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Existing Maori Park pool will be open as usual

It's swim business as usual, the Timaru District Council says.

While early construction works are under way on the Timaru District's new Caroline Bay Aquatic Centre on Maori Park, swimmers will not have to wait two years to again swim on the site of one of Timaru's most used recreational and sporting zones.

From November, Maori Park's 50-metre lap pool will be open for "business as usual" in what assistant pools superintendent for the Timaru District Council Kevin Hessel says will be a continuing opportunity for the entire community to enjoy their traditional dip down near the Bay.

With new fencing around the pool screening out works associated with the new aquatic centre; redeveloped changing rooms and a layout change that will see car parking virtually right to the door, Maori Park will continue to offer an important place in the overall district pool infrastructure, he says.

The pool opens in the second week in November, and will stay open through to the middle March.

"Despite what's happening over the fence, pool patrons will notice little change in access or services at Maori Park pool other than the lack of the diving well and learners' pool. We'll even have the inflatables back in the water," Mr Hessel said.

"Pay at the gate, use your concession tickets and season tickets, and you're in the swim as usual.

"We'll be open from 6am until 6pm and if large school groups come in we will lane off one of the seven lanes for the public so no-one misses out," he said.

He expects the Eastern Districts South Island swimming championships will still be held at Maori Park as well as Mountainview and Timaru Girls High Schools' swim sports.

"Maori Park will be able to accommodate the usual 500 to 600 spectators and swimmers."

He said a four-month season ticket covered all council pools within the Timaru District. That included Geraldine, Temuka, Pleasant Point, Century and Maori Park Pools.

Century Pool in Craigie Avenue would take over all aquacise classes because Maori Park was not deep enough for flotation belts.

These would be held twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at lunchtimes and at 6.30pm.

Council programme and contracts officer David Hooke said Maori Park pool fencing created a totally separate area from the aquatic centre construction site.

The solid-panelled fence complied with the Pool Fencing Act, and there were no rails on the outside which could help people to scale the fence, he said.

“The fence meant that the community was not at risk from hazards associated with large-scale construction such as heavy machinery operation, uneven ground or sharp objects and parents could send children to the pool knowing they were safe,” he said.

A major plus would be new car parking areas providing access to the pool without having to descend steep concrete steps.

“The main contract for the new aquatic centre provides for a number of car parks and we have programmed the southern one in early to meet demand by users of the existing pool. It should be sealed, with adjacent bike stand lock-ups, by opening time in November,” Mr Hooke said.

ENDS

Caption:



Splashdown: Maori Park pool gets a washdown from Timaru District Council assistant pools superintendent Kevin Hessell in preparation for the new season opening in November. “It will be business as usual,” he says. The new fence can be seen in the background.