

Residents impatient over project delays

IS it just coincidence Oakleigh's major projects seem to be held up in endless delay?

Residents have been frustrated by the lack of progress on the Oakleigh courthouse redevelopment, the Oakleigh pool revamp and car parking solutions for the Oakleigh town centre.

Last week, the council revealed it spent \$1.23 million for a residence adjoining the Atkinson Street-Palmerston Grove car park.

The council plans to convert the two sites into a multistorey car park and create 203 extra parking spaces.

The latest plan comes four years after the council considered reports for more car parking.

In 2004, Home Time Residential Properties was granted a permit to develop a three-deck car park on council land in Chester Street.

No work on the project has started, with the permit set to expire in April.

Community Life Action Group spokeswoman Julie Clearwater said the future of Oakleigh pool was discussed in 2002.

With consultation on options continuing now, she said: "It looks like we're going around in circles and not doing much."

Developer New Hope Foundation is yet to begin work on the proposed Oakleigh courthouse community centre.

The courthouse was first mooted as a community centre in 1999, but the project has made little progress.

NHF was named as the courthouse's new developers last November, but is still waiting for a promised \$350,000 funding from the State Government.

Cr Stephen Dimopoulos said he agreed the projects had "taken a while" but the problems were not specific to Oakleigh — Glen Waverley's Bogong Avenue multi-deck car park had a similar gestation period.

"I reckon it's just that in Oakleigh, everyone's quite vocal and make it known.

"All big projects take some time, it's just a local government issue."

Cr Gerry Kottek said there was no "evil" conspiracy against Oakleigh.

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Saving litres: council looking for new level of pool efficiency

THERE is growing pressure for the revamped Oakleigh pool site to be water efficient.

At this month's meeting of pool stakeholders, Monash Council recreation services manager Ian Swan said none of the four options being considered for the

site was very water efficient.

He admitted that future water restrictions might mean a splash-pad water park would have to be shut down.

He said 20,000 litres of water were cycled through a pool such as Monash Aquatic and

Recreation Centre at least once a day for filtering.

In a statement last week, Mr Swan indicated the water efficiencies of the options would be improved.

"The current climate and drought issue means we will have

to factor new water conservation management issues into the chosen option's design," he stated.

Pool steering committee chairman Cr Stephen Dimopoulos said water conservation couldn't be ignored, despite the added

cost of green technologies.

"It is my view and, I think, the committee's view that we want to go down the path of green technologies."

He said solar heating had been explored but was found too expensive and not effective

enough during cooler months.

Community Life Action Group spokeswoman Julie Clearwater said water-saving strategies could include rainwater tanks that could harvest from the abutting Oakleigh Recreation Centre roof.

Youth affairs so close to young ambassador's heart

MONASH JOURNAL FEB 26 2007

By Cameron Lucadou-Wells

SANKARAN Kasynathan hasn't wasted time when it comes to putting his stamp on the world.

Mr Kasynathan, 23, instigated Monash Council's newly established young persons reference group, and was among the 15 inaugural members appointed last Tuesday.

He has warned he wants the group to be a strong, active participant — not a bystander.

"I fear the council may narrow our capacity and we'll be referred to only when the council needs us.

"I foresee a great potential for us to put forward our own ideas."

He was unimpressed that he and other members weren't

invited to Tuesday's council meeting for the naming of the group members, and is impatient for the group to start work. "We'll see how it evolves. I'm happy and excited about meeting the other members and sharing different ideas.

"Hopefully, we have enough autonomy."

He represented young people at this month's Oakleigh pool stakeholders' meeting, and was pleased with the consultation.

He said most young people favoured the rehabilitation of Oakleigh's 50-metre pool, diving pool and learners' pool.

"After meeting with groups like CLAG [Community Life Action Group], I've started to think of the possibilities of forming a group independent to the council."

Among his ideas is to promote youth employment schemes.

"There needs to be closer ties between businesses and young people, particularly for work experience in Year 10," Mr Kasynathan said.

Part-time jobs were crucial for students and young people, especially with the "rent crisis" and rising study costs.

The young persons reference group is one of several projects on the go for Mr Kasynathan.

He reports for the State Government's Youth Central website, is a Youth Affairs Council Victoria board member, and has begun work as an electorate officer for Mt Waverley MP Maxine Morand, where he aims to strengthen her relationship with young people.



Young voice: Sankaran Kasynathan is getting active in public affairs. Picture: Ted Kloszynski

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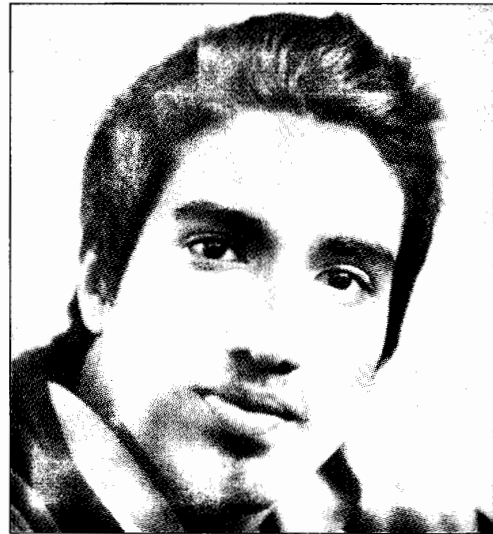
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rox Community Fun Run/Walk on Kids Camps. The annual event, in th and runs along the Jells Park metre run or walk. Prizes and r.citylifechurch.com/funrun or

Picture: Julie Bowyer

Pool options

MONASH Council has presented four possible options for the Oakleigh Pool site and is currently consulting residents.

The council held a stakeholders' meeting on February 16 at which they overwhelming

supported not only the retention of the diving pool and 50-metre pool but also a shallow pool for young children and seniors, as reported in your paper last week.

From your report I would like to further comment on the retention and repair of the current 50-metre pool versus a new pool with a longer intended life.

A new pool at an extra \$810,000 is certainly tempting and as ratepayers and residents we all want the most cost-effective and long-term practical result. However, there are some drawbacks with a new pool that may not be immediately obvious.

The pool would be built over the existing shell as it is not planned to demolish the old pool. This means a new pool would be smaller than the present one, have seven lanes rather than eight and the pool depth would be shallower (around 1.6 metres as opposed to the current 2.1). It would no longer be safe to dive from the deep end of the pool and limit the use of the pool to non-competitive swimming and make a new pool a far less attractive option.

One of Melbourne's oldest and most successful outdoor pools, Fitzroy Pool, was built in 1908. It has survived various updates, including the installation of a filtration system in the 1930s, heating in 1987 and major shell repairs and reconstruction in 2004. It is going from strength to strength and with thought and determination Oakleigh Pool will do the same.

Julie Clearwater, Oakleigh

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