

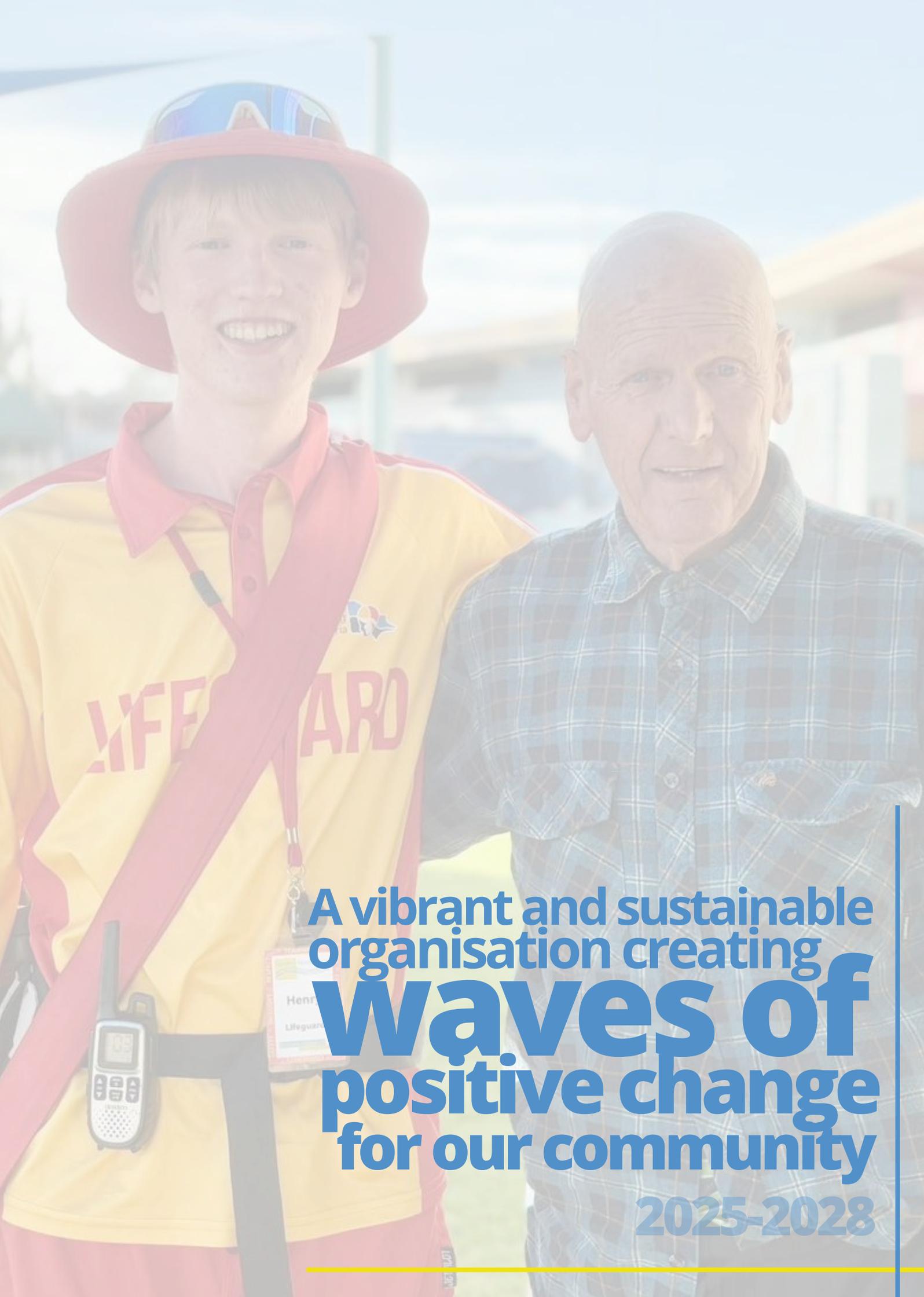
Golden Square Pool



GOLDEN SQUARE POOL INC.

2024/2025

ANNUAL REPORT



A vibrant and sustainable
organisation creating
waves of
positive change
for our community
2025-2028

OUR

ORGANISATION



Committee of Management

- Sam Kane** President
- Barb Lomas** Vice President
- Margaret Hand** Secretary
- Linda Howell** Treasurer
- Helen Barton**
- Debra Butt**
- Leonie Steed**
- Janene Smith**

Operations Leadership Group

- Sam Kane** General Manager
- Barb Lomas** Volunteer Manager
- Linda Howell** Business Manager
- Margaret Hand** Grounds Manager
- Tracie Kane** Kiosk Lead
- Kobe Henderson** Team Leader
- Aidan Corr** Team Leader

Teams

- Plant Operations**
Andrew Penna, Adam Reaper, Kobe Henderson
- Maintenance, Grounds and Facility**
Andrew Penna, Margaret Hand, Steve Hand, Catherine Doyle, Chris Corr
- Digital and Communications**
Sam Kane, Barb Lomas, Carol McCormack, Noel Clarke

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Sometimes I tell people that the greatest thing about Golden Square Pool isn't actually the pool itself.

Yes – that's technically the reason why we're all here.

At the beginning, none of us could have imagined how the dream to save the pool would set us on a journey to create such a wonderful community.

Friendships, community, volunteerism, health, dogs, classes, music, festivals, the great atmosphere, and so much more – they're the 'things' that saving our pool has made possible.

A lifetime of memories, that in years to come we'll look back on with happiness and a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

And they're the things I'm delighted to share with you in this year's Annual Report, a celebration of our team's achievements and impact over the past year.

AQUATICS

This year was our biggest ever – finally cracking over 20,000 patrons in one season. This is a wonderful achievement for our volunteers and staff.

Our season was ambitious, at almost five months in length, with lots packed in. Ensuring the joy of swimming and water is available to all is at the heart of what we do – and it was great this season to welcome 14 local schools for swimming lessons, carnivals and fun days, a notable increase on last year. Once again we hosted one of Victoria's largest outdoor VicSwim programs.

Water Aerobics continued to build its momentum, with two regular classes per week and growing to three during peak times. A dedicated Water Aerobics engagement strategy ensured growth in this popular program.

Our Pool Operations and Chemical Team did a wonderful job throughout the season to ensure we could safely operate every single day. Likewise, our Leadership Team effectively managed the demands of running a seven-day a week business, ensuring we were compliant, staffed and safe.



EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Activating Golden Square Pool to be more than just a place to swim is what we do best. Our Summer at the Square program was again a huge hit – creating a whole summer festival vibe for patrons and members.

Highlights included our Movie Night and Music by the Pool, as well as Opening Day/Weekend, which was record-breaking, with nearly 600 through the gate.

And, who would've thought Pools for Paws would become so pup-ular! Over 330 pooches and their owners joined us over five massive days – extending the use of the site beyond a traditional season. This event has become renowned – and, don't tell the humans, but is what we're asked about the most!

Holi – Festival of Colours was also back, in partnership with the Indian Association of Bendigo. With around 1,600 people attending on a brilliant Autumn day, it is a terrific example of how versatile a swimming pool can be. Our volunteers were again responsible for all event logistics and implementation, and did another great job.

Our innovative programming is what makes us unique – and I truly believe, one of the reasons we go from strength to strength every single year.

PEOPLE

Our volunteers are the true beating hearts of Golden Square's beating heart. Without them, we simply wouldn't be here. This year alone, over \$125,000 in volunteer contribution made our pool tick. From the kiosk team, to the grounds crew – our pool is a great example of people power at its finest.



Our 20 paid staff also did a fantastic job, ably lead by Kobe Henderson and Aidan Corr. I'm especially pleased in our investment in the skill development of our paid staff, ensuring we have a strong culture of staff rising through the ranks to ensure the pool's safe operation into the future. Our paid staff are essential to allow us to do what we do.

We also welcomed 370 members this year, which is comparatively our highest amount yet. We're fortunate that our members know that when they make a choice to join us, they're investing in the future of the place we all love. This support is critical.

Our people – no matter if they're volunteers or staff, members or casual patrons – are our greatest asset.

STRATEGY, INVESTMENT & ASSET

This year we completed a key strategic project – the revitalisation of our chemical shed and pool/plant operations area.

Under the terrific leadership of Chris Corr, and supported thanks to securing \$52,000 in funding from Agnico Eagle, these upgrade works have enabled our staff to have a safer and more efficient place to undertake the tasks that mostly go unnoticed – making sure the pool is safe to swim in, every day. Thanks to Chris and his team for the mighty and wonderful job. Stage 2 – a new roof and solar, is progressing in its project planning phase.

Every aquatic facility is required to undertake a rigorous safety and compliance auditing by Life Saving Victoria. Our audit occurred from December to February, and we were thrilled to reach a compliance score over 90% and safety score over 90%. We're now a silver endorsed facility on the Victorian Public Pools Register – up from bronze in the previous audit period.

This places our pool as one of the highest-ranked in Victoria for operating policy, procedure and governance – and is another endorsement of our strong operating model.

ADVOCACY

After years of persistent advocacy and many months of work in 2025, we're very proud to have reached a new funding model with the City of Greater Bendigo, which takes place from 1 July 2025.

This new model takes us away from a fixed \$50,000 annual agreement, which we've had for 12-years, and instead applies CPI to this amount – ongoing.

This is a big win for our organisation, helping us on our path towards a sustainable future with our primary funding partner. It also addresses a main theme of our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan – to work towards an operating and funding model which meets the contemporary needs and reality of our organisation.

We continued our engagement with Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, including attending regular Community-Run Facilities Networking Group meetings. I also presented at this year's ARV Regional Conference, and judged a category in this year's industry awards.

FUTURE

We're approaching 15-years of community-management at Golden Square Pool, and are about to welcome our 200,000th patron through the gate.

Coming off a record-breaking season, and strong governance and business development over the past year, there is lots to be proud of – and lots to look forward to.

Our volunteer and staffing number remains steady at 110 people – and our new 2025-2028 Strategic Plan is helping to reorient our direction to ensure we're really focussed on what matters – bringing waves of positive change to our community, whilst being grounded in sound, responsible management.

With a strong understanding of where we're at and what we need to do – I'm pleased with what our organisation has achieved this year, and confident that our stewardship of this remarkable and reinvigorated community space will continue well into the future.

My deep thanks to everyone who's been a part of the Golden Square Pool story over the past year – there's really nothing quite like it.

I'm humbled every single day when I walk through the gates and see our vision literally becoming a reality. It makes all the years of getting to this point worth it.

Yes – it's a pool.

But indeed, it's so much more than that.

Sam Kane
President & General Manager

BY THE NUMBERS

Seasons operated by community	12
Season entry total	20,434
Combined entry total since 2013	196, 680
Members	370
School programs and lessons visits	3,418
Volunteers Total	87
	Adults (59), Juniors (28)
Kiosk Volunteer hours during the summer season	1576
Kiosk Junior Volunteer Team hours worked during season	504
Followers on social media	6,550
Water aerobics participants	346
Holi attendees	1600
Pools for Paws visits	360
New Year's Eve Neighbourhood Party	373
Movie Night attendees	354
Friends of Golden Square Pool	252





**OUR
PEOPLE**

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Golden Square Pool wouldn't operate without the incredible team of locals who make the pool the thriving place it is - hundreds of volunteers since day one. We are powered by the generosity of wonderfully skilled, selfless and kind-hearted people who manage most aspects of the daily running of the facility, including maintenance, operating the kiosk, running events, managing social media and communications, maintaining the gardens, plant and facilities as well the governance and compliance of the pool.

As part of our Strategic Plan, our Volunteer Team is an opportunity for community involvement and promotes health and wellbeing for Golden Square and Bendigo residents, where people are our greatest asset.

We're proud that our volunteers come back year after year and new volunteers are always immediately made to feel like a valued part of the team.

The 2024/2025 season was bigger than ever, and the Volunteer Team worked tirelessly to ensure that all visitors enjoyed their time at the pool, whether it was for a quiet swim, to take part in a class or as part of one of our great events.

OUR JUNIORS

Members of our Junior Team continue to impress us with their reliability and dedication to serving the Golden Square Pool. Now a well-established part of the culture at the pool, the Junior Team members are great ambassadors for our organisation, working hard in the kiosk, assisting customers and bringing a cheerful, optimistic atmosphere to their shifts.

The Junior Team not only supports the pool, but young workers acquire important skills, gain an understanding of community participation and responsibility, and build their future resumes.

Many of our Junior Team members have now graduated into the Senior Team and begin to take on independent shifts while some have joined the paid staff as lifeguards.

OUR STAFF

We're grateful to the support of our 17 staff for ensuring that we're operating efficiently and effectively each and everyday.

Our staff complete many risk and compliance tasks that are important to keep our organisation going.

Thank you to Aidan Corr and Kobe Henderson for their great work in leading our paid staff.



OUR MEMBERS

This year, we decided the time was right to streamline our operations and combine our Golden Square Pool membership and City of Greater Bendigo season passes. This meant that we had just one great pass that gave pass-holders all the usual benefits of membership at Golden Square Pool, plus access to the City of Greater Bendigo seasonal outdoor pools.

When people purchase their pass from us, they are investing in our facility and helping to ensure the ongoing viability of Golden Square Pool, as every money stays at the pool and supports day-to-day operations, helps to finance programs, events and new infrastructure, and gives the organisation financial stability early in the season.

As well as everyday access to the pool, member benefits include discounted classes, no extra charge for our events and a discount on the Program MultiPass, making it great value.

FACES OF THE SQUARE

KRISTY

"I love that you always bump into someone you know when you visit Golden Square Pool."

If you live in the streets surrounding the pool, chances are you've done in a shift in the kiosk over the past twelve seasons.

That's the case for Kristy, who joined our team a few years back with her kids, Imogen and Declan.

She did so because she saw it as a good way to contribute to the place her family lives, and more importantly, to teach Imogen and Declan some valuable skills as they're growing up.

"We love being part of this community, and living locally we wanted to give the kids the opportunity to learn about volunteering and giving back to the community," she said.

Kristy said one of the best things about Golden Square Pool is being part of something special and that others can enjoy.

"The greatest benefit we get is our connection with community and seeing all the familiar faces whenever we visit to swim or work our shift," she said.

"We love being part of the events, such as Holi.

"The pool gives life skills for the kids, unlike anything else they're part of."



GLEND A

"I have an enormous feeling of belonging at Golden Square Pool."

Meet Glenda - a valued member of our team since 2022. Like most of our volunteers, she got involved through hearing about us out in the community from one of our other volunteers.

"I met volunteers Tracie and Heather in the winter months and they mentioned they couldn't wait for summer so that the best outdoor pool would be opened," she said.

"I asked where that was and being new to town, didn't know it existed. Next thing there are posts about Golden Square Pool in my feed and then the big sweep post was asking for volunteers. Yep, you guessed it - I put my name down."

"Now in my third season, I feel like I am part of the Golden Square Pool family."

Glenda has a heart of gold, sharing her time with many groups in Bendigo and before moving here - down in Keilor.

"It is hard to explain the feeling of satisfaction that I get when I help others," she said.

"Growing up I was a Brownie, then a Girl Guide and then a Ranger, which taught me the spirit of helping in your community."

At Golden Square Pool the thing she loves the most is seeing the happy faces that come through the gates.

"Being surrounded by nice people who have the same goals of maintaining and enhancing a sensational community asset for all to enjoy is so wonderful," she said.

"Every time that I am at the pool, for swimming or for volunteering I feel comfortable, welcomed and find myself always happy."

FACES OF THE SQUARE

GABBY

Gab and her Mum, Marcia, have been part of the team for the past five years, volunteering in the kiosk a few times a week.

"This was our local pool when we were teenagers and we have lots of fond memories of visiting with friends over the summer."

For Gab, she volunteers for two reasons: because she loves her community, and because she knows how good it is for her own health.

"It's such a friendly atmosphere here, when I'm volunteering and then when I jump in for a swim," she said.

"Being a member of a different community away from my work is really relaxing. I get a lot out of being part of the Golden Square Pool family."

We're all about skill and pathways development for all of our volunteers, and that's the case for Gab - moving into a paid swimming teacher role as part of VicSwim.

"I've enjoyed two summer seasons of VicSwim with Anne. Its a great program and low cost. Well worthwhile!"

"And, with Pools for Paws in March, where the dogs have a ball, it just adds to this brilliant community atmosphere."

"It is so uplifting."



LISA

Starting in our Kiosk Manager's role, Lisa and her son Alfie quickly fell in love with the friendly, community-focused atmosphere of our place. Lisa moved to being a kiosk volunteer with her son in 2018.

"I have made a lot of friends through the years while volunteering at Golden Square Pool," Lisa said.

"It feels good when patrons tell you how much they love going to the pool and can't wait to come back."

Over the years, Lisa has made countless friendships and truly values the sense of community at Golden Square Pool.

"I just really love it here," Lisa said.

VALE



This year we received the sad news that former volunteer Roz Bennett passed away. Roz was a great addition to our team for over five years, first starting in the maintenance and grounds team. A treasured friend of the Schepers family, Roz would often be seen helping in the kiosk or pottering in the garden - always with a big smile on her face and a cheery "hello, darling".



COMMUNITY

ACTIVATION

EVENTS PROGRAM

New Year's Eve

The Golden Square tradition continued with a neighbourhood pool party that offers the perfect venue for families to enjoy early New Year's Eve celebrations. The affordable and accessible fun included music, hotdogs, ice-creams, plenty of grass and shade and our always-helpful team were ready to ensure a safe and relaxing evening for all. Families made the most of the opportunity to enjoy a great night and see out the old year before heading into town or up the hill to watch the early fireworks.

Australia Day

With Australia Day falling on a Sunday and perfect summer weather in full swing, we ended up with a massive, long weekend-vibe of visitors, locals and regulars making the most of the end of the school holidays. We had two huge days of free entry on Sunday and Monday as people found ways to keep cool and relax.

It just wouldn't be Australia Day without our famous tradition of the Great Inflatable Race which provided plenty of entertainment, spills and fun for everyone.

Movie Night

We couldn't have asked for a better night for the annual mid-summer movie night, which was once again a great hit with families of all ages. The superb weather meant the giant inflatable was out and families could make a real day of being at the Golden Square Pool – fun activities, then dinner and movie all in one great venue.

With an appeal for all ages, families brought the picnic rug, chairs and takeaway to settle in enjoy the movie, Kung Fu Panda 4. A big crowd enjoyed a swim, dinner and the usual summer treats of ice-creams, popcorn, lollies and drinks from the kiosk.

Inflatable Fun

The giant inflatable provided an extra way to have fun on selected days over the summer. Kids and kids-at-heart enjoyed the challenge of making it to the end of the course.

Summer at the Square 2024/2025



Listening Post

As we always aim to be a vibrant community hub where everyone is welcome, it was fitting that we hosted a session of the City of Greater Bendigo's Listening Post. It was great to have Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell and Cr Thomas Prince at the pool to meet people who popped in to say hello and discuss relevant issues. It was also a good opportunity to show the new councillors around our facility and demonstrate what we are all about.

Music by the Pool

On Saturday 22 February, we were entertained by the always wonderful Ally Gook at our annual Music by the Pool event. It was a beautiful balmy evening to enjoy the music and take the night off cooking, thanks to food trucks Smoke N Roast and The Munch Hub.

LESSONS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Golden Square Pool is committed to providing a thriving, inclusive community through creative health and wellbeing programs. We're more than just a place to swim, offering programs to cater to all levels of fitness and ability as well as a welcoming fun atmosphere for all to enjoy the outdoors.

Water Aerobics

The Water Aerobics program really consolidated this year, with steady attendances from devoted regulars along with lots of new people joining in throughout the season to enjoy classes with our enthusiastic instructors. Saturday classes were also welcomed by those looking for extra opportunities.

A new innovation was the establishment of a mailing list for regular patrons to keep them up to date with any last-minute alterations or Water Aerobics news.

The MultiPass offered great value and was once again popular. Netball teams also made the most of a cool, low impact workout to do some pre-season training.

VicSwim

The VicSwim Program offers fun and educational holiday classes at the pool every year and is always well-attended, bringing new families to discover and enjoy Golden Square Pool. Over three big weeks in January, children develop water safety and swimming skills under the skilled supervision of our regular instructors Anne and Gabby.



HOLI FESTIVAL OF COLOUR

The fourth annual Holi Festival of Colours at Golden Square Pool was held on Saturday 15 March.

The day was once again a wonderful blend of music, dance, food, vibrant colours, laughter, joy, and community spirit. The day was particularly hot, making a dip in the pool even more welcome.

Holi festivals, a Hindu tradition recognised globally for their colourful powders and water, celebrate love and new beginnings, and our Bendigo event is the largest of its type in regional Victoria. We were once again delighted to work with the Indian Association of Bendigo Inc., supported by various local businesses to bring this event to Bendigo.

Guests on the day included, the Premier of Victoria, Hon Jacinta Allan MP; Federal Member for Bendigo, Lisa Chesters; Consul General of India in Melbourne, Dr Sushil Kumar; Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo, Cr Andrea Metcalf; councillors Karen Corr and Damien Hurrell and CEO of the City of Greater Bendigo Andrew Cooney.

The incredible celebration, showcasing the strength and liveliness of Bendigo's growing multicultural community is a fantastic way for young and old and all cultures to enjoy a family-friendly celebration.

The event involved many months in planning and would not be possible without our brilliant team of volunteers and staff.



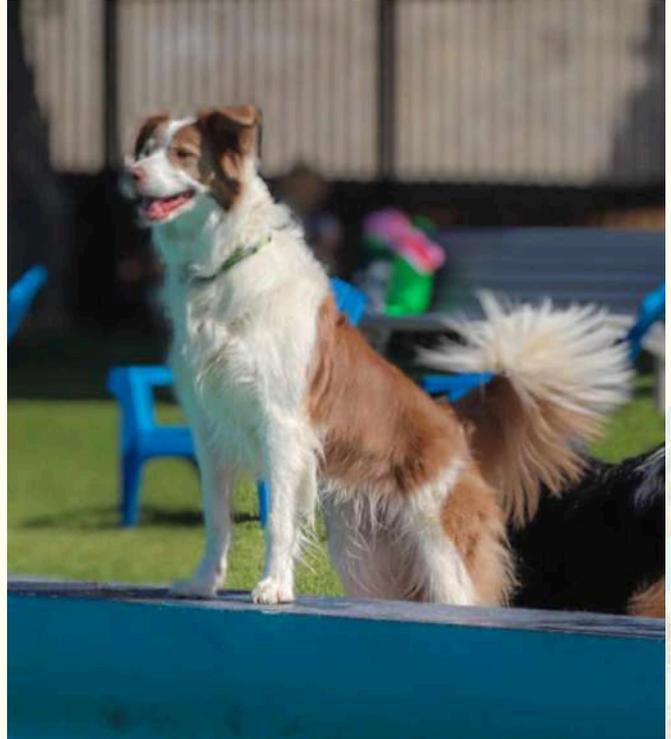
POOLS FOR PAWS

When the season comes to an end for the humans, the dogs get their turn at the pool.

Over five big days and two massive weekends, the pool is full of excited, playful, bouncy and very wet dogs as they run, swim, chase and play in this big, beautiful playground.

The fifth Pools for Paws was the best yet, and has become a much-loved institution at the pool, as well as very successful annual fundraiser.

Most dogs finished their playtime with a visit to the kiosk, which had been transformed into a Doggie Café, where a puppuccino and a meaty treat provide the perfect end to a fun time.





**FACILITY
GROUNDS AND
STRATEGY**

GROUNDS, FACILITY AND MAINTENANCE

The Grounds and Maintenance Teams continue to go above and beyond to make sure our facility is the best around town.

The most frequent feedback we get on our operations area is about our beautiful grass - and that's testament to this volunteer team.

Routine maintenance was also undertaken by various volunteers. We pride ourselves on a quick response to areas of concern, to ensure that the public has a quality experience.



SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS

We wouldn't be where we are today without the valuable work and support of the following supporters and sponsors:

- Bart n Print
- Goldfields Tag & Test
- Terry Lamprell
- WebSmith Productions
- Golden Square Dry Cleaners
- United Cricket Club

STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

This year we finalised and launched our new 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, after nearly 12-months of development and consultation.

This Strategic Plan launches a new vision for our organisation: **a vibrant and sustainable organisation creating waves of positive change for our community.**

This vision is realised through three strategic priorities:

Innovative health, wellbeing, and community programming

Sustain a thriving, inclusive community through creative programs, strong relationships, and a dynamic local presence.

Sustainable facility and infrastructure development

Secure a sustainable future through smart infrastructure planning and community-focused, climate-conscious facilities.

Organisational capacity, capability and culture

Maintain a supportive, inclusive culture through strong leadership, continuous growth, and adaptable management.



UPGRADED CHEMICAL SHED

Golden Square Pool was grateful to receive the support of Agnico Eagle Fosterville in providing \$52,000 in funding this financial year, which allowed us to upgrade essential equipment and infrastructure in our Chemical Shed.

This project was ably project managed by volunteer Chris Corr, and was prioritised to ensure that staff and volunteers had a safe working environment when completing one of the most important tasks - ensuring the pool was safe every single day.

This project also involved a complete electrical upgrade to the site - to allow for a future solar project to occur in the plant operations area - the next stage of this project. This included the addition of power points and taps on the creek side to allow us to better cater for events.

Thanks to Chris' brilliant work, he was able to use the funding investment to secure further donations to support this project. So far, over \$63,000 in value in addition to the funding has been secured - with the next stage underway.

Chemical Shed Renovations and Extension to the Rear for Acid Storage Area

- The Chemical Shed major rectification and repairs works to the existing brick shed were completed including brickwork replacement (into the missing holes) and repointing (fixing / replacing missing mortar between the bricks) and replacing the badly rusted steel post near the hypochlorite storage tank with timber.
- After much digging a concrete slab and small upstand retaining wall on the boundary at the rear of the Chemical Shed was constructed for the new Acid Storage area.
- A timber roof structure was built over the Acid Storage area and the entire area was roofed with new tin and a gutter installed.
- The inside of the Chemical Shed was cleaned and painted, new benches, shelves and cupboard installed and a whiteboard on the wall.

Electrical and Water Upgrade

- Conduits were installed and provision made for 5 x 15 amp external waterproof power outlets down the Bendigo Creek side to be mounted to existing shade sail posts. These can be used for events.
- Three new water taps were installed down the Bendigo Creek side (on existing shade sail posts) and two on the fence to the operations area (one inside and one outside). This makes access to water for operations, maintenance and events much easier. Previously there were no taps and water available in the operations area.

Major Electrical Upgrade - Main Electricity Supply Point to new Sub-board near the Garden Shed

- Utilising the investment from Fosterville, we secured the support of Bendigo based company Underground Cable Systems who supplied and installed about 75 metres of large electrical cable and a new cabinet for future electrical sub board at absolutely no cost. This was about \$42,500 of value alone.
- The electrical connections and "making live" this new power supply has not yet been organised and will be a winter 2025 priority project.







st george BRW
corporate
triathlon
national series



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