

Kew Recreation Centre - our own gas-fired carbon bomb



Nine hundred and sixty six of us petitioned Boroondara Council to install electric heat pumps instead of gas at the Kew Recreation Centre. There has been no response.

One Councillor is saying he is proud that on his watch our Council got to net zero carbon emissions. The net zero claim was made in 2022, half-way through the term of Council, before the Kew Recreation Centre imploded with an earth-shaking crash as the roof fell in.

Council should have known that claim would be blown up by the use of gas-fired boilers at the Centre. If they did, they kept it secret.

Now a Freedom of Information request shows that in 2019 in the initial design of the Kew Recreation Centre, electric heat pumps were considered but gas was chosen.

It also shows that in September 2021 Council officers told Council that the draft Climate Action Plan included the expectation for Council to transition larger facilities and aquatic centres off gas, providing *“a great opportunity to reduce Council’s carbon emissions at large energy consuming sites such as aquatic centres”*.

A 2021 consultant’s report said *“The implementation of heat pumps is achievable, however the main impediment to the change is cost. The longer it takes to make the decision to change to heat pumps, the more expensive implementation will be”*.

Council declined to provide us with information comparing heat pump and gas running costs - they confirmed they have it. This information was also redacted from the Freedom of Information material. More secrecy.

In 2021 they evidently decided to stick with gas at Kew despite the then known capacity of heat pumps to do the job and the goals of the Climate Action Plan. That decision should have involved the community - NOT been hidden and kept secret.

Now in 2024 they seem to be having second thoughts. We are told they are looking at getting more reports. They have a dilemma of their own making.

In 2019 heat pumps for aquatic centres were in early use. Council could have kept the existing centre until they had a better handle on the alternatives. But they pushed ahead with the design including gas. [Now heat pumps are proven for large aquatic centre use](#), they have applied for Federal funding support to transition Boroondara Sports Complex and the Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre off gas.

They have a hard choice - change the Kew Recreation Centre to heat pumps at increased cost or blow up their net carbon zero claim. They are procrastinating, and keeping quiet to hide their poor planning.