

Canberra cool on Oakleigh pool bid

MONASH JOURNAL 28 AUGUST 2006

By Cameron Lucadou-Wells

THE Federal Government has poured cold water on a plea to help retain a pool in Oakleigh.

Chisholm MP Anna Burke wrote to federal Sport Minister Rod Kemp for advice on what funding would be available to keep the Oakleigh pool afloat.

In a letter sent to the minister on August 18, Ms Burke said she had lobbied Monash Council to keep the pool, which if retained, would need an upgrade.

In a statement issued to the media last week, Ms Burke said that to secure the funding, the council had to commit to keeping the pool.

"The community has clearly stated that it wants to keep the Oakleigh pool and diving tower. "Council should respect its wishes."

She said an upgrade should include a heated pool so that it could be used beyond the summer months.

A spokeswoman for Ms Burke said \$2 million of federal sports grants promised during the 2004 election was doled out for sporting facilities in 2004-05.

A spokesman for Mr Kemp



Money talks: Stephen Dimopoulos is open to outside funding for the Oakleigh pool site.

said the grants were a one-off program. He ruled out the possibility of the Government providing funding for a pool.

The program granted tax-deductibility status to sports clubs raising money for facilities, he said.

"We don't have an [ongoing] facilities program; that is the responsibility of local and state governments."

Oakleigh councillor Stephen Dimopoulos, who is on the

council's pool redevelopment steering committee, said a proposal for state or federal funding could not be made until the pool's future was decided in October.

Cr Dimopoulos said that taking into account the possibility of external funding, the committee would propose several pool site options for public consultation.

"With \$3.5 million [budgeted by the council for the pool site], you can't do a lot with that."

Oakleigh state MP Ann Barker, a founding member of pro-pool lobbyists Community Life Action Group, said she would apply for State Government funding for an upgraded Oakleigh pool, but only with the council's backing.

"If the council genuinely accepts and acts on the community's wishes to retain the pool, then it has the option of applying to the State Government for funds to complement its own financial contribution to the pool's development.

"Like any funding application to the State Government, the council would need to provide a detailed and fully costed plan," she said.

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Your View

Letters should be emailed to journal@cnvic.fairfax.com.au or posted to PO Box 4305, Wantima South, 3152. All letters for publication must contain the author's name, full address and telephone number. Preference is given to concise submissions of 220 words or less.

Best to dip out

IN response to David Crisfield's letter, Inside Job (*Journal*, August 14), which suggested Oakleigh be made into a complex better than Glen Waverley, I say that many residents feel Oakleigh's pool is already better

than Glen Waverley's. Oakleigh has extensive grounds and large, shady trees, and the open air is a major bonus.

My family feels sick within minutes of entering the steel and glass-walled complex at Glen Waverley because of the build-up of chlorine

fumes, and the idea of swimming there is ludicrous.

The crowded pools at Glen Waverley resemble human soup with no space for actual swimming.

My husband is especially sensitive to chlorine fumes and can't even stay inside the complex to watch the children souping around.

Give us Oakleigh Pool, however outdated, any day. How much nicer to walk to the pools, sit on the lawn under an old tree and read the paper while the kids play rather than cram into a car and drive on a hot day, just to huddle on a damp bench inside a fumey industrial-looking complex and watch the kids be pushed about.

All most residents want is the pools and change rooms restored to the condition they would have been in had any decent maintenance been carried out in the past 10 years.

If there's any money left after that, solar heating for the toddler pools would certainly attract younger families back to the Oakleigh pool.

Brenda Dibble, Oakleigh

the 14,000 entrants compare positively with the number of entrants to the multi-million-dollar aquatic centre.

Surely Cr Tom Morrissey was not surprised that the research revealed "1950s-style, cold water outdoor pools were not attractive to recreational swimmers".

Other research will most certainly reveal that, in 2006, people are not attracted to driving unheated vehicles or living in homes without space heating. It is painfully obvious that Oakleigh pool requires a total refurbishment and adequate heating.

As the State Government is benefiting from the insidious gambling tax from Monash residents, it is reasonable that it form a partnership with Monash Council and make a positive, long-term contribution.

Ronald W. Millett, South Oakleigh

Not so warm and fuzzy

ON August 3, I received my rate and valuation notice complete with a warm, fuzzy letter from Mayor Joy Banerji advising me that, overall, properties in Monash had increased by an average of 7.41 per cent.

I was interested in the graph that showed Wheelers Hill housing having an average increase of about 9 per cent.

My rates have increased by 24 per cent.

If the average increase in Wheelers Hill is about 9 per cent, then certain parts of Wheelers Hill must have no increase, which I very much doubt.

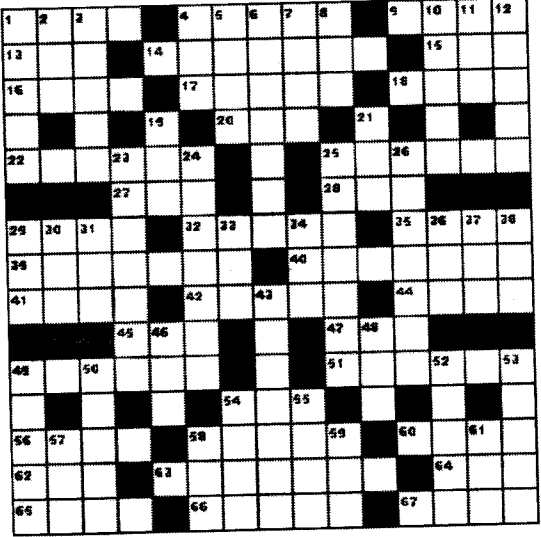
Name supplied, Wheelers Hill

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