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Property

LIFTOUT



Oakleigh pool in hot water

Travis Parnaby

THE Oakleigh pool will be cold comfort for swimmers this summer with the pool facing possible shut-downs on hot days.

Monash Council told the *Leader* last week that the pool's filtration system would struggle to cope as patronage increased in searing heat.

New Monash Mayor Joy Banerji said the council would closely monitor the pool's water quality.

"If water quality cannot be maintained within health regulations, the pool will be closed until the water recovers," Cr Banerji said.

In a further blow, Cr Banerji also said none of the present infrastructure at the 49-year-old pool site was "salvageable".

The pool has faced an uncertain future since 2002, when the Community Life Action Group (CLAG) led a campaign to save it from closure.

Cr Banerji said the council would need to spend at least \$4 million to refurbish the unheated pool and confirmed it was a "leading priority" for the new councillors.

The council already has \$1.5 million set aside in its budget for works at the

Park Rd complex. But that price could jump to \$10 million for an indoor/outdoor complex with heated pools, which is favoured by the Oakleigh Pool Steering Committee.

New Oakleigh ward Cr Gerry Kottek said the cost difference between what the council had allocated and what was needed was "huge".

"\$6 million is a big gap," Cr Kottek said.

"We need a facility that is safe and healthy."

Prior to the election, the Oakleigh Pool Steering Committee, which included Cr Stephen Dimopoulos, had "made some progress" on a master plan for the site.

Despite a hefty price tag, Cr Dimopoulos said a heated indoor pool was the way forward.

"Unfortunately, outdoor pools don't attract a lot of people. There aren't enough hot days," Cr Dimopoulos said.

"Let's not forget that it was built in 1956 and if the previous council had maintained it we would be in a better shape."

"I don't think it's good enough to say 'let's not do anything'. We can do something."

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