

Your View

MONASH JOURNAL Vision short-sighted

I READ with interest Monash councillor Gerry Kottek's vision for a tram network instead of a train link from Huntingdale to Rowville via Monash University.

Cr Kottek asked the question: "How much light-rail might you get for the same money?" I believe the question that Cr Kottek should have asked is: "Which mode of transport would be the best economically viable option to deal with capacity challenges in the long-term future?"

The Wellington Road corridor requires a heavy-rail backbone, especially for this large area of Melbourne that has been growing for decades and will grow considerably more as we head towards 2030.

Overall capacity of a light-rail line is about one-third of a heavy-rail line, as a train can carry about 10 times as many passengers as a tram.

I believe any possible cost savings for light-rail would not be economically sound in the long-term as more light-rail vehicles would need to be bought to deal with capacity and what you'd get in return was travel times similar to the existing SmartBus.

A light-rail vision is just as short-sighted as the SmartBus vision.

I urge Cr Kottek to read the pre-feasibility study conducted by Knox Council in 2004, which concluded that while light-rail had certain merits, it would not provide major travel time improvements.

Matthew Billman, Oakleigh South

Murky process

TO the community of Oakleigh, in relation to the Oakleigh pool decision, I offer to anyone interested my files, reports, emails, letters, handwritten notes and anything I have for their scrutiny. They will

18 JUNE 2007

show a passion, commitment, manipulation, untruths, bias, etc, from many who have contributed to the final outcome. I waited until all consultations and processes were concluded before speaking at council last week.

I supported the vote on the basis that both CLAG and ALP branch members, and other members of the community interested in the site, were duded by the previous ALP-controlled council, which failed to advise the community in its last term of office that it was working on another option which did not respect the former resolution to reinstate the pool. I am disappointed that only 1.5 per cent of the community engaged in the [consultation] process. I'm also disappointed that we are refitting an old pool. I am happy to see a new pool for toddlers with a beached area and some modern water-play components, and appropriate change facilities, heating and shading. The community appeared split on the need for a diving pool, and I would have preferred to see any forthcoming State Government funds used to lessen the need for land sales to fund the pool.

In the end, no matter the means, the most passionate 1 per cent have won the day. It is expected the pool will be completed in 2009. I urge the silent 99 per cent to use and enjoy this facility when it arrives, as no one can doubt that we do indeed have a unique space in this part of Oakleigh.

**Cr Denise McGill
Oakleigh Ward**

Letters should be emailed to journal@airfax.com.au or posted to PO Box 4305, Wantirna 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. Published letters may be reproduced by the *Journal*.

Oakleigh's battle to stop the closure of its outdoor pool was won last week, but what type of person devotes hundreds of hours to saving a community icon? CAMERON LUCADOU-WELLS spoke to the woman who helped lead the community fight.

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Non-joiner galvanised Oakleigh community

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Ms Clearwater was softly-spoken, even a passive voice of opposition — in contrast to the public fury that swept Oakleigh after Monash Council's closure of the pool last year.

Before taking on this pivotal role, she had worked only menial jobs and had never before spoken to the media.

She said she'd never been a "joiner" of causes and was more comfortable on the fringes.

The main reason she became spokeswoman was because the CLAG website was set up at her home and "it was easier for me to do that work".

The first time a journalist left her a message, she considered not returning the call out of nerves. "I do find with talking to newspapers, it can be difficult to express myself. Even asking a question at



Soft-spoken saviour: Julie Clearwater was a reluctant mouthpiece for Oakleigh pool supporters. **Picture:** Michael Copp

council question time was difficult."

But there came a point where she thought she'd just do it, and the cause became a "fairly constant" occupation.

"If you were working and had a family and a life, you couldn't do it."

This month, the council backflipped in response to public uproar, and committed

\$6 million to refurbish Oakleigh pool. Supporters said the community was indebted to Ms Clearwater for her efforts. Last week, she received a bouquet with a note: "This is for doing what our family didn't have time to do."

Ms Clearwater said the community reaction was "embarrassing, but satisfy-

ing". The campaign had been a team effort, including by the CLAG committee and supporters who hung blue plastic bags, blue ribbons and blue 'Save Oakleigh Pool' signs and delivered CLAG fliers.

"My name has been prominent because I've spoken to the papers a lot, but it has been a community effort."

She said the campaign was sparked by spontaneous individual actions — like those of CLAG member Catherine Dennis, who draped a huge sign over Warrigal Road overpass days before last August's tide-turning public meeting.

Ms Clearwater also rated Oakleigh Primary School for its blue ribbon display and its teachers who petitioned sports clubs to climb on board.

Now CLAG's main fight is over, Ms Clearwater will have some time on her hands.

She'll clear her head by picking kiwifruit in the country this week as she decides on her options.

"I've been thinking I must do something with my life."

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