

From: "Rohan Birchmore" [REDACTED]
Sent: Sat, 18 Jul 2026 12:03:58 +1000
To: "Contact Us" <contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au>
Subject: Objection of Rezoning
Attachments: Rohan Birchmore Representation - Refined Existing Themes.docx

Good afternoon,
Please find attached my letter of objection to the rezoning proposal of 23 Racecourse
Crescent Launceston.
A copy has also been sent to Vanessa Holloway.
With many thanks
Rohan Birchmore
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REPRESENTATION | DRAFT AMENDMENT PSA-LLP0018

17 July 2026

Sam Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
City of Launceston
PO Box 396
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Dear Mr Johnson

REPRESENTATION

Draft Amendment PSA-LLP0018 - 23 Racecourse Crescent, Launceston

I write to object to Draft Amendment PSA-LLP0018, which seeks to rezone 23 Racecourse Crescent from the Recreation Zone to the Commercial Zone. I support appropriate development and investment in Launceston; however, I believe this proposal requires particular caution because it places at risk an established and highly valued recreation, health and wellbeing facility and may have broader consequences for the surrounding precinct, nearby residents and the Launceston CBD.

The existing LIFT facility

LIFT is already a significant community asset. It provides a high-quality recreation facility for a large and diverse membership and accommodates a range of qualified operators delivering fitness, physiotherapy, Pilates, nutrition, rehabilitation and related wellbeing services. These activities are closely connected and allow members to access training, treatment and support within the one facility. At a time when physical health, mental wellbeing and active participation are increasingly important, this is precisely the type of established community infrastructure that should be supported and protected.

As Director - Head of Operations of Support Academy, I also have direct experience of the role LIFT plays in supporting people with disability. The facility provides Support Academy with a safe and familiar base and office, as well as a suitable setting for disability fitness and wellbeing programs. Other disability-service providers, including New Horizons, also make use of LIFT. The value of the facility therefore extends well beyond conventional gym membership: it supports confidence, social participation, independence and improved health outcomes for people who may otherwise face barriers to accessing mainstream recreation facilities.

The broader recreation hub

The site should not be considered in isolation. It sits alongside the recently upgraded Launceston Tennis Centre and close to the Elphin Sports Centre and Northern Tasmanian Cricket Association Ground. Together, these facilities form an important recreation and sporting hub for Launceston and the wider region. LIFT complements those venues by providing gym, fitness, strength and conditioning, rehabilitation and allied health services that the surrounding sporting facilities do not provide themselves.

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That relationship is particularly evident when events are held at the Tennis Centre. Players and support teams regularly make use of LIFT because the Tennis Centre does not provide an equivalent gym facility. This demonstrates the practical value of having compatible recreation facilities located together. The existing activities at 23 Racecourse Crescent strengthen the broader precinct rather than operating as an unrelated or temporary use.

Why the rezoning should not proceed

My concern is not with the continued operation of LIFT, which I strongly support. It is with the permanent change in planning direction that would result from replacing the Recreation Zone with the Commercial Zone. A rezoning would remain in place long after the current owners or operators and could ultimately allow the existing recreation facility and its associated businesses and programs to be displaced by a broader range of commercial activities. The resulting uncertainty would affect not only LIFT's operators and members, but also the disability service providers, sporting organisations and nearby residents who benefit from the site's present function.

Council is also continuing to work to maintain the vitality of the Launceston CBD. In that context, the creation of additional Commercial Zoned land in close proximity to the city centre should only occur where there is a clearly demonstrated need and where the wider consequences have been properly considered. There are other locations already available for commercial development without sacrificing an established recreation facility that is valued, used and well located within a recognised sporting precinct.

I understand that a similar rezoning proposal was not supported by Council when the property was under the previous local ownership of Dennis Tucker. I appreciate that every proposal must be considered on its own merits. Nevertheless, the site's recreation role has not diminished since that time. If anything, its community value has strengthened through the range of fitness, health, disability and sporting connections now supported from the facility. The current operators also have plans to invest further in and improve LIFT, which should be encouraged within the existing Recreation Zone.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Council give priority to the long-term interests of LIFT's members, the people and organisations who depend upon its services, the adjoining recreation facilities, nearby residents and the wider Launceston community. The existing use is appropriate, successful and consistent with the recreation function of the precinct. There is no compelling reason to replace that established planning outcome with the uncertainty of a Commercial Zone.

I therefore ask that Draft Amendment PSA-LLP0018 not proceed and that the Recreation Zone be retained over 23 Racecourse Crescent.

Yours sincerely

Rohan Birchmore

Director - Head of Operations, Support Academy | RJB No 2 Trust | [REDACTED]

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