Rev Peter McDonald  
Minister, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.  
GPO Box 2534  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Rev McDonald

Thank you for your letter of 18 August 2010 concerning the operation of the four Community Swimming Pool facilities on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands), Yalata and Maralinga Tjarutja Lands.

The swimming season is currently from the first week in October to the end of the last week of the Term 1 school holidays. Pools attempt to operate seven days each week during the peak summer season. All Community Swimming Pool facilities are closed for the period between Christmas Day and New Years Day.

All four Community Swimming Pool facilities are open for use by the Communities; including the schools, between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm. The opening times are determined by each of the Local Community Swimming Pool Committees.

In June 2010, the Commonwealth department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) provided funding of $39,955 for the purchase and installation of a solar water heater for the Mimili Community Swimming Pool facility. It is hoped that this will extend the pool season by at least two months, thereby increasing the impact of the range of health benefits swimming pools provide.

The Mimili Community Swimming Pool facility will act as a trial to evaluate the effect of the solar heater on swimming pool use, and the benefits and the associated costs incurred in its operation. At this time there are no plans to roll out swimming pool heaters to the other Community Swimming Pool facilities.

All Community Swimming Pool facilities are supported by a full time Regional Community Swimming Pool Manager based at Mimili. Each Community Swimming Pool facility is funded for a full time Pool Manager (currently non- Anangu) and full time Assistant Pool Manager (currently Anangu) with a number of casually employed Life Guards (Anangu). Every opportunity is taken to encourage Anangu to take up all roles in the Community Swimming Pool facilities.

The absence of students from school is affected by the impact of a range of factors such as cultural reasons, student health, high rates of mobility and levels of community dysfunction. The presence of a Community Swimming Pool facility in the four communities has had positive benefits such as improved skin and ear health.
The Department of Education and Children’s Services has not at this stage carried out an evaluation into the effectiveness of the “no school, no pool” policy in regard to increased school attendance.

The Community Swimming Pool facilities continue to provide important safe, health, recreational and employment opportunities to the Communities on the APY Lands, Yalata and Maralinga Tjarutja Lands.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

Gino DeGennaro
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 9/11/10