

Corporate Policy

13 August 2004

C02907

The Committee Manager
Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Madam

Subject: Joint Use and Co-location of Public Buildings

I refer to your letter to Council of 23 June 2004 inviting submissions into the Inquiry into the Joint Use and Co-Location of Public Buildings.

As you are aware, Council was a partner to the construction of a community sports centre within the grounds of the Blaxland High School. The funding for the project was as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ Department of Sport and Recreation | \$ 150,000 |
| ▪ Minister for Education and Training | \$ 400,000 |
| ▪ Blaxland High School | \$ 200,000 |
| ▪ Springwood Basketball Association | \$ 200,000 |
| ▪ Blue Mountains City Council | \$ 550,000 |
| | Total = \$1,500,000 |

The parties formed a construction committee to work with the Department of Commerce in managing, overseeing and making decisions regarding the construction of the sports centre.

The construction of the sports centre was commenced early in 2003 and its practical completion was achieved on 14 August 2003. The sports centre is located within the grounds of the Blaxland High School at 3-9 Coughlan Road, Blaxland, featuring two basketball courts and associated facilities. The official opening ceremony was conducted on 19 September 2003.

To ensure equitable access to this new facility for all sectors of our community, the operation of the sports centre will be controlled by a management committee comprising:

- The Principal of Blaxland High School.
- One parent nominated by the school.
- One teacher nominated by the school's Principal.
- Two community representatives from the Springwood District Basketball Association.
- Two representatives nominated by Council.

A head to the agreement document to which Council was party set out quite well the main reasons Council contributed such a significant amount to the project. The following are extracts from that document:

"The parties are desirous that the site be developed as a sports centre to provide a range of sporting facilities for local schools and the community generally and have agreed to cooperate with each other and do such reasonable acts of things that are necessary in order to expeditiously achieve the aims of these heads of agreement".

"The parties agree that they enter into these heads of agreement with a view to providing significant net community benefits by way of improved sporting facilities to the local schools and community".

A joint use and management agreement, of which Council was not required to be a signatory, also sets out quite well why Council agreed to be a partner:

"The Minister, the Blue Mountains City Council and the Springwood and District Basketball Club Incorporated are desirous that the sports centre should be made available for the purposes of social, educational, cultural, recreational and sporting activities to members of the public and to bodies or associations desiring to conduct such activities and have incorporated the management committee for the purpose of managing the sports centre".

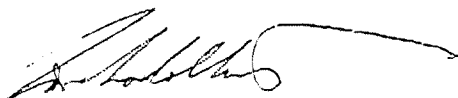
The management agreement then goes on to set out various times each party may have exclusive use, which in the main gives first preference to the school or the Springwood Basketball Association, depending upon the day and time. However, the agreement also makes it clear that when it is not being used at such specified times then those parties may consent, and such consent is not to be unreasonably withheld, to the Centre being hired or used at the discretion of the management committee for community purposes.

Unfortunately, Council had concerns raised with it regarding the availability of the centre for use by the general community. Council has written to the chairman of the management committee seeking comment on the degree to which the facility has been made to the broader community and the mechanics involved.

To date, Council has not received a reply to its concerns and until such time as it receives that reply, I cannot comment further on the matter. However, suffice to say that having contributed such a large sum to the project, and also having now been approached for funding in respect to similar projects, Council is keen to see that community funds are properly applied to the benefit of the broader community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to follow up this matter further.

Yours faithfully,



GRAHAM COLLINS
Group Manager, Corporate Policy