

Libby, with daughter Ella, has paid to store the cord blood.

Photo: DAVID SMITH/NEWSPIRE
Dillon as it may have looked in the days before the
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PHOTO ONE
OAKLEIGH MONASH LETTER 15 AUGUST 2006

MONASH COUNCIL BACKFLIP: POOL SAVED? REPORT: PAGE 3

Change of mind over pool

OAKLEIGH MONASH LEADER 15 AUGUST 2006

Steve Drill

OAKLEIGH pool is back on deck after public pressure forced Monash Council to change its decision to close the pool.

The council dived back into the pool debate at last week's council meeting.

Councillor Stephen Dimopoulos received applause from a 60-strong contingent of pool campaigners when he suggested the Oakleigh pool steering committee consider repairing the neglected 50-metre outdoor pool.

"My personal view is that when we undertook consultation all our cards weren't on the table," he said. "On June 6 we discarded the possibility of a pool."

The council voted to close the Oakleigh pool this summer because the facility was in desperate need of repair.

Julie Clearwater, who has been fighting for the pool, welcomed the decision but urged her supporters to remain active.

"We're really pleased but there's a lot of work still to be done," she said.

"We haven't won anything yet."

Ms Clearwater feared the council might consider building a 25-metre pool instead of replacing the present facility.

John Marten, a former Oakleigh mayor, said the council's backflip did not guarantee Oakleigh pool would re-open.

Deputy mayor Paul Klisaris said the public meeting at Oakleigh's Mechanics' Institute hall a fortnight ago had made the councillors reconsider the pool.

"That was really the spark that lit the fire," he said.

Cr Klisaris said the State Government

should contribute some of the millions that would be needed to repair the pool.

Public consultation on the pool will start in October and councillors have urged people to call them, email or write letters with their ideas about the pool.

Councillor Charlotte Baines said people should have an open mind.

"This is their chance to dream and think of everything they possibly want," Cr Baines said.

"People should think about their vision for the character of Oakleigh."

Own up to unpopular decisions

AT THE August 3 Oakleigh Pool meeting, I was again amused to hear Councillor Stephen Dimopoulos claim innocence for the closure of the pool by remarking that he didn't vote for the pool to close.

While it's true he didn't vote for the pool to close at the council meeting, as I understand it, he did, along with the other Oakleigh councillors, sit on the steering committee that recommended the pool close.

He, along with the other Oakleigh councillors, effectively loaded the gun to execute the pool, then handed it over to the other non-Oakleigh-based councillors to fire the fatal shots while trying to wash his hands of the decision.

Monash councillors cannot be allowed to be selective and claim credit for any popular decisions while avoiding responsibility for unpopular decisions.

Just as councillors are always eager to claim their share of credit for any popular decisions made by council, they must also have the courage to accept their share of responsibility for any unpopular decisions.

While I totally disagree with Cr Denise McGill's decision, I do respect her for at least having the courage of her conviction to stand up for what she believes.

Councillors cannot be allowed to distance themselves from unpopular decisions.

As Cr Paul Klisaris said following his election to council: "There is no room for division, nor will it be tolerated."



Julie Clearwater with others opposing the pool closure.

NS008109

Surely these words apply to all councillors and their decisions.

David Dickens,
Woolers Hill.

Pooling our resources

MORE than 50 years ago when the Oakleigh, Moorabbin, Glen Iris, Clayton and other suburban pools were built, they catered for a generation of young children who could walk around the streets, ride bikes, and catch buses on their own.

Now children don't have those freedoms because parents have far more awareness of potential dangers

and yet we are now expected to put our children on buses and send them further away to a neighbourhood that they don't know.

They cannot be expected to ride or walk as it is too far away. For young people to be getting themselves to and from a neighbouring suburb is irresponsible.

The sense of community will be lost to our children, they will lose the security of knowing the people who use their local pool. Kids that know each other through kinders, primary schools and colleges are less likely to have fights as they are linked by friendships.

Have your say

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Write: 1 Chapel St.
Blackburn, 3130

Fax: 9875 8344

email: monash

@leadernewspapers.com.au

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For years, young people have walked from house to house, picking friends up along the way, as they wind their way through local streets to the pool. It was one of their first experiences of responsibility.

Once at the pool, they see kids and parents they know from their neighbourhood, so we as parents know they are safe, because although they don't have direct parental supervision, they are being supervised. They play and catch up with new and old friends.

What is going to replace this vital social experience for our youth?

Catherine Dennis,
East Oakleigh.

Ripple effect

I ATTENDED, with 500 other residents, a meeting with our councillors regarding the Oakleigh pool. What I realised from the meeting was that their decision has implications for all my fellow Monash residents.

I learned, on hot days, there are already such large numbers attending MARC that a sun shade has had to be added to the entrance to shade queues of people waiting to get in.

I learned that we have one of the fewest numbers of public-managed pools.

Finally, I learned the future maintenance and development of the Oakleigh pool could have been referred to the State Government for monetary assistance years ago. Yet nothing was done. This inaction comes in spite of the fact that just three years ago the council agreed to keep the pool open.

My fellow Monash residents, such poor decision-making will inevitably affect your services as well.

The council does not know how to manage itself and the massive rate rise and queues at MARC are proof they do not know what they are doing.

If we want to keep the council honest and keep its staff servicing the residents - not just its bean-counter finance department - please join our fight.

Those of us fighting for the Oakleigh pool ask Monash residents to write to our councillors on this issue and any other cost-cutting and shutting-shop services they are planning will not be accepted. We elect councillors to properly manage the funds and improve our services and facilities. There are 160,000 of us and based on how our council is travelling, we deserve better.

Paul Saffigna,
Oakleigh.

THE WORLD'S BEST...
Blinds, Curtains

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ALL WEATHER PROTECTION

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