

Gravity cops blast over 'pool'

Belmorgan site in deep water with labour council

IT'S been dubbed the city's biggest swimming pool, but you wouldn't want to venture in to the murky, green waters.

Now Wollongong City Council and the South Coast Labour Council (SCLC) have expressed concerns about a build-up of stagnant water, up to a metre deep in places, and the fencing around the Burelli St construction site of the new Salvation Army headquarters.

The building is being constructed by Belmorgan Property Development as part of a deal to acquire the army's existing building across the road from the flooded site that will be demolished to make way for the \$350 million Gravity project.

With delays to the Salvation Army project and subsequent heavy rains, the site has filled with water and unsightly litter.

Yesterday morning, the council's development, assessment and compliance manager John Gilbert told the Mercury that he had voiced his concerns about the water build-up to Belmorgan's project manager Nicholas Kordas on June 19.

"I was assured that water testing to determine the most appropriate method of disposal had been completed and that work to pump the water from the site was about to begin," Mr Gilbert said.

"Mr Kordas was to contact me when pumping was ready to start but I have heard nothing since," he said.

SCLC secretary Arthur Rorris and president Jo Kowalczyk were highly critical of Belmorgan after inspecting the site yesterday.

"For a company who wants to build the biggest infrastructure project in the city's history this is just not good enough," Mr Rorris said.

"This is one of the companies Rod Oxley was hailing as the saviours of the city."

Ms Kowalczyk said she was seriously concerned about public safety because of a lack of proper fencing in some places around the site.

She pointed to a small mesh panel placed across a pathway and held in place by a flimsy wooden stick.

"This flies in the face of the strict rules applied to owners of swimming pools and a four-year-old could easily get through," she said.

"Building sites are a magnet for kids and with the school holidays starting next week the potential for a tragedy here is very real."

Belmorgan spokesman Anthony Kosseris said the company had been trying to get permission from the council to pump the water into stormwater drains for more than a month.

"Despite testing on two occasions, which showed the water is relatively clean and suitable as stormwater, we cannot get the go-ahead from council.

"We want the water out of there by the end of this week so we can dry out the site and get on with the job," Mr Kosseris said.

He said he has been checking the fencing around the site daily but would immediately rectify any problems in the section identified by the SCLC.