



HYDRILLA

SEPTEMBER 2020

**Aquatics for
Indigenous
Communities**



Introduction

Swimming as a form of exercise and relaxation has many benefits to offer people from all walks of life and backgrounds. For Outback indigenous communities, however, the impact of a local, accessible pool can bring about huge health and social improvements.

Around 19% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia reside in areas classified as remote or very remote. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics). Some of the issues that face people living in these communities include a lack of access to services and medical care and declining educational services which result in both high unemployment and high crime rates. While building a swimming pool in these communities will not solve all these issues, there is evidence available which demonstrates positive outcomes for residents when a swimming pool is provided.

Hydrilla has been involved in a large number of Indigenous Community Pool construction projects, we have witnessed the excitement and positive energy that flows into these communities when a safe place to swim is provided. Returning to these pools for scheduled service and maintenance we have seen the ability of a public swimming pool to improve the health and wellbeing of an entire community, this has left a profound impact on our team. Each aquatic facility we build makes us feel proud, but those that create a wave of change give us a sense of fulfilment that we are building more than aquatic structure and systems, we are helping to build communities.

Swimming pools in remote communities have been associated with reducing rates of infectious disease and providing health and social benefits. (Source: Lehmann et al). While not all research is conclusive, as more pools are constructed in these areas further data and information can be gathered which illustrates the health and social wellbeing benefits experienced.



Health Benefits

In addition to preventing certain infectious diseases, having access to a local swimming pool can improve health and wellbeing outcomes for users in areas such as:

- Increased physical activity through on-going programs and activities
- Teaching safe swimming practices through formal learn to swim classes
- Encouraging healthy eating and nutrition
- Improving personal hygiene awareness and practice

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) children are at greater risk of drowning than other children”

Wallis *et al.* BMC Public Health

Social Benefits

Pools offer social benefits for the entire community, with reports that during the swimming season the pool becomes a gathering place for many of the community, who take advantage of the grassed areas and barbeque facilities (if provided). Other social benefits seen in the communities are:

- Improved social unity
- Promotion of good behaviour
- Increased training & seasonal employment opportunities
- Reduction of vandalism and crime rates

The general lack of resources and infrastructure in these remote areas often leave residents with limited organised activities and structure. Having the pools to use and enjoy provides a distraction and has been reported to *‘keep kids out of mischief’*.



School Attendance

Many of the remote communities with swimming pools have adopted a 'No School No Pool' policy to encourage attendance at school with access to the pool the reward. The simple approach to the program means that each child who attends school for the day will be provided access to the pool in the afternoon.

Teachers at some of the schools with close proximity to a pool have reported successfully encouraging positive behaviour among students with entry to the pool as a reward.

A study by the Royal Life Saving Society of WA (remote aboriginal Swimming Pools Project) reports that participants showed great support for and acceptance of the No School no Pool Policy. The program is seen as an attractive incentive for children to go to school. The program was more effective among primary school-aged children.

The effectiveness of the No School No Pool Program is something Hydrilla Service Manager, Ben Miranda has witnessed on more than one occasion while performing service and preventative maintenance visits at the pool.

"The joy on the kid's faces when they can show their wrist band and get access to the pool after going to school is incredible. You see the one or two kids who did not go to school that day, standing outside the fence or hiding behind the water tanks watching all the fun they are missing out on. It's an effective measure"

For more information on the positive outcomes in Remote Indigenous Communities, we suggest contacting the [Central Lands Council](#) or reading some of the articles cited in this publication.



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Kalumburu Community Pool





LOCATION

Kalumburu, Western Australia

CLIENT

Builder: Kimberley Green
Constructions

Pool Partner: MCH Solutions

CATEGORY

Construction

FEATURES

Natare Prefabricated Stainless
Steel Pool

Kalumburu Community Pool

A remote and special community required an equally special community pool. Collaboration was the key to success in this extraordinary project.

Located 3,670km from Perth the Indigenous community of Kalumburu is considered one of the most remote Aboriginal communities in Australia. The prefabricated stainless steel Natare pool allowed for rapid construction of the pool in the harsh Western Australian climate.

The challenging and unique outback terrain of the site coupled with the remoteness of the community ensured innovation and new ideas were explored to get the pool built quickly, while still ensuring the long term integrity of the structure and systems. Primary Contractor [Kimberley Green Constructions](#), [MCH Solutions](#), Hydrilla and [Natare Corporation](#) collaborated to create a pool which will satisfy all the conditions of the community and ensure they have a valuable community asset for a long time to come.

Fabricated in Indianapolis, Indiana, the bespoke pool made its way to Australia in 3 separate shipping containers. Once the pool reached the construction site a specialist team were able to efficiently weld the panels together on the pre-built concrete slab, to form a watertight structure. Made from corrosion-resistant and easily maintained stainless steel, the pool is strong with a system of supporting structural 'buttress' to ensure the pools stability with or without water. The strength of the stainless steel structure was an additional consideration in the cyclone prone region.



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KALUMBURU COMMUNITY POOL

The design of the facility features a main pool area, 25m x 6 lanes, as well as a smaller toddler pool with beach entry for inclusive access. A brightly coloured mushroom water feature provides additional enjoyment for the younger children in the community.

Time on site to construct the pool was 20 days and a further 7 days to finish the pool with water line tiles and commercial grade PVC Liner. This finish option was selected to ensure fewer issues with the pool finish. Unlike tiles the commercial grade liner is able to flex and move with the pool, a desirable quality in the harsh outback environment. Additionally the liner can be recycled when a replacement is fitted in the future.

The Kalumburu pool is managed by the Department of Communities and Royal Life Saving WA, it provides educational, health and social benefits to the residents of the Kimberley community.

For more details on Natara Pool Systems please see our information [HERE](#). Further details on our work in Indigenous communities please see our white-paper [HERE](#)

Video of the completed pool can be viewed on our YouTube Channel [HERE](#)

QUICK FACT:

The Natara technology installed at Kalumburu is the same system used to build the world's largest rooftop infinity pool at the iconic Marina Bay Sands Resort in Singapore.



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Mutitjulu Tjurpinytjku Centre





LOCATION

Mutitjulu, Northern Territory

CLIENT

Central Lands Council

CATEGORY

Construction

FEATURES

Cultural and Geographic Considerations; Indigenous Community Pool

Mutitjulu Tjurpinytjaku Centre

Nestled in the shadows of the iconic Uluru in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, this community pool constructed in 2012/2013 remains one of our most recognisable construction projects.

Constructing a pool in one of the most distinctive locations in Australia was both an honor and a challenge for our team. Located at the base of Uluru, in a world heritage national park, there were strict laws and regulations to work around even before we arrived on site. This included consideration of sand, gravel and fill, which needed to be weed and contaminate free; acquisition of water for the pool and disposal of site waste.

Our teams experience constructing community pools in Yulara and Yuendumu was put to great use and we circumvented these issues by thinking outside the square, ensuring both the community and environment were disrupted as minimally as possible. We elected to build up the site, with material mined from an approved site within the park, that was then used for waste, this solved dual issues at once and ensures the integrity of the soil and the park

Water management was an additional issue created by the restrictions within the park. Our solution involved water recycling through a small reverse osmosis system. Reverse Osmosis is a water purification process which removed unwanted molecules and larger particles from water using a partially permeable membrane



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MUTITJULU TJURPINYTJAKU CENTRE

The pool itself features two distinct zones, a main pool with depths ranging from 1.2 meters to 1.8 meters and a smaller, toddler pool with beach entry (0.0 m) to 0.6 meters depth. The combination of both pools gives flexibility and accessibility to all members of the immediate community and neighboring communities.

The remoteness of the Mutitjulu site meant that this was a project where we completed more than just the swimming pool. Our team worked to construct fencing, ablution block and the paving around the perimeter of the pool.

Completed in 2013 we continue to visit the site for regular servicing and maintenance visits. Our team get to see the on-going health and community benefits their work has generated.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has kindly let us share the following clip on Anagu elder and Mutitjulu Traditional Owner Judy Trigger speaking on the pool. Watch the clip [HERE](#)



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References

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