

BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



MEDIA RELEASE

4 November 2015

NEW SWIMMING POOL LAUNCHED

As Tennant Creek sweltered in the blistering heat, eager locals longed to jump into the much anticipated new swimming pool.

Townfolk had waited nearly nine months for the \$3.6 million facility to open and when the launch date of 2 November was finally announced people turned their thoughts to cooling off in the water.

But Mother Nature had a different agenda to that of Barkly Regional Council event organisers and shortly after the official proceedings finished and hundreds of children began splashing around with colourful beach balls it started to rain, and rain, and rain.

Thunder and lightning and an electrical storm put an end to the pool party and BBQ with children and a few diehard dignitaries, adults and Council staff huddling under the eaves of the administration building waiting for the ominous dark clouds to clear.

They never disappeared. But despite the wild weather spirits remained high and the community thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations.

BRC President Barb Shaw told the gathering of residents, Councillors and dignitaries on Monday that the official opening marked an important milestone for Tennant Creek and its inhabitants and for people from outlying communities as well as visitors.

“The iconic Tennant Creek swimming pool was really starting to show the signs of age and a change was necessary,” she said. “It was built in the mid-60s and officially opened on 17 December 1967 by another Aussie icon, Olympian swimmer Dawn Fraser.

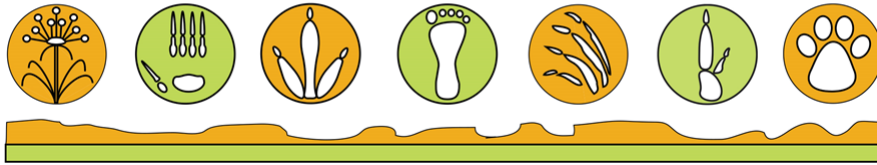
“It was sad to see the pool demolished in February this year. A chapter in the history of Tennant Creek closed but the town and Barkly region needed a more suitable solution that addressed accessibility issues and provided a healthy focus and positive outcome for the community.

“Now we have a beautiful, state-of-the-art swimming pool complex which locals and visitors will enjoy for years to come.”

The Australian Government provided \$3.6million towards a \$4.55 million upgrade of Tennant Creek’s regional sporting facilities, including change rooms at Purkiss Reserve.

Along with the Australian Government grant, other funding sources included Council (\$679,350), the NT Government (\$250,000), Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (\$20,000), plus local businesses (\$650).

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Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack said in a joint media statement that the upgrade was another example of the Australian Government's commitment to work with local government to build productive infrastructure for communities right across Australia.

Northern Territory Senator Nigel Scullion, who sent his apologies for not being able to attend the launch, said that the community was eager to try out the new Regional aquatic centre and modernisations at Purkiss Reserve.

"Projects just like this highlight the importance of governments and local businesses working together to deliver grass roots community infrastructure."

President Shaw told the gathering on Monday, including Warren Snowdon MP, Mayor of Alice Springs Town Council Damien Ryan, Joan Purcell of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Gerry McCarthy MLA Barkly as MC, that the construction and completion of the pool complex and change rooms at Purkiss Reserve was done in a relatively short time, but the bid to lobby and advocate for the funding took a great deal longer.

"Council first put in a submission to the Commonwealth Government in July 2013 for a new swimming pool centre and administration building as well as upgrades to facilities at Purkiss Reserve," she said.

"We then had to lobby and advocate for the grant submission again after a change in federal government with funding finally secured in October 2013."

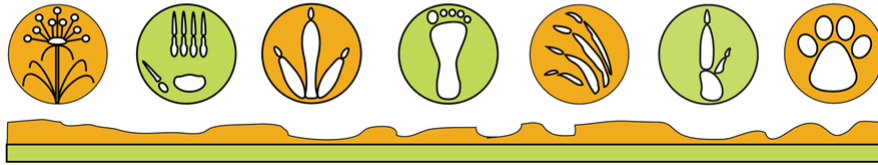
Throughout 2014 a great deal of behind the scenes preparatory work was conducted between BRC, the Tennant Creek community-led Purkiss Reserve Consultative Committee and the architects Hames Sharley.

Part of the project included the innovative design of the 25m lap pool, a learn-to-swim pool and a toddler's pool into a single structure, addressing accessibility issues with a beach-style entry for all patrons.

Plans also highlighted a water park splash pad for children, upgraded change rooms and a new administration building incorporating office, first aid, coffee shop, kitchen and mechanical water treatment equipment.

In 2015 Queensland-based Taylor Builders Pty Ltd was awarded the tender for the construction of the swimming pool with local firm GK Contractors winning the tender to upgrade amenities at Purkiss Reserve. Sanjeev Gounder of Opus International Consultants worked on behalf of Council as the project manager.

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Special guest champion breaststroke swimmer Sally Hunter also read out a message on behalf of Dawn Fraser.

“Dawn was so sorry that she could not make it to Tennant Creek,” said Sally, who won gold for the medley relay at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland. “She wishes everyone all the best and recalls vividly how when she finished the inaugural lap of the first Tennant Creek pool she looked up to see hundreds of onlookers wanting to jump in to join her.”

Forty-eight years later Sally, who did the honorary lap for the new pool along with Brooke Wilson and Natasha May from the High School and Andrew Green, Stanley Waistcoat and Deja Wortely from the Primary School, also looked up to see hundreds of children eager to jump in.

President Shaw said it had been a long road for the community to finally have modern facilities at the pool and Purkiss Reserve but it was well worth the wait.

“These new facilities will support youth and family activities and assist council in encouraging healthy and active lifestyles within the community,” she said.

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