

Golden Square Pool

Golden Square's
beating heart

GOLDEN SQUARE POOL
2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT
A PLACE FOR ALL//SWIMSAFE//BIKES//GROWTH
VICSWIM//LAP CLUB//SCHOOLS//SUMMER DAYS
GOOD VIBES//FAMILY//LAUGHS//ARVO CUPPAS
FRIENDS//SWIMMING//YOGA//WATER AEROBICS
90 VOLS//COMMUNITY//LIVE EVENTS//SMILES//FUN



working hard everyday to be a
**vibrant, dynamic
and empowering**
community hub
that connects and grows
**Golden Square
and Bendigo**



Our Organisation

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Sam Kane President

Barbara Lomas Vice President

Janene Hewitt Treasurer

Patrick Skahill Secretary (Aug19-May20)

Natalie Kurzke General member

Margaret Hand General member

Helen Barton General member

Catherine Doyle General member

Jason Smith General member

James Courtman General member

TEAMS

Marketing and Events

Sam Kane, Barbara Lomas, Janene Hewitt

Lifeguard Management

Natalie Kurzke, Sam Kane

Pool Operations

Andrew Penna, Shane Howell

Natalie Kurzke, Ken Hamilton, Sam Kane

Kiosk Management

Barbara Lomas, Tracie Kane

Maintenance and Facilities

Andrew Penna, Rhonda Schepers,

Harry Schepers, Ian Schepers,

Dave Kane, Brian Kurzke, Jason Smith

Community Partnerships

Natalie Kurzke

SwimSafe Bendigo

Natalie Kurzke, Ben Shue, Sam Kane,

Bronwyn Soko, Deanna Neville,

Sandra Wright

Finance

Linda Howell, Janene Hewitt

Golden Square Recreation Reserve

Master Plan

Sam Kane, Helen Barton

Online Communications

Sam Kane, Barbara Lomas,

Janene Hewitt, Noel Clarke

Data records

Dee Lynch

Lap Club

Deb Gordois

Golden Square Pool 2019/2020 Annual Report
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Produced by Sam Kane and Barbara Lomas

with contributions from Natalie Kurzke and Carol McCormack

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Back cover photo by Noni Hyett

All images in this publication were taken prior to COVID-19 restrictions.

It gives me great pleasure to present Golden Square Pool Inc.'s 2019/2020 Annual Report. It has been a year of continued growth, successes and challenges that have culminated in certainty for the pool's future.

We hit the ground running in 2019/2020, with the establishment of a community garden in the first week of this committee's term. A collaboration with many local organisations saw this dream realised. This program has continued during the off season, and has allowed us to form many valuable community partnerships.

Before summer got truly underway, we also saw the completion of a major infrastructure project – the installation of 16m of shade along the creek side of the facility. This activated the eastern side of our grounds and proved very popular with our community. We were also honoured to take home two state awards for our community development work - wonderful recognition for the tireless work of our committed team.

Our health and wellbeing program expanded significantly across the season, with eight classes per week including the introduction of Zumba, Freestyle Pool Fit, Lap Club and Kids Yoga. We extended our weekend opening hours and introduced morning lap swimming in January. We also produced an expanded and extended events season, provided a venue for even more schools to hold their swimming programs and welcomed 40 new volunteers into the family. Despite a challenging season of weather – from a Code Red day to air quality issues - there were 18,595 visits across the season, and 406 members.

My favourite thing about our place over summer, and I'm sure many of our community would agree, is the 'vibe' and good energy that's created every day. Whether its friends catching up for a swim, music, fresh produce for the garden or racks full of bikes, there always something people can connect with at the pool. There is always someone around for a chat, too. What more could you want in a community?

In January we faced the most significant challenge to our day-to-day operation with a fire in our kiosk and meeting room. This made both of these areas unusable. Quickly, in the height of summer, we had to re-establish our operation again from scratch by installing and fitting out a site hut, moving the entrance and redirecting power. Thanks to the generosity of many people across Bendigo, and the City of Greater Bendigo, we reopened in just three days. If this doesn't show the power of community – then I don't know what does. We operated out of the site hut for the remainder of the season, which created a new vibe. We're looking forward to moving into a refurbished space before the start of the 2020/2021 season.

In February 2020 Golden Square Pool took on the management of the popular and successful SwimSafe Bendigo program from Ben Shue. This again continued to provide important free water awareness and safety lessons for those who haven't been able to access them



before. We're looking forward to seeing the growth of this program over the next year.

All of our planned off-season events, which revolve around connecting community for social events, were cancelled due to COVID-19. However, we undertook a number of small projects to bring positive energy to the community. These included chalking the carpark and bike track, National Volunteer Week focus, and sharing good news stories online. We've also been part of City of Greater Bendigo's community-led response to the pandemic, Help Your Neighbour.

We fulfilled a long-held wish to complete and release a four-year Strategic Plan in January 2020. Many months of consultation enabled us to develop this document, providing us with a clear vision to guide future planning. Thank you to those who contributed, in particular Rosalie Rogers. As you will read in this report, many items in our action plan are underway and some completed.

Ongoing works to plant, operations and equipment occurred this year thanks to the valuable support of the local aquatic industry. A regular servicing and maintenance program ensures community and staff safety across all areas.

We are fortunate to have the funding support of many organisations. This year major funding was received from Swimming Australia, the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government to complete projects. We are grateful for this support and indeed to all who have donated and provided services in-kind.

We have undertaken significant work this year to ensure our operation is efficient and sustainable. This

included developing our Pool Operations Team, Policies and Procedures Team and Finance Team. After a review in line with the Strategic Plan, we will be moving to a new organisational structure from October 2020. We will establish an Operational Management Team, which will be responsible for the pool's everyday operation. The Committee of Management moves to overseeing and setting direction, rather than also being involved in operational elements.

Work during the 2020 off-season has centred on securing the future of our facility as part of the Golden Square Recreation Reserve Master Plan. In July 2020, council voted to progress an option in line with master plan development Option 1, which sees the pool retained with all other users receiving upgrades. This option provides a space for everyone in our community and will see a unique recreation precinct developed for Bendigo. We are looking forward to working with our neighbours and Council as this process progresses. We thank councillors for the debate and for the endorsement of our continued operation.

My deep thanks and appreciation to our Committee of Management for their tireless work over the past year, which saw many successes and challenges. I'm proud of the position the organisation is in, thanks to the leadership shown by this team. Farewell and thank you to Jason Smith and Patrick Skahill who are leaving the Committee.

Thank you to the many individuals, too many to name, who form our many working groups. From teams across strategy, data, finance, marketing, communications, facility, fire recovery, partnerships and more, each of you have brought skills that have vastly grown our organisation – thank you.

These thanks extends to our 90 wonderful volunteers – words will never, ever be enough. Each of you are the lifeblood of our place and I couldn't think of a better bunch to do it with. Thank you for brightening all of our days, telling stories, helping at a moment's notice and living out our vision in all your actions. Thank you to our lifeguards for their work in ensuring all are safe.

Thank you to the City of Greater Bendigo for their continued guidance, in particular Amy Johnston for the day-to-day operational support to myself and our team. This thank you extends to Lincoln Fitzgerald, Matt Kerlin, Anne Johnson, Vicky Mason and the whole Active and Healthy Team, and we look forward to the continuation of our strong and collaborative working relationship. Thank you also to councillors for the time and consideration they have given to our facility.

And finally, but certainly not least, thank you to our patrons and users. Without each of you buying a membership, coming in for a swim or to access a program, and getting a Paddle Pop on the way out the gate, none of this would be possible.

It's been my greatest honour to lead this wonderful organisation for the past two years – an organisation



When I reflect on the community I want to one day raise my own family in, this is it.

that is committed to building community, creating lasting impacts and changing lives. Thank you to all who have given me guidance and support this year, in so many ways.

When I reflect on the community I want to one day raise my own family in, this is it. Among a generous, resourceful, smiling, healthy and vibrant group that collaborate and is thankful, positive and authentic. A community that accepts everyone, no matter their background, age or ability.

Over eight years we've created a wonderful movement. Our volunteers, Committee of Management, supporters, patrons, partners and wider community – past and present, are testament to that.

From day one it's been, and will always remain, a whole-of-community effort. I continue to be amazed at what is achieved from everyday people coming together with a shared vision: to enrich the neighbourhood, suburb and city we live in.

And I couldn't be prouder that our work is going to continue and lives can continue to be changed just like mine has been.

Let's keep going. Let's keep using our skills to make a difference. Let's keep trying new things. Let's keep sharing our story. Let's keep fighting the good fight.

Let's keep building Golden Square's beating heart – a true place for all.

Sam Kane President

Pre-season work

The season began with some wonderful new additions to our facility including magnificent shade sails, a community garden and a locally made sharing table. In early October our community came together for a pre-season dinner at the Bendigo Stadium.



Opening day and season start

The opening day of our seventh season took place on Saturday 16 November and was unseasonably cool. Despite this, many supporters and guests were there for the opening and to admire the new mural, created by local artist and our volunteer Jane Ineson. We also unveiled a yarn-bombed bike from the Bendigo Yarn Bombers.



Schools and weather

The final weeks of 2019 saw a great number of school students attend for swimming lessons and end of year celebrations. Alongside this was a number of challenges related to extreme temperatures, a Code Red day, mud rain and compromised air quality. Our team adapted and responded professionally.

Christmas and hello 2020!

Patrons at the pool on Christmas Eve were treated to a visit from Santa Claus, thanks to the Golden Square Fire Brigade including the pool on their route. The year ended with our second annual New Year's Eve Party which attracted a large and well-behaved crowd.



Summer Beats

The Summer Beats series this year focused on giving young local artists an opportunity to perform at an all-ages event. This was backed with a regular Saturday night barbeque to encourage people to enjoy a relaxed Saturday night at the pool. Music by the Pool in February was a low-key event in partnership with Bendigo Blues and Roots Music Festival.



Australia Day 2020

Golden Square's Australia Day event was once again held at our pool with a good crowd enjoying the barbeques, music and Great Inflatables Race. Thank you to Cr Jen Alden for conducting our official ceremony.



100,000 patrons!
At the end of January we celebrated 100,000 patrons through the gates since the pool was saved and passed into community hands.

Lease certainty

In July we reached a major milestone - receiving ongoing certainty of operation from City of Greater Bendigo after seven years of advocating. From March to July the Bendigo community united to show Council how much our pool means, and how we will be a valuable part of the Golden Square Recreation Reserve's future.



Season 2019/2020 by the numbers

Season operated by community	7
Season entry total	18,595
Members	406
VicSwim visits	425
School programs and lessons visits	5,741
SwimSafe Bendigo free lesson hours	40
Volunteers	90
Volunteer hours during the summer season	1,318
Junior Volunteer Team hours worked during season	472
Followers on social media	3,503
Water aerobics or yoga visits	263
New Year's Eve party attendees	370
Movie Night attendees	203
Music by the Pool attendees	318
Friends of Golden Square Pool	205



Memberships at Golden Square Pool continue to increase each season. Our members have the satisfaction of supporting the pool plus they receive a range of benefits including entry to events and discounted access to classes including water aerobics and yoga.

All our members are valued as part of the Golden Square Pool family, signing up to be part of our community and enjoying summer at the Square.

All funds from Golden Square Pool memberships and City of Greater Bendigo Season passes sold at Golden Square Pool

stay with our community organisation. Funds are invested back into the pool to finance programs, events and new infrastructure as well as to support day-to-day operations.

For Season 2019/2020 we had 406 members – 202 Golden Square Pool members and 204 City of Greater Bendigo passes.

While most of our members are from the Golden Square and Kangaroo Flat areas, the pool draws people from across Bendigo and outer areas including Maiden Gully, Marong, Lockwood South, Huntly and Longlea.

Our volunteers

In Season 2019/2020 it was exciting to see even more volunteers join our organisation. We are proud to have 90 committed, hardworking volunteers on our books who ensure day-to-day operations, run events, carry out maintenance, undertake governance and work on our plans for the future. With 38 new volunteers joining our team this season and 18 people who have been with the team since the beginning still with us, our volunteer team has never been stronger.

The dedication of our volunteers allows us to live out our vision of providing a safe, welcoming and affordable recreation facility where all people can belong. In addition, our Junior Volunteer Team has empowered even more young people to be actively part of their local community.

We are proud to see some of our young volunteers train as lifeguards and transition to paid staff members. This has built on our vision to create opportunities and develop skills to help people grow and become vital members of the community.

From greeting patrons at the gate to keeping the grass in top condition, our volunteers work together to create a space for all in Bendigo – a place that is more than a pool.

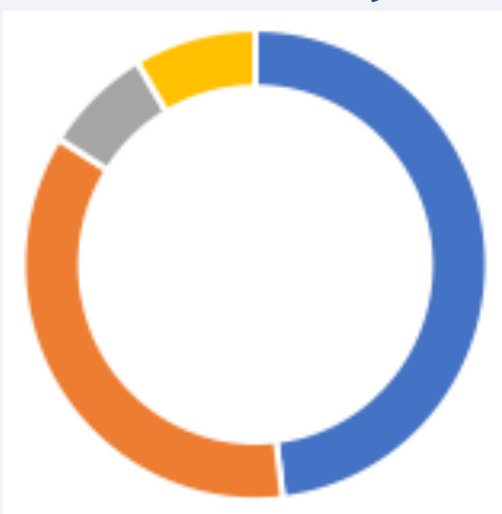
Junior Volunteer Team

Encouraged by our 2019 Innovation Award at the Volunteering Victoria State Awards, our Junior Team grew to 38 in its second year. Juniors as young as 5 years old have worked at the pool alongside their parents, grandparents or other family member for the benefit of the community. In the process, our Junior Volunteer Team members benefit from our culture of positivity and social connection.

With 12 of our Junior Volunteers under 10 years old and the remainder under 16 years, we are giving young people the opportunity to learn valuable skills in handling money, taking on responsibilities, how to work in a team and how to make and keep commitments. It also helps them build their resumes which will give them a great advantage when they come to apply for a part-time job.



Our family



- Volunteers - Adult
- Volunteers - Junior
- Committee
- Staff

In 2019/2020, paid staff included 10 lifeguards, a pool manager, and a contracted pool operator.

YOUR MULTI AWARD WINNING ORGANISATION

2019 Community Group Award Victorian Regional Achievement and Community Awards

On Friday 11 October 2019, Golden Square Pool was honoured to receive the state Community Group Award in the Victorian Regional Achievement and Community Awards at a Gala Dinner in Melbourne, in recognition for volunteers' work in transforming the swimming pool into a vibrant community hub for Golden Square and Bendigo.

The award "recognises groups that make a significant contribution to their community. These community groups share a strong sense of team spirit, and play a vital role in enhancing the social, economic, commercial and environmental prosperity of their region."

Receiving the award was testament to the continuous hard work and dedication of 100's of past and present volunteers in creating a vibrant and inclusive space for live music, learn to swim classes, volunteering programs, a community garden, health and wellbeing classes and more.

We are truly overwhelmed to have received this state recognition. For our volunteers, it shows that people care about the work they are undertaking and it is having an impact on people's lives.

When we saved our pool in 2013 we set out to transform the facility – and we believe that we have achieved that to the best of our ability. This award shows that not only is this extraordinary work and effort by everyday people valued by our community and our state, but people power is making a difference in our world.



President Sam Kane and Vice President Barb Lomas accepting the award in Melbourne.





Sam Kane, Nat Kurzke, Barb Lomas and Ronan Clarke accepting the award.



2019 Innovation Award Volunteering Victoria State Awards

On Wednesday 20 November 2019, Golden Square Pool was named winners of the Innovation Award at the 2019 Volunteering Victoria State Awards during a ceremony held at Victoria's Parliament House. This award was in recognition of our unique Junior Volunteer Team Program which encourages young people in our community to get involved and volunteer at our facility.

The program grew out of a need for our organisation to be inclusive of families by encouraging adults with children wanting to volunteer at the pool to take an active role. Young people are now encouraged to accompany their parents/guardians to shifts, inducted and given specific tasks across kiosk, maintenance and events.

This program teaches young people skills in serving customers, working as part of a team, contributing to community and being part of something powerful – giving them valuable experience not available anywhere else, to help prepare them for their future.

Our inaugural program during 2018/2019 was a major success, and this summer we have seen a significant increase in families joining our team to volunteer, as they are welcomed and encouraged to bring their children with them.

Our young families are the future of Golden Square Pool. Our juniors are incredible, and give so much to our organisation. It wouldn't be the same without them.

Some of President Sam Kane's acceptance speech at the Victorian Regional Achievement and Community Awards

This award is a tribute to every single person – volunteers, supporters and the 90,000 patrons, who have contributed to Golden Square Pool since it was saved by a strong community campaign in 2013.

Past and present volunteers, our Committee of Management, our patrons and members, and our sponsors and donors should be so proud of everything they have done to make this pool what it is. Without them we wouldn't be in the strong position we are today.

This award is more than just a title, a trophy, it tells our volunteers that the work

they are doing in running an outdoor swimming pool is valued and is making a difference to people's lives – people power at its best, and is another step forward in helping us to secure the future of our beloved community facility.

We will never give up our fight to ensure that Golden Square residents have a place they can gather to cool off, relax and gather as a community.

Thank you Awards Australia, PRIME7, The Weekly Times and Bank of Melbourne for their sponsorship and promotion of this award.

Thank you again – we are truly, truly honoured.

**Delivered on Friday 11 October 2019,
Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, Victoria.**

Health and Wellbeing

Across 2019/2020 we expanded our commitment to community health and wellbeing with new programs and initiatives to help get our suburb moving again and connect people.

Our aim was to have something happening all the time for our community to be part of - and that goal was realised as we entered the busy December and January summer season period.

Water aerobics expanded to two classes per week, Sunday morning yoga was introduced, a partnership with Z-Fit Studios saw Zumba occur on the grass on Saturday mornings, while a new bootcamp class - Freestyle Pool Fit - also took place on Saturday morning. In Term 1 2020 a specialised Kids Yoga class joined the calendar and was a great way for young people to get their 'zen' on by the pool deck.

Outside formal classes, we also increased opportunities for our community to look after their fitness by attending our facility. We introduced morning lap swimming throughout January three mornings per week. This proved so popular that it continued in February and March - with plans to further engrain this into Season 2020/2021. Friends of Golden Square Pool also held their annual triathlon gathering, utilising the great tracks surrounding our facility.

While this all provides physical health benefits for our community, our facility also provides mental and social health benefits - through offering a place of connection and growth. The existence of our facility and the programs we offer for people of all ages, enables our community to meet neighbours for the first time, to give back to their local area and embrace where they live. We offer a place for a casual arvo cuppa or a family and community dinner (which is one of the most popular uses of our space and one which further connects people and creates resilient communities).

Smiles on the faces of our community members demonstrate something you can't put a price on - the power our organisation has on people's health. This benefit continues in our busy off-season program, where our community continue to connect and undertake work with the pool as our foundation. This includes our community garden, working bees, social catch-ups, fundraisers and more (many cancelled this year due to COVID-19).

We are more than a place to swim. We pride ourselves on offering a centre for health and wellbeing from a grassroots, community level. None of this would be possible without our wonderful instructors and community partners who share our vision of creating happy and healthy communities with people of all ages enjoying the pool, enjoying the grounds and enjoying community. We look forward to growing these offerings in the coming year - on and off season.





FOCUS ON ACTIVE TRAVEL



At the Square, we're all about building a community of happy and healthy individuals and families. A key part of that is fostering a culture of active travel to the pool - utilising our great location as part of the Golden Square Recreation Reserve and alongside the Bendigo Creek Trail.

We often see 20 bikes/scooters or more in the bike racks on a summer's afternoon. Kids and families ride to the Square after school and work to take a dip, meet with friends or attend a class. Lots of people also walk from the surrounding neighbourhood, creating a wonderful atmosphere.



We were also thrilled across 2019/2020 to partner with Bike Bendigo and host two community ride and swim events. Attendees started at the pool and rode to Kangaroo Flat on the Bendigo Creek Trail before coming back to the pool for a swim. We're looking forward to growing our partnership with Bike Bendigo across 2020/2021.

At the Square, we're all about building a community of happy and healthy individuals and families.

SwimSafe Bendigo

We were honoured at the beginning of February 2020 to take on the running of the SwimSafe Bendigo Program. After 18 months of developing and running the program, founder Ben Shue approached the Golden Square Pool Inc. Committee of Management about taking over the program. Ben, with his background in swim teaching and connection with multicultural services, had seen a need in Bendigo for such a program.

SwimSafe Bendigo offers free lessons to teach basic swimming skills and all-important water safety to people who have not had experience in the water or the opportunity to learn to swim. Participants lack of experience may have been due to financial disadvantage, growing up in a country that did not provide swimming lessons, a physical challenge or other barriers.

Funding for this amazing program was sourced through a grant from Swimming Australia. Thanks to this grant we were able to offer the program at the pool on a twice weekly basis at no cost at all to participants. With a team of wonderful AustSwim trained volunteer swim instructors offering their time and experience, the program was off and running twice weekly.

Due to the growth of the program a committee was formed over the summer. Plans were set in place to offer training opportunities to past and present participants and other members of the community to undertake an AustSwim teaching course themselves. This would be fully funded through the grant received. With dates set and enthusiastic participants in the course, our aim for the upcoming 2020/2021 season is to expand and offer more lessons with an expanding team of qualified instructors.

Research shows that not being able to swim or simply have confidence in the water can lead to people becoming isolated through social exclusion. One of our biggest focuses, along with lifesaving skills, is to provide all with a sense of community and social inclusion at our pool. This program allows that to happen and also extends into many areas of participants' lives.



The SwimSafe Bendigo team

**I'm not scared of
the water anymore.**
Wendy, SwimSafe Bendigo participant

Aquatic Programs



We are committed to developing the water skills of our community. This is achieved through a variety of aquatic programs - particularly for young people - run by both Golden Square Pool and also hosted by us through school programs.



This year we established the Golden Square Pool Lap Club led by experienced swim teacher Deb Gordois. Deb takes sessions two times per week, with participants swimming as many laps as they can while receiving tips and tricks from Deb and the team. There are rewards once lap milestones are reached. While this first started for young people who had finished swimming lessons and were looking to continue, it expanded to anyone - including adults - who wanted to join a casual swimming squad environment. All up, participants collectively swam 1,500 laps - or 750km, during Season 2019/2020!

We were also proud to again host VicSwim lessons for three weeks and they were as popular as ever. We're thankful to Faith Leech Aquatic Centre and Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre who hosted lessons on our behalf, when the pool was out of action due to the weather and after our fire.



We also welcomed seven schools in for swimming carnivals and programs. These included Specimen Hill Primary School, Golden Square Primary School, Big Hill Primary School, Epsom Primary School, Girton Grammar School, Victory Christian College and Marist College Bendigo. We were proud to host these schools and help them provide programs to enhance students' confidence in the water, as well as provide an opportunity for schools to let their hair down at the end of the year. We are always thankful for the support of our schools.



FOCUS ON COMMUNITY GARDEN

In August 2019 we teamed up with Bunnings Kangaroo Flat and their Activities Coordinator Michelle through their community partnerships program to begin our community garden at the pool. Bunnings supplied us with four galvanised garden beds, a wide variety of vegetable seedlings, mulch and other essential items to start our garden. Along with Bunnings' kind donation, we sourced and received a truckload of soil and compost mix kindly donated by Australian Quartz and Minerals, Biomix and delivered on the day by the team from ASQ Garden and Landscape Bendigo.

To help set up the garden we invited a group of enthusiastic students from Golden Square Primary School, who had been helping us out with other projects, and our wonderful junior volunteer team from the pool. The pool site was full of enthusiasm and hype as Michelle from Bunnings arrived and was greeted by students eagerly waiting to get their hands dirty. The teams from AQM and Biomix also stayed on after delivery to help fill the garden beds with soil.

After a day of hard work by all with Michelle leading the way, everyone was excited to see the end result of the garden beds filled with soil, compost and seedlings planted and ready to grow. Our community garden was set to become a project at the pool for everyone to be involved in and enjoy twelve months of the year. The local school students continued to visit weekly to tend to the garden throughout winter leading up to the summer season. Over summer we had Distinctive Options Disability Group come on board and they now tend to the garden on a weekly basis.

Through this project we have had the privilege of teaming up with Bendigo Foodshare, growing fresh produce on their behalf which goes towards supplying meals for those in need in our local community.

Today, even through COVID-19, our garden is thriving and bringing much joy to everyone in our local community. We look forward to growing this program in the coming years.



Community Partnerships



One of the priorities of our organisation has always been connecting with our community, including connecting and partnering with other community organisations, groups and businesses.

Our Community Partnerships program has grown in the past twelve months in massive proportions, with the aim of getting the pool out into the community and benefiting and helping other not-for-profit like-minded organisations.

The partnerships we have formed have provided mutual benefits and allowed all involved to grow and expand beyond what would otherwise be achievable. Fantastic projects, such as our community garden, volunteering regularly at Bunnings' community nights, and partnering with other community aquatic facilities, have allowed skills to develop amongst our team, for us to expand the work of our organisation, and help to share our story and vision with the wider Bendigo community. It's also been great to present our story, and how to activate community, with many other groups this year.

We have and continue to grow and expand in this area every year and the benefits to all involved are never ending and priceless. Our partnerships are continuous and we run programs 12 months of the year, helping us to truly be a year-round organisation helping to improve our community.

We look forward to the upcoming 2020/2021 summer season and to continuing to help others in our community through this wonderful program.



Community Pool Network catchup in Olinda.

Events season

The season was a mixed one for events due to external forces such as extreme weather, smoke, dust, wind as well as unseasonably cold days. In addition, the team faced further obstacles to work around with the limitations of power and equipment as a result of the fire and working from the site hut.

However, once again the volunteers and staff overcame all obstacles to deliver a comprehensive program of events aimed at appealing to all ages, allowing our community to enjoy all the atmosphere and amenities at the pool.

This year's focus of the summer series promoted the atmosphere of something always happening at the pool on a Saturday, including a regular, low-key barbecue most warm nights during the school holidays. The music scene put the attention on our young locals and gave them an opportunity to perform for an audience at our all-ages gig.

Our inaugural movie night allowed the Marketing Team and our hardworking volunteers to finish the season on a high and allow our patrons to enjoy the last event for the summer.

Many of our usual off season events were cancelled due to COVID-19.



Season 2019/2020 events

14 September	Fundraising barbecue
3 October	Fundraising dinner
16 November	Opening Day
8 December	Bike Bendigo Community Ride and Swim
20 December	Triple M Pool Party
28 December	Saturday Night at the Square: Innes Harrington
31 December	New Year's Eve at Golden Square Pool
4 January	Saturday Night at the Square: Alex and Dan
18 January	Saturday Night at the Square: Harrison Jenner
26 January	Australia Day 2020
8 February	Music by the Pool
29 February	Movie Night
8 March	Bike Bendigo Community Ride and Swim International Women's Day

Training

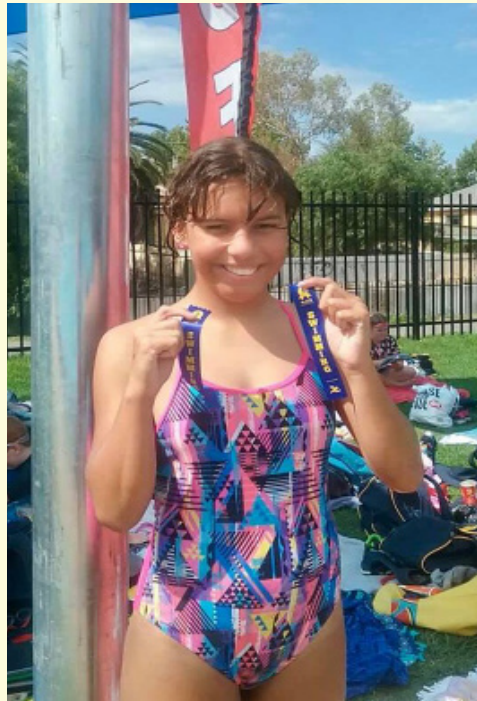
There were many training opportunities given to volunteers and staff across the past year.

Our lifeguards undertook their two required training sessions across the season, to refresh their skills and enhance their knowledge. First aid, CPR, rescues and scenarios were all covered to ensure their skills are maintained at the highest standard possible. We thank Todd Foster for generously giving his time to support our community and ensure guards can respond effectively in all situations.

Volunteers were also trained in areas to support the rostered lifeguards, including in operating the pool vacuum and undertaking chemical tests. This large knowledge base ensures our organisation can operate efficiently.



Carnivals



Lots of fun was had at the many school swimming lessons, carnivals and celebration days over summer!

Pathways Program

In 2019/2020 we launched the Golden Square Pool Pathways Program. This program is designed to provide a pathway into employment for members of our community - primarily members of our volunteer team.

Through the pilot of the program, our volunteer Adam successfully gained his first aid and lifeguard qualification - becoming a valuable member of our lifeguard team. Adam's course costs were sponsored by the organisation.

Adam joined us in 2015 as a kiosk volunteer with his sister Kirralee and quickly became a much-loved member of the Golden Square Pool family. As a qualified lifeguard, Adam now supervises our swimmers while remaining a friendly face to our patrons and community.

At only 19 years old, Adam is also a role-model for members of our Junior Volunteer Team. He represents everything Golden Square Pool is about: everyday people coming together to make a difference in our community.

We're looking forward to growing our Pathways Program across 2020/2021 to provide more job opportunities in the aquatic industry for our community.





Our new shade installed in November 2019

Golden Square Pool volunteers have continued to undertake maintenance and upgrade works across 2019/2020, following significant upgrades the previous financial year.

These works have helped to enhance the life of the facility and ensure safety for patrons. In line with our current strategic directions and the Golden Square Recreation Reserve Master Plan developments, more works are planned for 2020/2021.

The biggest upgrade project this financial year was the installation of a new 16m shade structure along the creek side of the facility. This project was made possible thanks to the generous support of our community over many years. This project has reactivated the creek side of our facility and has created another space for our community to gather and relax.

Pool operations were contracted to Pool Werx, and plant works undertaken by Bendigo Aquatic Services.

Major works this year

- Painting of the pool deck and pool lip-pediment
- Servicing and repairs of the pool automatic vacuum by Clark Rubber
- Servicing of the pool pump by Midland Irrigation
- Toilets – plumbing works

The above are in addition to routine daily maintenance undertaken by volunteers - including lawn mowing and building/facility repairs



FOCUS ON THE BEATING HEART MURAL

Last summer we were thrilled to unveil our brand new mural, painted by our amazing volunteer Jane Ineson. This piece of art on the front of our chemical shed encapsulates everything about our community space – swimming, gathering together, colour, health and wellbeing, life and love.

It's bright, it's the first thing you see as you walk through the gates, and your eyes are immediately drawn to it on the neighbouring bike path. It is now the centrepiece of our facility.

It was a big project and was done largely in secret, so we could do the big reveal. It involved Jane spending afternoons and evenings in October/November last year preparing, painting and refining... putting the finishing touches on right before we opened the gates for Season 2019/2020. It was the major component of our launch of Season 2019/2020.

The mural also involved our volunteers placing their hands along the bottom to symbolise the hundreds of people – of all ages and backgrounds - who have come together since 2012 to transform our pool into the vibrant space it is today. These handprints represent our commitment and people power - the time and energy it takes every single day to operate our pool.

We thank Jane immensely for her incredible work and dedication, as well as Haymes Paint for donating the paint.



Sam's trip to the capital



In December 2019, our President Sam Kane was a winner of the national ABC Heywire competition for his story on our pool journey over the past seven years. In February 2020, Sam travelled to Canberra for the ABC Heywire Regional Youth Summit, where he joined 40 other winners from across the country.

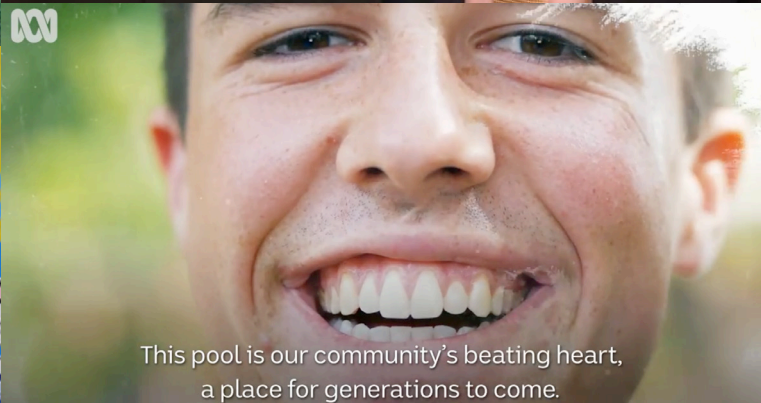
While in Canberra Sam worked to develop projects in response to significant issues facing our society. His group focussed on ideas to build resilient communities, to reduce social isolation and increase community connection and skills. The groups then presented these ideas in Parliament House to ministers, leaders of federal departments, youth and philanthropic organisations, ABC Board members and more.

Sam also had the opportunity to share the story of our pool journey to government departments and throughout 2020 his story was shared across the ABC right around Australia through text, podcast and video.



My Heywire experience has given me new perspectives on issues facing regional communities and young people. An unforgettable, rewarding and empowering experience.

Sam Kane



This pool is our community's beating heart, a place for generations to come.



Images: Sam in Canberra, and Sam's early campaigning for our pool.



2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was finalised and released in January this year, presenting an updated vision and new objectives for the organisation for the next four years. This is the first full Strategic Plan for the organisation.

Our organisation is experiencing an unprecedented amount of growth as we transition from a seasonal swimming pool to a year-round community hub that services the entire Bendigo community. With that comes need to review and update our operation and practices to cope with the demands of growth and a changing aquatic landscape.

This plan aims to solidify the operation from a business and financial perspective, while keeping and expanding the organisation's community focus. This plan provides leadership, vision and guidance to Golden Square Pool Inc. Committee of Management in establishing a strong, sustainable and viable future as Golden Square's beating heart. The strategic platforms were developed via a detailed analysis of current services and operations.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually, with achievements and updates reported to members. A number of milestones were reached in the first six months.

Completed this year

New organisational structure including Operational Management Team endorsed

Golden Square Pool Pathways Program established

One volunteer trained in lifeguarding and first aid

Quotes, plans and works scoped for pool upgrade

Major vacuum repair and service works occurred as part of routine maintenance

Online accounting, business and data management systems piloted

Health and wellbeing program growth - new classes // Zumba, Freestyle Pool Fit, Kids Yoga

Engaged in the Golden Square Recreation Reserve Master Plan process

Growth of Community Garden program - primarily during the off-season

Planning to grow the SwimSafe Bendigo program





In July 2020, City of Greater Bendigo endorsed an option for the Golden Square Recreation Reserve Master Plan (in line with Option 1), which sees Golden Square Pool remain and all other stakeholders receive upgrades. We are thrilled with the outcome and that we can all now move forward with certainty to create a fantastic precinct for the entire community.

We can now continue implementing our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and commence investigating and undertaking important works across many areas. With certainty, we can now apply for grants and start making our community space even better. We're also looking forward to being part of the implementation plan process of the recreation reserve master plan and working closely with our neighbours and Council as part of this. There are so many possibilities, including for joint and shared use, that we can't wait to explore.

We thank our community for their incredible support throughout the journey this year and since we first saved our pool in 2013. We also thank the councillors who voted for an option the community backed, and which sees all users receive upgrades.

The future of Golden Square Pool and the Golden Square Recreation Reserve is exciting. Together we have a wonderful and unique opportunity to create a fantastic recreation precinct for everyone in our community. We can't wait to be part of it.



Our future

Sponsors and Supporters

Our organisation cannot operate without the generous donations, financial and in-kind, from our supporters and sponsors. We can't thank them enough for all they have done for us:

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Coolabah Turf
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Rosalie Rogers
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Swimming Australia
Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety
Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications



On behalf of the members of Golden Square Pool Inc., a huge thank you to our Committee of Management - Sam, Barb, Janene, Nat, Margaret, Helen, Catherine, Jason and James, for their leadership and commitment over the biggest year in our organisation's history. Each of our committee members has brought their skills to build our organisation into what it is today - vibrant, inclusive, diverse and dynamic, setting it up for a wonderful future. Their work will leave a lasting legacy in Golden Square.

FACES OF THE SQUARE





Golden Square Pool



Golden Square's
beating heart

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