



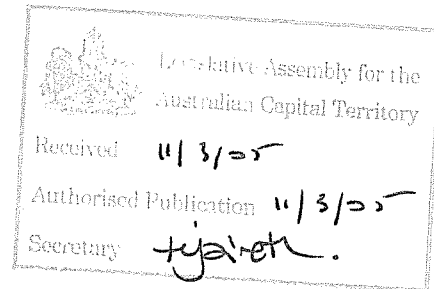
Burley Griffin

SWIMMING CLUB

Submission Number	4
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7 March 2005

Dr H. Jaireth
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Dr Jaireth

The Board of Directors of the Burley Griffin Swimming Club wish to take this opportunity to comment on the *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No. 205 (DV205) – Deakin Block 11, Section 68 (Oasis Leisure Centre) Proposed Office Use*, currently under consideration by the ACT Standing Committee on Planning and Environment.

If the Committee intends to hold a public hearing in relation to the proposed variation, Burley Griffin wishes to register its interest in appearing before the Committee to put forward its views on the subject of the proposed variation.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Alan Tebb for
President
Burley Griffin Swimming Club

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Submission by Burley Griffin Swimming Club

to the

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

Concerning

Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No. 205 (DV205) Deakin Block 11, Section 68 (Oasis Leisure Centre) Proposed Office Use

March 2005

Introduction

1. Founded in October 1976, the Burley Griffin Swimming Club (BG) is one of the longest running and most successful amateur swimming clubs in the ACT. For 26 years the home of BG was at the Deakin Health Spa pool.
2. In October 2002 the sudden and unexpected closure of the Deakin Health Spa pool left BG with no option but to look for another venue in which to continue training. At that time 'lane space' for more than 30 hours competitive swimming training per week was in short supply. This situation has not improved. As a general rule, swimming clubs in the ACT have to book lane space in two or three venues, or share space with other clubs in order to run their learn to swim and competitive swimming coaching programs. Invariably, competitive training at most pools is characterised by overcrowded and sub-optimal conditions.
3. In 2002 the Board of BG observed that most amateur swimming clubs in the ACT were run as small businesses from either private pools or commercial facilities that offered lane space for hire. In most cases these small businesses were owned and operated by a swimming coach in either a full time or part time capacity. BG decided that they would create a new business model to manage the swimming needs of the BG club swimmers and their parents. In conjunction with the manager of the Deakin Health Spa learn to swim school, BG (as the sole member) created a not for profit, limited liability company called Deakin Swimming Limited (DSL) to relocate BG and the swim school into the Oasis Centre and to manage an aquatic facility in support of swimming generally. The Board of this new company consisted of members from BG, the business manager of the Deakin swim school and two independent directors.
4. With the backing of its sole member, DSL has pursued two primary objectives since 2000;
 - a. To become an independent commercial entity that could support all aspects of swimming development from learn to swim for the very young all the way through to competitive swimming at the highest levels of competition, and
 - b. To either manage **or own** a swimming facility that would give priority to the first objective and treat commercial profit as a secondary objective and as a means of under pinning the future development of swimming in the ACT.
5. BG is very pleased with the DSL swim school which has been in operation for over 2.5 years and is widely recognised as one of the largest operations offering one of the best, if not the best, learn to swim program in the ACT. Together, the Deakin Swim School and the BG Club offer a tightly integrated path for swimmers to realise what ever potential they possess and to pursue their sporting goals for as far and as long as they wish to commit their time and energy.

6. **It needs to be highlighted that all this effort by the BG Board and its members is done on a volunteer basis and that BG derives no direct financial benefit from its commercial arm, DSL.** BG continues to fundraise in support of the Club's objectives and relies totally on the volunteer efforts of its Club members and their parents for support. Because of the not for profit status of DSL, all profit from its operation is directed back into the pool facility or donated as direct grants to swimming clubs and the ACT Swimming Association in support of swimming in the ACT.

BG Support for the Draft Variation

7. BG supports the draft variation that would see a new complex comprising modern offices combined with a refurbished pool and aquatic centre. However, BG support is contingent upon the requirement that, before the purpose clause for any unit within Units Plan No. 1556 is varied to allow offices, the indoor pool must be refurbished to the satisfaction of the Territory. We understand that an indicative cost of around \$3.7 million (in 2003 prices) has been previously used to estimate the expenditure required to satisfactorily refurbish the facility. BG will continue to give its full support to DSL to work with the Territory, the lessee of the centre and any other interested parties to ensure that this redevelopment opportunity maximises the benefits to the whole community.
8. Commercial redevelopment of the site provides a tremendous opportunity to rejuvenate a facility that in part is now approaching 30 years of age. The pool in particular is very costly to operate and maintain due to the lack of adequate environmental heating and cooling, the condition of the pumping and filtration equipment, the condition of the pool surrounds and most critically, the safety of the roofing structure over the pool area. Without significant investment the pool has a limited life of perhaps two to three years left before health and safety concerns close the facility. BG does not wish to see the West Deakin precinct and indeed Canberra more widely, lose a critical piece of swimming infrastructure in the current 50 metre pool.
9. With the right support BG is of the view that the Oasis pool redevelopment could go beyond the current plans and include such enhancements as;
 - a. A heated toddlers pool that would allow an expansion in learn to swim classes for the very young;
 - b. A hydrotherapy pool to assist with rehabilitation treatment, and
 - c. The addition of two lanes to provide the flexibility for simultaneous, multiple users that are not currently catered for in the six lane configuration.

Demographic Importance of the Oasis Leisure Centre

10. In just two years, in a highly competitive market, with ageing infrastructure, BG's commercial arm, DSL, has managed to build a broad based community operation catering for young children learning to swim through to elite swimmers competing at national and Olympic level. The programs offered at the Oasis Centre include aqua aerobic classes for all ages and abilities and classes for special needs swimmers from nearby schools and centres catering for the disabled or handicapped. The facility is used extensively by schools and other organisations for swimming competitions and other events. From casual swimming to triathlon and scuba classes the pool is frequented by more than 1500 patrons per week. Some of BG's senior swimmers train in the pool up to 10 time per week and in total, the centre manages approximately 3000 transactions per week on a seasonal average.
11. Loss or closure of the Oasis pool would create substantial difficulties for BG and other patrons seeking a year round facility in which to exercise, train and play. The only credible alternatives are significant distances away in Civic, Tuggeranong and Belconnen. At present the shortage of 'lane space' for competitive swimming is a severe problem for amateur swimming clubs affiliated with ACT Swimming and a limiting factor to the growth of competitive swimming in the ACT. The loss of the pool at Oasis would result in Burley Griffin facing serious issues, for the second time in only a few years, about where to train and how to sustain their activities in the long term.

Conclusion

12. The model of an amateur swimming club with a commercial arm such as DSL is totally unique in the ACT and NSW – we may well be the only swimming club with a not for profit commercial operation of this size in Australia. As a club we are determined to support any initiative to rejuvenate the pool located within the Oasis centre and operate it through DSL for the long term and for the benefit of swimming and the ACT community more broadly. BG appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and would be grateful for the chance to meet with the Committee at some stage to further develop the points outlined above.

The Board of Directors
Burley Griffin Swimming Club

7 March 2005