

Save Bungendore Park Inc.

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18 Sep

The Bungendore public swimming pool



"I remember the day when the local school was invited to take part in East Queanbeyan's Swimming Carnival long before we had our pool here. There was great excitement!"

In 1978 the Bungendore community started to raise funds to build a swimming pool. Before that, very few children in Bungendore could swim.

Jill Fox, Bungendore teacher and community worker, recollects the creation of Bungendore's swimming pool, soon to be demolished by the construction of the new high school.

In 1978 the Bungendore community started to raise funds to build a swimming pool. Before that very few children in Bungendore could swim. Now we face the demolition of the community swimming pool in Bungendore Park at the corner of Turallo Terrace and Majara Street

to make way for the proposed new High School. The Pool Committee is making plans to celebrate its 30th birthday in November!

"I remember the day when the local school was invited to take part in East Queanbeyan's Swimming Carnival long before we had our pool here. There was great excitement. Children were asked if anyone could swim and a sea of hands shot up. On the day they lined up on the blocks shivering with excitement, and at the signal jumped in.....and sank! Teachers came from everywhere and dived in for a mass rescue. Shortly after the pool was finally opened and Rhonda-Jane Foulds had taught all our children to swim, Bungendore primary school was winning the local District Carnival. Rhonda-Jane has taught generations of children in this town to swim...and no doubt young lives have been saved."

Back in the late 70s we held a New Years Eve Street party in front of the Royal Hotel in Gibraltar Street. The whole street was closed off and an entry fee was charged. Bush bands on the back of a flat tray semi trailer and the famous animal imitation competition brought plenty of laughs, good will and dancing amongst the crowd. It was always a memorable night and a great way to farewell the old year and welcome the new. Bungendore locals enjoyed nothing better than a big community party. This was the seed sown for raising funds for a pool for the community.

A committee was formed and ideas were floated as how best to raise funds. On Good Fridays we ran a bucket coin collection at the railway crossing. Coins intended for the plate at Good Friday church services probably ended up in the "pool bucket". Luckily bank interest rates on savings were 18% at the time and the money we collected made more money!

By the late 1980s we began seeking grants and after much lobbying we got a grant to build the amenities block at the pool site. If you have ever looked closely you will notice that the bricks used are different from the bricks of today. They are in fact bricks made in Queanbeyan in the 1800s and come from a number of very old houses that were eventually demolished in Queanbeyan. The bricks were stacked in our backyard until with the grant, three local tradesmen, Danny Clancy, David Daniels and Paul Fox used them to build the amenities block. A little history and recycling at its best.

Finally, with money raised from community pockets over twelve long years, a State Government grant and extra funds from the Council, the pool was opened on a very hot afternoon in November, 1991. Our young daughter, Kate Fox, cut the ribbon at the official opening with local Labor member, Jim Snow. All this was achieved by the efforts of volunteers working together with the community for the benefit of everyone living in the area. It was an enormous achievement and took a great deal of energy, stamina, perseverance and generosity from all.

The swimming pool is a great social meeting place for children in a town that has few opportunities for teenagers. Many of the children who have grown up here over the last thirty years have special memories of hours spent with friends...and enjoyed healthy outdoor exercise as well.

I fear we will not get a replacement, but if by chance we do, the site proposed for the "new sports hub" will not have an indoor pool as many imagine as Council only portrays it as "covered". The site would involve children crossing the very busy and dangerous Molongolo/Tarago Road and young children will not be able to walk by themselves to the new site as they do to our current pool. Furthermore, the Primary School won't have the easy access to a pool as it does now because it will be too far away.

This is a community pool and was run as such for its first years managed by volunteers from the community. No consultation was carried out with

members of the Swimming Club or other “stakeholders” who use Bungendore Park, nor the wider community before the Council decided to announce the knock down of a community asset, “no longer fit for purpose”, an asset that was initiated and largely paid for out of community pockets!

Let’s celebrate its 30th birthday with many more to come!

“It’s no longer fit for purpose” – rubbish!

Touch football
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the Regional
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Bungendore
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Bungendore, NSW
bungendoreparkactiongroup@gmail.com

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