



PRESS RELEASE

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LES TWENTYMAN SAYS

“SUNSHINE WILL BE THE MACQUARIE FIELDS OF MELBOURNE”.

9th January 2006 - Sunshine, Melbourne

The VCAT hearing to be held Tuesday 10th January 2005 at 10.00 am at 55 King Street, Melbourne to hear objections to Brimbank City Councils decision to grant itself a planning permit for the \$7M redevelopment of Sunshine Swim & Leisure Centre will be attended by prominent Open Family youth worker Les Twentyman.

Savesunshinepool.com, Sunshine Community Pool Action Group, Sunshine Residents & Ratepayers Association and various community and sporting groups and schools are supporting the objection lodged by local resident Mr. John Hedditch.

The reason they are supporting the objection is because the planned redevelopment will only spend 30% of project funds or \$2.1M on a small shallow indoor pool while filling in the three outdoor pools (including the 50 metre pool), providing grossly inadequate water space for the pool catchment area's 65000 residents. The new shallow indoor pool is unsuitable for youth and families wanting a leisure swim and schools wanting to attend regularly to build health, fitness and aquatic skills.

The sunshine community is outraged at Brimbank councils decision to hide away 4 other options for redeveloping the site from the community while Council proceeded with their preferred totally inadequate plan. The 4 other options prepared by Peddle Thorp architects were only released after an application under FOI was made by Savesunshinepool.com.

The Sunshine Pool catchment area covers some of Melbourne's most disadvantaged post codes – Sunshine, West Sunshine, North Sunshine, Albion, Ardeer, Deer Park and parts of Braybrook, Tottenham and St Albans.

The groups believe the loss of 3 closed outdoor pools (built with community labour and fundraising in 1960 and closed in 1994 due to Sunshine Council not maintaining the community's assets) without adequately replacing water space and outdoor landscaping and trees will have a serious long term impact on community wellbeing in the area.

Les Twentyman has confirmed he will be attending as a witness for the Pool Groups and Mr. Hedditch. “I was asked as a guest in 1994 to travel to Newcastle upon Tyne, England where kids rioted for 6 days to speak to the youth involved. When I asked them why they rioted they replied “they had nothing to lose” and pointed to the closed down pool and library.” Les Twentyman said. Mr. Twentyman went on to say he believed Sunshine will be the Macquarie Fields of Melbourne if the lack of recreational facilities for families and youth is not addressed and funded adequately.

The objectors to the Brimbank Council's planning permit believe the planned destruction of three outdoor pools including the historic twin sister of the Harold Holt 50m pool with the replacement of one indoor, shallow learn to swim pool is totally inadequate for the 65,000 residents of Sunshine. If the current plan proceeds there will be 60% less water space



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available to future generations than was available to a smaller population in 1994 before the pools were closed.

At a preliminary VCAT Directions Hearing held December 9th, 2005 Justice Stuart Morris dismissed the application by Brimbank Council to have the community objection thrown out. Justice Morris put forward the following grounds for tomorrow's VCAT hearing;

- “(a) Persons residing or owning land in the vicinity of the land which is the subject of the application for review have had insufficient opportunity to participate in the procedures required to be followed under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* before the responsible authority made a decision in respect of the application for a permit, in particular in that insufficient information was provided as to master plan options concerning the development of the subject land and nearby land, which information was necessary or desirable to make a decision about the permit application.
- “(b) The grant of a permit is undesirable as it would make more likely the loss of an outdoor 50 metre pool and toddlers’ pool, together with associated landscaping and trees, which would be detrimental to the well being of the Sunshine community.”

Due to the lack of any alternative recreational space in Sunshine the Sunshine Swim & Leisure Centre is a highly valuable site. The objectors believe the best use and optimum usage for this site should be properly planned for. This is currently not the case as Brimbank Council have not undertaken any feasibility studies of the different redevelopment options nor have they done any master planning of the site nor planned for the replacement of the outdoor 50m pool.

The local outdoor pools and landscaped lawns have provided the area's one peaceful "buffer space" for local and new migrant families to come together, have fun and meet others from similar and different backgrounds. But for the last 12 years the outdoor pools have been closed and the planned redevelopment will leave the Sunshine community without a recreational pool for families and youth for ever.

Savesunshinepool.com, Sunshine Community Pool Action Group, Sunshine Residents & Ratepayers Association and Mr. John Hedditch have for many years asked Brimbank Council to run an orderly master planning process for the site for a stage 1 project and a stage 2 outdoor recreational pool and in that way return to the Sunshine community the water space that it previously enjoyed 12 years ago. This would be in line with Sunshine being designated as a major activity centre under the state government's 2030 policy and would factor in increased recreational water space for the growing Sunshine Pool catchment area population.

The local MP's Bruce Mildenhall and Telmo Languiller both supported a more adequate and proper redevelopment of Sunshine's pools in Parliament on 1 April 2004 but Brimbank Council would not support them.

Sunshine Residents & Ratepayers Association Inc.



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It seems that Council thinks it has nowhere near enough money to do a proper job. The State government wants to take pokie revenue in spades and spend it on itself and other major events while the Sunshine community burns. The funding arrangements for these sorts of projects need a serious look at as they are vital to community strengthening but not seen as vital community infrastructure and funded accordingly.