

22 Hyam Street
Nowra
March 18, 2008

The Minister for Planning
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney

Dear Mr. Sartor,

As you would be aware, there are plans to close Nowra Olympic Pool to make way for commercial development on the southern shore of the Shoalhaven River, from the bridge westward.

We feel that there are a number of points which should be brought to your attention when you are considering any decision on the site.

History of the Site

- There has been a public swimming pool in the vicinity of the site of the present pool for about one hundred years. The first river swimming baths were constructed in about 1910 and two more pools were constructed at the same site.
- The present Nowra Olympic Pool was constructed in the 1950s as a result of the efforts of the community. A committee was formed which oversaw the fundraising and the co-ordination of local volunteers. Many residents donated money, including many wonderful people who sacrificed part of their wage on a weekly basis. Many other residents donated labour, materials and equipment to realize the community's dream of building an Olympic Pool for their young people. The Nowra Rotary Club undertook the entire financing and construction of the wading pool.

Subsequent History

- Over the past few years, maintenance of the site has been minimal, despite appeals to Shoalhaven City Council. The pool and plant have been allowed to deteriorate through lack of funding. Shoalhaven City Council is now using the results of that neglect as an excuse to close down the Nowra Olympic Pool!

Suitability of Site

- The riverside setting is a great magnet for tourists who are overwhelmed by the beauty of the site. The open air pool literally sparkles in unison with the river.
- It is an ideal site for major sporting activities such as Regional Swimming Championship Meets, a function it has performed with distinction in the past. An upgrading of the pool, plant and facilities, would once again bring the facility to life. With high unemployment in the Shoalhaven, activities which bring people to the area for a few days would seem a very positive step. When young people swim, whole families follow!
- It is central to the Nowra Bomaderry CBD. It therefore provides a convenient fitness area for CBD workers

Reasons a Pool should be kept on the Site

- The Nowra Olympic Pool is used for
 - Public swimming
 - Learn to Swim Programs, including those run by your Governments Sports and Recreation Department.

- Water Polo
 - Canoe Polo
 - Scuba Diving training
 - Swim Squads
 - Fitness Classes for children and adults
 - Social activities by guides, birthdays etc.
 - Water Slides
- The entire Shoalhaven Region, which as you would know runs from north of Berry to Durras, has only two Olympic Pools. The consequences of the closure of one of these would have a devastating effect on swimming as a sport in the Shoalhaven. Even with two Olympic sized pools in the Shoalhaven, days for schools to hold carnivals are at a premium. There is little flexibility in the running of the carnivals, which must go ahead, rain, hail or shine, to accommodate the District (which in the case of the Shoalhaven Secondary Schools was held on February 20 this year), Zone and State Titles. The training of swimmers would be affected and with our proud history of champion swimmers and the ever present need to encourage our youth to participate in healthy exercise to beat the obesity scourge this would be very detrimental to our youth.
 - The suggestion that Bomaderry Olympic Pool alone could provide for even the Nowra/Bomaderry area is ludicrous. It is positioned at the extreme northern boundary of the area making it inaccessible to children from areas like East Nowra, West Nowra and South Nowra as there is no public transport to cater for this. One cannot imagine allowing children to walk to Bomaderry Pool from these areas because of the traffic and other dangers involved. In addition they would not make it there and back before dark, even without stopping to swim!
 - Nowra Pool is far more popular with social swimmers than is Bomaderry.
 - Swimming lessons and Life Saving tuition and testing would also be severely compromised if the Shoalhaven was reduced to one Olympic Pool. It would be a backward step to close Nowra Olympic Pool to satisfy the needs of developers.

We humbly ask that you intervene on behalf of the residents of the Shoalhaven to ensure that Shoalhaven City Council and the developers retain a pool on the site of the present Nowra Olympic Pool for the good of the residents and tourists.

Beryl Bryce
For the Save Our Pool Action Group

Copies to:

Member for Kiama

Member for South Coast

Minister for Sport and Recreation

Member for Gilmore