



KOGARAH WAR MEMORIAL OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOL:

A GRATEFUL COMMUNITY REMEMBERS ITS PAST

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Executive Summary

Opened officially in 1966, the Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool at Carss Park, one of more than fifty war memorial swimming pools in NSW, is in the tradition of Australian war memorialisation after the Second World War. A mark of respect and gratitude by the post-war generation for the sacrifices that had secured peace and freedom, the Pool looks backwards to generations of hardship and forwards to a hopeful future, taking inspiration from both.

As significant community places, where families with young children could gather in health and safety, war memorial swimming pools sought to commemorate the fallen, and those who had returned, who by their very existence stood as testimony to a free people, now living in peace, going about essential post-war reconstruction. New facilities such as pools, along with parks, libraries, community centres, clubs and sportsgrounds, all proved attractive to a population freed from the constraints of wartime, and to meet the population boom, particularly in urban growth areas such as those of the St George region. The building of new pools and other recreational infrastructure also reflected a desire to capture the enthusiasm generated by Australian medal winners at the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Games, and the successful hosting by the City of Melbourne of the 1956 Games.

The effort to improve facilities for swimming at Carss Park was led by Carss Park Amateur Swimming Club which established the Kogarah District War Memorial Olympic Pool Committee with Ken Cavanough as Campaign Director. The Club succeeded in raising £4,000, comprising large donations like the £150 given by South Hurstville RSL sub-branch, and many small donations from community members. Having successfully raised funds, campaigned, and seen the project through to fruition, passing through the doors of the Pool each day also ensured that the legacy of a wartime generation would not be forgotten.

The building of the Pool at Carss Park sought to both recognise those that had endured, and to harvest the fruits of peacetime, fuelled by the nation's familiar thread of sporting culture. That post-war generation's own legacy lives on in the community they dreamed, planned and built, not in the form of local infrastructure alone, but in their belief too that together they were building a future that would be better for their children and their children's children.