

**Chewton Pool Inc
2022/2023 Presidents Report**

September 2023

Welcome everyone to the Chewton Pool Inc Annual General Meeting. Thank you for taking an interest in our community pool and association. The 2022/2023 season was the twelfth season operated by Chewton Pool Inc and one of the better seasons that I can remember. The season was memorable for the level of focus of our management team, an excellent batch of lifeguards, good weather, and a large number of new pool users and members.

1. Committee of Management

The Committee of Management and staff continue to work hard to maintain the pool facility and provide quality aquatic programs for the community.

The COM has been consistent in its members this year, but we do have two members retiring.

Our retiring members are Jackie Heath, who has given 8 years to the pool as our operations expert and in the past, the fundraising sub-committee. Jackie has been a constant supporter of the pool and we have all been so very grateful for her organization and hard work on our operations manual and COM processes. Thanks so much Jackie, you will be sorely missed.

Liz Douglas is also retiring this year. Liz has been a reliable and constant helper with grounds maintenance and grounds volunteers, always being ready to jump in and help with maintenance, season set-up and cleaning tasks. Thanks Liz.

Continuing members include, myself, Sally McCarthy, Sarah Myles, Caroline Scott and Jess Carter. Please feel free to offer support or assistance at any time during the year if you have a particular skill or enthusiasm that you think might help with our work, we would particularly welcome those who can do fundraising, grant writing and member/volunteer support.

Thanks so much to those of you who have stepped up to help run this vital community resource and given up your personal time and effort to keep the pool open and working.

2. Chewton Swim

After five seasons of involvement with Chewton Swim, Frog Peck gave notice that he would be stepping aside from Chewton Swim this coming season. We have already put out an EOI for new swim teachers and are beginning the process of planning for Chewton Swim this summer. The COM would like to sincerely thank Frog for all his efforts to make Chewton Swim the success that it is today. We get fantastic feedback from parents about the quality of the swim school and the standards of teaching. Thanks so much Frog, for always being an enthusiastic and dedicated swim teacher of the year!!

3. Volunteers

The number of volunteers who regularly participate in the running of the pool and its programs forms a significant portion of the Chewton population, and every year the COM is thrilled to see old and new faces putting up their hand to work for free. The work that volunteers do on the grounds, and in the kiosk are crucial to our success. This is a community pool and it cannot operate without volunteers. It is volunteers that make this pool special and make it financially sustainable, so thanks to all of those who make it happen each year. Please encourage your friends and neighbours and other pool users to volunteer and continue to grow our pool community.

4. Staffing

Chewton Pool Inc provided seasonal employment for 24 staff during the season. Staff wages is our largest expense and is paid for each year by an operational grant from Mount Alexander Shire Council. A very big thank you MASC!

With increased funds from Council over the last two seasons we were able to continue our new supervision plan. Every shift has two lifeguards on duty and either the manager or deputy manager appearing to check on staffing, water quality and safety, every day.

All our junior lifeguards last season were wonderful, with some who had worked in similar roles before, but most were learning lifeguarding for the first time. The steep learning curve for them included filling in forms and timesheets, attending training and remembering to respond to messages. We are hoping a number of them are able to return and re-use all that valuable experience in the coming season. We know that we will have another crop of new juniors to be trained this year as well.

Our Pool operations Manager, Phillip Walker and Deputy Manager Darius Walters, did an absolutely sterling job, and ran the pool, pump, volunteers and lifeguards with great skill and good humour. They were perfect embodiments of the Chewton pool vibe. Huge thanks to you both.

5. Engineering report

MASC has paid for a specialist pool engineer to undertake a condition review of our pool. JWC engineers submitted the report in March 2023. The big surprise of the report was that the engineers found that “the pool was in fair to reasonable condition with no substantive evidence of significant issues which would affect structural integrity.” The report also provided a table of recommended repair works over a 10 year period with indicative costs of \$204,135. Most repairs are cracks in the shell, reinforcement corrosion, painting and waterproofing.

The engineer’s report was a piece of work commissioned by council that has worried the committee for some time. Some of us felt that the council may have been seeking a means of de-funding the pool. If the pool had been found to be structurally unsound, the closure of the facility would have been inevitable. The council is yet to discuss with us what the findings mean for the future, nor have they provided an adequate explanation of how the pool could have been found to be structurally unsound 12 years ago by their engineers, and is now in fair and reasonable condition. Further conversations with the council staff will discuss this issue. But the biggest learning from this process is that the Chewton community made the right choice to save the pool 12 years ago, and it will continue to serve the community for another 20 years.

6. Fundraising

So that we are prepared for these future repair costs, we are setting aside money each season and have launched the *Sponsor a Piece of the Pool* campaign. It would be great if everyone can get behind this fundraising campaign as these funds are crucial to our being able to make necessary improvements and maintenance to keep the pool open.

To begin the task of fundraising, this winter we partnered with the CFA to do the big bonfire dinner in August. We were very grateful for the use of the CFA shed, with its kitchen, toilets and indoor/outdoor spaces and their assistance in setting up and packing up the event. Big thanks to Steve Womersley, Rob Reid-Smith and Ro Luke. We think we had at least 150 people attend the event, we raised over \$1450 and had eight people express interest in volunteering. Thanks to our tireless volunteers for cooking, baking and serving the hungry hordes. Thanks to The Zero Point who entertained us with fantastic tunes!



Big thanks as well to our other partners, Harvest Fruit and Veg at the Mill who provided us with a big box of fresh fruit every week during the season. A very generous and much enjoyed donation each week which has assisted us to meet our healthy eating targets in the kiosk.

I am very pleased to present this report of our Committee and the 2022/2023 season to the Chewton community.

Sera-Jane Peters
President, Chewton Pool Inc
September 10, 2023