

**Steve Millard**  
**City of Port Phillip City Council**

**Re: Proposed tenancy agreement – Nea Ellas (New Greece) Trading as Port Melbourne Soccer Club.  
As advertised in The Age, 21 August**

As a resident of Port Melbourne I object to the City of Port Phillip granting the proposed tenancy agreement to Nea Ellas without proper shared use protections for the community.

My objection is based on the following grounds:

**1. Access to the grounds by local residents.**

The proposal states the grounds are open for all residents. The grounds have been locked to residents for many years, therefore some significant changes need to be made so that residents feel welcome.

Up until July 2020, signage on the fences around the grounds have dictated 'if a ball goes over the fence you are to contact the Soccer club by phone' – Clearly this is saying don't come in and get your ball.

At the beginning of 2020 the council negotiated for gates to be open to the community, but this does not signal free and welcoming access to the grounds. Also, this gate could be locked at any time.

Some of the 6 foot fencing needs to come down so that community members feel they can walk through the facility. It is not easy to see that the gates are unlocked unless you walk to the specific locations and try the gate.

The grounds keeper has previously abused and chased out local residents so this needs to be rectified.

**2. Privileged access without providing a benefit to the Port Melbourne Community**

The soccer club is a semi- professional club with paid coaches and high fees. The membership numbers quoted in the lease agreement are unusual. Parents and 'others' make up more than half the member numbers and many of these people do not reside in the community. As part of the new agreement the club needs to report player (not family and associates) post codes and provide finances to the Council.

**3. In summary**

I think it is very hard to justify continuing to heavily subsidise a professional soccer club with community rates, particularly if rate payers are subsidising a group of people primarily from outside the council area. There are many clubs that rely on Bunnings Sausage sizzles for their primary source of income. In this respect it is very unfair that a privileged club gets access to such large council subsidises and grants.

The whole reserve needs to be accessible and the only way to achieve this is by removing the fence on the Eastern border to allow the residents free access to this very large piece of land.

  
**Port Melbourne resident.**