

Golden Square Pool



GOLDEN SQUARE POOL INC.

2021/2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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
Barb Lomas Vice President
Margaret Hand Secretary
Linda Howell Treasurer
Catherine Doyle
Helen Barton
James Courtman
Bronwyn Soko
Debra Butt
Casey Ely

Operations

Kirsten Boyd Manager
Barb Lomas Volunteer Manager
Linda Howell Business Manager
Tracie Kane Kiosk Manager
Natalie Kurzke SwimAware Bendigo
Manager
Catherine Doyle Maintenance
Coordinator

Teams

Pool Operations

Andrew Penna, Kirsten Boyd, Adam
Reaper

Maintenance and Facilities

Andrew Penna, Margaret Hand, Steve
Hand, Catherine Doyle, Dave Kane,
Shane Howell

Media, Communications and Online

Sam Kane, Barb Lomas, Carol
McCormack, Noel Clarke

Risk and Policy

Debra Butt, Casey Ely, Sam Kane, Kirsten
Boyd

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Amongst the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Golden Square Pool community came together again in unique ways in Season 2020/2021 to connect, grow and celebrate all that's good about our wonderful piece of paradise.

Opening Day for Season 2021/2022 was held on Saturday 25 November 2021 – and it was so great to see everyone again. We were honoured to have our number one ticket holder State Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards MP officially open the season, alongside our ward councillor Cr Dr Jen Alden and Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf.

Across the season we were proud to host nine local primary and secondary schools as they held their swimming programs and events at our pool. This is consistent with previous seasons, with many dates booked out well in advance.

We value our strong relationship with local schools and enjoy working with them to provide a safe space for young people to learn vital water safety skills.

Eased restrictions, in comparison to last season, allowed us to bring back our famous New Year's Eve event. Many in our community gathered to enjoy a night together, before heading off to enjoy the 9.30pm early fireworks. The risk of holding a large-scale Australia Day event in the peak of the Omicron COVID wave, however, meant there were no formalities on this day as in previous years. Yet despite this, over 500 people still enjoyed the beautiful weather and free entry.

Towards the end of season, we also introduced two new community events that were so popular, we couldn't keep up with the demand. We were honoured to partner with the Indian Association of Bendigo to host Bendigo's first ever Holi – Festival of Colour event. Over 200 people soaked up the atmosphere of colour, music and food, demonstrating how great our community truly is.

That was backed up with our first ever Pools for Paws day out for dogs, which opened the facility to a brand-new user-group once the humans had finished swimming for the season.



The pool and grounds were transformed with dogs having a ball, and our volunteers had a bunch of fun selling dog themed treats from the kiosk. Both events will be back, bigger and better, in the seasons to come.

Continuing the theme established last season, we developed new activation initiatives to engage our community in different ways beyond events – as had previously been our core. The pillar of these was our new program, Healthy Golden Square, which provided free health and wellbeing activities for kids to pick up new skills, connect with others, and get back involved as we emerged from the pandemic.

The highly popular program engaged new families to our facility and gave kids a chance to try stand-up paddle boarding, junior lifesaving, lap club, games, yoga and more. We also continued our adult yoga classes and enjoyed two pop-up water aerobics classes.

Our popular SwimAware Bendigo program (formerly SwimSafe Bendigo) was back again, and enjoyed steady numbers despite restrictions. We value our strong partnership with Life Saving Victoria to deliver this program, as we do with Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services – and look forward to strengthening these further over the coming years.

This season we continued to work hard to grow our organisational capacity. We continued to implement changes to the Royal Lifesaving

Australia's Guidelines for Safe Pool operations and updates to the Public Health and Wellbeing Act. We also continued to develop a suite of internal policies to ensure compliance in areas such as human resources, chemicals, operations, first aid and safety.

Our commitment to safety was cemented in December after we undertook a three-month auditing process by Life Saving Victoria. As detailed later in this report, this gave the facility a Bronze Pool Safety Endorsement on the Victorian Public Pool Register. The organisation is to be commended for the considerable work undertaken in the compliance space to ensure continual quality improvement. This commitment to compliance and safety remains an ongoing task, as detailed in our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

The pandemic also posed challenges beyond events and gatherings – primarily in relation to site access and human resources, like every business. This placed extra strains on the organisation, our volunteers and staff and our Management Teams, but were dealt with sensibly and in line with relevant government legal requirements.

This season we also unveiled exciting new projects – such as the completion of shade along the creek side of the facility, shade at the kiosk window, a 16m mural which has transformed the facility, and an upgraded Community Garden space. These projects, all aligned with our strategic objectives, further enhance what we provide to our patrons, and strengthen our position as our suburb's true beating heart.

16,958 patrons passed through the gates across the season, an increase of approximately 1,500 on the previous season. This rebuild is in line with expectations after a patronage decline the previous season due to pandemic-imposed challenges.

None of the successes of this season could have been achieved if it wasn't for the tireless dedication of our team of volunteers. I say it every year – but it's true, they're the beating heart of the beating heart, and make our place what it is. My deep thanks to each and every one of you – for giving of your time, your skills, and your smile, to make the Square what it is. These thanks are extended to our team of staff led by our Manager Kirsten Boyd, for their incredible work to keep our pool safe and operational.

My thanks to the City of Greater Bendigo for their ongoing operational support, in particular that of Ray Smith and the Active and Healthy Lifestyles Team. We value our strong working relationship with the City, and look forward to this continuing to grow.

I'd also like to offer my personal thanks to our Committee of Management and wider Management Teams for their power of work in what was a challenging season. I'm thankful for the massive advancements our organisation took last season to further strengthen our operation, compliance and commitment to be the best we can – and that's testament to the wonderful, selfless people who make it all happen, often unrecognised.

Finally, thank you to our patrons, members, supporters, sponsors and donors for all they do to make our place a vibrant community hub for all people. Without all of you, the community we've built here simply wouldn't be possible.

I'm proud every day to lead an inspiring, talented and committed team who only want the best for health, wellbeing and connection in Golden Square – and see our pool, and helping it to thrive, as the foundation of ensuring a truly happy and united community.

Through the ups and downs, that vision – encapsulated beautifully over the last season – has remained steadfast, and we're not going to give-up anytime soon.

Sam Kane President

President Sam Kane with Abishek Awasthi, Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf and Cr Rod Fyffe



FROM OUR MANAGER

This season has been a huge success with some new and wonderful programs brought to an already existing amazing facility. This has put us at the forefront for Bendigo pools, especially community run pools. That is something we can all take pride in.

We were very proud that we were able to staff our pool right through the season, despite many pressures we experienced as an organisation. This shows the calibre of staff and their dedication to our pool.

Some of the highlights included seeing Healthy Golden Square come to fruition, our events and junior programs and seeing the development of some of our projects including the revitalisation of the grass and the advancement of the community garden.

While we were unable to offer aqua aerobics this season, we did manage to have two sessions with Margaret Zerafa who came from Melbourne specially to take them. The feedback was incredible, and her second session doubled in size.

My first season as Manager has given me plenty of enthusiasm and ideas for the next season. I would like to offer a huge thanks to all the departments for making Golden Square Pool the PLACE TO BE

Kirsten Boyd Manager



Manager Kirsten Boyd with staff member Jack Deed.

FROM THE KIOSK AND VOLS

A drop in volunteering numbers and an increase in responsibilities and duties put pressure on our kiosk staff from the beginning of Season 2021/2022. The numbers gradually built up as the summer holidays approached and dropped off again before the end of the season.

A change in the kiosk was a big move away from paper forms, using the tablets to fill in attendance logs and queries. Overall it has helped make processes smoother for both volunteers and administration. Finally having SQUARE connected to the EFTPOS was a welcome improvement.

At times it was difficult to fill the roster and some people took on a greater load as a result. There were many reasons for the drop and illness and self-isolation added extra pressure at times. A run of hot weather and extended hours also placed a strain on the roster. Even though we had less people, we filled more hours this season than ever before – well over a thousand hours. This is a testament to just how committed and selfless our volunteers are.

Despite the pressure, those on the team throughout the season did enjoy a rewarding summer in the kiosk with many friendly faces coming in regularly, a range of fun activities and a great sense of community.

Taking part in the New Year's Eve party, Holi Festival and Paws for Pools were some great highlights.

Barb Lomas Volunteer Manager



OUR MEMBERS

Memberships at Golden Square Pool are a great way for people to show their support for the pool while gaining access to a great range of benefits, including discounted classes.

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 GSP memberships and City of Greater Bendigo Season passes sold at Golden Square Pool stay with our community organisation and are used to finance programs, events and new infrastructure, as well as to support day-to-day operations.

In 2021/2022 our memberships were down across all categories, reflecting a general trend as the leisure sector recovered from the pandemic and related restrictions.

This season we had 253 members, shared between Golden Square Pool only and City of Greater Bendigo memberships.

OUR STAFF

This season we employed 17 casual staff, consisting of a Manager, Project Manager and 15 lifeguards.

Our staff support our volunteers to achieve safe and successful daily operation.

OUR PEOPLE

Golden Square Pool's commitment to building an inclusive and welcoming community is reflected in the success of the volunteer team. Our volunteers are dedicated and hard-working, committed to the success and future of this community organisation. They are from a wide variety of backgrounds and occupations, representing all ages – from primary school children to retirees.

We owe our existence to the volunteers who take care of day-to-day operations, run events, carry out maintenance, undertake governance and plans for our future. While the extra responsibility of ensuring COVID-19 protocols were followed was onerous for our volunteers, they did what had to be done in order to continue safe operations.

While our volunteering numbers were down throughout the season for a number of factors, we still enjoyed a strong participation rate than most voluntary-run organisations and expect a gradual return to pre-pandemic volunteering levels over the next few seasons.

Our future goals for our volunteers, besides building up their numbers, are to encourage an even greater participation and level of skill development to ensure our organisation continues to thrive and grow as a valuable community asset.

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.



OUR JUNIORS

Members of our Junior Team continues to delight and impress all who are involved with them. The Juniors collectively committed 340 hours to our organisation last summer. This shows that they really are making a difference.

The young people on our team are dedicated, reliable and hard-working. They are learning valuable skills and contributing to society at an early age. Some of our Juniors have graduated to independent shifts and we are so proud of them.



SEASON BY THE NUMBERS

Season operated by community	9
Season entry total	16,958
Combined entry total since 2013	140,610
Members	253
VicSwim visits	450
School programs and lessons visits	6,549
SwimAware free lessons	104
Volunteers Total	71
	Adults (51), Juniors (20)
Kiosk Volunteer hours during the summer season	1256
Kiosk Junior Volunteer Team hours worked during season	340
Followers on social media	5,059
Water aerobics participants	24
Yoga	28
Lap Club	12
New Year's Eve party attendees	464
Friends of Golden Square Pool	234





**COMMUNITY
ACTIVATION**

OUR FIRST HOLI

For the first time, Golden Square Pool partnered with the Indian Association of Bendigo to host Bendigo's Holi - Festival of Colours.

There was colour, dancing, food and good vibes at the pool for the day-long festival. This great community celebration was a wonderful use of the space at the pool, making the most of the grass and open space to enjoy this unique festival.



SWIM AWARE BENDIGO

This season our popular SwimSafe Bendigo program was rebranded to SwimAware Bendigo.

During the 2021/22 summer season, in partnership with Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services and funded by Life Saving Victoria, 21 participants were registered and enrolled in the program. We ran Monday night weekly lessons, totalling thirteen lessons for the season, averaging eight participants at each session. There was a mix of past participants and new with varying abilities. Seven volunteer instructors included a mix of four returning and three new instructors. The program focussed on water safety skills and basic swimming skills

There were many highlights, including a water safety lesson with participants and their families, run by Life Saving Victoria and hearing the individual stories of the families involved in the program.

The program concluded with a family evening run by Life Saving Victoria's Melbourne instructors and was an opportunity for families to learn basic water safety survival skills in different scenarios along with our wonderful volunteer SwimAware Instructors. Participants ranged from children to the elderly. Overall, it was a huge success and LSV are looking forward to returning in the future.

Natalie Kurzke SwimAware Manager



OUR FIRST DOGS DAY

Dogs ruled the pool when we hosted our inaugural Pools for Paws day after the end of the season for humans.

The dogs (and humans) had a blast enjoying swimming, fetching and running around at the pool. After a good play and swim, dogs were spoiled with puppachinos and dog biscuits from the kiosk.



OUR EVENTS

New Year's Eve

Golden Square Pool hosted another successful New Year's Eve, with families making the most of the safe, fun and alcohol-free event to celebrate the New Year. Hot Dogs were on offer from the kiosk or families brought their own picnic dinner. A fun evening wrapped up in time to catch the early fireworks.

Australia Day

Although we didn't hold an official Australia Day celebration this year, for a number of reasons, there was still a great vibe at the pool with many people enjoying the public holiday and free entry.

Pink Patrol

On Saturday 21 February we turned pink for Life Saving Victoria's Pink Patrol initiative - a day to celebrate the work and achievements of women in the aquatic and lifesaving industry. We had super fun wearing pink, and a special Water Aerobics class with Margaret who came up from Melbourne to run the class. This was not only a fun day, but also an opportunity to acknowledge and thank the wonderful women who make up the Golden Square Pool family - from our volunteers and the lifeguards on the pool deck, to our staff, members and the women on our management teams.



HEALTHY GOLDEN SQUARE

Thanks to the funding we received, we were able to continue our program of Healthy Golden Square this season. This specialised health, fitness and active program for kids ran in the second half of the season and gave kids the opportunity to get active, connect, and grow their skills at no cost to them.

Healthy Golden Square was a great opportunity for Golden Square Pool to partner with many other groups in our community to create great opportunities and experiences.

Lap Club

Participants were coached by a qualified instructor and tracked their laps in the 50m pool. Collectively the participants swam 23 kilometres or the equivalent of from Golden Square to Axedale.

Kids Yoga

Kids enjoyed the opportunity to try out new moves under the guidance of an experience yoga teacher.

Junior Lifeguard

This new program gave kids aged between 8 and 15 the chance to experience some of the skills of lifeguards while still having fun. It is hoped that this program will foster interest in future lifeguards.

Junior Aqua Play

Structured games and activities both in the water and on grass for children aged 4 to 8 years old not only gave children some valuable water safety experience but a lot of fun as well.

Stand up paddle boards

The safe environment of the pool was the perfect place for kids to have a try of stand up paddleboards and canoeing. This very popular activity was fully booked and all participants had a wonderful time mastering some new skills.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Thanks to a grant to upgrade and landscape the community garden, this corner of the pool grounds has been given a complete makeover. Works were completed in time for the start of the 2021/2022 season and a small group of dedicated volunteers managed the space and grew a variety of herbs and vegetables.



LESSONS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

At Golden Square Pool we are more than just a place to swim and committed to promoting the physical, mental and social health of our community. This includes for our regular patrons and broader members of our community, such as sports groups.

Water Aerobics

Our popular Water Aerobics classes were unavailable this season. However we did have a guest instructor from Melbourne who visited on two occasions with a Super Class and a Pink Patrol class.

Yoga

While still a joy to have yoga outside on the green, yoga faltered this season without a suitable timeslot. Many thanks to our faithful instructor Kate Watts who persevered with a small group of dedicated yogis.

VicSwim

We had 90 students take part in VicSwim lessons over three weeks in January. As always our teacher Anne - a Golden Square Pool stalwart, helped participants feel safe and comfortable in the water, and pick up new tips too.

Sporting clubs

Many sporting clubs took the liberty of the weeks and weeks of hot weather to train at the Square. The pool was a hive of activity many nights!





**FACILITY AND
BUSINESS**

GROUNDS AND MAINTENANCE

NEW SHADE

Over the last twelve months, we've been working hard on maintaining the lawns and surrounds of our lovely Golden Square Pool. The Maintenance Team have worked on the following:

Lawns/Gardens:

- Our Community Garden has been established. The new garden was created at the start of the 2021-22 season and has since been improved. There are four high garden beds for herbs and vegetables. And three lemon trees have been planted against the fence. Thanks to Bendigo Hire (free 'Ditch Witch' hire, Golden City Timber and Hardware and ASQ Eaglehawk, the retainer wall was completed, and filled with soil. Some grass runners have been placed in the soil so that eventually it becomes another grassy seating area.
- Gardens behind barbeque area have been pruned and weeded to allow for new spring and summer growth
- Pruning/weeding the large garden behind the kiosk and change rooms

Aquatics and Pool Operations

Regular maintenance and assessment of all aquatics related infrastructure occurred as per requirements. This include a shell assessment in October 2021 and 2022 (including patch-up works), and works in the Chemical Shed. Our Pool Operations Team contracts the support of Adam Reaper to ensure compliance.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to works this year!

Margaret Hand and Catherine Doyle
Maintenance Team

Two significant shade projects were completed over the past year.

Three more sails were added on the creek side of the pool to make this area completely shaded - and, some much needed shade was added to the front of the kiosk.

The creek shade was supported by the Victorian Government, and the kiosk shade was funded by the Peter Ryall Foundation.

It's been a long-held strategic vision of the organisation to increase the shade cover for our patrons and volunteers to protect everyone from the damage of the sun, and these two projects allow that to happen.

The new sails also increase the use of the site for our community, has transformed the facility and has allowed the grass to have a new lease on life.

Moreover, when we gained management of the pool in 2013, the creek side had no shade - and now, thanks to fundraising and government funding, we've opened up that space for schools, classes and events.

Our investment in shade has been a real win, and sets us apart.



We're in the third year of implementing our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. 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.

This plan aims to solidify the operation from a business and financial perspective, while keeping and expanding the organisation's community focus. The strategic platforms were developed via a detailed analysis of current services and operations.

An Annual Review of the plan was completed by the Committee of Management in October 2022. A major review of the Strategic Direction of the organisation will take place in early 2023.



The Golden Square Pool Inc. Committee of Management is committed to building a sustainable future for the organisation - across the areas of finance, people, risk, HR, technology, policy, operations and aquatics. We understand that what's required by our organisation to operate the facility and business safely and in accordance to guidelines and legislation is an important task, and one that can't wane.

This work has been a focus of the past 12-months. This has been spearheaded by our plan, in line with the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, to separate the governance and operations of the organisation from the committee, to better provide oversight into the large responsibilities of our business, as well as our compliance as an aquatic facility and not-for-profit.

The solidification of our Manager's role, and a clearer focus of the committee and its sub-committees has helped us work towards this - with the committee and Executive no longer minutely involved in the daily operation, but this power being placed in the Manger's function.

This also allows the skills and time of our committee to be better spent ensuring the viability of our organisation, operations and diverse community programs.

Testament to this is the organisation being listed as a bronze endorsed pool on the Victorian Public Pools Register.

This year we've also advanced plans for a major staged upgrade of Golden Square Pool. We engaged FDG Architects to scope, design and cost this project, which would deliver a splash area, revitalised 50m pool and new plant and operations area. We have continued our advocacy for this project to the Victorian Government, Sports & Recreation Victoria, City of Greater Bendigo and Aquatics Recreation Victoria.



FUNDING

The team has been working hard behind the scenes to secure funding for variety of upgrades and programs. 2020/2021 has been our most productive season ever in terms of successful applications.

The following grants were received over the past 12-months:

2020 Community Shade Grants Program Round 5 – grant to provide a duplication of the shade sails along the south side of the 50-metre pool. Works were completed in time for the start of the 2021/2022 season.

Facebook Good2Give – grant to upgrade and landscape the community garden. Works were completed in time for the start of the 2021/2022 season.

VicHealth Reimagining Health Grants – funds to develop and run the Healthy Golden Square program from kids.

VicHealth Reimagining Health Grants – funds to continue SwimAware Bendigo.

Victorian Government Small Business Adaptation Grant - for implementation of new POS system.

Peter Ryall Foundation - new shade

Lisa Chesters Stronger Communities Grant Program – funds to enable upskilling of volunteers (underway)



SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS

We wouldn't be where we are today without the valuable work and support of local businesses - including the ones below over the past year:

- Bart n Print
- Goldfields Tag & Test
- Terry Lamprell and Nola Thomas
- Bunnings Kangaroo Flat
- Teaporium
- Hip Pocket Golden Square
- National Hotel
- Natalie Kurzke
- WebSmith Productions
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Golden Square Dry Cleaners
- B&T Pool Painting and Court Surfacing
- Bendigo Property Solutions
- Golden Square Fire Brigade





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