

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of five minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on 29 August 2017

Name	Subject/Comments
Paul Bradstreet	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct
Jeff de Jager	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct
Carolyn Harding obo Batemans Bay Indoor Aquatic Centre Committee	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct
Trish Hellier	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct
Peter Bernard	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct
Maureen Searson	PSR17/050 Mackay Park Precinct

ADDRESS TO EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING 29 AUGUST 2017

AGENDA ITEM PSR17/050

PAUL BRADSTREET, 27 NEWTH PLACE, SURF BEACH

Good morning councillors

I'm Paul Bradstreet from Surf Beach. I would like to speak to you this morning on what, in my view, needs to be done to maximise council's chances of obtaining significant state government funding for some, much needed public facilities as part of the MacKay Park precinct development project.

The recent announcement by the NSW government of greatly increased funding for regional sporting infrastructure and cultural activities presents council with a new opportunity to advance this CBD consolidation project. But the timeline for applications for the cultural fund is tight and the competition for both sources of funding is likely to be very high, particularly from proposals which have reached a more advanced stage of planning and may be shovel ready. Moreover both funds have rigorous financial and economic requirements which council's application must meet. So to proceed as recommended council needs to commit to quickly finalising an agreed concept, developing a complying application and supporting this with an energetic political lobbying effort demonstrating broad community support.

Today's staff report presents the results of the Otium concept plan and business case study. As I read it, it recommends that *for the purpose of grant application* councillors adopt the Option 1 single site, integrated aquatic/cultural/community centre and it foreshadows a need to consider detailed future design changes including an unspecified expansion of the facility. Importantly, it does not ask councillors to commit to the concept at this time. This tentative approach signals a lack of enthusiasm and reduces the chances of winning significant funding.

Staff have specified four criteria which a successful application has to meet. I agree these are a reasonable basis for an assessment of the final proposal, and today will comment on each to the extent that I can given the incomplete information available to me.

First, is the project supported by a strategic assessment? Well, the consultant didn't think so and decided to plug this gap by preparing a draft aquatic strategy and an assessment of preferred arts and cultural facilities. Until these documents are made public and agreed to by council the application will be on very shaky foundations. Even if they are approved the application will also need to address the urban planning context of the proposal. As you know both council and the state government is keen to develop Batemans Bay as the regional centre of south eastern NSW and it follows from this that we have to be able to stage regional and state level sporting and cultural events in the Bay. In my mind, this implies a need for a 50m pool and a bigger theatre than the proposed multi-purpose 500 seat replacement for the community centre space. Additionally, I was surprised that, apart from saying that Option 1 maximises the amount of council owned land for a PPP development, the report contains no discussion of how any such development may integrate with the proposed centre, through cash or kind. And it is strange that the business plan does not mention potential links with other sporting and cultural activities at MacKay Park.

Is the project underpinned by an economic assessment is the second criteria. Well, not yet but one is planned. Otium's business plan is a financial, rather than an economic document. Its strength is its careful estimate of capital and operating costs of the options it was given albeit under very optimistic assumptions which ignore depreciation, interest costs and the potential need to do site preparation works to protect buildings from sea level rise. It will be interesting to see whether the consulting economists, SGS, can identify and quantify sufficient economic benefits and costs to meet the NSW Treasury's requirement that the benefits exceed the costs. This is not a particularly high bar. I would like to see the SGS brief also include advice on patrons' willingness to pay for centre use, either directly through fees or indirectly through rate increases.

Third, and most importantly, is the project affordable. Well, the costs of both options are high and some of the funding sources, such as grants and anticipated profits from asset sales such as the bowling club site PPP and the community centre have yet to be identified and are likely to be risky. This leaves loans and future rate rises to make up any shortfall. At this stage I suggest that you seek firm advice from the audit committee on what a "not to be exceeded total project cost" should be. This advice will need to be based on a calculation of council's available borrowing capacity and hard evidence of ratepayers' willingness to pay increased rates. Given the controversy around the size of the last round of rate increases and current flat economic conditions I'd be very surprised if ratepayers, particularly those in the southern part of the shire, are in any mood to pay more.

The fourth criteria – is the project deliverable relates to technical and managerial risk. The major technical risk identified so far is the vulnerability of the whole site to sea level rise and this can be accommodated at a further cost. And the one thing I will say about managerial risk is that council has a poor track record in major development project management – think BBBR and the Surf Beach employment land projects. For a project of this size the appointment of an experienced and dedicated project manager working to clear council determined objectives and financial/time constraints is imperative.

So while I urge you to proceed with the grant applications you must be frank in discussing their chances of success with the community. Expectation management is required if cynicism is to be avoided and broad community support for the project is to be demonstrated to the state government.

Finally, if you are wondering what my option preference is let me tell you it is for an indoor aquatic centre only, configured to include a 50m pool. I believe the option 1 design shows all the signs of a building designed by a committee which tries to do too much and, as the report notes, option 2 destroys the commercial potential of the site. I am particularly disappointed that the proposed theatre is too small and its flat floor and removable seating means it is not a theatre in any conventional sense. I believe that many of the community/cultural activities needed can be adequately accommodated for the moment elsewhere in town. For example, last Saturday I was impressed by the use of the old Ned Kelly building in Clyde Street as the indoor space for the Sculpture by Clyde exhibition. Of course, decoupling the aquatic centre makes the project cheaper and gives you more time to get a better quality application done and to get some institutional support behind it. For instance, what does Mr Pollock's Regional Development Authority have to say about the recommended proposal.

But I am only one voice. What matters is that you find a solution which the community can support and is demonstrably willing to pay for.

Thank you

Public Forum Submission - 29 August 2017

PSR17/050 CONSIDERATION OF BUSINESS CASES AND CONCEPT PLAN OPTIONS FOR MACKAY PARK PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

Councillors,

There are a number of aspects of the report before you that require further thought and information before any reasonable decision can be made.

1. Choices

You have before you an urgent recommendation to adopt Otium's Option 1 over its Option 2 – according to the report you are given no other choice but you **do** have as many choices as you see fit.

To name just a few other choices -

- Demand that before proceeding with this matter, you be given the opportunity to endorse or otherwise the (phantom?) Draft Pools Strategy on which Otium's plan is based
- Make amendments to bring the proposal in line with the community's wishes, i.e. add a 50 metre pool,
- Demand full costing information including estimates of depreciation and borrowing and/or any other funding arrangements or
- Chuck it out altogether.

Sensible things for you to do at this meeting, if you feel you must proceed to make a decision, would be to introduce amendments to -

- Insist that, before you vote, the estimated depreciation, borrowing and any other costs are made known so that you are not blind to the full consequences of the decision you are being asked to make
- Assuming you are satisfied with the project's affordability once full cost estimates are known, and only then, adopt Option 1 including a 50 metre pool in place of the 25 metre pool. This is the sensible and practical thing to do and is consistent with community wishes.
- Include a condition that, should grants be obtained, the existing community centre and visitor information centre be sold as soon as practical when the new facility is available and that proceeds of the sales be used to reduce the loans for the new facility (It is noted in Otium's business cases the operating costs of these facilities have been absorbed into the new facility).

2. Urgency

Why this matter is considered urgent at this stage is puzzling.

While one of the two grant funds mentioned – this round of the Regional Cultural Fund - has a deadline of 4 September, it is only the first of four rounds and the other – the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund - remains open without any published closing date.

3. Eurobodalla Aquatic Strategy

The recommendations in the report are based on Otium's business cases for the two options, both of which are based on the draft Eurobodalla Aquatic Strategy which Otium was asked to develop but is yet to be adopted by council. The business case suggests Option 1 is in line with this unadopted strategy.

This draft strategy nominates the Narooma 50m pool facility to accommodate Eurobodalla Shire's swimming carnival and event needs and describes the proposal in Batemans Bay as "a contemporary leisure centre facility mix featuring different programs, leisure, fitness and adventure water options, health and fitness facilities, retail, food and beverage and co-location with visitor information centre, community and arts and cultural facilities."

The exclusion of sporting uses in Otium's description of the proposed Batemans Bay facility seems at odds with Council's wish to apply for a Sports Infrastructure Fund grant. The inclusion of a 50 metre pool to satisfy carnival and event needs of the northern most populous part of the Shire would help overcome this anomaly.

4. Grant Funding vs Council's Contribution

While the Otium business cases spell out the capital costs estimated for the proposed facility, including additional costs for a 50 metre pool, the recommendation before you today does not identify the grant amounts being sought from either of the State funding sources or for that matter, from any Federal funds, not that any application can be guaranteed in advance.

It has been suggested that for Option 1, council might be seeking some \$36 million in grant funding - \$35 million from the Sports Infrastructure Fund and \$1 million from the Cultural Fund - leaving a Council contribution of at least \$10 million toward the total cost.

If the proposal has such merit and the state has such large amounts available, and any potential federal sources have yet to be identified, why would not Council seek larger grants to include the additional cost of a 50 metre pool and to more equitably cover the cost of the arts and cultural development?

5. Write Down Costs – Community and Visitor Information Centres

The business cases for the proposed development discount its ongoing operational expenses by the current costs of the Community and Visitor Information Centres and it assumed these facilities will be sold off to partially fund the new development but no mention is made of expected proceeds or perhaps capital write-downs that may be required. This information, at least in estimate form, should be known before you make a decision to proceed.

6. Depreciation and Borrowing Costs

It is also noted in the report before you “that as the quantum of grant funding, if awarded, is unknown, any requirement to raise loans is also unknown and cannot be quantified. Further, any additional depreciation for any structure can only be determined once final designs and construction costs are also known.”

The Otium business case clearly quantifies operating and capital costs for the various parts of the project and Council publishes tables used for the depreciation of various classes of infrastructure therefore depreciation can be easily estimated. Similarly, by deducting estimated grants from total capital costs, it is simple to identify the range of borrowings or internal funding that will be necessary (indicative TCorp interest rates are available following the \$2 million loan for the purchase of the old bowling club site).

To suggest that such estimates cannot be made available until further details are confirmed is ludicrous and you should refuse to proceed until such estimates are made available for your full and proper consideration of the large commitment you are being asked to approve.

In an email to you on 21 August 2017, I provided some ballpark estimates – it’s not all that hard to do – I trust you have obtained updates since, and if so, these need to be documented in this recommendation to show how thoroughly you considered the issues before arriving at your decision.

You wouldn’t buy a new car known to be inadequate for all your needs solely on the basis of its list price without also knowing the dealer and statutory costs, its warranty arrangements, its operating and insurance costs and the financing arrangements, would you? This project’s capital cost is the equivalent of 1,000 \$46,000 cars!

7. Affordability

While it would be fantastic for Batemans Bay and the rest of the Shire to have the proposed development complete with a 50 metre pool, I urge you, please, to not decide to proceed before you are fully aware of the likely one-time and ongoing costs involved.

If more work needs to be done to ensure a fully informed decision, then so be it even at the small-fry risk of missing the first round of grants from the Cultural Fund.

Jeff de Jager

52 Coila Creek Road, Coila.

P 4473 9963

E coilacreek@bigpond.com

Mayor Innes, Councillors, Council Staff and Community Members

I am representing the Batemans Bay Indoor Aquatic Centre Committee, a group of residents that have consistently been requesting an indoor aquatic centre in Batemans Bay for over 25 years. There has always been support from the various councillors and mayors over these years for an indoor aquatic centre but ultimately it has boiled down to money. Where was that sort of money going to come from? Well we now have an opportunity like has never been presented before and unlikely to occur again.

Our committee would ideally like to see a centre combined with other sports however we don't live in that ideal world with unlimited money. So to share a building with the arts and cultural people is not ideal but I believe achievable with some clever architecture, décor and all of us working together. It's not going to be about us versus them, this amazing building is about providing opportunities for our community members to access a facility that can provide health benefits not only physical but emotional and social which can be provided by both aquatic and arts centres.

Our committee has had the aim of providing a centre for everyone to use. Babies, children adults, athletes, disabled, and the elderly will all be able to use the various pools planned for the centre for uses from sport, learning to swim, exercise, recovery from illness and operations, aquafit classes and the opportunity to be able to move freely that may not be possible on land. What I am trying to say is that we are trying to help everybody for a wide range of reasons.

The concept plans show a good selection of pools to cater to all needs. The only thing that is obviously missing is a 50m pool. Again this would be ideal however it is acknowledged how financially this would put a massive strain on the residents of our community. We do request that the final plans do allow for the possible expansion of the 25m pool for a 50m in the future.

Just before the last council elections I spoke to every council candidate that I could and every one was supportive of an aquatic centre that was heated, open all year and was indoors. I am very excited about the opportunities that could lay ahead and I hope that all you councillors share my excitement and still have the enthusiasm that you shared with me prior to the last election. Our committee has been working with council for a very long time and we

appreciate the work you are doing towards preparing the application for the grant. Our committee continues to fundraise and is looking forward to the day where we can offer this money to enhance this facility.

Thank you

Good Morning Mayor Innes, Councillors, General Manager, Staff Gallery and those who are comfortable Live Streaming.

My name is Patricia Hellier from North Batemans Bay and I would like to address the item on the Agenda today PRS 17/050. At this point in time I would like to acknowledge the efforts and continued efforts of all those involved in the various committees associated with this project.

Two weeks ago I attended a meeting at the Catalina Club and last week I attended the meeting at Hanging Rock Function room to hear Otium consultants presentation on this proposed project and the 2 options. I returned that evening as I was interested in listening to the question that were raised as I thought this meeting would attract another group from the community.

The proposal of the Agenda today is headed CONSIDERATION – definition is – mental view – serious deliberation – importance – motive of action – an equivalent.

It would be amiss of me not to raise a number of views that have been expressed to me from various people within the community -

Many would be happy to see an upgrade of the current Batemans Bay Pool including this pool to be covered in and heated.

Many are prepared to accept at 25mtr pool even though their preferences were for a 50mtr pool.

Then we have those whose who are adamant that the community has a need for a 50mtr pool.

Many are concerned as to the ongoing cost of this facility.

Then there are those who just want a culture centre for the shire.

There are a larger faction who have serious concerns in relation to the this proposed project for various reason especially the fiscal responsibility as we all know that projects go over budget and the concerns are that ultimately the rate payers of this shire will incur another hefty rate rise to pay for any budget blow out.

Councillors, in 2015 it was recognised by a report called “Dropping of the Edge” that this shire is a disadvantaged area and a recent report has shown that there is an element of mortgage stress in the shire and with the increasing cost of electricity, gas, fuel, groceries etc. an addition rate rise would be a disaster for the rate payers of the shire.

While I understand the need for such a project, but after lengthy consideration I am now questioning the urgency to adopt one of these Options being put forward at this meeting, has the cart been put before the horse so to speak? – has all the required studies been conducted? How much revenue will be acquired if there is success in the sale of the Visitors Centre and the Community Centre and where is the transparency associated with dealings of the Batemans Bay Bowling Club and possible sale?

It appears that there are more questions than answer and there is now an element of “a he said she said” view.

You might think I am being sceptical but in 2014 I sat through Council meetings where the Councillors were asked to give their permission for the General Manager to investigate a Special Rate Variation there was only one councillor at that point in time that did not support this, which then led to a proposal of a 26% SRV which was then endorsed at 21.6% by six of the eight Councillors with only two of the Councillors not supporting this SRV despite the fact that saw nearly 11,000 people sign a petition against a rate rise.

Councillor the possibility of Grants from the NSW Government might sound enticing , but can this shire at this point in time realistically embark on such a venture without all the facts being placed on the table. Thank you - 29th August 2017

MACKAY PARK AND PREFERRED ROUTE OPTION FOR BATEMANS BAY BRIDGE

Madam Mayor if this council adopts this report without serious consideration as to the recently Preferred route option report for a new Batemans Bay Bridge they will demonstrate themselves as reaching a new level of planning incompetency with respect to its community. The preferred route option report and Mackay area are intricately linked. Both lie within the same so called "Preliminary Environmental Investigation Study Area "Both areas have been identified within a study area of that report. To my knowledge no environmental studies were carried out by council prior to the purchase, no project implication assessments made nor any preliminary environmental investigations carried to identify ecological sensitive areas, areas of aboriginal or historical significance within the area purchased by the council.

The unprofessional manner surrounding the purchase and ad- hock planning of this site is unbelievable. The real reason for purchase by the council has been shrouded with secrecy and felt by "the block of knowledge from the top pub "was organised as a "pork barrelling "exercise to re-elect the previous leadership – with the objective of maintaining the same old junta

Luckily the Road and Maritime have carried a due diligence assessment and investigations indicating there is "a strong

like hood of unrecorded sites of historical and aboriginal significance within and outside the study area. Most of this area is encompassed by the subject site and minimisation of the impact on biodiversity is a necessity and may lead to another option

It should be noted that a bulk land claim on the south coast has been submitted and that includes crown land in Batemans Bay and is currently subject to court proceedings.

Madam mayor let us have another look at this "white elephant" purchase and the preferred option for the bridge. Madam Mayor lets us look at our commercial area and plan for a better future for all major commercial areas, Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma. These should be serviced from major by-passes without overall modifications as has been done to many areas up the north coast and down the south coast

The whole exercise of a preferred routes to these areas should be re-visited. There has been no consideration of using many areas of the high voltage transmission easements throughout the shire as part of a by-passing system. This has been well designed, reveals well placed river crossings and linking many parts of the Prince's Highway to the main routes to Tilba, Digman's Creek, Bega and beyond.

Madam Mayor, a meet the people was held recently at Batemans Bay by the project team for the bridge and the study area which includes Mackay park. The General Manager was conspicuous because of her absence as were all senior engineering, finance and planning directors. Their

positions should have demanded their attention even after working hours particularly with such an important presentation from Government officers. The two community representatives mentioned in the report to represent the wider community did not appear to reveal their identity. No councillors were present and I spent much of my time there and given the impression that the preferred option was one directed for political opportunism. I feel that the absence of council leadership and presence was a reflection on all the other wonderful people that are part of the current council structure and the rate -paying community as a whole. The pioneering spirit demonstrated by the leaders in the past seems to have lost its way. Madam Mayor when I first heard you speak at Moruya many years ago I believe you were the one that would restore local government in our area to its rightful status- the closest form of democratic government to the people. I still believe that you are the one that can do it. History has shown that all it takes is for "few heads to roll "

Peter Bernard -Dalmeny 29th August 2017

MAUREEN SEARSON PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL
EXTRORDINARY MEETING 29th August 2017

COUNCIL VOTING ON THE REDEVELOPMENT OF MACKAY PARK
PRECINCT AQUATIC/ART/CULTURE PRECINCT

Firstly, I will give a little historical context to and important background history of the Batemans Bay Swimming Pool. While living in Narooma in the 1960's philanthropist and first world war veteran Edwin Street and his wife Daisy Street of Streets ice-cream fame, generously donated towards the building of Batemans Bay public swimming pool.

Edwin Street began making ice-cream in Corrimal when he returned from France, as a war veteran in 1917 and expanded the ice-cream business from Sydney in 1950 to a factory in Moruya.

Edwin and Daisy Street, who took an intense interest in the welfare of their community, also donated to build public swimming pools at Moruya, and Narooma, and in suburbs of Wollongong as well as funding retirement and nursing homes on the South Coast.

You may ask what have Edwin and Daisy Street's funding of the Batemans Bay 50 metre. pool in the 1960's have to do with the choice the the Batemans Bay community is making now? Well it is this we must forget why we have the 50 mt. pool. Why all of us who value swimming are here today...because of the philanthropy and generosity of Edwin and Daisy Street.

As a user of the Batemans Bay swimming pool I am speaking on behalf of other lap swimmers from Batemans Bay and surrounding areas. I understand that the Arts/Cultural Centre is of equal importance to Batemans Bay and the Eurobodalla Shire but for the purpose of this presentation I will focus on the Aquatic Centre.

I would like to share some background into why I am here today. In November 2016 I ran as a candidate in the 2016 Eurobodalla Shire election. The major policy issue that people talked to me the most about, was a year-round heated aquatic centre for lap swimmers, swimming club, learn to swim, people in need of rehabilitation, people with disabilities and fun for kids, and to attract visitors to bring much needed money and jobs into Batemans Bay and the Eurobodalla Shire...a very exciting prospect to look forward to, for the health and mental health benefits, social benefits of having a meeting place where no one is left out.

However after attending meetings, the most recent last week to listen to Otium and Council staff discuss two options for the Aquatic Centre and the fact that neither have a 50mtr. pool. I am very concerned about the lack of consultation of all of the stakeholders in the design of the Aquatic Center. In saying that I am sincerely appreciative of the dedication and hard work of the BBIAC over many years in their fundraising efforts for an indoor heated pool.

The Batemans Bay Swimming Club have informed me that while they did attend Batemans Bay Aquatic Indoor Committee meetings, they were not consulted to give input about how the Aquatic Centre should look. I have a letter from the Batemans Bay Swimming Club to Council in response to Council's request that the Batemans Bay Swimming Club endorse the Aquatic Center design....

Likewise, Eurocoast Triathlon Club were not consulted by Council or the relevant Committees for their input. To add Eurocoast Triathlon Club Batemans Bay members currently travel to Ulladulla during the winter instead of swimming and spending money in their home town of Batemans Bay.

Ulladulla Aquatic Centre has a 25mtr. heated indoor pool for winter swimming but because of the swimming squad and other programs lap swimmers can only swim in very restricted times. There is also an outdoor 50 mtr. pool for the summer season which can accommodate all of the different groups who attend the pool.

Batemans Bay is very similar to Ulladulla in population. It is difficult to see how, with only a 25 mtr. pool, Batemans Bay would not be subject to the same lap swimming restrictions as Ulladulla.

In summary –

- *we the community....from different age groups, varying abilities and motivations have been benefiting from and enjoying the 50 mtr. Batemans Bay pool...in part because of a generous donation and community mindedness of Edwin and Daisy Street. Yet the Council is asking one group of pool users to accept the loss of the 50 mtr. pool to be replaced by a 25 mtr. pool and without even being consulted. In doing so Council is undermining the generosity and community mindedness that gave us a 50 mtr. pool in the first place.*
- *It is important for Council to understand that people who swim laps do so for the same reasons as "recreational" swimmers – well-being and reaching personal goals, enjoyment of being social, fitness, personal education and therapy.*
- *It is very clear that Council has not consulted the whole community for their input into the Aquatic Centre. To say so is misleading and questions Councils transparency and willingness to be honest and open with the public.*
- *The redevelopment of the Mackay Park Precinct is vital for our community, now and for the future and so is a 50 mt. pool.*

Q. I understand Create NSW the funding body have 2 funding streams. Can you explain why there is such urgency in having to apply for funding by early September when 99% of the funding is coming from the Regional Sports Infrastructure Funds which is ongoing during the year?

Maureen Searson
Speaker 6



23rd August 2017

Dear Eurobodalla Shire Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Batemans Bay swimming club. I have been living in Batemans Bay for 30+ yrs. When I first moved here way back then, my mum was on a committee to get the Batemans Bay area an indoor pool. I have attended a number of meetings and seen presentations of the redevelopment of the Hanging Rock sporting area and now the Mackay Park project. We were ready to put 100% support behind the proposal of an indoor 25m pool that we could then hold a winter swimming club competition, the realisation that a 50m indoor pool was never going to happen, had been accept by us as a club.

Our support was with the council until, we were informed, only when the plans/project were released to the public that the Bay area was going to lose their 50m outdoor pool. We listened to the reasons at the community meeting, that there is a 50m pool in Narooma that we could use for events, Batemans Bay is an aging population average age of 54, this is the type of venue visitors will want...etc

We would like to put forward our reasons for the Batemans Bay communities need and want for a 50m pool;

- Yes we are an aging community... but we have 8 schools that use the 50m pool for school events, school swimming lessons (when we can get trained swimming teachers) and for our more serious swimmers to train in over the summer months. Yes we can train in a 25m pool, but it doesn't build up the stamina for our children to be strong surf swimmers. I don't know if the council have been to Ulladulla to visit but you can't go to the pool and swim as a community member unless you are a member of the learn to swim program, a squad training member. And yes we have tried, they allowed my children to sit on the steps in the water. Yes, it was put forward that these were only during the hours of 3-6 in the afternoon. Well that isn't rocket science to work out, kids are at school during the day. So no we can't change the hours that we want to attend the pool.... And yes Ulladulla have the same facilities that ESC are proposing for the new aquatic centre, except they will have a 50m outdoor pool and we won't.
- For years families have travelled to Ulladulla for a number of reasons. One poor management of the Batemans Bay pool, resulting in no coach and a high turnover of swimming teachers (if any at all). Again yes, because we didn't have an indoor facility, we were unable to secure a coach. Also for families to have our children in the water 12 months of the year instead of only 6 months. Yes Ulladulla squads and serious swimmers take up the entire pool over the winter months and they are training in an indoor pool. But this is not for the entire year, as soon as it is warm enough, squads etc are moved out to the 50m pool. Giving the community more freedom to attend the pool for a leisurely swim or do we say it, kids being able to play in the water. So swimmers are training in a 50m pool 6 months and indoor 25m 6 months.
- Did the council bother to ask the swimming clubs about their clubs, before making assumptions about the clubs use of local pools? Did you know Batemans Bay is the biggest swimming club out of all 3 clubs? That's without it being an all year event for us. Did you know that this year we are the only club out of the 3 that are holding a carnival for state wide swimmers to attend? Approx. 150+ swimmers from around the state attend our pool for that carnival. Last years was a huge success. Did you know that 50% of our members travel to Ulladulla for squad training up to 4 times a week and attend their winter swimming club, then transfer back to the Bay for the summer?

We understand that it was presented to us that we could still have our carnival at the Narooma pool. We can honestly tell you, after discussing this with club families, they would prefer to be a part of the Ulladulla club and it is likely that this is where our swimmers wanting the 50m pool would go. Not an ESC pool...

We spoke to a number of school representatives today. Their first question being, is it possible to hold a carnival in this new complex, once built. Would 300+ students and spectators fit in this venue, or is council expecting these 8 schools to bus students to Narooma for an extra cost. It is exciting for the schools that possibly with the new complex we may actually get swimming teachers to stay in the area, as in the past we have had to let funding go, due to their being not enough qualified swim instructors to facilitate the funding program for swimming lessons for school aged students.

Our heads are not buried in the sand and we do realise pools cost money and that the Batemans Bay pool needs repairs/fixing/replacing. Our concern is once we let it go, we will never get it back. 30+ years ago when it was first brought up with the council that a 25m indoor pool was needed for the Batemans Bay community, it was being considered and fundraising started. But this was with the understanding that the 50m pool was still viable. Now 30 years later, we are being told that all we need is the 25m pool for a community that has tripled and gone from 2 small primary schools and no high school. Again, we understand that there are other pools that the centre is providing, great. Our aging population and therapy patients will greatly benefit from the hydro therapy pool.

Again we know it comes down to money and telling us the other night that there is always a possibility that down the track we would get a 50m pool back, that doesn't help our community now and we believe it would never happen. We also are concerned about the amount of time that the Bay area would be without a pool completely. This would obviously destroy our club and families would need to travel to Ulladulla for the children to swim.

We need to let you know our honest opinion on the matter. We were 100% behind the 25m indoor pool, but to lose the 50m pool was never on our radar. You only have to talk to the community and local families to hear what they would also wish for our aquatic facilities. We have asked community members that want an indoor and 50m pool, why they didn't attend the meeting the other day with council, the responses were very similar. Most have attended a meeting or too over the years and we have never seen any progress, we suppose they never thought this would ever become a reality for our town.

We appreciate the efforts of the indoor aquatic committee who have been fighting for an indoor pool for years. Their tireless fundraising efforts and lobbying of the council and government representatives are remarkable.

Kind regards
Batemans Bay Swimming Club
Jeni McCarthy
0405682573

Batemansbayswimmingclub2536@gmail.com