

Pool referendum vote vetoed

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By Rosemary Bolger

MONASH councillors have sunk a proposal to conduct a public vote on the future of Oakleigh pool.

Cr Craig Shiell wants votecards sent to all Monash ratepayers that would ask them to choose their preferred option to replace the pool, which was permanently shut in June.

The council has invited public feedback on four options, ranging from a water play facility to a 50-metre and diving pool.

The public has until February 26 to submit feedback, and the council is set to make a decision in May.

Cr Shiell said the consultation process was inadequate and most residents were unlikely to see the ads calling for feedback.

"If it's going to impact on all ratepayers, I think they should have a say."

He said the vote could be done for less than \$50,000 if combined with the rates mail-out.

But the plan has failed to gain the support of fellow councillors on all sides of the pool debate.

Cr Charlotte Baines laughed off the vote suggestion.

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Cr Stephen Dimopoulos, a

strong supporter of Oakleigh pool, said: "We don't need a referendum because we know we want the pool".

Cr Geoff Lake defended the

current consultation process as "free and open".

Mayor Tom Morrissey also criticised the plan as unnecessary and expensive.

Cr Shiell declared he would continue to push for the vote. "People against the idea might be the people who fear they may get a bad result."

Three councillors could not be contacted before deadline.