

Kogarah War Memorial Pool, Carss Park

Fact Sheet 2: History of the pool

1962

Formation of Kogarah District War Memorial Olympic Pool Building Fund Committee to raise money to assist in the construction of a pool at Carss Park.

Kogarah RSL provided written advice to the Fund Committee that it did not currently propose to make any contribution toward the cost of the pool in a letter dated 6 December 1962.

1963

Donation of £150 from local RSLs to the Fund Committee, recorded in the 1963 balance sheet of the Fund Committee.

1964

Kogarah Council enters into a contract with Ferrum Engineering to construct the pool.

The Fund Committee donated £3,000 to Kogarah Council toward the construction costs of the pool. Total construction costs were £78,000.

Ken Cavanough, Secretary of the Kogarah District War Memorial Olympic Pool Building Fund Committee reported that the Committee "raised a net amount of £4,000, of which £3,000 has been paid to Kogarah Council to be used specifically in the cost of the pool construction."



Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Pool (Carss Park Pool), Wading Pool Construction, Carss Park NSW, September 1970
Source: Georges River Libraries Local Studies Collection.

1965

The pool was opened to the public on 30 October 1965.

The cost of admission was 1 shilling and 6 pence for adults and 6 pence for children.

The official opening of the pool was delayed while the dressing sheds were completed.

The Fund Committee donated £1,000 to Kogarah Council for construction of dressing sheds at the pool.



Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Pool (Carss Park Pool), Carss Park NSW, 1969. Georges River Libraries Local Studies Collection.

1966

Australia adopts decimal currency on 14 February 1966
(£1 = \$2, 10 shillings = \$1, 1 shilling = 10c, 6 pennies = 5c).

A contract to construct dressing sheds and kiosk at the pool was awarded to Lewin & Lander at a Council meeting of 2 May 1966, to cost \$44,379.

Official opening of the Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool at Carss Park on Saturday 1 October 1966 by Mayor of Kogarah Alderman E A Duggan.

The total cost of the facility was \$156,000, of which the Pool Committee had raised \$8,000. The pool itself cost \$91,000, the amenities block cost \$44,000 and the foundation piles cost \$20,000 (The Propeller, 6 October 1966).

The Leader newspaper also reported the opening:

"After officially opening the Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Pool at Carss Park on Saturday afternoon the Mayor of Kogarah, Ald E A Duggan, started the senior ladies 50 metre swimming event ... The pool, opened to the public last December, cost more than \$100,000. An amenities block has been built since."
(The Leader, 5 October 1966).

The initial contract to lease the pool was awarded to J Guthrie.

1970

First engineering report identified subsidence issues and cracks along floor of the pool.

1971

The next lease of the pool, including full maintenance responsibilities, was awarded to Dick Caine in 1971 for \$3000 per annum (\$250 per month).

1989

Kogarah Council commenced annual monitoring of ground subsidence at Kogarah War Memorial Pool.



Image: 1982 Aerial photo
Source: *Landscape Heritage Study for Carrs Bush Park (including Todd Park) (2004)*, Mayne-Wilson & Associates. p.36.

2011

Kogarah Council commenced monitoring of water usage at Kogarah War Memorial Pool.

Kogarah Council commissioned Pool Structure and Equipment Condition Assessment Report for Kogarah War Memorial Pool by Geoff Ninnes Fong Partners.

2015

Kogarah Council provided its final lease including full maintenance responsibilities to Dick Caine for \$5000 per annum including the provision of an annual financial subsidy of \$5,000 for electricity and more than \$130,000 for water and other operating expenses.

2016

Georges River Council commissioned Cardno Engineering to undertake Building Asset Condition Assessment reports on all Council Aquatic Facilities, including Kogarah War Memorial Pool.

2017

The lease of the pool was not renewed in July 2017 due to concerns about the condition of the facility.

Georges River Council took over the management and day-to-day operation of the facility.

2018

Council provides an annual operating subsidy of \$650,000 to cover losses at the pool.

2019

Georges River Council commissioned an independent structural assessment of the Kogarah War Memorial Pool. This assessment was undertaken by Geoff, Ninnes, Fong & Partners and identified that the existing structures had reached the end of their serviceable life and that it is not feasible to repair or upgrade the existing structures.

The pool as a war memorial

The choice of name of the pool 'Kogarah War Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool' was intended from an early stage by the Fund Committee who began raising money toward construction costs. The name of the Fund Committee was the same as the pool. The pool was a war memorial in name only as there were Federal government tax benefits at the time to do so. Hence, there is no monument or cenotaph at the pool site that commemorates those who lost their lives at war.

In the Dictionary of Sydney article 'War Memorials to World War II and later Conflicts', Dr Neil Radford states:

'By the end of World War II the tide of public sentiment had turned against commemorative obelisks, honour rolls and trophies in preference to more utilitarian memorials such as parks, swimming pools, libraries, community centres and the like which provided both a dignified memorial and a facility from which all citizens could benefit. The Commonwealth Government encouraged this by allowing tax deductions for any gifts to a project that could legitimately be described as a war memorial. Many suburbs and towns benefitted from these arrangements, and schools and churches were not slow to realise that additional facilities for their members could be funded in this way.'

The Returned and Services League (RSL) was initially supportive of the concept of utilitarian memorials. However, by 1963 the RSL had altered its stance on useful memorials, resolving unanimously: "that the indiscriminate use of the term 'war memorial' as applied to undertakings such as swimming baths, sports ovals, public buildings and many other such buildings should be discontinued where recognised memorials are established."