

2.56.002

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Strathalbyn Pool turns 50

21 January 2019

The 2019 Santos Tour Down Under entertained Strathalbyn residents and visitors last weekend, and now the community has another reason to celebrate, with an upcoming milestone that spans generations.

The much-loved Strathalbyn Community Swimming Pool will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a classic summer pool party on Saturday 2 February. To acknowledge this important 50 year milestone, entry to the pool will be just 50 cents on the day!

Guest speakers, face painting, a photo booth, BBQ, music, games and historical displays will be on offer from 10am – 4pm, helping to relive the past 50 years and rejoice at what the pool has brought to the town.

Alexandrina Mayor Keith Parkes spoke about the pool and its importance.

“For the past 50 years, the Strathalbyn Pool has provided a safe and fun respite from our trying summer conditions for the people of Strathalbyn. Not only that, between this pool, and past waterholes along the river, generations of local children have learned to swim here through the kind commitment of dedicated volunteers,” he said.

The pool and swimming in general have a rich history in Strathalbyn, with townfolk swimming in waterholes along the River Angas as far back as the 1870s. In 1872, the then Strathalbyn Corporation formally permitted swimming in ‘Jeff’s Waterhole’, between the hours of 8pm and 8am – only at night! The first swimming races in Strathalbyn were held here in 1911.

In 1935, a cement weir was built in the river along with cement walls, creating a pool 100 metres upstream from the Angas Mill, which later included a toddler’s pool and floodlights. In 1943 the pool was given a cement floor to accommodate the huge numbers of children learning to swim there. Dawn Fraser visited Strathalbyn in 1956 and gave a swimming demonstration at this pool before going on to win gold medals at the Melbourne Olympics.

Construction of the Olympic-size pool commenced in November 1968, and opened to great fanfare in February 1969. Over the past 50 years, the pool has seen several upgrades, with the most recent being in 2009, when a \$3 million project saw solar heating, a new kiosk, new change rooms and shade structures installed. The work also included an increase in the depth of the main pool by 300mm.

Chief Executive Officer of YMCA South Australia, Haydn Robins, appreciates the partnership his organisation has had with Alexandrina Council to deliver the service the pool offers, saying, "The YMCA is proud of the work we do at the centre and has worked in partnership with the Alexandrina Council over the last six years to deliver great service for local residents and visitors to the area. The 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration is a great chance for us to put this fantastic facility on show and celebrate with the community."

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations on 2 February also mark a very special reunion. The Strathalbyn Swimming Club was first formed in 1935, and in 2017 became the Great Southern Swimming Club. The Club is calling on past Strathalbyn Swimming Club members to come along, share stories and reunite with other past members.

YMCA Area Manager James Lomax said the Strathalbyn Swimming pool is a hugely popular community pool that becomes a community meeting place and hub over the summer months.

"The support from the community every season is incredible with many people buying season passes, joining aqua classes, swimming lessons or just enjoying the facilities on hot days with family and friends.

"The Strathalbyn Community Pool is a fantastic regional outdoor pool and the YMCA is proud of the work we do at the centre and has worked in partnership with the Alexandrina Council over the last six years to deliver great service for local residents and visitors to the area. The 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration is a great chance for us to put this fantastic facility on show and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with the community," said YMCA South Australia CEO Haydn Robins.