

# Public in favour of pool revamp

By Cameron Lucadou-Wells

A BROAD cross-section of Oakleigh's community want the retention and repair of Oakleigh's pool, despite claims by the council a new pool would have a longer life.

The message from residents at an Oakleigh pool stakeholders' meeting last Thursday was the same as that delivered at last August's public meeting — which led the council to embark upon community consultation on the pool's future.

Attending the stakeholders' meeting last week were about 50 representatives of community groups, including schools, sporting groups, Community Life Action Group, Monash Ratepayers Association and Monash Youth Reference Group.

Four options for the Oakleigh pool were presented to the public for discussion, and there was an overwhelming consensus for one: a rehabilitated 50-metre pool and diving pool.

The majority also urged for



**Have a seat?:** The pool has been left to deteriorate.

the inclusion of a shallow-water pool for seniors and children.

A 25-metre replacement pool or a splash pad water park gained little support.

Community Life Action Group spokeswoman Julie Clearwater was pleased the council was consulting the community.

"People were overwhelmingly in favour of keeping an outdoor pool."

She said she was initially concerned community groups

would be swayed by a "negative" introduction to the meeting by council officers Don Cameron and Ian Swan and aquatic consultant Michael King.

Mr Cameron said a rehabilitated pool would last 25 years, compared to a new pool's lifetime of 50 years.

Mr King warned the community had to choose a pool that was suitable for the next 40 years. Chairman of the council's pool steering committee Stephen Dimopoulos said the meeting's success had restored the community's faith in the consultation process.

"I just sat back and felt a weight lift off my shoulders, as I saw community members take some responsibility off us and take ownership."

Written submissions for Oakleigh pool's future close next Monday.

The formal public consultation process continues with speak-outs next month, with a final report delivered to the council by May.



**Brighter future?:** Oakleigh community groups inspect the pool site last Thursday.

Picture: Lucy Di Paolo

## Fewer at the pool in summer

ATTENDANCES at Monash Aquatic Recreation Centre have decreased this summer, despite the closure of Oakleigh pool last June.

Patronage in December was about 62,000, down by 4500 in the corresponding period of last year.

The council is expecting January's figures to be 4000 less than the corresponding time last year.

Monash Mayor Tom Morrissey said attendances, especially on weekends, were driven by prevailing weather conditions.

"The effect of the closure of the Oakleigh pool cannot be assessed with any accuracy."

Weather bureau figures for these months for Moorabbin Airport show little difference in average temperatures for the past two summers.

December 2006 had a slightly cooler average temperature (25 degrees) to December 2007 (26.5). January 2006's average was slightly warmer (27.4) than January 2005 (27 degrees). But there was less rainfall (73.2 millimetres) between December and January compared with the previous summer (127.4 millimetres).

Community Life Action Group spokeswoman Julie Clearwater said she knew former Oakleigh pool users who still didn't go to the MARC, but was reluctant to draw further significance from the figures.



## Govt urged to donate land

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than a kilometre away.

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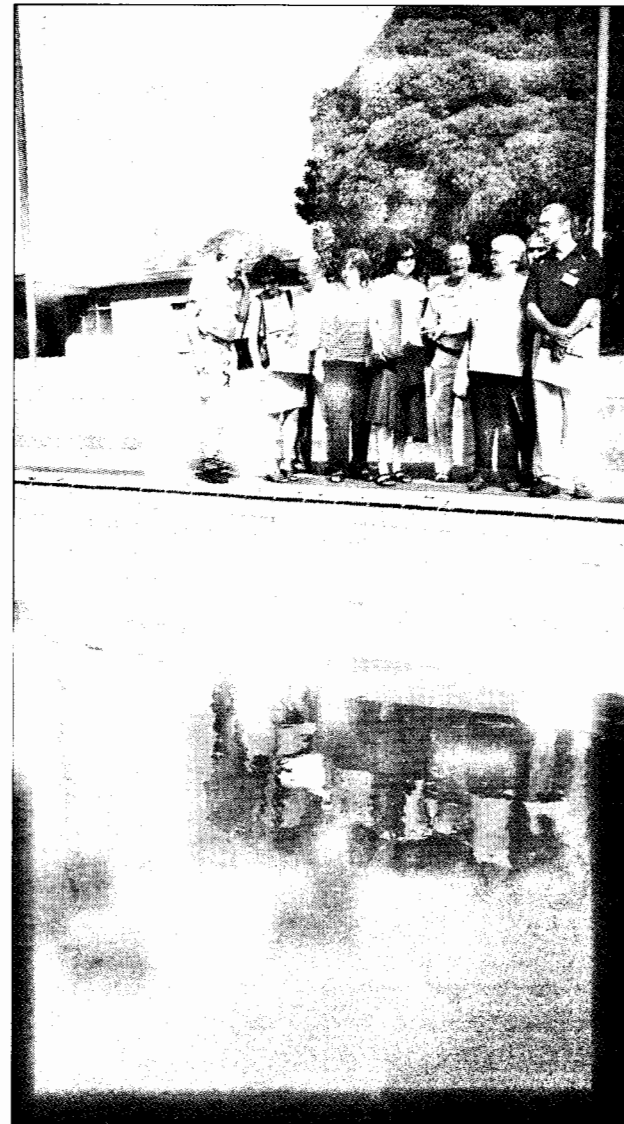
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