

Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety

Survey results for Maroondah City Council

February 2023 | Victorian Auditor-General's Office

About this report

As part of our performance audit *Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety*, we compared councils' progress in implementing safety regulations for private pools and spas. We collected data from councils about private pools and spas in their municipalities.

This report shows your council's survey results against your council group and the broader sector.

We refer to private pools and spas as 'pools' throughout this report for simplicity.

Interpreting the data in this report

We recommend that you read our performance audit report *Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety*. You can find this on our website:

<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/regulating-private-pool-and-spa-safety>.

We encourage you to examine your survey results in consideration of the findings in our report and contextual factors that are specific to your council.

Survey methodology

In September 2022, we surveyed Victoria's 79 local councils to collect data on their progress in implementing the regulations. We received responses from all 79 councils.

We asked councils about:

- the costs of implementing a pool and spa registration system
- the information recorded in their registration systems
- the number of estimated and registered pools and spas
- compliance and noncompliance certificates they have received
- staff resourcing.

To improve the quality of our data, we verified survey responses with councils that reported anomalies or inconsistent results. For example, totals that were less than the sum of their inputs.

This report uses the updated data after verifying these results.

Where councils were unable to provide answers for some survey questions, we have excluded them. We note these exclusions where they apply.

The data in this report is current as of September 2022 unless otherwise specified.

Council groups

We grouped councils based on the number of registered pools they have for comparison. The groups are:

- low (councils with less than registered 250 pools and spas)
- medium (councils that have between 250 and 4,000 registered pools and spas)
- high (councils with more than 4,000 registered pools and spas).

Number of pools in Victoria

Safety regulations require owners to register their pools with their local council.

Councils estimate that there are 200,783 pools in Victoria. Of these, 174,715 are registered with councils.

We grouped councils based on the number of registered pools they have for comparison.

The groups are:

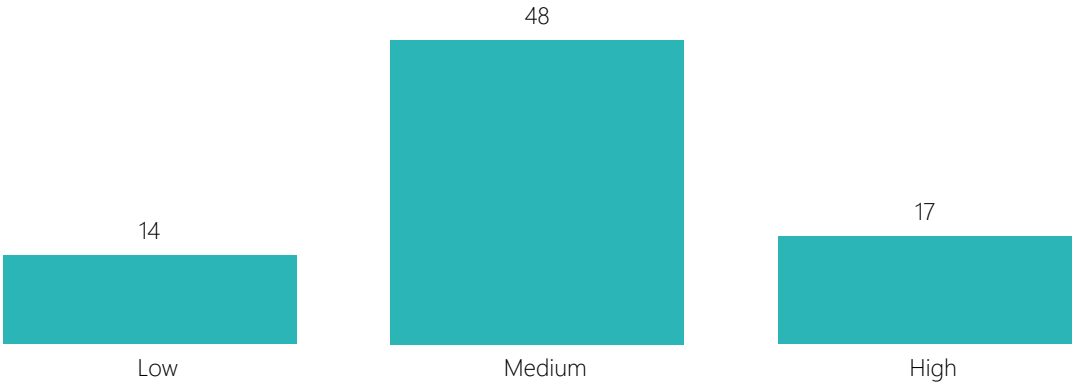
- low (less than 250 pools)
- medium (between 250 and 4,000 pools)
- high (more than 4,000 pools).

Your council has an estimated 4,713 pools, of which 4,426 are registered. Your council is in the high group.

Average estimated and registered pools in each group

Council group	Number of councils in each group	Average registered pools	Average estimated pools
Medium	48	1,407	1,591
Low	14	144	200
High	17	6,187	7,154

Number of councils in each group



Unregistered pools

If an owner does not register their pool with the council, the council cannot track if it meets safety standards.

Of the estimated 200,783 pools in Victoria, 13% (26,068) are not registered.

Your council

6%
Unregistered pools

4,426
Registered pools

4,713
Estimated pools

Your group (high)

11%
Average unregistered pools

6,187
Average registered pools

7,154
Average estimated pools

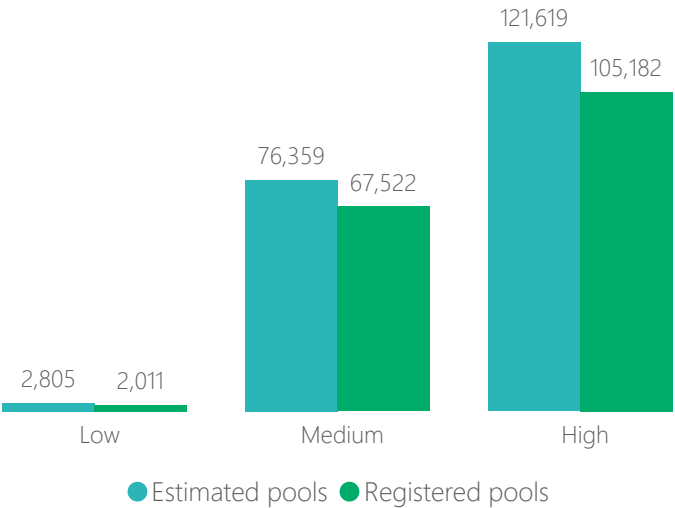
Sector

13%
Unregistered pools

174,715
Registered pools

200,783
Estimated pools

Total estimated and registered pools by council group



Percentage of estimated pools that are unregistered by council group

Council group	Unregistered pools
▲ Low	21%
Medium	11%
High	11%

Finding pools

Using a combination of tools, 70 councils have a high or medium certainty over their estimated number of pools.

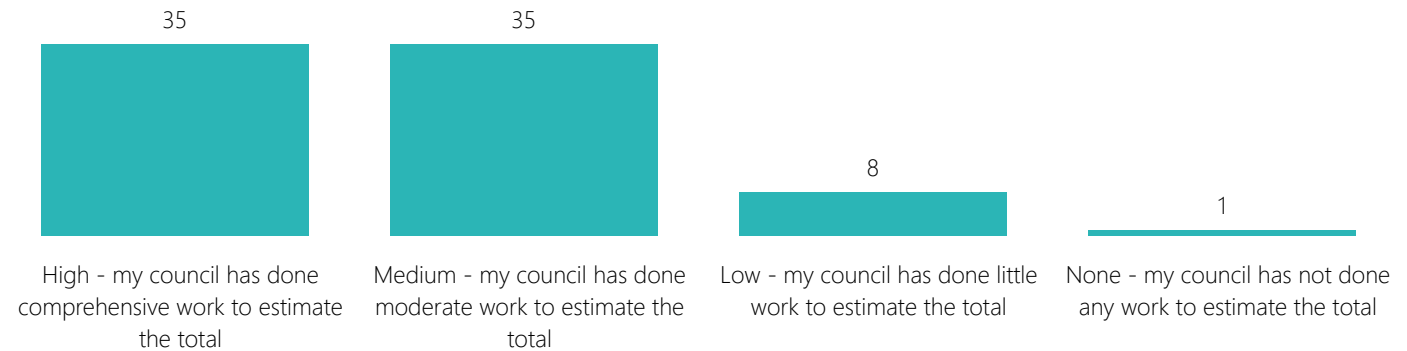
The most common tools used to identify pools were:

- building permit records
- aerial photography
- existing pool register records
- enforcement records
- geographic information system mapping.

Note: We amended the wording on responses that did not fall under the multiple-choice options for ease of reading. The amendments do not change the meaning of the original responses.

Your council reported that it has a high degree of certainty that your estimated number of pools is accurate.

Councils' degree of certainty over their estimates



Your council reported using these tools to identify pools:

Aerial photography
Existing pool and spa register
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping
Historical building permits
Prior building enforcement records
Real estate photos and planning permits

Registration systems

Safety regulations require councils to maintain records of all pools in a register.

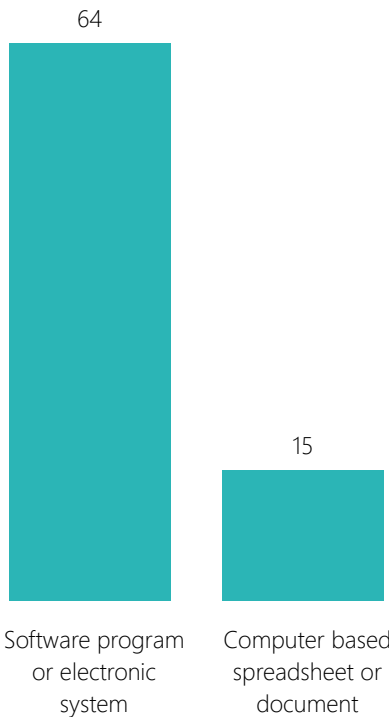
All 79 councils reported having a pool register.

Of the 79 councils, 64 use a software program or electronic system as their pool register. The remaining 15 councils use a computer-based spreadsheet.

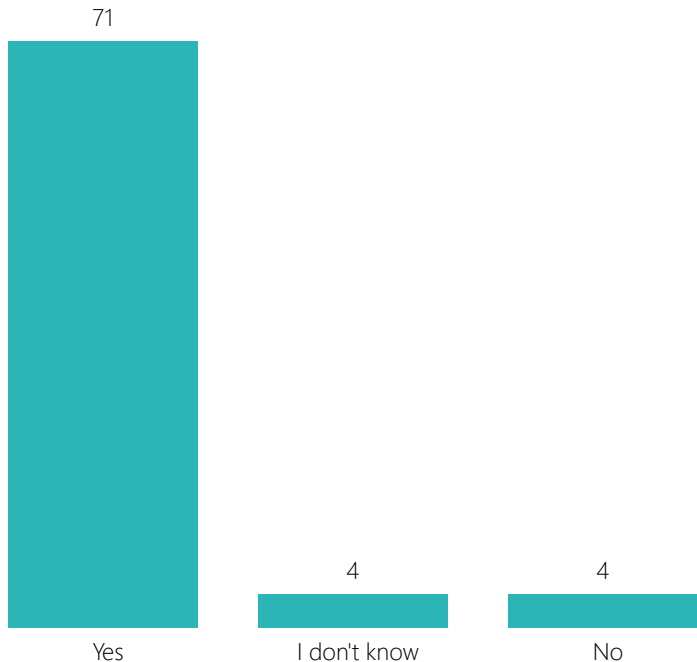
However, some councils do not know if their pool registers record all the information prescribed by the regulations.

Your council has a pool register that is a software program or electronic system. Your council reported that its register contains all prescribed information required by the safety regulations.

What format is your council's register?



Does your register contain all prescribed information that is required by the safety regulations?



Registration systems

Of the 64 councils that use a software program or electronic system as a pool register, 50 councils used their existing systems instead of purchasing a new one.

The average upfront cost of purchasing a new system (\$13,645) was lower than modifying existing systems (\$19,146).

Councils should consider their needs when they determine if a new system should be purchased or not.

Your council reported that you are using an existing council system for your pool register. The average cost of making changes to existing systems for a pool register is \$19,146. Your council spent \$20,000.

Costs for a new system

14
Councils bought a new system
\$13,645
Average cost
\$0
Lowest cost
\$40,000
Highest cost

Costs of making changes to an existing system

36
Councils used existing system
\$19,146
Average cost
\$0
Lowest cost
\$82,000
Highest cost

Was the software program or electronic system newly purchased?



Outstanding certificates

The regulations require owners to:

- get an inspector to certify their barriers meet safety standards
- lodge the compliance certificate with their local council.

Compliance certificates for pools built on or before 30 June 1994 were due by 1 June 2022. These make up 27% of all registered pools in Victoria.

As of September 2022, Victorian councils have only received 56% of these certificates. The backlog will make it difficult for councils to manage future certification deadlines.

Of the 4,426 pools registered at your council, 1,073 were due to submit compliance certificates by 1 June 2022. As of September 2022, your council has received 69% of these certificates.

Percentage of compliance certificates received of those that were due by 1 June 2022

Your council

69%

Your group (high)

51%

Sector

56%

Compliance certificates due by 1 June 2022 in the sector

Sector

27%

Registered pools in this age category

46,465

Pools built on or before 30 June 1994

174,715

Registered pools

Note: The results on this page exclude one metropolitan council and one large shire council because they could not give us this information.

Noncompliance certificates

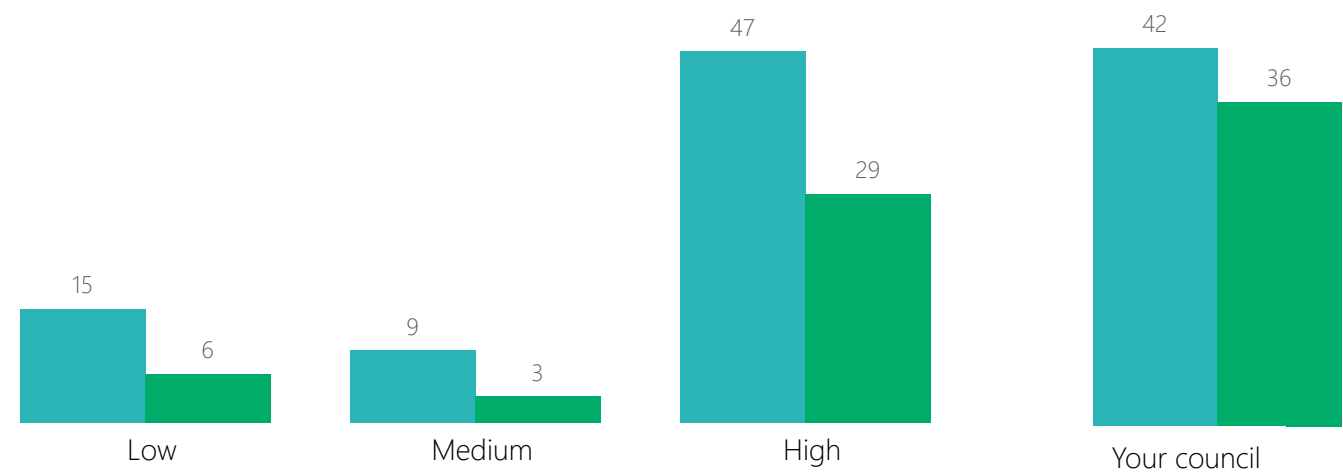
For this report, a noncompliance certificate is considered addressed if the owner submits a compliance certificate for the pool or if the council considers the pool decommissioned.

As of September 2022, Victorian councils received 1,440 noncompliance certificates. Of these, 49% had not been addressed.

At your council, 14% of noncompliance certificates have not been addressed.

Average number of certificates received and addressed by council group

● Certificates received ● Certificates addressed



Note: The results on this page exclude one large shire council because it could not give us this information.

Resourcing adequacy

We asked councils how many full-time equivalent (FTE) hours they spend per week on work around the pool safety regulations, and if this was adequate.

Only 5 councils reported that their resourcing was always adequate to complete tasks in a timely manner.

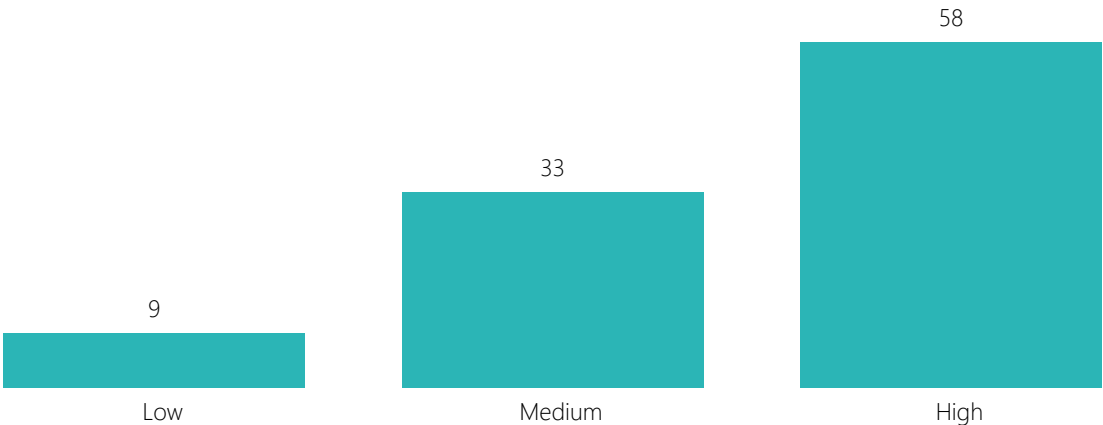
Sixty-three councils reported that they were either under some or significant pressure.

Your council reported that staff are under some pressure to complete tasks in a timely manner.

Resource adequacy by council group

Is your resourcing adequate for your council's needs?	Low	Medium	High	Total
Never — staff are under significant pressure to complete tasks in a timely manner	7	17	7	31
Sometimes — staff are under some pressure to complete tasks in a timely manner	3	21	8	32
Mostly — staff are mostly able to complete tasks in a timely manner	3	7	1	11
Always — staff are always able to complete tasks in a timely manner	1	3	1	5
Total	14	48	17	79

Number of registered pools per full-time equivalent (FTE) hour by council group



Resourcing the new regulations

Councils across Victoria spend an average of 52 FTE hours per week on work around the pool safety regulations.

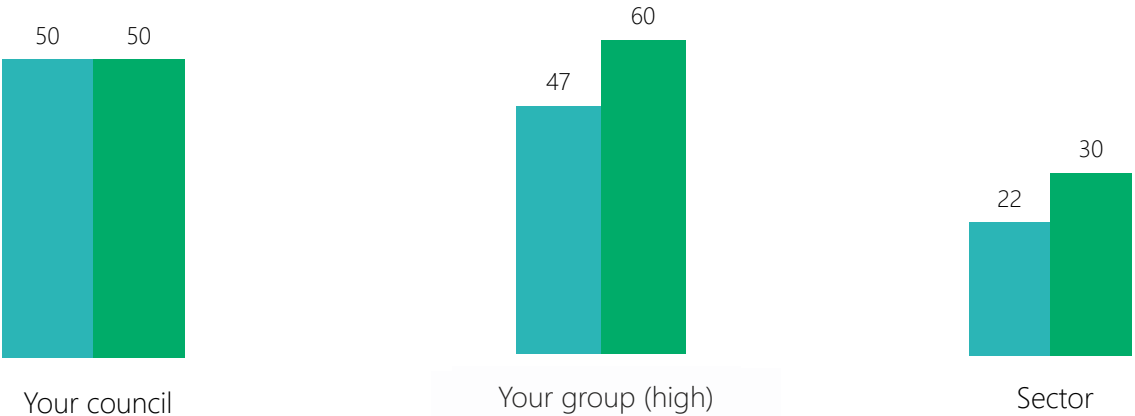
On average, councils spend:

- 30 FTE hours on admin tasks
- 22 FTE hours on technical tasks.

Your council reported that it spends 50 FTE hours on administrative tasks and 50 FTE on technical tasks for implementing the safety regulations per week.

Average FTE hours for your council, your group (high) and the sector

● Average technical FTE ● Average admin FTE



Acronyms and abbreviations

Compliance certificate: a certificate of pool and spa barrier compliance

FTE: full-time equivalent

Noncompliance certificate: a certificate of pool and spa barrier non-compliance

Pools: private pools and spas