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Picture: Lucy Di Paolo

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LAND FIGHT

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Ex-mayor joins move against sale

By Cameron Lucadou-Wells

A FORMER Waverley mayor has joined residents to fight a sell-off of a Monash Council-owned reserve in Mt Waverley.

Peter Davies, who was a Waverley councillor 1969-82, fought to set aside the 7 Lesay Court block as an entrance to the adjoining Scotchmans Creek reserve.

He will back an appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal against Monash Council's intention to sell the block.

The council intends to sell the 675-square metre block to raise about \$300,000 for the \$7 million

Oakleigh pool redevelopment.

The council wants to raise up to \$3.4 million from land sales for the project, earmarking 18 Cabena Crescent, Oakleigh and Sadie Street, Mt Waverley as potential sales.

Mr Davies said the council's intention to sell the Lesay Court block, but reserve a three-metre alley, was "most inappropriate".

"These pieces of land were left to councils by councils of yesteryear and I think that should be respected.

"As a councillor, I fought hard for land to be preserved at the corners of Stephenson and High Street roads and Springvale and High Street roads to retain elements of bushland. It gives some relief from the urban landscape."

He said the council was taking the "easy", short-term option by selling land to finance Oakleigh pool, rather than making the harder decisions of raising rates or borrowing money.

"I'm thinking in 100 or 200 years' time the urban space will be much dif-

ferent with higher densities. It will only be enhanced by open space."

Oakleigh Ward councillor Gerry Kottek, who voted against the land sale, said open space could become "as rare as hen's teeth".

"This resource is not something you can recreate."

Lesay Court resident Helen Dourahalis, who collected 200 signatures on a petition objecting to the sale proposal, said the block was important.

"It's part of the reserve. It's some-

thing you need to show that the reserve's actually there."

Monash Ratepayers Association president Jack Davis said the council was ignoring the numerous community groups and residents that kept objecting to the disposal of open space.

"With an ever-growing population we need more open space, not less."

Monash Mayor Tom Morrissey said the council sold land that was "surplus to our needs" to fund major capital projects, such as the Monash Aquatic Recreation Centre, Clayton Community Centre and the Oakleigh pool.

"The council does this in order to minimise the impact on Monash ratepayers of the construction cost."