

Minister hears sports pitch

A GLIMMER of hope remains for Ocean Shores residents desperate to keep their promised sports fields.

They could not convince their elected councillors, nor afford a court case against Byron Shire Council, but they have the ear of State Government.

NSW Roads Minister Eric Roozendaal on a visit to the region said he would review the Roads and Traffic Authority's planned purchase of land known as Lot 107 from Byron Shire Council.

The land was earmarked as Ocean Shores' only sports field until the council decided it should be saved for the environment by selling it to the Roads and Traffic Authority, which will use it as a compensation package for the impact of the Yelgun to Brunswick Highway upgrade.

Ocean Shores Community Association president Frank Mills called on the Minister when he was visiting the highway upgrade site.

He wanted Mr Roozendaal to understand what effect the sale of Lot 107 would have on Ocean Shores before the deal was finalised.

"We worked on getting these sports fields for 10 years and it is the only land available in Ocean Shores or to the north," said Mr Mills.

He said parents were forced to drive their children to Lismore and the Tweed if they wanted to compete at sport.

A local sports field would give the children somewhere to play an impromptu game of football, soccer or cricket after school while still leaving the council-desired corridor for the wildlife to feed and pass.

"Why can't the RTA purchase land some-



Frank Mills

where else? Why is it so important to purchase our sports fields?" said Mr Mills.

"If they left it as sports fields we would all win - the wildlife, the community - and it would act as a buffer to prevent fire spreading into the (adjoining nature reserve) known as 7km habitat."

Mr Mills said he was delighted the Minister had agreed to revisit the land buy-up offer from the council.

"It is great to see co-operation," he said.

"We want the Minister to be aware of all the facts, nothing hidden. Let him see it for himself.

"We are hoping he will say we don't need that land, we will buy some land somewhere else, and if he does his name will go down in history in this neck of the woods."

Mr Mills said 5000 people had signed a petition aimed at retaining the sports fields for Ocean Shores.

"It's not one or two people jumping up and down, it's the whole community," he said.

However, a spokesman for Mr Roozendaal said no promises were ever made to interfere with the council's sale.

"It is entirely a matter for the local council."

Please say no Minister

Please say no Minister

Ocean Shores fans make pitch for sports field

picked up five first places at the

11.3.2006

A GLIMMER of hope remains for Ocean Shores residents desperate to keep their promised sports field. Although they could not convince their elected councillors, nor afford a costly court case against Byron Council, they do have the ear of the State Government.
NSW Roads Minister Eric Roozendaal has promised to review the Roads and Traffic Authority's planned purchase from the council of land earmarked as the only sports field at Ocean Shores.
Byron Council wants to sell it to the RTA for use as compensation for the impact of the Yelgun to Brunswick Highway upgrade.
BELINDA LAWIS reports: Page 2

***This statement from the spokesperson is not clear as Minister Eric Roozendaal said at the meeting **“He would review Lot 107”**.