

20 May 2016

Mr. R. Dobrzynski  
General Manager  
Launceston City Council  
Town Hall  
St John Street  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

By email to

Dear Sir,

**Re: DA 0163/2016 Launceston Aquatic Security Fence, 18A High St. Launceston.**

We refer to the advertised application for the above. In general terms increasing security may be a valid objective – however there are a number of fundamental matters we wish to raise at the outset:

- Why not leave the boundary fence where it is, improve the solid wall sections where presumably the unauthorized access is occurring, and save ratepayers money by not carving off any more of this heritage place unnecessarily?
- Quality of the submission – for an application purporting to come from inside Council the quality of the submission is lacking. With the previous application we asked for a drawing showing how the rectilinear fence panel design deals with the sloping ground. Is the top and bottom stepped?
- Conflict of interest? – We question the integrity of the processing and assessment of this proposal when the "owner" is cited as the General Manager, who is also applicant and to whom the public advertisement directs representors to address their submissions. Those assessing the proposal and representations received are the Councillors themselves, and it is noted that the Councillors have already approved the re-alignment of the fence at an earlier Council Meeting. The issue of Launceston City Council assessing and determining its own application has been raised in the past. Other councils in Tasmania recognize the obvious bias in this situation, and refer such applications to a neighboring council to determine on their behalf.
- Heritage – 18A High St is a Heritage Place (LCC and THC) and there should be a detailed assessment of the proposal against the relevant Historic Heritage Code and the HCH Act. Again, others should have provided such an assessment, and a suitably qualified and independent Heritage Consultant engaged. There is nothing advertised to say that the Tasmanian Heritage Council has provided an exemption from the granting of a works approval.

## Launceston Aquatic Security Fence

It is profoundly disappointing that Launceston City Council, with all its alleged expertise and management levels finds itself with a fence that was only very recently built at no doubt considerable expense but that is allegedly not fit for purpose. This despite paying hundreds of thousands of dollars of ratepayer funds for advisers and consultants. Launceston ratepayers should not bear the cost of incompetence either by management or its consultants.

It is self evident that a fundamental feature of the pool fence would have been to keep people from unauthorised entry. It is not as if this is a recent development that could not have been foreseen. The phenomenon of unauthorised entry into the pool compound is not new, a midnight swim at Windmill Hill on a balmy summer night was a long-time rite of passage for countless young Launcestonians.

What attempts have been made to claim against the consultants that designed the fence? What action has been taken to ensure that management responsible for this debacle is performance managed to ensure similar things do not happen again? Somebody has to be accountable and responsible for this.

We question the need for a new fence altogether when a few strands of the ForceField Security Fence Monitoring System installed along the top of the existing fence would most likely do the job at a much lower cost to ratepayers.

We question the need for enhanced security - if in fact there have been unauthorised entries, the application refers to a vague 'high number', how many have there been? What has been their pattern? Is there a specific weak point in the fence where the majority of entries have taken place? Where is the security camera evidence and why has it not been used to prosecute intruders?

If in fact there is a security and safety issue, how does this compare with other safety risks in the municipality that are not being addressed? Is the additional capital expenditure of \$180,000 warranted for the quantum of risk being mitigated and can this cost and risk be reduced by other means, particularly in view of the chronic operating losses that Launceston Aquatic continues to incur?

What is the opportunity cost of this particular 'safety measure'? Most people would argue that able-bodied persons capable of breaching the existing fence are the least likely to drown at the pool. As stated above, countless people have gained unauthorised access and used the former Windmill Hill pool in the past without any drownings taking place. Similarly, many people use the First Basin pool at all hours, and for most part of the year, it has no fence around it at all, and when a fence is erected, it does not have the ultra-high security design nor electrification features proposed for this fence at Launceston Aquatic.

The section of fence towards the west extending past the Memorial Hall appears to be unchanged, and the solid wall section to the east of the outdoor pool and adjoining the changerooms, likewise appears unchanged. There is no drawing or illustration showing what the proposed fence will look like in its actual setting. The mesh panels are rectilinear and will need to have a formed, stepped base wall to counteract the sloping site, with the top being similarly stepped and hence out of character with the

## Launceston Aquatic Security Fence

undulating ground and the area generally. It is of concern to note from the material presented by the applicant from the manufacturer, that this fencing system is designed for use in gaols and other like high-security compounds. It will be inconceivable that this attractive cultural heritage parkland will be given the unsavoury appearance of an encircling gaol fence. The area immediately abuts the culturally sensitive War Memorial Avenue leading to the War Memorial Hall. Images of Changi Gaol and European Concentration Camps lining this approach, are exceedingly insensitive and inappropriate.

The expansion of the fenced in area constitutes a substantial proportion of the best and most accessible parkland at Windmill Hill Park. It results in more of that space being taken away from anyone other than those paying admission fees to the Aquatic Centre. How will the additional alienation of public open space enhance Aquatic Centre revenue and by how much? The additional open space to be added to Launceston Aquatic will need to be patrolled and controlled and maintained, thus placing more demands on pool staff or more likely require more staff and costs to be borne by the ratepayers.

In 2007, Launceston City Council undertook the **Launceston City Council Open Space Strategy 2007**,

[http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/upfiles/lcc/cont/council/community\\_engagement/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_reports/lcc\\_open\\_space\\_strategy\\_10thJuly\\_2007.pdf](http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/upfiles/lcc/cont/council/community_engagement/strategies_plans_and_reports/lcc_open_space_strategy_10thJuly_2007.pdf)

within which it established that East Launceston already had the least area of parkland set aside, compared to all other suburbs. The Plan was to be reviewed each 5 years (a review was due in 2012), however in East Launceston there does not appear to have been any increase in the provision of open space since 2007, and to the contrary, this proposal significantly reduces what is some of the most flattish and useable parkland in Windmill Hill Park and the East Launceston suburb generally.

In the LCC Open Space Strategy 2007, Windmill Hill Park was given a score of 1/10, the highest and most valuable of all area assessments within the municipality, whereas the area that was already sectioned off into the Launceston Swimming Centre was scored at only 3/10. Ironically at an inflated figure of 39,489m<sup>2</sup>, Windmill Hill Park included the not inconsiderable park area that was technically included in the High Street road reserve, which Council ought not need to be reminded had been unceremoniously taken and bitumened over for the Aquatic Centre carpark! The 39,489m<sup>2</sup> of Windmill Hill Park is officially categorised by Council as a Conservation Heritage Area Park, whereas the 8,297m<sup>2</sup> area already fenced off for Launceston Aquatic is officially categorised to the lower order of Regional Sport.

Whilst, as already stated above, it is virtually impossible for most people to read or even understand how much area of Windmill Hill Park is proposed to be fenced off by this proposal from the drawing forming the basis of this application, our professionally-calculated assessment is of the order of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of prime cultural heritage parkland.

## Launceston Aquatic Security Fence

The following chart illustrates the deficiency suffered by the East Launceston suburb prior to this application to reduce the present parkland/open space.

Data from Launceston City Council Open Space Strategy Study 2007

	population	area m2	m2/head pop
Alanvale / Newnham	5,399	220,951	41
<b>East Launceston</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>64,754</b>	<b>29</b>
Invermay / Inveresk	2,996	840,456	281
Kings Meadows	3,720	695,679	187
Launceston / Elphin	3,547	410,365	116
Mayfield	1,434	56,080	39
Mowbray	3,245	249,957	77
Newstead	4,366	393,306	90
Norwood	3,784	131,005	35
Punchbowl	411	256,204	623
Ravenswood	4,065	550,407	135
Rocherlea	1,143	229,141	200
South Launceston	3,739	183,174	49
St Leonard's	1,613	232,867	144
Summerhill	2,904	589,203	203
Trevallyn	4,330	1,405,734	325
Waverley	1,570	405,263	258
West Launceston	3,984	964,566	242
Youngtown	2,938	387,467	132

In summary, it is our submission that this proposal should be refused, that council's staff be directed to give consideration to making a fresh application that will be limited to proposing some relatively minor changes to raise the height of the present panels of fencing, and in doing so make considerable cost savings for ratepayers, not withstanding that the incursion into Windmill Hill Park will be avoided.

Yours faithfully,

Lionel Morrell

President

**TASMANIAN RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC.**

Enc. photographs



Photograph 1.  
Area of parkland to be taken over and alienated

## Launceston Aquatic Security Fence



Photograph 2  
Section of fence to be removed and replaced

## Launceston Aquatic Security Fence



Photograph 3  
Section of fence to be retained

---

**From:** Alex Thomson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 May 2016 8:08 AM  
**To:** Robert Dobrzynski  
**Subject:** Launceston Aquatic Centre DA 0163-2016 Aquatic Center 18A High St Launceston  
**Importance:** High

City Manager  
LCC  
Dear Sir

Re Launceston Aquatic Centre DA 0163-2016

I object to the details of this development as set out in the DA above  
It is unnecessary in my opinion, or should be unnecessary, to extend the grounds of the Aquatic Centre by fencing outside its current boundaries.  
The loss of public space entailed in the proposed development, and the form of the fence, will decrease the amenity and the heritage values of the site.

Yours Sincerely

Alex Thomson

Dr Alex Thomson  
MB ChB DipObst MD FRNZCGP FAFPHM FRACGP  
[REDACTED]  
Launceston TAS 7250  
AUSTRALIA



Mr. R. Dobrzynski  
General Manager Launceston City Council  
St John Street

By email to

Dear Sir

**Re:** DA 0163/2016 Launceston Aquatic Security Fence, 18A High St.  
Launceston.

I do not support this application and hereby register my support for the representation lodged by the Tasmanian Ratepayers Association on this matter.

This development application neglects to address the significant change this fence modification involves. It is not merely a matter of a new fence but a substantial realignment of boundaries and takeover of public open space in favour of the Aquatic Centre.

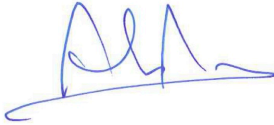
There is a fundamental lack of balance between the power of council to change land use and boundaries with what the rest of the community has to undergo for example to create long term leases over privately owned land or adjust boundaries. Even if the current law allows it, council could as a sign of good will and transparency, subject itself to the same rigorous process that the rest of community has to undergo in transactions of this type.

In the decision of 08 February to move the fence, there is no consideration given to the many people including myself and my wheelchair bound daughter who use and enjoy the several thousand square meters of the best flat space to be taken over.

Whilst I do not begrudge Council's decision to grant free access to the area by the Rotary Club of Launceston, the right is not extended to others in the community who visit the area virtually every day of the year and to whom its significance is no less - and no less valid - than it is to the Rotary Club of Launceston.

The decision of 08 February gives greater importance in the use of the area by minority of people (pool patrons) for a minority of the time (the few months the outdoor pool is operated) over the majority of people who are not pool patrons and use the area throughout the year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alvaro Ascui', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alvaro Ascui

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Robbie Johnston [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 May 2016 1:59 PM  
**To:** Robert Dobrzynski  
**Cc:** Council; Robin Johnston  
**Subject:** Re DA 0163-2016 (resubmission of DA 0331/2015 Launceston Aquatic Security Fence)

representation to the General Manager, Launceston City Council, re DA 0163-2016

For the following reasons I question the privatising of public parkland to extend the area of Launceston Aquatic:

- Reduction of open flat parkland in East Launceston a suburb with currently relatively little public green space;
- Resumption of Heritage Listed parkland;
- Placement of pedestrian pathway against the shrub border adjacent to the proposed security fence - the placement does not provide open visibility for pedestrians and is potentially a personal safety risk, particularly for the aged, children and women;
- Construction of the proposed security fencing: although camouflaged, ultimately by the new shrub border, this obvious high security fencing advertised as suitable for correctional and detention facilities and industrial contexts, is out of keeping with its residential suburban park location

Best wishes, Robin Johnston

**From:** "Ken Partridge"  
**To:** "Robert Dobrzynski"  
**Subject:** Fwd: More Parkland to be lost to Launceston Aquatic Centre?

Re DAO163-2016

Dear Sir

I object to this annexation of public parkland.

Sincerely Ken Partridge  
----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Lionel Morrell  
**Date:** 20 May 2016 at 18:46  
**Subject:** More Parkland to be lost to Launceston Aquatic Centre?  
**To:** Lionel Morrell

Dear Residents of Launceston,

Attached to this email is a re-run of a previously withdrawn application by Launceston City Council to itself (acting as a Planning Authority) to construct a new high security fence at Launceston Aquatic, relocating pathways and shrubbery so as to grab another 1000m2 of public parkland by moving the new fence to a fresh alignment.

Representations must be lodged with the General Manager at Launceston City Council (email is acceptable)

before 5pm on MONDAY 23 May 2016. The Ratepayers Association will again be making a representation, but we encourage everyone else to follow likewise with their own submissions, because all too often the community fails to make its views known until it is too late, and the evils of apathy win the day!

If you make a representation, please ensure that you make reference to DA0163-2016 in your heading.

The Ratepayers Association has argued consistently and valiantly against Launceston Aquatic since before it was constructed, before it was approved, there were arguments at the Planning Appeal Hearing, but almighty Launceston City Council used ratepayer funds to engage a highly paid professional team to gazump the community team..... and who in the end was right ?

The shame is on Council and this includes Aldermen elected since the original decision to proceed with Launceston Aquatic.

Yes we now have this facility and many people in the community say we have to live with it, live with the haemorrhage of public funds, because NOTHING can save it from a 40-year life cycle of losses. The present General Manager stated upon his arrival that public swimming centres ALWAYS lose money.... yes and didn't we say that too, but Simply Great Leisure, the very consultants that were again employed to recommend a gym, said the pool would PROFIT over \$200,00/year PARDON??? Yes sadly we employ them again.....and even more sadly the gym causes the Centre to lose even more money, not to mention the anxiety it causes other rate-paying gym operators in Launceston.

Can the Council ever offer an apology to those brave and outstanding citizens who tried to rail against Launceston Aquatic? No , never, as it became all too personal.

Grief and despair by ratepayers will continue, and not just because of Launceston Aquatic but other fatal wounds that haemorrhage in Launceston.....

So now we are once again faced with a grab for more land from the parkland to fence off into the Launceston Aquatic Centre. We have asked why the present fence was not designed properly to keep out intruders, but a deafening silence is all that we get. According to the Project Signboard, Council retained 3 architectural firms (Launceston, Hobart and Melbourne) to work in conjunction in designing the project, plus its own in-house City Architect. What a bungle, that the fence is apparently completely useless in keeping out intruders and so we are being told that a CONCENTRATION CAMP-STYLE fence marketed to high security prison installations, is what we require, and of course around a couple of hundred thousand dollars to install it complete with electronic wires on the top!!

Last year we found it difficult to ascertain from the application drawing, the extent of the proposed new fence. From the present application, it is now confirmed that the section towards the west extending past the Memorial Hall will be unchanged, and the solid wall section to the east of the outdoor pool and adjoining the change rooms, likewise appears unchanged. There is no drawing or illustration showing what the proposed fence will look like in its actual setting. The mesh panels are rectilinear and will need to have a formed, stepped base wall to counteract the sloping site, with the top being similarly stepped and hence out of character with the undulating ground and the area generally.

Well, the Aldermen didn't appreciate the comparison we drew last year to Changi Prison and European Concentration Camps, and how WW2 returned servicemen from that conflict may feel just a little uneasy viewing it close at hand as they travel along side it

on Memorial Avenue to reach the War Memorial Hall and Bowls Club. So having withdrawn the proposal against a hail of opposition, here is the very same proposal back up for approval, and while they are at it, they may as well steal some more of the flattest part of the parkland and move the enclosure outwards. The justification comes with some muffled reasons such as to give the privileged swimmers more shaded lawn space to soak up the sun's rays....forgot to realise that the big tree is a radiate pine (?) underneath lies pine needles, and clear them away to find nothing grows, so the dreamed of a swathe of lawn can't happen...well perhaps plastic turf will suffice?

In 2007, Launceston City Council undertook the **Launceston City Council Open Space Strategy 2007**,

[http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/upfiles/lcc/cont/ council/community\\_engagement/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_reports/lcc\\_open\\_space\\_strategy\\_10thJuly\\_2007.pdf](http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/upfiles/lcc/cont/ council/community_engagement/strategies_plans_and_reports/lcc_open_space_strategy_10thJuly_2007.pdf)

within which it established that East Launceston already had the least area of parkland set aside, compared to all other suburbs. The Plan was to be reviewed each 5 years (a review was due in 2012), however in East Launceston there does not appear to have been any increase in the provision of open space since 2007, and to the contrary, this proposal significantly reduces what is some of the most flattish and useable parkland in Windmill Hill Park and the East Launceston suburb generally.

In the LCC Open Space Strategy 2007, Windmill Hill Park was given a score of 1/10, the highest and most valuable of all area assessments within the municipality, whereas the area that was already sectioned off into the Launceston Swimming Centre was scored at only 3/10. Ironically at an inflated figure of 39,489m<sup>2</sup>, Windmill Hill Park included the not inconsiderable park area that was technically included in the High Street road reserve, which Council ought not need to be reminded had been unceremoniously taken and bitumened over for the Aquatic Centre carpark! The 39,489m<sup>2</sup> of Windmill Hill Park is officially categorised by Council as a Conservation Heritage Area Park, whereas the 8,297m<sup>2</sup> area already fenced off for Launceston Aquatic is officially categorised to the lower order of Regional Sport.

Whilst, as already stated above, it is virtually impossible to read or even understand how much area of Windmill Hill Park is proposed to be fenced off by this proposal from the unreadable drawing forming the basis of this application, our professionally-calculated assessment is of the order of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of prime cultural heritage parkland.

The following chart illustrates the deficiency suffered by the East Launceston suburb prior to this application to reduce the present parkland/open space.

Data from Launceston City Council Open Space Strategy Study 2007

	population	area m2	m2/head pop
Alanvale / Newnham	5,399	220,951	41
<b>East Launceston</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>64,754</b>	<b>29</b>
Invermay / Inveresk	2,996	840,456	281

<b>Kings Meadows</b>	<b>3,720</b>	<b>695,679</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Launceston / Elphin</b>	<b>3,547</b>	<b>410,365</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Mayfield</b>	<b>1,434</b>	<b>56,080</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Mowbray</b>	<b>3,245</b>	<b>249,957</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Newstead</b>	<b>4,366</b>	<b>393,306</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Norwood</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>131,005</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Punchbowl</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>256,204</b>	<b>623</b>
<b>Ravenswood</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>550,407</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Rocherlea</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>229,141</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>South Launceston</b>	<b>3,739</b>	<b>183,174</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>St Leonard's</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>232,867</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Summerhill</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>589,203</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Trevallyn</b>	<b>4,330</b>	<b>1,405,734</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Waverley</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>405,263</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>West Launceston</b>	<b>3,984</b>	<b>964,566</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>Youngtown</b>	<b>2,938</b>	<b>387,467</b>	<b>132</b>

So, what is the point of Council having an expensive Open Space Strategy prepared and adopted, only to ignore it completely when it wants to approve one of its own projects in the very area that is most in deficit for recreational land in the entire municipal area??

In general terms increasing security may be a valid objective – however there are a number of fundamental matters we wish to raise at the outset:

- Why not leave the boundary fence where it is, improve the solid wall sections where presumably the unauthorized access is occurring, and save ratepayers money by not carving off any more of this heritage place unnecessarily?
- Quality of the submission – for an application purporting to come from inside Council the quality of the submission is lacking.
- Conflict of interest? – We question the integrity of the processing and assessment of this proposal when the "owner" is cited as the General Manager, who is also applicant and to whom the public advertisement directs representors to address their submissions. Those assessing the proposal and representations received are Councillors themselves, the same Councillors who have already agreed to the new fence alignment at a meeting before this application was advertised. The issue of Launceston City Council assessing and determining its own application has been raised in the past. Other councils in Tasmania recognize the obvious bias in this situation, and refer such applications to a neighboring council to determine on their behalf.
- Heritage – 18A High St is a Heritage Place (LCC and THC) and there should be a detailed assessment of the proposal against the relevant Historic Heritage Code and the HCH Act. Again, others should have provided such an assessment, and a suitably qualified and independent Heritage Consultant engaged. There is nothing advertised to say that the Tasmanian Heritage Council has provided an exemption from the granting of a works approval.

It is profoundly disappointing that Launceston City Council, with all its alleged expertise and management levels finds itself with a fence that was only very recently built at no doubt considerable expense but that is allegedly not fit for purpose. This despite paying hundreds of thousands of dollars of ratepayer funds for advisers and consultants. Launceston ratepayers should not bear the cost of incompetence either by management or its consultants.

Once we have submitted our representation, we are very happy to circulate a copy back to you, and so we encourage each of you to also send a copy of your representation back to us. And by the way, you don't need to be a Launceston ratepayer to make a representation.

Yours faithfully,

Lionel Morrell

President

**TASMANIAN RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC.**

Enc. photographs