

Robertson Swimming Pool — the Retiring President's Report

After 10 years as President and 30 years involvement, John Thomas has worked to achieve a swimming pool for Robertson. Below is John's final report as President as presented to the 2015 AGM of the Robertson & District Swimming Pool Association Inc in December 2015. John has provided a copy of his final report for the information of the community.

"Thank you to all who have attended tonight. It is a truly exciting time with great opportunities ahead and some major milestones passed.

Of great significance is the securing of a site and completion of a development application. RADSPA have signed a 10 year lease + options @ \$750 per year with the ARTC for a block at the end of Caalong Street. This is a major milestone after 4 years of searching. It involved a considerable amount of work with State Government rezoning and RFS and Water NSW approval before the DA could be finalised. The DA was approved this week, on 7 December 2015. The Council have donated back the Planning Proposal fee (\$5,356) and offered to waive the water and sewerage development charges (\$366,875). A special thank you to Sharon Makin and Chris Stevenson from the Committee for putting so much work into the DA.

Also of considerable significance is the success RADSPA has had with government grants. Firstly, the NSW Govt CLUBGrants, submission that we successfully secured for \$350,000

Secondly, the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) where we have just received notification of a grant of up to \$542,637. A special thank you to Don Ferguson and Kate van Eimeren for their work on these grant applications. The Committee now

has in the region of \$1.1 million with which to fund the project. Of course, with this comes massive responsibility and challenges.

Over the course of the last year there had been considerable time devoted to discussions about the physical nature of the development. We have actively searched for architectural/draftsman input. Axel Richter, Stephen Johansson, Greg Turland, reps from "Australian Temporary Structures" along with others previously spoken to, have shared input with us. Now we have firm ideas of available finances we can start to move with more purpose.

In recent weeks, the committee has determined to re visit the possibility of placing the development on Robertson Bowling Club land. This will be further investigated

The next year, in fact the next few months, are going to be very important as concrete decisions need to be made. The Committee would very much like the support and help from the community to maximize the best possible outcome for the development.

In summary, I want to emphasize what a major achievement gaining council approval is. For 3 decades, the Wingecarribee Council has been determined not to allow a pool to be built in Robertson. Even as recent as 2013, the council could have facilitated the development by allowing RADSPA to use a tiny corner of Hampden Park, but they would not. It is only in the last 2 years that some councillors have come on-board and made the difference. Without that D.A. approval, no amount of funds was going to make a difference.

I want to sincerely thank the small group of Committee and others who over recent years have brought it to this point. It's now up to the community to get involved and make it a success. The project must not fail.

On a personal note, since personally seeing a privately run, 25m heated pool in Warilla and talking to the owner, I've had the belief that a similar, modest and efficiently run facility was do-able in Robertson.

My focus has been on the benefits to the children of the area of such an asset. This was after all the catalyst that prompted the formation of the pool committee when two children drowned in Caalong Creek in 1980.

I realise now, that a larger vision and fresh legs are required to carry the project forward, so I will not be standing for a position on the committee again.

John Thomas, President , RADSPA. 2015"