

From:
Sent: Tuesday, 25 May 2021 1:43 AM
To: City of Wagga Wagga <Council@wagga.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Public Exhibition Submission

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Hi, you have received a public exhibition submission.

Details

Name of document on public exhibition: Fees and Charges Proposal

Name: Joshua Paul

Address:

Email:

Submission:

To whom it may concern, Wagga Water Polo has had a long and positive history with Wagga Wagga City Council, being one of the key users of the Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre. We enjoy excellent support from Oasis staff, who always go above and beyond for our sport and appreciate the wonderful relationship we have. The relationship first started almost 70 years ago and during this time Wagga Water Polo had hosted countless, near annual state and national water polo events, which bring hundreds of visitors and tens of thousands of dollars into the city. Wagga Water Polo also hosts local competitions three nights a week. Members of Wagga Water Polo constitute a large portion of the Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre membership, and contribute a significant portion to the Oasis's annual income. Arguably, Wagga Water Polo's member contribute a far greater portion of the operating costs of their sport's facility than other non-aquatic sports in the city, such as the football codes, netball and touch. Whilst no new fees are proposed in the 2020-21 fees and charges, Wagga Water Polo has concerns about existing charges that we understand was inserted in recent year's fees, and introduce pool hire fees. There are two fees of concern. The first are the "General" lane hire fees (item numbers 0289, 0290 and 0291). Whilst we understand that these fees are not for community sport (such as local competitions and training) and they have not been applied this way previously, the current wording leaves scope for interpretation to change in future (such as changes in management arrangements) without consultation. If a general pool hire fee was applied based on the current fees and charges, it would cost Wagga Water Polo around \$2700 a week for competitions alone (ie excluding training) or around \$50,000 a season. To recover this cost, Wagga Water Polo would need to levy its members around \$200 more a year on top of existing membership costs (\$180 a year for adults). This would be on top of pool entry costs already paid for by our members (\$410 for a group membership). In total, the cost of playing water polo in Wagga could increase to approximately \$800 a season (plus training costs). Clearly this is unsustainable and would end the sport in this city. Recent experience in Albury, where new operators started charging pool hire for local competitions, has shown

such moves cripple local sport, making sport unaffordable and ultimately destroying competitions. This move triggered a massive community response in the Border region, which shows the general community opposition to such charges. As such, we request that the fees and charges explicitly note that these item numbers do not apply to community sport including local competitions, training and tournaments. The following wording is recommended: *General ___ Pool Lane Hire (excluding local/community sport competitions, training and tournaments). The second charges of concern are the Major Event fees (items 0283 and 0284). These fees apply to National, State and Regional events. Whilst these fees do currently apply, Wagga Wagga City Council has recognised that charging these acts as a disincentive to attracting major aquatic events to the city, as it has previously provided donations to waive the fees when Wagga Water Polo has bid for major events in the city. The money generated by these fees is far outweighed by the overall community economic benefit of attracting these events to the city and the hundreds/thousands of visitors they bring. It is noted that Wagga already attracts a disproportionately large number of regional, state and national water polo events due to the strong working relationship between Wagga Water Polo and the Council, the low cost of pool hire (through fee waivers), the excellent availability of pool space, and the general welcoming/facilitative approach from Oasis staff. Rather than having to repeatedly request donations/grants to cover the cost of this pool hire to attract major events it is requested that these items be deleted, or alternatively, their scope be reduced to only apply to national and state level events (ie excluding regional events), which are less common and can still be addressed on an event by event basis with individual donation/grant requests. Once again, Wagga Water Polo would like to thank Wagga City Council and the Oasis Staff for their ongoing and enthusiastic support for the sport of water polo in the city and we look forward to you looking favourably upon this request. Kind regards, Joshua Paul President of Wagga Wagga Water-Polo Association