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Subject: Brown Hill Community Pool operations this summer.  
Date: Thursday, 21 January 2021 11:45 PM

Dear Sport/Aquatic Managers,

I write this note on behalf of the General Committee of the Brown Hill Progress Association who operated and managed the Brown Hill Community Pool from the summers of 2005-6 thru to 2019-20 to express our disappointment at how this facility has been opened and operated this summer.

Firstly, a brief background and stats to give some grounding to where this disappointment comes from. In the 14 years of operation we built attendance numbers up from a closed facility to our biggest season in 2018-19 when 9427 people came through the gate. The kiosk averaged between \$13-14,000 in turnover per season and we employed approximately 40 lifeguards, many of whom returned for several seasons. We always had a good relationship with council and sincerely thank them for assisting us with funding and maintenance assistance across all these seasons. We know and understand that outdoor pools in Ballarat are expensive to run and have a short season. We handed back to council the management of the pool in March 2020 as the Safety and Compliance issues grew beyond our expertise, our management committee was ageing and the costs for Indemnity Insurance for BHPA to remain involved with a water facility rose to over \$6000 per annum. This was all done after several discussions with council representatives in good faith and just as the word COVID had entered our vocabulary. I have attached our Season Summary Reports from the last two seasons for perusal.

The disappointments in no particular order:

- \*To not have the pool open until Jan 1st. We know COVID created problems but to have Allan working practically solo in late December to clean and get plant operational was way too much for one person and unsafe with confined space regulations. We thank Allan for his efforts.
- \*To have no stock in the kiosk for the first week of operation
- \*To not offer some sort of prorata summer season pass reduction to local families due to the loss of the first month of operation.
- \*To have the pool slide completely removed but no effort to reconstruct to make it compliant.
- \*To present the change rooms without even a decent clean out. We know they are old but a sweep down, disinfect and hose out makes them a bit more presentable.
- \*To have no induction on site for lifeguards and Duty Managers so that they have a general idea of plant operations and encouragement to clean and service the change rooms and tidy the grounds, water grass etc.
- \*To have the lifeguards so under resourced in the kiosk. i.e. Inadequate COVID tracing sheets, no spare batteries for the testing kit, no fan inside the kiosk, no erection of the shade sail to give more sun

protection in front of kiosk.

\*To have no flexibility to allow school bookings around extended hours.

\*To have made no effort to get a system of circulation of water from the main pool through the toddlers pool so it can be used. We have discussed this for years and know that it only needs a pump to pull water from the Main Pool to the high side of the Toddlers to be installed as there is already a water return pump in place to empty water from toddlers back to the Main Pool.

The Milo Team who with parents' permission has been providing a warm drink to shivering Learn to Swim kids for over 10 years was extremely let down that this could not continue as it has been a hallmark of how we care for the 4-10 year olds in our community who are brave enough to turn up each day and leap into the cold water.

An apology from Peter Fisher (Pool Plant Maintenance for the last 14 years and qualified plumber) who did step in to assist in the plant room mid last week. The Plant room main pump groaning and the considerable amount of bubbles that were being pumped through the main inlet had Peter worried that the pump motor could overheat and seize and he knew what the problem was and how to fix it straight away. Who do you call for maintenance, answer Allan but he is away? Do you know how to clean the leaf and lint filter for the main pump? No one has shown us. This filter needs to be cleaned out regularly and especially after windy days that blows more leaves into the water as it severely restricts water flow hence chlorine input if left blocked up.

So, Peter gave the Duty Manager a lesson on turning off the pump, emptying the filter and reinstalling and restarting. This is a ten-minute job. This procedure should be demonstrated to Duty Managers and for consistency have only one or two Duty Managers on the site on rotation. Peter would be happy to assist with instruction if needed and lives only five minutes from the pool and is a retiree at home most of the time. He returned a key for entry he still had to the Lifeguards on Monday.

I hope you can sense the frustration. If a group of volunteers, some working some retired, can make a run-down facility operate and be attractive enough to get over 9000 patrons over a summer why cannot people whose profession is the management of water facilities?

A question we hope can be clarified.

What is required in terms of permits/forms/certificates for the BHPA to run events at the Brown Hill Pool? We usually have several events (supporting Learn to Swim, Australia Day/end of summer holidays celebration, Toys at the Pool Day, Zumba etc). Could you please provide COB's process for gaining the appropriate permissions to run these and similar important events that keep our community active and involved in the pool?

To move forward some actions that may help

- Have Brown Hill, Buninyong and Black Hill all opened on the same date and for the same length of season with clear explanation on the Website
- Season passes available prior to opening with online payment available to cover all the small outdoor pools (We used this for the last 4 seasons and on average 35- 40 local families took advantage of it)
- Involve Lifeguards in the pre-season clean up to assist Allen and learn about the plant and systems and take some pride in the general appearance of the pool, change rooms and surrounds.
- Please look at the toddlers pool upgrade
- Work with larger user groups like schools and sports clubs and offer group discounts
- Allow events within the grounds with volunteer support, both social, educational and exercise.

We know that all these issues can be worked through and the Brown Hill Progress Association appreciates the commitment the City of Ballarat has made to the residents and ratepayers of the Brown Hill community in opening the Brown Hill pool this summer. The Learn to Swim program is in full swing and it is really pleasing to have 25 children enrolled in the program this summer. This summer is already half over and we all hope that next summer will be a fresh start and the effects of COVID Restrictions greatly reduced. We all want a safe facility that is accessible to the Brown Hill Community and that provides water education, exercise and fun. We are willing and able to work with council through these teething problems and we look forward to hearing from you". We look forward to a response and have an enthusiastic group who are willing to be proactive in improving our pool both physically and functionally and keeping attendances at a reasonable level.

Yours Sincerely

Brendan Stevens

Secretary on behalf of Brown Hill Progress Association

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