

# Lake Eucumbene Chamber of Commerce (INC.)

ABN 34892 647 464 Incorporation number INC9880093

Email: [info@eucumbenechamber.org.au](mailto:info@eucumbenechamber.org.au)

Website: [www.eucumbenechamber.org.au](http://www.eucumbenechamber.org.au)

## **RESPONSE TO SNOWY RIVER SHIRE COUNCIL'S FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSAL**

The Snowy River Shire Council (SRSC) proposes to close the Adaminaby pool, thereby saving \$70,000 in the first year and \$90,000 thereafter.

The Lake Eucumbene Chamber of Commerce (Inc.) (LECC) objects to the SRSC proposal on the grounds of economic efficiency, economic effectiveness, equity, and for policy reasons.

Closing the Adaminaby pool is economically inefficient:

- the pool was provided following the death by drowning of a child in the nearby fast-flowing cold waters of the Murrumbidgee River
- the frequency of inland rivers drowning fatalities is alarmingly high, especially in cold fast flowing rivers. According to the *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2014* (p2), 39% of drowning deaths in 2014 occurred in inland waterways (105 deaths), compared to 15% (39 deaths) in swimming pools. Inland waterways are the commonest site of drowning.
- \$3.5M is widely used in Australia as the value of statistical life (PWC *What is the Economic Contribution of Surf Life Saving in Australia*, 2011 p18). This makes economic nonsense of closing off the Adaminaby area's only practical access to swimming tuition, and to a safer place for both recreational and fitness swimming, at projected savings of \$70 000 - \$90 000/yr.
- this area has a summer tourism enterprise that is largely related to water based activities – fishing/boating.
- the ability to swim is a critical employment and workplace skill. As per the *RLS Report* above: For each \$1 spent on surf life saving - a return of \$27.1 is provided to the community (via work productivity, education, and economic activity created e.g. tourism). We extrapolate that similar would apply for a pool 'learn to swim' centre.
- closure constitutes a waste of over \$50 000 of public grant moneys invested in pool improvements over the last 7 years.

Closing the pool is ineffective:

- without the local pool, it is unlikely that families would be able to access the next best economic available swim-training and practice alternative, 55km away (or further, for many families living outside Adaminaby itself).
- Adaminaby Public School utilised the pool for many years for swimming lessons. This only ceased when there was no qualified coach available to teach locally. Adaminaby Public School is currently negotiating for swimming lessons to be held in the Adaminaby once again, staff and parents being concerned at the severe disruption to children's education caused by the time needed to bus all its students to Cooma for swimming tuition (a 110km round trip). This disruption will become a permanent and inescapable hindrance to our children's schooling, if the Adaminaby pool is closed.

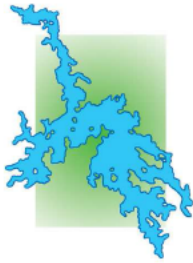
Closure of the pool is inequitable:

- this community has demonstrated the economic and social need for a pool in the past, and it has been provided. The same drivers still apply.
- the *benefits* to the wider Australian community of water safety on the alpine lakes and streams are shared across locals, tourists and visitors alike.
- under the proposed new arrangements, the *costs* of a national culture of water safety would be transferred inequitably to the Adaminaby community, via higher costs of skills acquisition and maintenance by local tourism staff and operators, and emergency services personnel; while our *benefits* would be reduced, due to lack of local pool and swim-training facilities.

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The LECC further considers this 'cost saving' proposal by the SRSC would be highly detrimental to the social and economic future of the Adaminaby district as it:

- fails IPART's criterion 3: *effectively manage infrastructure and deliver services for communities by not managing its infrastructure and failing to deliver services* to the township of Adaminaby and the its rural surrounds (ABS Census data)<sup>1</sup>.
- places an unjust burden of reduced services on an area which already receives little in Shire services, rather than sharing the load equitably across the Shire
- contravenes government policies for promotion of healthy active lifestyles, support for youth, rural mental health and rural economic development, and
- will reduce summer recreational opportunities, contravening SRSC policy for encouragement of tourism outside the snow season.

The Adaminaby pool is a centrepiece of our local community and irreplaceable part of our social capital. Built entirely from community fundraising efforts, this is the only swimming pool within 55 km.

Adaminaby has extraordinarily few publicly maintained youth, sporting or recreational facilities:

- the 2 tennis courts are usually in poor condition
- the 'sportsground' is not maintained as a suitable surface for any sport. It is a rectangular paddock with a cricket pitch, and has been used for stock agistment for many years
- most public open space is unusable, as it lies along a highway used by logging trucks
- there is no safe public area in town designed for children to even kick a football.

There is no park or outdoor social space in Adaminaby for people of all ages to get together and be active, except when the pool is open. The pool grounds are a meeting place for families.

Without the pool, it would be inconceivable for many young families to move to, or remain in, our town.

The pool is also a key facility for summer tourists, in a region which is highly dependent on tourism for its economy.

The loss of the swimming pool would therefore impinge heavily on the future of the local school, the town of Adaminaby and the surrounding district.

## CONCLUSION

LECC submits that the SRSC proposal to close Adaminaby pool is inefficient, ineffective, inequitable and contrary to Federal, State and local government policies.

SRSC's submission refers to unspecified 'alternate social capital infrastructure' to be developed by June 2016 in conjunction with closure of the pool. But there is no conceivable alternative to a local swimming pool for the enjoyment of residents of all ages, and locally accessible swimming instruction for ensuring the water safety of residents and visitors, particularly children.

LECC is sure that there is a better way forward than summarily closing down this major community infrastructure.

Members of the Adaminaby community, the Adaminaby Public School and the Lake Eucumbene Chamber of Commerce are willing to work with the SRSC to help develop alternative funding sources and keep the pool open.

Diane Sutton,  
Chairman, Lake Eucumbene Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)

### <sup>1</sup> Adaminaby

1. Permanent residents 226
2. Privately owned dwellings 160;
3. Number of families 60;

### Wider Lake Eucumbene area

1. Permanent residents 314;
2. Privately owned dwellings 322;
3. Number of families 67.

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