



DHARRIWAA ELDERS GROUP

To: Walgett Shire Councillors
C/O The General Manager
PO Box 399 Walgett NSW 2832
Delivered by hand by Harmoni Dennis

27 July 2023

Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) calls on the Walgett Shire Council to undertake urgent infrastructure repair to the Walgett Memorial Pool, and to commit to building new 50m and 25m heated pools and a toddlers pool, with suitable shade structures, solar power and effective filtering systems so that residents and visitors can swim all year round in Walgett.

We also request that the pool be available for the usual October 2023 opening. It's not practical to have transporting pool users to Lightning Ridge as any kind of interim option.

The pool is very important civic infrastructure for Walgett. It provides one of the few past-times for children and young people, facilities for school and swimming club sporting activities, and vital for the health and wellbeing of Walgett's workforce and community. There is evidence showing how important chlorinated pools are for public health.^{1,2}

Dharriwaa Elders Group offers our connections with industry experts to ensure that the pool is built using best practice evidence-based engineering to accommodate movement of highly reactive Walgett black soils, energy and waste sustainability. Our UNSW Engineering collaborator Greg Leslie has high level industry contacts who manufacture large scale filtration systems for industry, municipal pools, aquariums and water parks.

From DEG's Director Ricky Townsend:

"I swam in swimming club from 1966 & I know how important the pool is for exercise every morning, providing a place to get yourself fit & for relaxing in a safe place with your friends. This pool closure will have a big impact. Everyone will want to swim in the river but they can't. They can't swim in the river because of the chemicals that are in the river from cotton farms & because of the blue green algae. We are asking for a safe place for people to swim in Walgett."

"People have to realise that it gets well over 48 degrees here & children need a safe place to cool off & play in the summer. When it gets hot, it's REALLY hot. The pool is the only way to cool down unless you sit in front of the air conditioner all day."

"With energy prices on the rise & our houses not built for Walgett's climate – the pool will be even more important for our children & the whole Walgett community in the coming El Nino summer."

Dharriwaa Elders Group offers our support and networks to ensure this vital infrastructure in Walgett is upgraded with urgency.

Yours sincerely

Virginia Robinson, Secretary for and on behalf of the Dharriwaa Elders Group

¹<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC181254/#:~:text=Conclusion%20Swimming%20pools%20in%20remote,improved%20educational%20and%20social%20outcomes.>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1326020023012396>