

6 May 2009

LETTER TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SENT E-MAILS TO MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS RE LEARN TO SWIM

On 14 April 2009 a group of committed parents appeared at the Council's Finance Committee asking the Council to request Lakes Leisure Limited to open up more space at Alpine Aqualand for private swim coaches. These parents and a number of other interested individuals also wrote to the Mayor and Councillors.

At the request of the Committee, a workshop was held between elected members and the board of Lakes Leisure to receive the board's advice on any new information disclosed by the letters and submissions. The board was also asked to provide further information about any current spare capacity in Aqualand, and the financial impact of limiting private swim coaches on Aqualand's financial position.

The workshop was held on 30 April 2009. It is very satisfying to note that the opening of Alpine Aqualand has dramatically increased the market for Learn To Swim. Careful stewardship of the capacity of both Aqualand and other pools will be needed to ensure that this demand can be met.

Both the Council and the board share a common ambition that Aqualand should, very quickly, provide the full range of community programmes that this district expects. That programme will cover all ages and levels of health, utilise all of the available space in the pools and (while including Learn To Swim) will also cover many other areas such as fitness, sport and wellbeing. Quite rightly, four lanes in the main pool will also be reserved at all times for individuals who wish to swim for fitness or recreation.

Lakes Leisure informed Council that existing bookings and programmes under development foreshadow this level of activity being in place by early 2010. As a consequence Council has accepted that Lakes Leisure requires direct and exclusive daily control over pool capacity in order to get maximum benefit for the community from these programmes.

Existing space available to private Learn To Swim coaches will be maintained. This currently includes Sundays and agreed school holiday periods. The board has also offered to keep term time under review and will offer additional space to private coaches on a casual basis once the board's own term requirements have been assured.

The Council also received assurances from the board that the needs of competitive swimming will continue to be accommodated.

The Council also accepted evidence from the board that for the 2010 year, Alpine Aqualand would earn \$108,000.00 less revenue by providing pool space to private coaches rather than delivering classes themselves. This additional cost can only come out of the pocket of local ratepayers.

Council has reached the view that the explanation it has received are reasonable, and that the board's conclusions are supported by robust analysis. Having reached that point the Council does not intend to debate the matter further. Councillors have asked me to write to each submitter informing you that this is the outcome.

Thank you for your considerable effort and commitment to Learn To Swim. It has been carefully weighed by Councillors. Unfortunately we have reached the view that, in order for the community to get the most value out of Alpine Aqualand, it is necessary for community programmes to have priority over private swim schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clive Geddes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clive Geddes
MAYOR