

Land sale to yield \$1m for pool

THE sale of two blocks of council-owned land to fund the \$7 million Oakleigh pool redevelopment was given the go-ahead at a Monash Council meeting last week.

The sale of lots at 7 Lesay Court, Mt Waverley, and at 18 Cabena Crescent, Oakleigh, which adjoin Scotchmans Creek reserve, are expected to reap more than \$1 million.

The council plans to raise \$3.4 million from land sales for the pool project, earmarking a 9700-square-metre lot abutting Sadie Street, Mt Waverley, as a potential sale.

The sales attracted significant opposition from residents, with a 119-signature petition against the sale of 7 Lesay Court submitted to the council last month.

Lesay Court resident Helen Dourahalis, who organised the petition, said the land sale would lead to the loss of valuable green space.

Ms Dourahalis, who attended a public hearing, felt the council's consultation process was futile.

"There was no debate, no asking of questions.

"We just fronted up and said our piece."

Mt Waverley Ward councillor Joy Banerji said land sales were part of the original plans for the pool project.

"I was definitely in favour of a swimming pool being built in Oakleigh, but the trade-off is we are selling land to pay for it."

She said the vacant blocks were not used as playgrounds, and the council still had a number of good-quality reserves, playgrounds and sports grounds.

"Open spaces which serve a specific purpose are the ones which are worth fighting for, but these parcels of land don't have significant use by the greater community."

Oakleigh Ward councillor Gerry Kottek, who voted against the sales but supported the pool project, said parts of Monash, such as Notting Hill and Oakleigh South, were "under par" for open space.

"You could argue it's just one piece of land next to Scotchmans Creek [reserve], but for the residents it's a big deal."

Cr Kottek said the pool could have been funded by rate rises or borrowings as an alternative.

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