



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

New public management and aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making processes

This is the Published version of the following publication

McDonald, Katie, Tower, John and Hanlon, Clare (2023) New public management and aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making processes. *Managing Sport and Leisure*. ISSN 2375-0472

The publisher's official version can be found at
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23750472.2023.2267057>
Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/47375/>



New public management and aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making processes

Katie McDonald, John Tower & Clare Hanlon

To cite this article: Katie McDonald, John Tower & Clare Hanlon (11 Oct 2023): New public management and aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making processes, *Managing Sport and Leisure*, DOI: [10.1080/23750472.2023.2267057](https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2023.2267057)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2023.2267057>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 11 Oct 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 234



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

New public management and aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making processes

Katie McDonald , John Tower  and Clare Hanlon 

Institute of Sport and Health, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

ABSTRACT

Rationale/Purpose: The purpose of the study was to explore how new public management (NPM) components influence the planning and decision-making of local government aquatic and recreation centre (ARCs) development.

Methodology: Two case studies were conducted in metropolitan Melbourne, Australia. Data collection comprised documents ($n = 264$) and semi-structured interviews ($n = 19$) to understand the real-life experiences of people involved in ARC planning and decision-making. Deductive analysis was used to identify how NPM components influenced the ARC planning and decision-making process.

Findings: ARC planners were primarily driven by financial outputs. Results identified four of the seven NPM components are active in the planning and decision-making across both cases. These include management skills, output controls, creating competition and resource efficiency.

Practical implications: From a theoretical perspective, the findings suggest that resource efficiency decisions were prioritised in the ARC decision-making process. Local governments need to consider their motivations towards achieving financial efficiencies and the subsequent impacts on ARC provision. This approach influences local governments' capacity to address social planning objectives.

Research contribution: Local governments in Melbourne, Australia employ NPM principles in their ARC planning and decision-making practices.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 10 February 2023

Accepted 2 October 2023

KEYWORDS

Aquatic and recreation centres; new public management theory; leisure planning; decision-making

Introduction

Aquatic and recreation centres (ARCs) are social spaces that provide communities with opportunities to be physically active. These centres deliver important health, well-being and social benefits to their communities and contribute to local economies by providing job and income opportunities (Howat et al., 2012; Tower et al., 2014; VAGO, 2016). ARCs provide communities with non-profitable outcomes, however, they are not an attractive investment for the

commercial sector (Grieve & Sherry, 2012). As a result, ARCs tend to be left for government, especially local government, to develop. In Victoria, Australia the local government estimated spend in 2016–2020 was AUD\$933 million of capital expenditure on recreational and community facilities (VAGO, 2016), with individual centres capital budgets reaching over AUD\$50 million. The justification for this expenditure focused on the need to provide people in communities with a “one-stop-shop” i.e. bigger and

CONTACT Katie McDonald  katiej.mcdonald@vu.edu.au

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

better centres to fulfil their aquatic and fitness needs (Maddock, 2015, 26-28 august).

New Public Management (NPM) is a public sector management theory designed to diminish bureaucratic approaches and create a more flexible and competitive government sector. NPM was founded on the principles of achieving improved financial management practices and efficiency (Gruening, 2001) and has been responsible for changing governmental practices in many countries (Duncan & Chapman, 2010; Hood, 1991). The impact of NPM on ARC planning and decision-making has not been investigated in previous research, however, there is potential to better understand ARC's development via NPM principles. NPM may explain local government concerns about ensuring positive returns on investment and highlight the pressures associated with efficiently using scarce community resources (VAGO, 2011). Local government officials may be motivated to build ARCs to generate a positive return on investment and make better use of community resources (Griffiths et al., 2014; McShane, 2009). This study explored whether NPM components influence the planning and decision-making of local government ARC development. ARC planning and decision-making processes have received little research attention, despite the benefits and investment associated with them. As a result, there has been a call for research in this field by leisure planners (Engels, 2019; Marriott et al., 2021; Tapper & Kobayashi, 2018; Veal, 2013, 2020), leisure decision-making researchers (Reid, 2009; Veal, 2017), and industry consultants (Marriott, 2012). Leisure planning is defined as a continuous process through which community resources, attitudes, values and needs are reviewed and evaluated to achieve goals and outcomes that may not have been otherwise been achieved (Marriott, et. al., 2021). The study builds on the limited foundation knowledge to address the needs and provides the foundation to understand how NPM components influence ARC planning and decision-making.

Aquatic and recreation centres

ARCs provide a range of infrastructure that usually includes multiple water spaces including a 50 m pool, hydrotherapy pool, zero depth play areas and learn to swim pool. In addition to the water spaces an ARC could have a gymnasium, group fitness rooms, allied health spaces, childcare, and a café (Butson et al., 2021; Tower et al., 2014).

A positive association exists for ARCs to be placed in communities to enable people to engage in physical activity (Limstrand, 2008; Sallis et al., 2012). Government provision and services related to aquatic and recreation infrastructure enhance the welfare of communities through improved health and well-being (Eime et al., 2017; Lewi & Nichols, 2014). In particular, they provide psychological benefits (Eime et al., 2013), increased physical activity participation levels (Prins et al., 2011; Prins et al., 2012), and significant socio-economic impacts to communities (Barnsley et al., 2017; Tower et al., 2014). The presence of sport and leisure infrastructure not only increases the levels of physical activity in the community, but it also provides benefits to the non-users in the community. These benefits include perceived intention, (Prins et al., 2010) by providing people with options to attend a centre, and perceived community value, i.e. the level of worth a community perceives based on its ability to meet its needs and expectations (SGS Economics and Planning, 2010).

Two key findings emerge from the literature reviewed on ARC planning and decision-making. First, local governments have moved from the outdoor single swimming pool to the multi-purpose ARC or "one-stop-shop" concept (Maddock, 2015, 26-28 august). Second, performance measure tools are used to assist the viability of planning and decision-making (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005; Lewi & Nichols, 2014; McShane, 2006, 2009).

The connection between leisure planning and decision-making

Decisions can be made without planning, planning however, cannot be conducted without making decisions. As a result, decisions are an intrinsic part of planning (Parent, 2015). On the other hand, planning provides the information to guide decisions (Grünig & Kühn, 2013) and reinforces the strong connection between planning and decision-making process. Veal (2017) discusses that a leisure planning process and a rational decision-making process need to be considered simultaneously or “nested” (p. 145) together within a leisure planning project. No evidence exists to demonstrate the theory or applications used in the development of a nested leisure planning and decision-making process or the connection between ARC planning and decision-making.

Leisure planning as a field of study (Veal et al., 2013) was established in the early 1900s (Engels, 2019; Veal, 2009). However, there is limited literature about leisure planning during this time. It was not until the 1970s that leisure planning literature explained the complexities via a number of publications (e.g. Bannon, 1977; Gold, 1973, 1980; Mercer & Hamilton-Smith, 1980) and conference topics (Burton, 1970). This period was unique to leisure planning and produced extensive critical inquiry and widespread discussion.

Since the 1970s limited scholarly research on leisure planning exists. Consequently, leisure planning guidelines rigorously tested and applied in the leisure industry are not evident and only seven academic papers critique leisure planning approaches including (Engels, 2019; Reid, 2007; Veal, 1984, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2020). The bulk of scholarly contributions instead have been written in academic and industry-based books, with 16 identified in total. Eight of these publications are single editions and eight comprise multiple editions with

some up to four editions, e.g. Veal, 2017. The absence of academic papers in this field illustrates a gap in scholarly knowledge on leisure planning and reinforces the need to understand current ARC planning and decision-making processes, in this case through the theoretical lens of NPM.

New public management theory (NPM)

NPM is a public sector management theory used to explain how the creation of a more flexible and competitive government sector could be less bureaucratic than previous public sector approaches. NPM theory focuses on results rather than procedures (Gruening, 2001). Founded on the principles of financial efficiency, NPM is responsible for changing governance styles at national, state/provincial, and local levels in many countries including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and parts of Europe (Duncan & Chapman, 2010; Hood, 1991). NPM was introduced into Australia in the mid 1980s through the public reform initiatives (Johnson, 2000). Seven components exist within NPM, these are required to achieve the goals of improved management practices and understand the associated processes (Hood, 1991, 1995; Yamamoto, 2003).

Seven components indicate the typical public sector management practices required within NPM and can be divided into two sections: personnel skills; and improved management practices and efficiency. Regarding personnel skills, the first two components, management skills (NPM 1) and measuring performance (NPM 2) refer to personal management styles, professionalism and the explicit use of goals and targets to meet performance measures. The application of personnel skills is expected to improve the quality of organisational management and communication processes and a person’s attitude towards a role. People will deliver improved services if they

feel satisfied and respected within their roles (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2007; Hood, 1991). The combination of management skills and measuring performance results in staff having clearly defined roles of responsibility, essential to measure accountability (Hood, 1991; Yamamoto, 2003).

Improved management practices and efficiency are processes covered by NPM components 3–7. These five components, drawn from private sector management processes, focus on the outputs of the organisation. Output controls (NPM 3) applies performance targets and resource allocations to measure performance (Yamamoto, 2003; Hood, 1991). Separation of business units (NPM 4) applies the characteristics of proven private sector tools and the decentralisation of government organisations bringing local government restructuring into separate departments with their own organisational identity (Duncan & Chapman, 2010; Hood, 1991, 1995). Creating competition (NPM 5) introduced competition to the public sector, which was a new phenomenon in public sector management, previously most community activities were government funded and protected from competitive markets (Hood, 1991; Webster & Harding, 2000). NPM 5 introduced the concept of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) to the public sector, a process which, by law, required governments to advertise for and employ competent persons or organisations to manage and operate government services on their behalf (Hood, 1991; Yamamoto, 2003). Management approaches (NPM 6) introduced the application of proven private sector management tools, allowing for greater flexibility in hiring staff and in their salary packages e.g. bonuses and flexible work arrangements (Hood, 1991, 1995). Finally, resource efficiency (NPM 7) focuses on the use of resources; the departmentalisation of products, a better understanding of economic influences, and flexibility in human resource management, therefore providing a better use of resources and delivery of

efficient and effective outcomes (Hood, 1991, 1995).

All seven NPM components are not equally present in all circumstances however, they provide control mechanisms to lead towards an effective management system (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012; Hood, 1991). NPM theory has been utilised in the study as a lens to better understand the ARC planning and decision-making processes. This lens was used as an overlay framework to see if the components exist.

NPM impact on ARCs

Management teams within the leisure industry (including ARC teams) constantly find themselves “doing more with less and having to achieve value for money” (Thibault et al., 2004, p. 121). The adoption of policies that promote efficiency and market growth has raised concerns that this may be the sole criterion for assessing services, programs, and partnership decisions (Frisby et al., 2004; Thibault et al., 2004). In the 1990s it was noted that a profit-orientated setting has occurred within a public sector environment that has traditionally catered for community needs (Thibault et al., 2004). Operating within this environment has meant the NPM principles had an impact on the operations of ARCs, which has also influenced how planning and decision-making occurs. ARCs exist in a market driven environment that has increasingly become result focused.

The development or redevelopment of ARCs involve local governments in Australia to either co-locate their sporting centres or redevelop old outdoor swimming pools into multi-purpose ARCs. The redevelopment of these swimming pools has achieved a significant increase in attendance numbers (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005) because there are a greater variety of activities to meet leisure consumer expectations (Howat, Murray, et al., 2005). The output controls of efficiency and

effectiveness may assist to increase community participation and explain why local governments have moved to multi-purpose ARCs. The implication for this change affects the ARC planning and decision-making processes to focus on the efficiency of output controls. Criticism exists noting these multi-purpose or “one-stop-shop” centres may marginalise the core mission of local governments to enhance the well-being of their local communities (VAGO, 2011). Although there is an intention for increased participation to enhance community well-being, the participants are mostly from higher socio-economic backgrounds, so the whole community does not participate and get the well-being benefits (Tower et al., 2014). As a result, expenditure and asset investment decisions made by local government were primarily driven by improved financial ratios and not priorities emanating from service and asset planning.

The use of performance measures can assist in ARC planning and decision-making (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005) and ARC operational decision-making (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005; Iversen, 2015, 2017). Performance measures are a reliable benchmark to assess financial viability:

Decision-makers involved in the planning of [ARCs] should aim to include multi-purpose facilities with indoor pools and minimise facilities with solely outdoor pools. This should result in a greater likelihood of improved financial viability and higher participation rates (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005, p. 14). This finding is consistent with trends experienced in metropolitan Melbourne, state of Victoria, Australia, where local governments have developed many indoor multi-purpose ARCs. Between 2016 and 2020, the expected spend on indoor multi-purpose community and recreational facilities by Victorian local governments was AUD\$933 million dollars (VAGO, 2016).

NPM components that promote efficiency and market growth could be at the expense

of community-focused values. Consequently, community public rallies protested the redevelopment of community outdoor 50-metre pools (Lewi & Nichols, 2014). Examples include the numerous “save the pool” campaigns conducted around Victoria, Australia in the 1990s (Lewi & Nichols, 2014). The campaigns to save these pools were often prompted by an emotional attachment, as typified by one resident “it’s not because I want to go and swim in that pool, it’s what it represents as a family place to go” (Preiss, 2015, p. 74).

The extent NPM components are applied to ARC planning is unknown. Based on the literature reviewed, Table 1 provides a summary of how NPM components may impact on ARC planning and decision-making.

The application of NPM components, to ARCs has enabled a basic understanding of the extent to which commercialised, market-oriented policies could guide ARC planning and decision-making. NPM has the potential to explain local government officials’ motivations to build ARCs, identify their concerns about ensuring a positive return on investment, and highlight the importance to use scarce community resources efficiently (Griffiths et al., 2014; McShane, 2009).

NPM values are embedded within local government policies that drive management practices today (Edwards et al., 2012). There are two areas of local government practices where NPM appears to have been applied to ARC planning and decision-making. The first involves a hybrid version of NPM (Lodge & Gill, 2011) used to address competitive market strategies and financial measures of performance (Lapaley, 2008). The second is the widespread increase in expenditure on ARCs, which began in the early 2000s and is now reflected in the development of multi-million-dollar ARCs. The aim of the study was to explore how NPM components are active in public sector management and have influenced the planning and decision-making of ARCs.

Table 1. Components of NPM.

Section	Component	Explanation of component	Relative to ARC planning and decision-making
Personnel Skills	NPM 1 – management skills	Specialized skills and clearly defined roles of people to ensure efficient and effective outcomes.	Establish a professional working environment where all members of the ARC planning team are professionally trained, have specialized skills, and they are accountable for outcomes.
	NPM 2 – measuring performance	Establish clear standards and criteria for measuring performance.	Develop criteria for staff performance, and the use of KPIs.
Improved management practices and efficiency	NPM 3 – output controls	Develop the use of output controls, instead of using input controls. This process is concerned with the results rather than the procedures.	Establish controls of management performance and efficiency and service quality.
	NPM 4 – separation of business units	Move towards the establishment of singular groups to achieve efficiency advantages.	Establish cost centres for each operational unit.
	NPM 5 – creating competition	Move toward greater competition in the public sector through establishing compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) procedures which leads to “rivalry” which is the key to lower costs and better standards.	Establish systems to incorporate CCT. Services are completed by organisations on behalf of the local government.
	NPM 6 – management approaches	Emphasis on developing private sector management practices.	Introduces the application of proven private sector management tools, allowing for greater flexibility in hiring staff and in their compensation
	NPM 7 – resource efficiency	Prominence given to cost effective use of resources.	Establish processes that prioritise methods of operation that are more efficient. Emphasis on self-sufficiency and achieving financially efficient outcomes

Note. Adapted from “A Public Management for All Seasons,” by C. Hood, 1991, *Public Administration*, 69 (Spring), 3-19. “The “New Public Management” in the 80s: Variations on A Theme.” By C. Hood, 1995, *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 20(2-3), 93-109.

Methods

A qualitative multiple case study design was adopted. Qualitative research seeks to understand “how” questions (Yin, 2009). The study sought to understand “how” local governments conducted planning and decision-making for the redevelopment/development of ARCs. An explanatory perspective was adopted (Andrew et al., 2011) within the multiple case-study design.

Case selection

The case studies selected for this research were identified using a convenience sample that comprised purposefully selected multiple cases, studied at the same time, with the understanding that findings from one study did not impact the other (Thomas, 2016). The selection of ARCs was determined through the

constraints of selection criteria. This was applied to ensure the cases catered to the needs of the study and information-rich cases were selected (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2012). The following five criteria, with the selection explanation noted in brackets, informed the selection of ARCs cases:

- located in metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (Metropolitan Melbourne had a significant rise in the number of ARC built between 2000 and 2017 and the sample was employed by applying convenience sampling);
- open for fewer than three years at the time the current study started (Carlson, 2016)
- multi-purpose including pools, gyms, etcetera (Victoria State Government policy stipulated, funding would only be awarded to multi-purpose infrastructure);

- cost of the redevelopment is above AUD\$30 million at completion (at the time of the study the costs of building a new ARC exceeded AUD\$30 million; this figure was chosen to guarantee there was a large number of potential ARCs to be in the case selection pool); and
- independent market catchment areas, i.e. a radius further than 10 kilometres in diameter (ensures the case-study ARCs were not located in the same catchment area).

Two cases matched the five criteria. These became the reported cases in the study.

Data sources

Documents and semi-structured interviews were the data sources. A document analysis was conducted to provide history, context and track ARC planning and decision-making processes over an extended period for each case. Documents provided details that may have been forgotten by respondents (Bowen, 2009) and tracked changes over time, particularly since the ARC planning process had concluded and could not be observed. The documents were selected based on the criteria of quality assessment in terms of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Bryman, 2016). Data analysis was conducted using a six-step thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). Key themes that evolved from the document analysis guided the development of questions for the semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the lived experiences of respondents (Yin, 2014). Insights into respondents' work experiences and rich detail (Andersson & Mattsson, 2010; Halinen et al., 2013) on political, financial and community issues arising from the ARC cases were identified. Key respondents were selected based on their identification in the document analysis. In addition, a "snowballing" sampling technique was adopted

(Bryman, 2016) to enable respondents to recommend key informants. Interviews ceased once saturation of themes occurred (Murdock, 2008).

Data analysis

The seven components of NPM served as the deductive themes in the six-step thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) related to the document review and interview transcripts. The purpose was to identify recurrent themes in the ARC planning and decision-making processes. Thematic analysis was individually conducted for each ARC that enabled a within and cross-case analyses. Data were analysed through a triangulation and pattern matching process, the six-steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006) included:

- Initial Reading of text to gain familiarity
- Repeated readings to code text
- Development of basic themes
- Consolidation into organising themes
- Deriving global themes and networks
- Producing the report

Results

A total of 264 documents were analysed. Documents included local government reports, specialist reports, local government meeting minutes, newspaper articles and other related documents such as state government reports and personalised documents from respondents. Nineteen interviews were conducted with respondents involved in the ARC planning and decision-making. These respondents were assigned an individual pseudonym and represented a range of roles, including local government officers, councillors, external contractors, and a resident involved in the consultation phases.

Results identified four of the seven NPM components active in public sector management across both cases. These four

components assisted to explain ARC planning and decision-making processes and how NPM components guided the adoption of financial efficiencies. These components included NPM 1 – management skills, NPM 3 – output controls, NPM 5 – creating competition and NPM 7 – resource efficiency.

The management skills (NPM 1) component brought together teams of specialised people with relevant skills to ensure the local government achieved efficient and effective ARC planning outcomes. Specifically, this referred to the expertise and skill set of local government officers and consultants who investigated the need and demand for the ARC. The management skills were applied in the preparation of professional local government documents and reports, such as business cases and feasibility studies and the inclusion of the centre manager in the ARC planning process. Evidence-based data was gained from specialists to assist with the ARC planning process. One document statement (Doc 67, 4) reinforced the importance of reports developed by professionals to assist ARC planning:

Local government has commissioned various reports over many years from various analyst firms and technical experts discussing both the viability of maintaining two outdoor facilities and addressing the necessary repairs and ongoing maintenance issues to keep the facilities in a safe and operational condition.

The reliance on skill set expertise was reinforced by respondents. Trevor explained:

[We went to the] in-house experts on playgrounds because obviously local governments do a lot of playgrounds. This is just a wet playground. We took whatever expertise they had and tried to apply it to a wet playground environment. And they were great. They were really informative. Because in terms of child safety, they're all over that.

The output controls (NPM 3) component explained how the two cases used performance indicators and resource allocations to measure performance to achieve efficient

and effective planning processes. The findings from the documents identified eight performance indicators to measure ARC performance targets:

- visits per metre²;
- expense recovery ability including capital repayment;
- operating profits per visit;
- program range returns and attendances;
- secondary spend returns;
- range of attendance types (e.g. adult/child ratio);
- catchment area;
- revenue returns from health and fitness.

The performance indicators provided ARC planners with data from an operational perspective to guide informed decisions. Respondents provided a commentary on a variety of performance indicators to explain how commercial performance indicators assisted in decision-making. These included visits per metre², catchment analysis and return on investment. For example:

The gym was sized to get a commercial return, and the components of the gym were designed to get a commercial return as well. So, there were commercial elements certainly layered onto it to then provide what we think was an operating model (Orlando).

The creating competition (NPM 5) component explains the process used by the local government to create competitive markets by engaging services open to competition. Meeting minutes documents included numerous referrals to this component. These minutes explained the CCT process applied to the ARC planning process and provided a timeline of how this process was undertaken. The services open to competitive tenders aligned to the construction or operations of the ARC are listed in [Table 2](#). Construction tenders comprised a range of specialised services sought to construct the ARC. Operational tenders

Table 2. ARC services tendered.

Construction	Operational
Architect	ARC management
Building	Basketball courts
Landscape	Point of sale
Pool design	Café operations
Underground power installation	Access control
Demolition	Furniture and fit out
Drainage	Gym equipment
Structural consultant	
Cogeneration supply and install	

comprised management for the centre, café and club-based basketball contracts.

The documents identified these local governments used CCT within the ARC planning process to encourage competition and ensure financial efficiencies were achieved, e.g. “a competitive tendering environment exist[ed] [within the ARC planning process to] deliver an expected or more favourable financial guarantee to local government” (Doc 72, p.12).

The resource efficiency (NPM 7) component explains how the two cases made decisions to effectively use resources to deliver efficient and financially effective outcomes. The resource efficiency strategies applied to the ARC decision-making process included government grants, financial goals, public private partnership, budget, economic operational goals, complementary business and secondary spend. Olly provided examples of resource efficiency strategies that explained ARC decision-making, “your multi-purpose side of things represents financial efficiency. The idea [of] building a stand-alone pool or something like that, you cannot do it these days”. Theodore stated financial viability could be achieved by combining the high-income earnings of health and fitness areas with the high operational costs of swimming pools. He explained:

The dry areas will provide the financial return, the wet areas people pay for. If you can get the balance right, then hopefully you'll end up making a small profit. So, things like the gym, we recognised if we could make that as large as practically as we could, then that was going to help to drive the financial [return].

Discussion

NPM components influenced the ARC planning and decision-making processes. Seven components comprise the NPM discourse (Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013; Hood, 1991, 1995), but only four NPM components were identified in the ARC cases' planning and decision-making processes. One component related to personnel skills – management skills (NPM 1) and three to management efficiency – output controls (NPM 3), creating competition (NPM 5), and resource efficiency (NPM 7). The finding reinforces the notion that NPM components are “not always equally present in all cases” (Hood, 1991, p. 4) and not all NPM components need to be present in the ARC planning and decision-making process.

Management skills (NPM 1) brought together teams of specialised people with relevant skills to ensure these local governments achieved efficient and effective ARC planning outcomes. The two local government cases established a professional working environment where they engaged employees and professional consultants with clearly defined roles to ensure the ARC planning process was efficient and effective. This ensured the provision of adequate services, maintenance of established norms and standards, and reliability of professional work (Evetes, 2009; Suddaby & Viale, 2011). Previous research identified that the management skills component aids the definition and standardisation of local government management through the employment or contracting of personnel with specialised skills to improve departmental professionalism (Kalimullah et al., 2012; Lodge & Gill, 2011). One of the two ARCs for example, drew on the skills and expertise of local government playground specialists to assist develop the water-based playground. Local government developed clearly defined roles and matched them with specialised skills to ensure long term professional outcomes were achieved.

Output control (NPM 3) is acknowledged in previous leisure planning literature in two ways. First, literature discusses the value in using output control measures to assist in ARC planning decision-making (Howat, Crilley, et al., 2005). Second, literature acknowledges output controls mechanisms are common in governmental organisations (Taylor, 2014). Thus, output controls assist, support, and improve decision-making (Agasisti et al., 2020) by providing formalised quantifiable data. This numerical value provides decision-makers with analytical data used to guide actions. Findings from the study reinforce that output control measures assist decision-makers to make decisions based on numeric values about operations. Both cases in the study exhibited what VAGO (2016) described as business cases to support their development. The business cases used output controls to guide ARC decision-making.

Creating competition (NPM 5) was applied through CCT. This is a regulatory process adopted to achieve cost-effectiveness and quality service (Webster & Harding, 2000). In this case, services were completed by organisations on behalf of the local government. CCT was applied to plan a range of services associated with ARC development and enabled these services to be subjected to marketplace competition. The process associated with CCT comprised local governments advertising, selecting, and contracting organisations. This process aligns with the Victorian Local Government (competitive tendering) Act 1994, which states, "Local governments [are required] to participate in competitive tendering arrangements with respect to a specified percentage of their total expenditure" (p. 801) to seek the best value for their communities (VAGO, 2010; Victoria State Government, 2021). This process was implemented to ensure local governments use their resources as efficiently and effectively as possible (Victoria State Government, 2021). The CCT process applied by the two cases aligns with broader leisure management

studies (Pitas et al., 2022; Webster & Harding, 2000) and business practices for recreation facilities (Sayers, 2012). Findings signify that market liberation driven by government legislation influenced the ARC planning process and created an environment where ARC planners regularly apply CCT practices for the procurement of services.

The resource efficiency (NPM 7) component aligns with the local government leisure industry's implementation of resource efficiency practices (Thibault et al., 2004). The reliance on resource efficiency has not previously been identified in ARC decision-making. What has been recognised is that due to a decline in financial resources available to sport and recreation departments, efficiency practices are present in local government leisure services (Cureton & Frisby, 2011; Thibault et al., 2004). The implementation of resource efficiency strategies help increase efficiency and reduce running costs (Flynn, 2002). The study's data showed decisions were strategically applied to ensure profitable outcomes from ARC developments. In this case, the two local governments decided to build a multi-purpose centre that provided a range of services. The multi-purpose development enabled the opportunity to include resource efficiency strategies including a large space for a gymnasium, multiple secondary spend options and complementary services. From a theoretical perspective, the findings suggest that resource efficiency decisions were prioritised in the ARC decision-making process.

The financial outputs within the NPM components explain the financial discourse that dominated ARC decision-making. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Griffiths et al., 2014; McShane, 2006). ARCs are planned under a neo-liberal policy discourse, where local governments pursued aggressive asset rationalisation and renewal initiatives (McShane, 2006) to reduce the financial dependency of community facilities. To achieve this result, local governments have

recognised that applying “market principles and competition are the most effective and efficient means of making goods and services available to the public” (Griffiths et al., 2014, p. 284).

Local governments build ARCs because they are not attractive investments for the commercial sector (Grieve & Sherry, 2012), yet local governments consider them as commercial businesses. Consequently, financial outputs such as output controls (NPM 3) and resource efficiency (NPM 7) have influenced ARC planning decisions. These findings reinforce concerns raised by leisure management researchers (Murdock, 1994; Thibault et al., 2004), that local governments have strong desires to meet economic criteria. The policies to promote efficiency and market growth may have become the sole criterion for assessing performance (Murdock, 1994; Thibault et al., 2004). Findings from the study agree with this assessment, identifying reporting criteria was solely based on quantitative financial performance.

No community-based performance assessments were completed by the two cases. The emphasis on financial discourse may impact community-based policy, resulting in a diminished focus on community objectives. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Liguori et al., 2012; VAGO, 2016). The VAGO (2016) report suggests that “the cost of providing ARCs should be balanced against social and other community outcomes” (p. x). The report however, found that neither of the ARCs audited assessed how they met local governments social, health and wellbeing policies. In addition, public governance research acknowledges profit should not always be a goal for public organisations, rather, public value should be determined through an analysis of political policies and provision of programmes and service and, as such, financial structure and solvency are not perceived as relevant (Liguori et al., 2012). The danger for local governments and their communities is that

financial output controls do not measure community outcomes and provide only a narrow assessment of performance (Liguori et al., 2012). For example, in the study when developing an ARC, the local government could make a choice between two alternatives. First, they could decide to expand the gymnasium floor space, this may be an area that could produce a financial return on investment. Second, the expansion could include the development of several smaller activity rooms with less financial return. These smaller activity rooms may provide opportunities for community-driven programmes that enable people to connect with others or learn new skills i.e. an arts or self-defense programme. Market driven decisions in the ARC planning process may limit the ability of ARCs to develop community-driven programme spaces. The findings from the study indicate that financial outputs were a priority in ARC decision-making, emphasising financial sustainability rather than community-focused outcomes.

Limitations and future research

The findings provide new knowledge to explain how NPM components influence ARC planning and decision-making, however, limitations to the study need to be noted. First, the planning process was spread over a period of ten years, thus there was a time-lapse between the actual implementation of ARC planning and decision-making and the conduct of interviews (up to five years). The time-lapse had the potential to affect respondents’ memories of certain events which reinforces the importance of document analysis to validate timelines and events. This limitation provides an opportunity for future research to expand the study and conduct an ethnographic study on an ARC planning project as it evolves. Insights could be gained first-hand on planning and decision-making as they occur. The second limitation is our study was metropolitan Melbourne-based, specifically associated with the planning

approaches from two city-based cases. As a result, the interpretation of findings should be approached with caution, as strategies may not be transferable to different settings within Australia or other countries. However, it is a start! To embrace a state, national or global perspective, future research could employ quantitative methodologies to the planning of an ARC or similar sport and recreation infrastructure development. Leisure planning specialists from Australia and/or globally could be surveyed to quantify the focus areas and influence of NPM components in ARC planning and decision-making. Researchers could use the quantitative data to gain a broader scope of the leisure planning process beyond the local government setting.

There has been limited analysis of how NPM has impacted the local government leisure industry. Findings from the study provide evidence to indicate NPM principles explain how four NPM components influence ARC planning and decision-making practices. An opportunity exists to investigate how NPM could be applied to other local government leisure or planning settings such as community libraries or open space planning. Such an investigation could be used to understand the influence NPM has on other local government settings.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore how NPM practices influence ARC developments' planning and decision-making. The NPM lens revealed how four NPM components influenced the ARC planning and decision-making processes of two local governments. First, these two cases implemented management skills (NPM 1), to establish a professional working environment where they engaged employees and professional consultants with clearly defined roles to ensure the ARC planning process was as efficient and effective as possible. Second, the output control (NPM 3) component influenced ARC planning and decision-

making. The output control supports literature that recognises output controls mechanisms are common in governmental organisations (Taylor, 2014). Third, creating competition (NPM 5) was applied to improve management practices and efficiency practices including CCT for procurement of services. Finally, resource efficiency (NPM 7) influenced the ARC decision-making process whereby decisions were strategically applied to ensure profitable outcomes from the ARC developments. These findings reinforce the ethos of achieving improved management practices and efficiency which remains embedded in contemporary local government practices (Agasisti et al., 2020; Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013). These are important findings to current ARC planning and decision-making processes. Local governments need to consider their motivations towards achieving financial efficiencies when planning for an ARC and determine if these strategies impact their ability to address social planning objectives.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Katie McDonald  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7356-2624>

John Tower  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3907-3306>
Clare Hanlon  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5547-5327>

References

- Agasisti, T., Agostino, D., & Soncin, M. (2020). Implementing performance measurement systems in local governments: Moving from the "how" to the "why". *Public Performance & Management Review*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2019.1700806>
- Andersson, P., & Mattsson, L. G. (2010). Temporality of resource adjustments in business networks during severe economic recession. *Industrial Marketing*

- Management*, 39(6), 917–924. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2010.06.011>
- Andrew, D., Pedersen, P., & McEvoy, C. (2011). *Research methods and design in sport management*. Human Kinetics.
- Andrews, R., & Van de Walle, S. (2013). New public management and citizens' perceptions of local service efficiency, responsiveness, equity and effectiveness. *Public Management Review*, 15(5), 762–783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2012.725757>
- Bannon, J. (1977). *Tourism and recreation development* (1 ed.). Architectural Press.
- Barnsley, P., Peden, A., & Scarr, J. (2017). *Economic benefits of Australia's public aquatic facilities*. <http://swimaustralia.org.au/docs/rlss-economic-benefits-report-2017.pdf>
- Bowen, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Methods: Teaching thematic analysis*. The British Psychological Society. Retrieved 19th July from <http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-26/edition-2/methods-teaching-thematic-analysis>
- Brunetto, Y., & Farr-Wharton, R. (2007). Service delivery by local government employees post- the implementation of NPM. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 57(1), 37–56. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17410400810841227>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Burton, T. L. (1970). *Recreation research and planning: A symposium*. Allen and Unwin.
- Butson, M., Tower, J., & Schwartz, E. C. (2021). Lifeguard turnover in aquatic and recreation centres: Perspectives from managers. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 30(1), 33–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416220983489>
- Carlson, C. M. (2016). *Speaking back to theory: Community development practices in the west region of Western Australia [Edith Cowan University]*.
- Cureton, K., & Frisby, W. (2011). Staff perspectives on how social liberal and neo-liberal values influence the implementation of leisure access policy. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2010.544665>
- Duncan, G., & Chapman, J. (2010). New millennium, new public management and the New Zealand model. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 69(3), 301–313. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.2010.00692.x>
- Edwards, M., Halligan, J., Horrigan, B., & Nicoll, G. (2012). *Public sector governance in Australia*. Australian National University E Press.
- Eime, R., Harvey, M. J. T., Charity, M., Casey, M., Westerbeek, H., & Payne, W. (2017). The relationship of sport participation to provision of sports facilities and socioeconomic status: A geographical analysis. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 41(3), 248–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12647>
- Eime, R. M., Young, J., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M., & Payne, W. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for adults: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-10-135>
- Engels, B. (2019). The historical rise and fall of community facility provision standards in the metropolitan planning of Melbourne. *Planning Perspectives*, 34(4), 693–724. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2018.1423637>
- Evetes, J. (2009). New professionalism and new public management: Changes, continuities and consequences. *Comparative Sociology*, 8(2), 247–266. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156913309X421655>
- Fatemi, M., & Behmanesh, M. R. (2012). New public management approach and accountability. *International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 42–49. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2236141>
- Flynn, N. (2002). Explaining the new public management: The importance of context. In K. McLaughlin, S. P. Osbourne, & E. Ferlie (Eds.), *New public management: Current trends and future prospects* (pp. 57–76). Routledge.
- Frisby, W., Thibault, L., & Kikulis, L. M. (2004). The organizational dynamics of under-managed partnerships in leisure service departments. *Leisure Studies*, 23(2), 109–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0261436042000224482>
- Gold, S. M. (1973). *Urban recreation planning*. Lee and Febiger.
- Gold, S. M. (1980). *Recreation planning and design*. McGraw-Hill.
- Grieve, J., & Sherry, E. (2012). Community benefits of major sport facilities: The Darebin International Sports Centre. *Sport Management Review*, 15(2), 218–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2011.03.001>

- Griffiths, T., Connor, T., Robertson, B., & Phelan, L. (2014). Is mayfield pool saved yet? Community assets and their contingent, discursive foundations. *Community Development Journal*, 49(2), 280–294. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bst039>
- Gruening, G. (2001). Origin and theoretical basis of new public management. *International Public Management Journal*, 4(1), 1–25. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7494\(01\)00041-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7494(01)00041-1)
- Grünig, R., & Kühn, R. (2013). *Successful decision-making: A systematic approach to complex problems* (3rd ed.). Springer.
- Halinen, A., Törnroos, J.-Å., & Elo, M. (2013). Network process analysis: An event-based approach to study business network dynamics. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 42(8), 1213–1222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2013.05.001>
- Hood, C. (1991). A public management for all seasons? *Public Administration*, 69(Spring), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x>
- Hood, C. (1995). The “new public management” in the 1980s: Variations on a theme. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 20(2-3), 93–109. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682\(93\)E0001-W](https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(93)E0001-W)
- Howat, G., Alikaris, J., March, H., & Howat, P. (2012). Health-related benefits: Their influence on loyalty and physical activity participation in Australian public aquatic centres. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 12(1/2), 73–92. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSM.2012.051253>
- Howat, G., Crilley, G., & Murray, D. (2005). Using performance measures to assess performance of indoor and outdoor aquatic centres. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 11(1), 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.5172/jmo.2005.11.1.6>
- Howat, G., Murray, D., & Crilley, G. (2005). Reducing measurement overload: Rationalizing performance measures for public aquatic centres in Australia. *Managing Leisure*, 10(2), 128–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13606710500146449>
- Iversen, E. B. (2015). Measuring sports facility utilisation by collecting performance information. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 20(5), 261–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2015.1090885>
- Iversen, E. B. (2017). Does size matter when public management tools meet (the voluntary) reality in sports facilities? *World Leisure Journal*, 59(1), 54–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2016.1277612>
- Johnson, J. (2000). The new public management in Australia. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 22(2), 345–368. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2000.11643455>
- Kalimullah, N. A., Ashraf Alam, K. M., & Ashaduzzaman, M. M. (2012). New public management: Emergence and principles. *Bangladesh University of Professionals*, 1(1), 1–22.
- Lapaley, I. (2008). The NPM agenda: Back to the future. *Financial Accountability & Management*, 24(1), 77–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0408.2008.00444.x>
- Lewi, H., & Nichols, D. (2014). “You never appreciate what you have until there is a chance you may lose it”. *Fabrications*, 24(1), 114–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10331867.2014.901140>
- Liguori, M., Sicilia, M., & Steccolini, I. (2012). Some like it Non-financial ... *Public Management Review*, 14(7), 903–922. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2011.650054>
- Limstrand, T. (2008). Environmental characteristics relevant to young people’s use of sports facilities: A review. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 18(3), 275–287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0838.2007.00742.x>
- Lodge, M., & Gill, D. (2011). Toward a New Era of administrative reform? The myth of post-NPM in New Zealand. *Governance*, 24(1), 141–166. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2010.01508.x>
- Maddock, K. (2015, 26-28 August). *Showcasing the latest in leisure facility design & function - learn from past planning for the future*. *Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, Melbourne, Australia*.
- Marriott, K. (2012). Aquatics and leisure: Looking to the future. *Australian Leisure Facilities Association Journal (ALFA)*, 6–8.
- Marriott, K., Tower, J., & McDonald, K. (2021). *Community leisure and recreation planning*. Routledge.
- McShane, I. (2006). Community facilities community building and local government - An Australian perspective. *Facilities*, 24), <https://doi.org/10.1108/02632770610666125>
- McShane, I. (2009). The past and future of local swimming pools. *Journal of Australian Studies*, 33(2), 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050902883405>
- Mercer, D., & Hamilton-Smith, E. (1980). *Recreation planning and social change in urban Australia*. Sorrett Publishing.
- Murdock, G. (1994). New times/hard times: Leisure, participation and the common good. *Leisure Studies*, 13(4), 239–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614369400390191>
- Parent, M. M. (2015). The organising committee’s perspective. In M. M. Parent, & J.-L. Chappellet (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sport event management* (pp. 43–64). Routledge.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.)

- Pitas, N. A., Mowen, A., Taff, B. D., Hickerson, B., & Graefe, A. (2022). Values, ideologies, attitudes, and preferences for relative allocations to park and recreation services. *Leisure Sciences*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2019.1656120>
- Preiss, B. (2015, February 7th). Community groups swim against the tide in a bid to save outdoor pools. *The Age Victoria*. <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/community-groups-swim-against-the-tide-in-a-bid-to-save-outdoor-pools-20150203-134mqe.html#ixzz411YaiCvK>
- Prins, R. G., Ball, K., Timperio, A., Salmon, J., Oenema, A., Brug, J., & Crawford, D. (2011). Associations between availability of facilities within three different neighbourhood buffer sizes and objectively assessed physical activity in adolescents. *Health & Place*, 17(6), 1228–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2011.07.012>
- Prins, R. G., van Empelen, P., te Velde, S. J., Timperio, A., van Lenthe, F. J., Tak, N. I., Crawford, D., Brug, J., & Oenema, A. (2010). Availability of sports facilities as moderator of the intention-sports participation relationship among adolescents. *Health Education Research*, 25(3), 489–497. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyq024>
- Prins, R. G., van Lenthe, F. J., Oenema, A., Mohnen, S. M., & Brug, J. (2012). Are neighbourhood social capital and availability of sports facilities related to sports participation among Dutch adolescents? *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 9(1), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-9-90>
- Reid, D. (2007). Leisure planning. In R. McCarville, & K. MacKay (Eds.), *Leisure for Canadians* (pp. 235–240). Venture.
- Reid, D. (2009). Rational choice, sense of place, and the community development approach to community leisure facility planning. *Leisure/Loisir*, 33(2), 511–536. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2009.9651451>
- Sallis, J. F., Floyd, M. F., Rodríguez, D. A., & Saelens, B. E. (2012). Role of built environments in physical activity, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. *Circulation*, 125(5), 729–737. <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.969022>
- Sayers, P. (2012). *Managing sport and leisure facilities: A guide to competitive tendering*. Taylor and Francis.
- SGS Economics and Planning. (2010). *Cost benefit analysis and economic contribution of community sport and recreation infrastructure*.
- Suddaby, R., & Viale, T. (2011). Professionals and field-level change: Institutional work and the professional project. *Current Sociology*, 59(4), 423–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392111402586>
- Tapper, J., & Kobayashi, K. (2018). 'It's a harsh fact of life with the RMA': Neo-liberalism and the realities of community sports facility development by the private sector in New Zealand. *Leisure Studies*, 282–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2017.1394361>
- Taylor, J. (2014). Organizational culture and the paradox of performance management. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 38(1), 7–22. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PMR1530-9576380101>
- Thibault, L., Kikulis, L. M., & Frisby, W. (2004). Partnerships between local government sports and leisure departments and the commercial sector: Changes, complexities and consequences. In T. Slack (Ed.), *The commercialisation of sport*. Routledge.
- Thomas, G. (2016). *How to do your case study* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Tower, J., McDonald, K., & Stewart, B. (2014). *Community benefits of victorian aquatic and recreation centres*. Victoria University. <http://www.aquaticsandrecreation.org.au/admin/ckeditor/kcfinder/upload/files/CommunityBenefitsofVictorianAquaticandRecreationCentres.pdf>
- VAGO. (2010). *Tendering and contracting in local government*. <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/240210-Tendering-full-report.pdf>
- VAGO. (2011). *Business planning for major capital works and recurrent services in local government*. <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20110914-Business-Planning.pdf>
- VAGO. (2016). *Local government service delivery: Recreational facilities*. https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/file_uploads/20160323-Rec-Facilities_8Lpv18Cc.pdf
- Veal, A. J. (1984). Planning for leisure: Alternative approaches. *World Leisure and Recreation*, 26(5), 17–24.
- Veal, A. J. (2009). *Open place planning standards in Australia: In search of origins. U-plan project paper 1* School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper 11, www.leisuresource.net
- Veal, A. J. (2011). Planning for leisure, sport, tourism and the arts: Goals and rationales. *World Leisure Journal*, 53(2), 119–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04419057.2011.580553>
- Veal, A. J. (2012). Leisure planning and partnering. *Australasian Parks and Leisure*, 15(2), 24–25.
- Veal, A. J. (2013). Open space planning standards in Australia: In search of origins. *Australian Planner*, 50(3), 224–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07293682.2012.739567>
- Veal, A. J. (2017). *Leisure sport and tourism, politics, policy and planning* (4th ed.). Cabi.
- Veal, A. J. (2020). Planning for open space and recreation. *Australian Planner (Online)*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07293682.2020.1739091>

- Veal, A. J., Darcy, S., & Lynch, R. (2013). *Australian leisure* (4th ed.). Pearson Australia.
- Victoria State Government. (2021). *Procurement*. Victoria State Government Retrieved 7th January 2021 from <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/strengthening-councils/procurement>
- Webster, E., & Harding, G. (2000). *Outsourcing public employment services: The Australian experience*.
- Yamamoto, H. (2003). *New public management - Japan's practice*. Institute for International Policy Studies.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publishing.
- Yin, R. K. (2012). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publishing.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publishing.