the 'constitution' of social practise or Sociality'. p71 This has a tendency toward bifocal views; history and social practise, placing spatial practise 'in the background as a reflection, stage, environment or external constraint upon human behaviour and social action' p.71.

'The three moments of the ontological trialectic thus contain each other; they cannot successfully be understood in isolation or epistemologically privileged separately, although they are all too frequently studied and conceptualized this way, in compartmentalized disciplines and discourses....The assertion of Spatiality opens the Historicity and Sociality of human lifeworlds to interpretations and knowledges that many of its most disciplined observers never imagined, while simultaneously, maintaining the rich insights they provide for understanding the production of lived space' (Soja 1996) p.72.

This study so far has 'bifocalized' the interactive Historicity and Sociality of being at a public swimming pool' p.71 by examining the history of swimming pools and social geographies of youth in the public space of swimming pools. I will now attempt to integrate the project with a discussion of the production of space at public swimming pools.

The thirdspace that Soja speaks of ' is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas events, appearances and meanings' p.2. 'Firstspace perspective focuses on the real world, secondspace perspective interprets this reality through imagined representations of spatiality. Thirdspace is real-and-imagined places.' p.6.

The fifth general affordance at a public pool is where reality and imagination can be integrated to produce thirdspace. A public outdoor pool is a space other than home or work, where one can be leisurely, or idle, or one can work physically hard to get fit or well. Social relations are conducted semi naked with friends and strangers, and are idiosyncratic of public spaces. The beach is a similar place where people also undress in front of strangers. However the history of the public pool diverged from seaside bathing after the era of the bathing house. Pools diverged from beach culture in the 1890's - 1930's when public outdoor pools were built in enclosed rocks at the beach to provide predictably calm water to bathe in. See figures 19&20. Swimming pools became a utopian reproduction of the unpredictable seashore, and polluted rivers. This is consistent with other movements before and after the era of the lido, when nature was produced as countryside (Macnaghten & Urry 1998). A lido was the grandest of all, and 'no other building was so evocative of inter war holidays as the lido or open air swimming pool' (*Seaside History; Lidos* 2010).



Figure 19. Jubilee Pool, Penzance, Cornwall, 2002 built in 1937

Source: www.designobserver.com/images/features/tide_pools_2.jpg



Figure 20. Blackpool lido built 1923

Source www.seasidehistory.co.uk/blackpool_lido.jpg

There was an imagining of utopian proportions of peace, joy of life, a sense of freedom from class and gender constraints, cumbersome clothing, a celebration of the sun on skin. The spaces of these swimming pools had these realities and imaginings embedded in the very name of the facility. The water was the redeemer, the dissolver of antipathy, a suspension of time, a fusion of humans and nature. The 1930's was a time of international idealism and social class restructuring, so the swimming pool was one place that represented utopian ideals in seaside like environs. 'It was believed that the tired, white bodies of the urban working classes, plagued by TB and other diseases, could be restored to health through exposure to the reviving properties of sun and salt water' (Worpole 2009).

In Australia the seaside was the 'muscular' beach, not the pastel seaside and nature as countryside was more ambiguous, less coherent than the neatness of cultivated England (Macnaghten & Urry 1998) p.180. Nature as landscape was how Australian artists painted the country (Haynes 2006) not as countryside. Swimming pools in Australia appropriated this ideology, but functionalistic modernism (concrete, angles, little or no ornamentation) and the love of the suburbs as a city house on the edge of the bush (Davison 2006), gave rise to a different ideology of swimming pools than in

UK. Pools in Australia (of which some were of the lido type), re-produced pools as spaces for the full gamut of larrikins, robust citizens, families and swimming heroes and heroines.

The reality now is that Australian pools do take from this era as described in the five stages of pool development but pools are a public space, that are juxtaposed between workplace and home, family and work, wilderness and concrete, beach and parade ground. Imaginatively they represent the sea-shore, the lake-side, the river-bank, the pond in the park, the water cure, the aquatic gymnasium. This representation is made through the typically used paint colours of blue or green, edges that mimic a beach, and vastness that mimics a lake, the regimented black lines, the exhortations to fitness classes. At some current pools there is drama in the vista and beauty in the landscape. Others are starkly functional, business like, with token biomimicry of such elements as a fountain, fibreglass rocks, and sail shades.

The public outdoor swimming pool is also representative of a healing place, characterised by hydropathic practises, for the purposes of maintaining wellness, and the recovery of health. Some examples of hydrotherapy are; wading, vertical swimming, horizontal swimming, spa bathing, sun bathing, leg dangling, water watching. Even though the outdoor public swimming pool is produced (in non indigenous societies) as representations of sea/lake/river and pond, the real sensory experience of water in the pool, the outdoor space, and landscaped gardens, are ways of engaging with nature (in a simple meaning of nature; plants and not painted green concrete, outdoor air, sun not a heat lamp, wind not a fan, rain not a shower).

Conclusions

Pool settings and facilities have been abstracted from the natural environment. The spatial specialisation of aquatic facilities maintains pools as contained, regulated, cleaned, controlled (Lewi 2008a) p.239. Less abstraction and substantial bio-mimetic features could provide aquatic skill development as simulations of natural aquatic environments, where higher rates of drowning occur. Accidental drowning is a preventable social tragedy. Sanitized water, straight edges, predictable depths, still water, lines and numbers, neutralise nature, transforming the landscape in to standardised spaces. These standardised spaces have been appropriated for rational uses and nationalistic projects. Demand for muscular play choices requires a balance of opportunity for calmer, less athletic play.

Pools are built as multi-purpose facilities with lapping and competition swimming prevailing, as prescribed by the shape. Even so, they have the potential to be more than standardised spaces. Some spaces and components of public pools afford heterogenous capacity (such as deep water, curved sides, grassy slopes, high edges, sloping depths) incorporating both real and imagined spatial frameworks. However, standardised rational spaces dominate. Playgrounds incorporating rocks logs ditches and mounds are more functional (inviting inclusive social engagement, creative play and increased physical activity) than sports fields or playgrounds with factory manufactured equipment. Pools without features that mimic biological or geographical traits may be less serviceable than pools without the physiognomy and attributes of natural environments. These standardised spaces are dystopic - environmentally degraded - as such are limited in their affordance capacity.

'Anyone can do a dystopia these days just by making a collage of newspaper headlines,

but utopias are hard, and important, because we need to imagine what it might be like if we did things well enough to say to our kids, we did our best, this is about as good as it was when it was handed to us, take care of it and do better. Some kind of narrative vision of what we're trying for as a civilization' (Stanley-Robinson 2009).

Transforming the conception of what a public outdoor swimming pool could be, and expanding their affordances, is in the utopian tradition.

Conclusions and recommendations.

In retrospect, this study has been very broad, too broad perhaps. However, swimming pools have not been studied in this way before, so in order to inform the topic adequately, the breadth of view was required. Further, narrower studies of youth play and recreation opportunities in Launceston generally and specifically at Australian pools is needed.

Boys and girls have divergent approaches to recreation. This gender difference necessitates discrete solutions. A 'muscular' approach to pool activity such as lap swimming, or diving, does not suit every adolescent customer, male or female.

Both organised and casual activities at pools have adapted to the historical design of swimming pools. These activities are now either culturally accepted or institutionalised so the expectation at many levels is that the design of new swimming pools will serve these activities that originally evolved largely from the design of the pools themselves.

Youth are at the doorstep of adulthood, they require experiences in public social locations in order to learn what behaviour is demanded of them as they become a responsible adult citizen. Censuring youthful behaviours at public swimming pools, unless dangerous or inconsiderate, excludes youth from the socialising process. The report *'Fair Play: a consultation on the play strategy'* by the UK Department for Culture Media and Sport in 2008 has some guidelines for the provision of play opportunities for youth. Councils and pool managers could review this and other similar reports about youth inclusive, unstructured and structured, recreation options.

‘Young people too often get labelled by the behaviour of a few of their peers, and can start to feel alienated from the community in which they live. *Aiming High for Young People* sets out proposals on proactive action to address the challenge which young people face in growing up in a culture that has widespread negative perceptions of youth, and in which nearly three-fifths of the media coverage of young people focuses on negative stories.’ (DCMS 2008) p.40.

The following further findings about public swimming pools emerged from this study:

- The weather primarily determines how much an outdoor pool is used, warm weather means more people and more social activities.
- Diverse social groups interact and coexist in the shared pool spaces.
- Swimming pools have embedded meanings as a representation of seashore, beach, lakeside and as a place of healing.
- Only 1% of time is spent swimming horizontally, 20 seconds in an hour.
- Pools are used more like a pond in a park than a competition venue, but the shape facilitates competition uses more than social uses, limiting social use, possibly reducing customer numbers.
- There are historical reasons for the rectangular shapes of pools.
- Financial accounting of old pools is prioritised rather than social values.
- There are more than 90 public-use pools in Tasmania.
- Of these, nine are 50 metres long, and four are open all year-round.
- Poor standards of swimming skills are exhibited in Tasmanian pools.
- The pools studied are understaffed to supervise adolescent activities.
- Youth activity is censured, alternative activities are inadequately provided by staff and facility design.
- Semi private spaces are deficient at the public pools studied.
- Adolescents are numerically underrepresented at public pools.

Recommendations:

- Consider social values and affordances when a council renovates or builds a pool, not just financial accounting.
- Conduct mapping of the social uses of indoor pools.
- Create a system to score a pool's social capital building capacity, which could be applied to other recreational facilities.
- Train staff and demonstrate alternative ways in which adolescents can use the pool water and surrounding facilities, making them feel welcome.
- Facilitate semi-structured youth activity both muscular and calm.
- Assist competitive swimmers to adapt to using pool water and spaces in a more socially inclusive manner while still developing fitness and skills.
- Evaluate 'policing' signage, access and regulatory fencing.
- Provide opportunities for youth dissatisfaction to be heard and acted upon.
- Increase the number of respected, mature lifeguard/activity leader staff, at times of youth-dense patronage.
- Generate a concierge-type hospitable atmosphere, away from 'guarding' and surveillance, without reducing safety.
- Create more semi-private spaces in the facility.
- Pools could be designed or retrofitted with, sensory stimulation features, echoing biological and geographical systems, which might increase patronage and diverse uses of facilities.
- Most accidental drowning occurs in natural water locations, however this could be reduced by installing biomimetic features and programs in pools, which in turn, could be utilised for teaching transitions to unpredictable, natural water.

- Imitating landscaping features of outdoor pools could help indoor pool customer numbers, eg light, greenery, rocks.
- Build or renovate aquatic recreation spaces for 21st C lifestyles deficient in nature engagement, with the 'human – nature connection' as guidance.

Seasonal outdoor pools are expensive to operate – water evaporation and heat dissipation from uncovered water – as well as damaging effects of the sun on human skin, establishes seasonal and outdoor pools less viable than 50 years ago. Cultural change toward expectations of comfort and climate controlled environments, such as heated water, cause outdoor pools to contain less public appeal. However there are other options for the use of the all of the spaces of a pool facility. The pool water could be a backdrop to assorted functions, as a pond in a park is a backdrop to picnics, watching others, reading the paper, or a café outlook. The water at a pool doesn't need to be swum in. It can be looked at! In some towns pools are considered as water storage for fighting fires. Alternately, the surface is suitable for small boats, water craft, or dangling legs. A body of water is suitable as a school outdoor classroom, so a swimming pool can be used as an aquatic classroom. If possible, the water of a seasonal pool could be used as a fish pond in the cooler seasons if it didn't damage the infrastructure. Finally an outdoor seasonal pool could be converted to a 'natural pool' where a third of it is planted with reeds as a biological filtration system. Germany sports over 100 public natural pools. These are unquestionably swimmable 'ponds in the park'.

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Sample questions

Do you like this swimming pool?

Do you come here much?

What's the favourite thing you do here?

What do you like about being at the pool?

What do you dislike, if anything, about being at the pool?

Are there some rules you abide by?

How do you find the lifeguards?

How do you get along with other people at the pool?

Are there any spaces here that you don't go to?

Are there any changes to this place you'd like to see?

How would you make this pool more user friendly for yourselves?

Recording Chart

Location
Weekday/weekend
M/F Age approx.

Date _____
Temperature _____
Alone/group _____

Time
Wind
Friends/Family

Number
Cloud %

	Actions	Waiting	Passing through	Watch	Eating	Chat	Play	Swim
Location								Duration
Grass								
Cement								
Edge land								
Edge water								
Water								
Shop								

Figure 21. Recording Chart for observations designed by Shane Gould

Pool images



Figure 22. 'Vertical swimming'

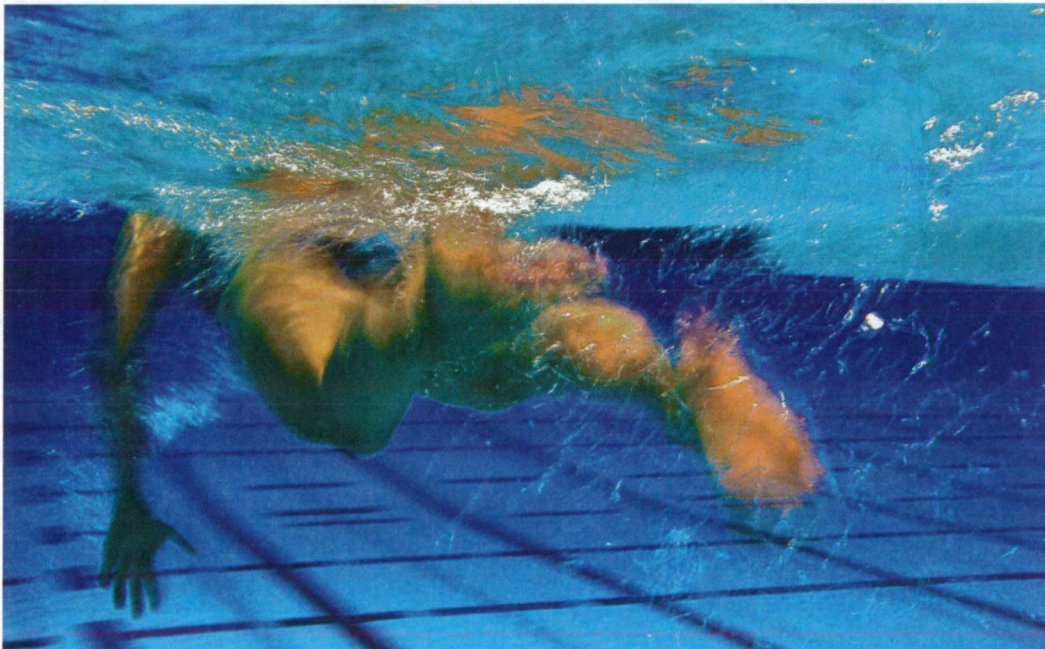


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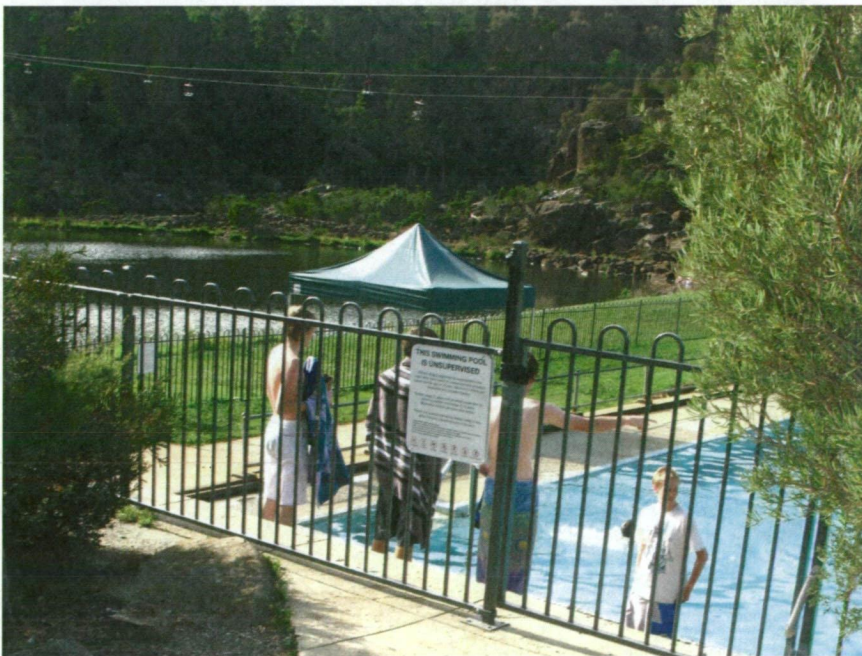


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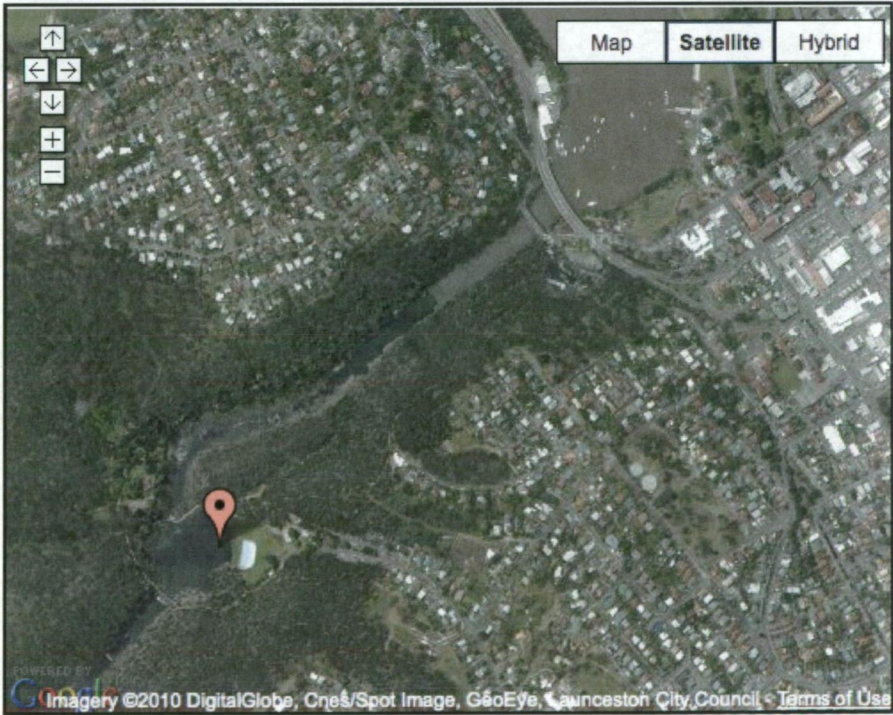


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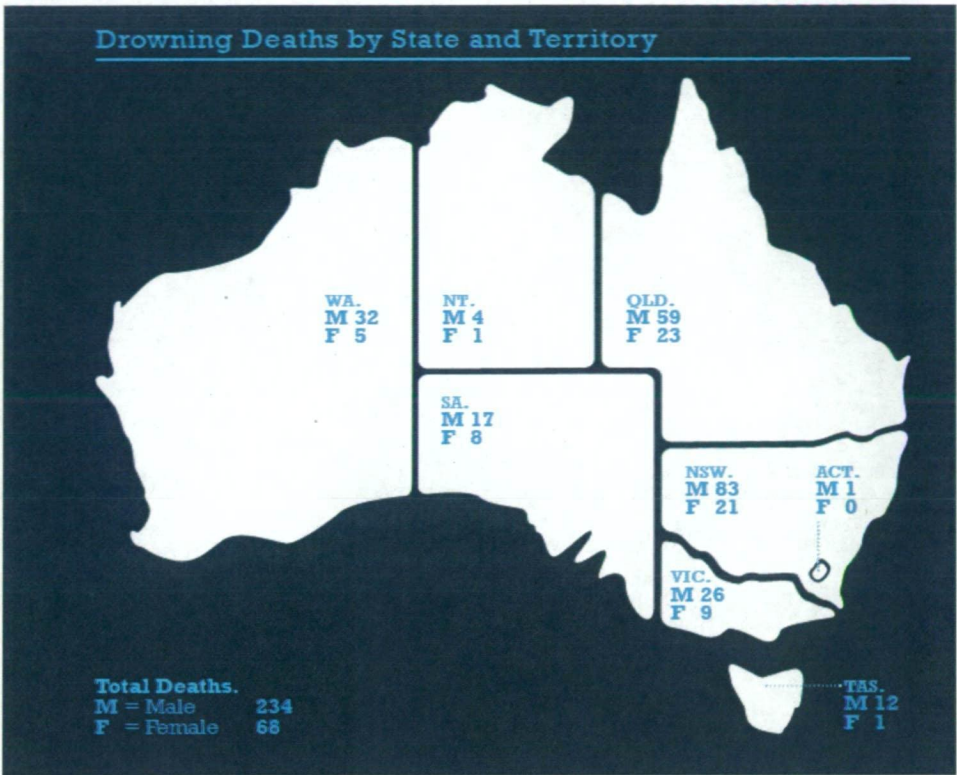


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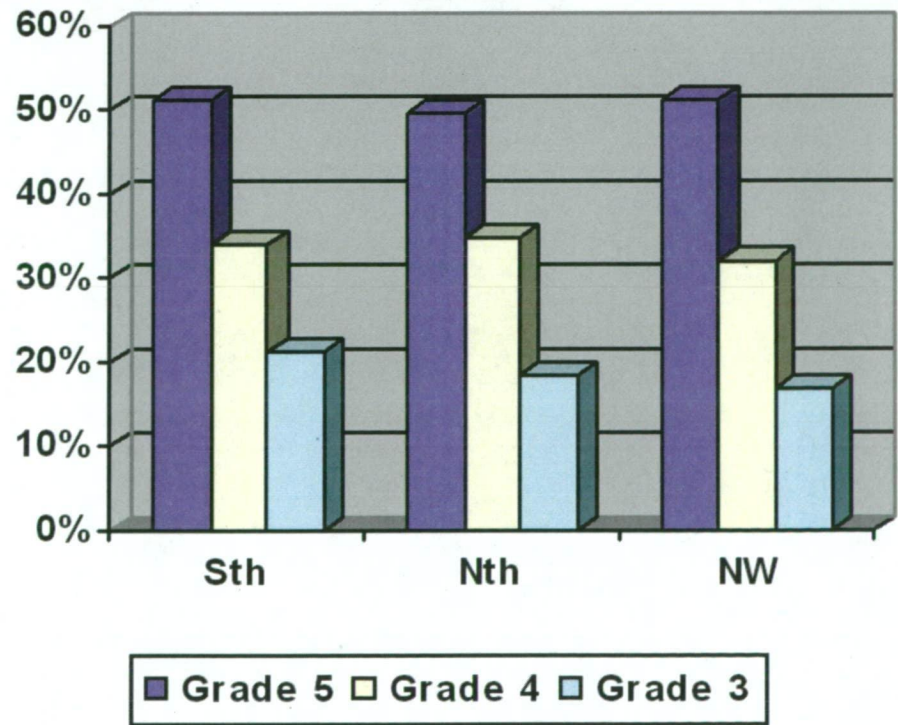


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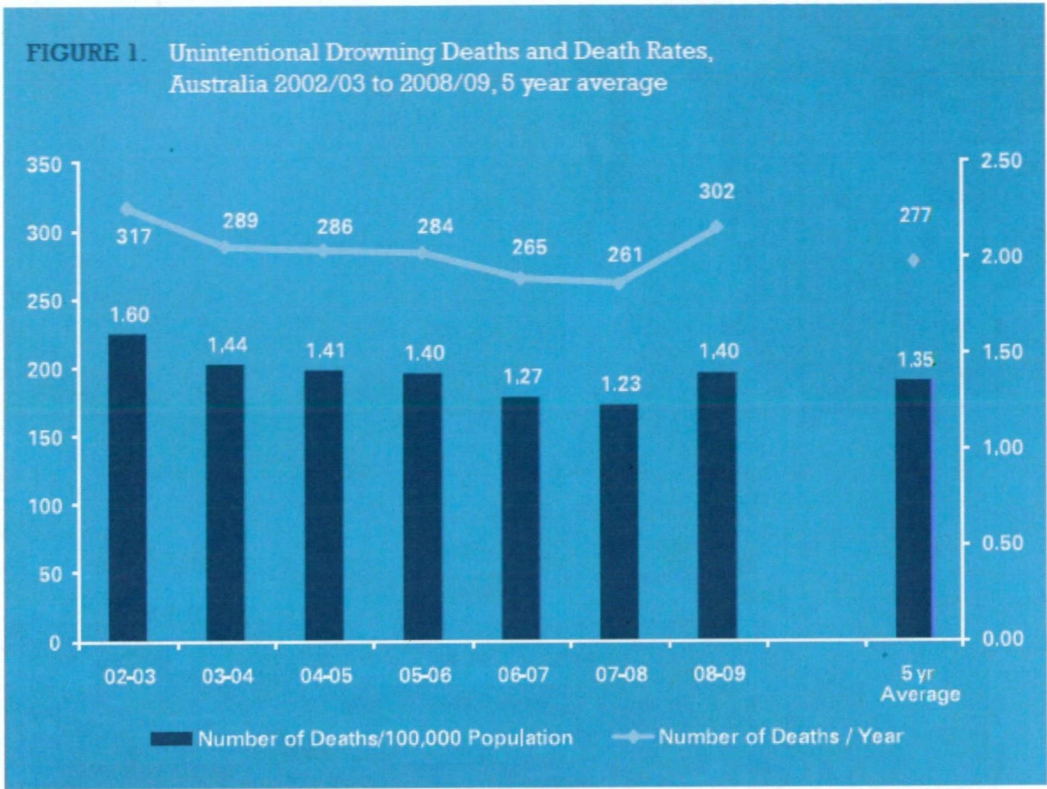


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Figure 40. Beaconsfield Primary School indoor heated seasonal pool

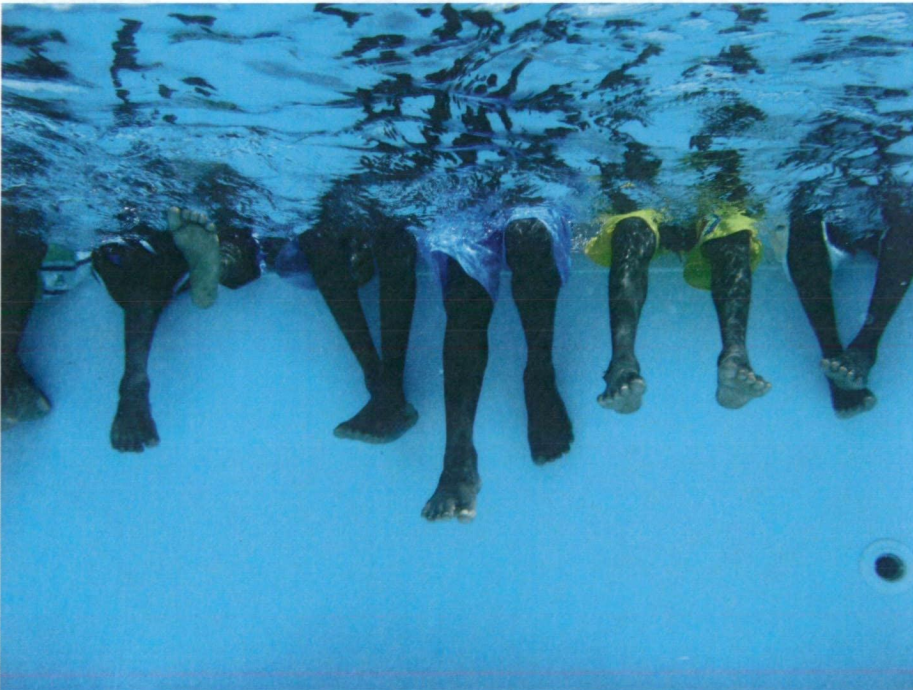


Figure 41. Adolescent boys Wadeye NT “Hanging Out” 2005

Incomplete list of Tasmanian pools for schools and public use June 7th 2010

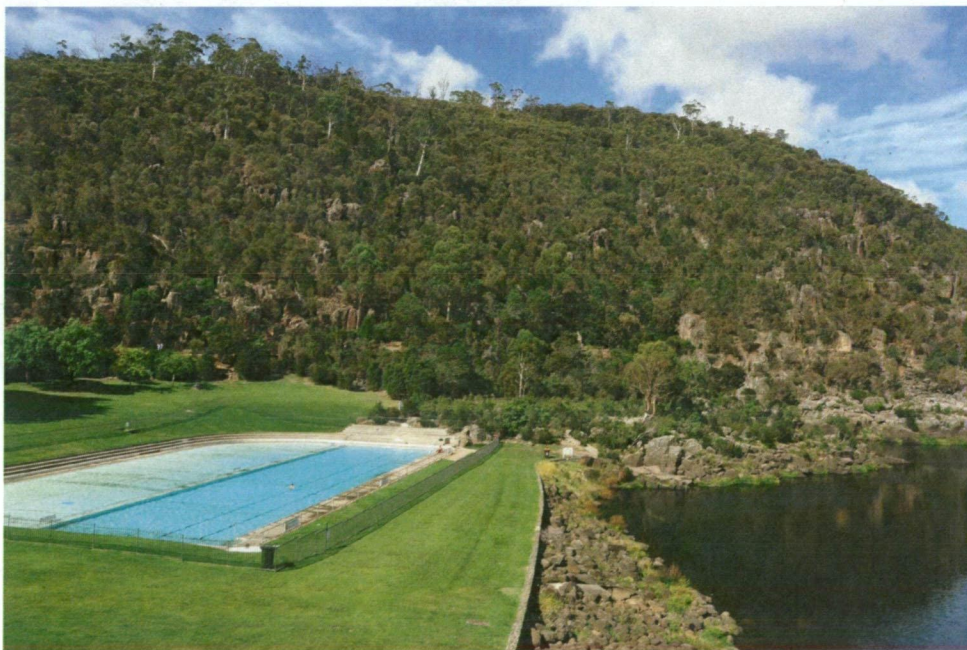
Town	Year Built	Ownership	Size of main pool	Heated	Seasonal
Acton		Swim school			
AMC		Maritime College	25m	yes	All year
Avoca		school			
Beaconsfield		school	18x12	yes	
Bicheno		school	10		
Bothwell		school	25m	yes	yes
Branxholm					
Burnie	1967	council	50	yes	yes
Bushy Park	1960's	council	25m		
Campbell Town	1985	council	25		
Caveside	1957	council	18.8x6.8		
Circular Head/Smithton	1960's		33x12		
Clarence		council	50		All year
Cressy	1960's	council	35x22		
Devenport		council	50		Yes
Deloraine	1965	council	21x10		
Deloraine School		school			
Dover					
Exeter		school			
Fingal		school			
Flinders Island		school			
Forest primary		school			
Friends School		school	25		All year
Glen Dhu		Ed dept.			
Grammar Launceston		school	25	yes	All year
George Town					
Glenorchy		council	50		Yes
Grassy					
Hagley Farm		school			
Hazelwood		school			
Invermay		school			
Hobart Aquatic	2000	council	50 & 2x25		All year
Hutchins					
Huonville		council	50		Yes
King Island		High school			
Kingston		private			All year
Latrobe					
Launceston Aquatic	2009	council	50 & 25m +		All year
Launceston College		school	?	Yes	All year
Launceston The Basin	1937	council	50	NO	All Year
Lenah Valley					

Lilydale	1964	council	25		
Maydena		council	25		
Mole Creek		council	25		
Mowbray		N/A	closed		
New Norfolk	1960's	council	50		Yes
New Town					
Nixon St		school			
Nubeena					
Oatlands		council	25		
Oceana					
Poatina		Company town Fusion	25		Yes
Port Dalrymple		school			
Port Huon		council	25		
Queenstown		council	25		
Railton		school			
Riana		school			
Ringarooma					
Risdon Vale					
Riverside		council	33		
Roseberry	1960's	council	25		
Ross	1960's	20x9	25		
Sandy Bay					
Scotch Oakburn Launceston		school			
Scottsdale		council	25		
Sorrell ?		school			
St Finn Barrs		school			
St Patricks		school	25		All year
St Mary's		school			
St Michaels Collegiate		school			
Strathgordon	1960's				
Table Cape		P school			
Tasman High		school			
THAC ?		Triabunna			
Ulverstone					
Ulverstone East		Ed Dept			
Winnaleah					
Woodbridge?		High school			
Wayatinah	1960's		25x8		outdoors
Wynyard Wescombes			15		All year
Zeehan	1960's	council	25		

Type	50m pools	School	Council (not incl. 50m)	Unknown/private	All
Number	9	32	23	17	81



Bothwell Tasmania road signage October 2009



The Basin pool Cataract Gorge Reserve Launceston 11am 29th March 2010