

Student 4: High Achieved

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

A description of an issue and the policy the action aims to influence.

In Hamilton, there is an economic exclusion of people that can't afford to swim at the public pools. With the Waikato River running right through the middle of Hamilton, many people choose to swim in the higher risk river because it's free, despite the fact many have died in its waters. In addition we have the third highest rates of drowning in the developed world. 108 people have died from drowning in NZ waters every year.

One of the human rights is that everyone is entitled to leisure time. Leisure time should be just that leisurely. If people are drowning whilst fulfilling their basic human right then I believe it is not a right that is being met.

I believe the Hamilton City Council should be encouraging Hamilton residents to swim in a safe environment by providing supervised pools that people can afford.

The policy I am trying to address is the price of the Hamilton Public Pools (specifically Gallagher's Aquatic Centre). The problem is that the 26m, 6 lane lap pool and about 15m toddler pool is a service not worthy of the \$6 adult entry fee and \$3 child entry fee. This problem is even more obvious when compared to other Council run pools around New Zealand, or even to the HCC run pools – Waterworld. Waterworld offers a 25m pool, 50m pool, dive pool and outside pool for the same entry fees as Gallagher's. I want this issue to be brought to light to the Council, and use social actions to change it.

This is an issue of economic exclusion, and it is unfair for people that can't afford it to be hindered in their ability to swim in a safe environment. This exclusion means that people are being hindered to get an essential requirement, especially being surrounded by water, to save their lives.

Develop a plan for social action that considers ethical implications

First, I want to gather heaps of information. I want to go to the Council and get the pool expenditures, as well as go to other pools, get the same thing and compare them. I want to see how people in the community think of this issue, therefore distributing a survey to make people aware. I want to go down to the river and talk to people swimming, asking why they don't go to the pools instead. I also want to research other pool prices in New Zealand and drowning statistics. With all this information, I should be able to compile a convincing letter to the Council, which will hopefully influence the policy by making the Council aware of the issue (at least planting a seed) for potentially eventually getting the prices changed. Within a petition, it is also highlighting the issue to the Council but by backing a letter with a petition, it's showing the Council many people know of the issue within the community. It would also be good to get support from organisations, such as Water Safety and Trust Waikato, for the same reasons as above.

These actions are definitely legal, but there are some ethical steps I will need to consider.

- Gathering information and using it – With websites, especially information used in a letter, I will need to reference correctly and make sure there is no plagiarism. Within a survey, I want it to be online and formal, so the first question will need to ask whether we are able to use quotes/comments, and because it's online it won't be forced upon people. I must make sure the questions are not biased and most of them are left open so that people can say what they think.
- Talking to the Council – This will probably be mostly via email, so all interactions need to be worded formally and politely. I must ask if I can use their name in my report.
- Petition – I want to create a petition to put out in our pool area (family business). I will need to follow the Council's petition policy, meaning a small paragraph explaining the issue, then spaces for people to enter their name, signature, and an address. This needs at least 100 signatures.

- Lobbying – Same procedures as talking to the Council. (Also getting teacher to proofread).

Justify the selected social actions taking into account the points of view, values and perspectives of self and others

I think this social action (petition and letter to the Council) is a good way to make them realise that this issue affects a lot of people. I believe that the council needs to be made aware of the issues many of their residents are experiencing and also they need to realise the implications for poor swimmers in a country surrounded by water and with many lakes and rivers. I also work with swimmers at my Mum’s swim school but I myself can’t swim as it is too expensive. I value the right of all individuals to be able to save themselves if they get into difficulties in water and by making the prices cheaper this may actually be a reality for all Hamilton residents. I also value a safe swimming environment and do not believe the river is safe for most people as the currents are strong. My point of view and values are shaped by a humanitarian ideology as I am concerned about the Hamilton residents not being able to access a service that is vital to their well-being.

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I’ve been able to talk to parents of the swimmers and hear their opinions, which caused me to want to address this issue in the first place. They don’t like the expense and think it should be free or at least cheaper. Most wondered where their rates money went to and thought it could go more on the pools especially with the high drowning rates. One parent said “We have such an appalling rate of water deaths in New Zealand and we need to fix it. If they made the pool sessions cheaper more people may be able to have access and the deaths may decline.” These parents value cheaper access to swimming services for their children and their rates being used for important social aspects like cheaper pool entry. The parents have a capitalist ideology as they are concerned about the financial side of using the pool. Their viewpoints are invaluable in trying to convince the council that the policy needs changing.

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The council disagrees with my social action as they believe that the expense of the pool is justified and much more money from the council is used to upkeep the pools than what is brought in from people using the pool..... They acknowledged that learning to swim was vital for children but said they felt 6 dollars for potentially all day at a pool could give people plenty of opportunity to practise the skills needed to swim and it was actually good value for the money. The council value keeping the community happy in many areas and therefore they have to prioritise the rates money. Their point of view and values are shaped by a capitalist ideology. They are expected to balance the books and whilst providing funding for a range of things in Hamilton. They must share out the funding equitably and they believe that the council already provides ample finances for the pools.....

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An account of personal participation in planning and carrying out the social action.

Date	What I did
May 2nd	Chatted casually to parents at the swim school where I work to see if the prices are an issue. All agreed they were expensive. Set up interviews with three parents for next week
May 3rd	Emailed the council to see if I could make speak with someone over the pool prices. Made an online survey on google docs as well as a paper survey.
May 5th	Sent google docs link to friends and family and put it on my facebook page. Asked others to send it around. Printed off the survey for form classes at school.
May 7th	Delivered the survey to staff pigeonholes and spoke in staff meeting about what I wanted done with the surveys
May 9th	Collected the surveys back and collated information. Interviewed parents (Table continues)

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