



REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL
AFFAIRS
IN RELATION TO
A PETITION OPPOSING THE CLOSURE
OF THE SWIMMING POOL AT
YANCHEP NATIONAL PARK

Presented by Hon Murray Nixon JP MLC (Chairman)

Report 55

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Date first appointed:

December 21 1989

Terms of Reference:

- 1 The functions of the committee are to inquire into and report on:
 - a) the constitutional law, customs and usages of Western Australia;
 - b) the constitutional or legal relationships between Western Australia and the Commonwealth, the States and Territories,
and any related matter or issue;
 - c) a bill to which SO 230 (c) applies but subject to SO 230 (d);
 - d) any petition.
- 2 A petition stands referred after presentation. The committee may refer a petition to another standing committee where the subject matter of the petition is within the terms of reference of that standing committee. A standing committee to which a petition is referred shall report to the House as it thinks fit.

Members as at the time of this inquiry:

Hon Murray Nixon JP MLC (Chairman)

Hon Ray Halligan MLC

Hon Ken Travers MLC

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REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

IN RELATION TO

A PETITION OPPOSING THE CLOSURE OF THE SWIMMING POOL IN YANCHEP NATIONAL PARK

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 On September 21 1999 Hon Ken Travers MLC tabled a petition (*Tabled Paper #180*) opposing the closure of the swimming pool in Yanchep National Park. The petitioners expressed their belief that the swimming pool is important to:

- the heritage of the National park;
- the community in Yanchep and Two Rocks; and
- local children having access to swimming lessons.

1.2 The petitioners called on the Government to urgently repair the pool to enable it to open this summer.

1.3 The petition was first tabled by Hon Ken Travers on October 21 1997. At that time the Committee sought submissions from the principal petitioner, Hon Ken Travers and the Minister for the Environment.

1.4 The petition was retabled by Hon Ken Travers on April 1 1998 and again on December 17 1998.

2 PRINCIPAL PETITIONER'S SUBMISSION

2.1 The Committee received a letter from Mr Stan Daley, the principal petitioner, dated December 1 1997.

2.2 Mr Daley advised the Committee that the pool was built in 1932 and opened in 1933 in conjunction with the Gloucester Lodge complex.

2.3 Spring water was cycled through the pool which enabled it to stay clean. It also kept the water a cool temperature during the summer months.

2.4 In 1968 the pool had several minor changes and the spring water was replaced with chlorinated water.

- 2.5 Mr Daley advised that the pool is 27.1 meters long and 17.8 meters wide. There is also a wading pool which is 17.8 meters long and 8.6 meters wide.
- 2.6 He advised that the pool was always part of the same lease as Gloucester Lodge until the City of Wanneroo took over the lease of Gloucester Lodge in 1979 to develop it as a museum. At that time the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) took over the running of the pool as a separate complex.
- 2.7 The Committee was informed that the Australian swimming team trained in the pool before leaving for the Olympic games in Germany, and that between 1942 and 1945 the Royal Australian Air Force took over the park facilities as a convalescent area.
- 2.8 Mr Daley submitted that *“With its long history and connection with Gloucester Lodge which is already on the Heritage List a lot of people are of the opinion that the pool should be kept as part of our history also.”*
- 2.9 Mr Daley submitted that another reason for the need for the pool to stay open is that Yanchep District High School has no other pool in which to hold swimming lessons. The nearest suitable facility is at Craigie, which is an unacceptably long return trip.

3 HON KEN TRAVERS’ MLC SUBMISSION

- 3.1 The Committee received a letter from Hon Ken Travers dated December 5 1997.
- 3.2 Hon Ken Travers submitted that the pool has high heritage value as well as being an important community facility for the Yanchep and Two Rocks community. He also submitted that a long term commitment to maintaining the pool is of utmost importance to the local residents.

4 SITE VISIT

- 4.1 On March 9 1998 the Committee visited the Yanchep National Park and inspected the swimming pool. The Committee had discussions with the principal petitioner, Hon Ken Travers and representatives of local interest groups concerning the heritage value of the swimming pool.

5 MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT’S SUBMISSION

- 5.1 The Committee received a letter from Hon Cheryl Edwardes MLA, Minister for the Environment, dated January 12 1998.
- 5.2 The Minister advised that the pool was currently closed because of significant leakage and the need for other substantial repairs. The leaking chlorinated water posed an

unacceptable environmental threat to the surrounding wetlands and the associated ground water. It was therefore necessary to close the pool for the summer season (1997/98) whilst detailed reports and further consideration could be given to the matter.

- 5.3 The Minister advised that she had requested CALM to commission a report to provide cost estimates to repair the structure of the pool, upgrade the plant, and renovate the public facilities to current health and community standards.
- 5.4 The Committee was advised that that report indicated that there were aspects of the works, such as the repair or likely replacement of pipework underneath the pool, which may be costly but which could not be accurately estimated. It also revealed a need for considerable de-watering of the site to undertake any repairs, otherwise the pool would pop out of the ground from the pressure of the surrounding ground water.
- 5.5 The Minister advised that the cost estimates, which were in the order of \$170 000, carried a qualification that they may be exceeded depending on what was discovered during the progress of works.
- 5.6 The Minister submitted that she was aware that the pool was an important recreational facility for the Yanchep-Two Rocks community and was particularly important for in-term and school vacation swimming lessons. The Minister advised the Committee that she was concerned that Government expenditure should be directed toward achieving the best outcome for the public.
- 5.7 The Committee was advised that following an approach from the Member for Wanneroo, Mr Iain MacLean MLA, the Minister met with representatives from the Yanchep District High School and the Parents and Citizens Association to discuss the issue.
- 5.8 The Minister advised the Committee that at the meeting she explained that before committing any expenditure required to upgrade and refurbish the pool and its facilities, she wanted to fully explore the option of a purpose built community/school pool which could be located to better service the community and provide a modern amenity.
- 5.9 The Minister submitted that during the meeting it became clear that a purpose built community/school pool would be the best option for the residents of Yanchep-Two Rocks, provided there was strong community support and the cooperation and involvement of the City of Wanneroo.
- 5.10 The Minister advised that as a consequence of the meeting, it was agreed that Mr MacLean would liaise with the various community organisations and chair a

- community based working group to consider options for the funding, development and operation of a community/school pool.
- 5.11 The Minister concluded by stating that she would be remiss in spending considerable funds upgrading an antiquated park facility when consideration could be given to an alternative which would provide a better, more convenient and longer term solution to the needs of the local community.
- 5.12 Following retabling of the petition on December 17 1998 the Committee again wrote to the Minister for the Environment requesting an update on the status of negotiations regarding the purpose built community/school pool.
- 5.13 The Committee received a reply from the Minister for the Environment dated May 18 1999 in which she advised that Mr MacLean had held discussions with the Commissioners for the City of Joondalup and the Shire of Wanneroo regarding the feasibility of a pool for Yanchep and possible funding sources.
- 5.14 The Minister advised that information given to Mr MacLean from the Commissioners was that it was generally not viable to construct a pool except in association with a complete multi-purpose aquatic centre. The Yanchep district at that stage could not support such a facility.
- 5.15 The Committee was advised that Mr MacLean had asked for a report on the feasibility of staging the development, beginning with a pool for the Yanchep people. The Minister advised that as at May 1999 that report had yet to be completed and it was not likely to be available for some time as staffing within the Shire of Wanneroo was still being finalised.
- 5.16 The Minister concluded by advising that there were no plans for the pool within Yanchep National Park to be reopened.
- 5.17 Following retabling of the petition on September 21 1999 the Committee wrote again to the Minister for the Environment requesting an update on the situation with the swimming pool. The Committee also asked whether there were any plans to open a multi-purpose aquatic centre for the residents of Yanchep.
- 5.18 The Committee received a letter from the Minister for the Environment dated April 11 2000. The Minister re-iterated her previous advice that the pool was closed in March 1997 due to the pronounced structural leaks causing chlorinated water to enter the adjacent wetlands. The pool was also economically inefficient. It was an old pool with outdated plant and equipment which was extremely costly to operate and maintain relative to the level of use.

- 5.19 The Committee was advised that as at April 2000 CALM did not have a plan for the disused swimming pool within the park. The Minister advised that during the current revision of the park's management plan this issue would need to be addressed. This would be done through public consultation with relevant stakeholders, the local community and the Yanchep National Park Advisory Committee. Final decisions would be made following public submissions on the draft management plan. That process was expected to be finalised within the next 18-24 months.

6 CITY OF WANNEROO'S SUBMISSION

- 6.1 On March 16 2000 the Committee wrote to Ms Kath White, Chief Executive Officer of the City of Wanneroo, requesting an update on the situation with the swimming pool. The Committee also asked whether there were any plans to open a multi-purpose aquatic centre for the residents of Yanchep.
- 6.2 The Committee received a letter from Ms Kath White dated April 11 2000. Ms White advised that at that stage the City of Wanneroo did not have any plans to open a multi-purpose aquatic centre at Yanchep.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Committee recognises the heritage value of the swimming pool as one of the first public swimming pools built in Western Australia. This is reflected in its heritage listings by the City of Wanneroo and the Heritage Council of Western Australia.
- 7.2 The Committee notes that the swimming pool served as an important facility for:
- the local Yanchep-Two Rocks community;
 - the coastal communities further north; and
 - visitors to the Yanchep National Park.
- 7.3 The Committee concludes that the State of Western Australia has responsibility for the preservation of this historical site.
- 7.4 The Committee believes that there is still an on-going need to service the people listed in paragraph 7.2 and that the provision of this service is a shared responsibility of State and Local Government authorities.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That CALM or another appropriate agency develop, fund and implement a heritage plan for the Gloucester Lodge and the swimming pool which will protect the significant heritage value of the swimming pool.
- 8.2 That the Minister for the Environment convene a meeting with the City of Wanneroo to explore the options for developing a local swimming pool which could include the restoration of this site.



Hon Murray Nixon JP, MLC

Date: August 1 2000