

## **Beatty Park Leisure Centre upgrade, 1990s Alannah MacTiernan OH0251**

During the period of my first term I became very aware of what was happening in relation to aquatic centres. I used Beatty Park – would take my kids and my family and I would use Beatty Park pool regularly. That was obviously our local pool. I was very conscious of how the back pool as it then was surrounded by black grandstands and totally ungrassed. It was a very, very hot and alienating place and the more I saw as I got involved in local government and as part of that began to see what other local governments had done with their aquatic centres, I could see the need for us to really do something quite dramatic there.

There was talk with some people pushing to totally close Beatty Park down and just build another facility up around here where the City of Vincent chambers now are but I didn't like that idea. I thought that we could have the best of both worlds. We could keep the outdoor pool because I, like many people, certainly like doing my laps outdoors rather than indoors. And, of course, there was huge historic value in Beatty Park. The Commonwealth and Empire Games were such an important in Perth's history and its transition from a provincial town into a capital city that you wouldn't want to lose Beatty Park and the whole Beatty Park story but you wanted to modernise.

So I then started really campaigning for a massive upgrade to deleting the back pool, which was built as a warm-up pool but, in fact, had become the de facto kids' play pool. To get rid of that and to replace that with an indoor pool that had indoor laps and all the latest in recreational facilities. When I stood for re-election in 1991 that and the upgrade of Beaufort Street were my two prime central campaigns, pledges. Now there was a group of people and I think one Councillor that was campaigning strongly against that. They said they wanted it just to be left just as it was. So we had a series of public meetings and honestly the overwhelming support. I mean we had hundreds of people come to those meetings and just overwhelmingly say, 'look we want Beatty Park.

One of things that I really, really celebrate – it was like a couple of days after the pool was open, one of the women who was one of the major antagonists against the development of the pool, I saw her leaving the pool with her children. She came up to me and said, 'it is really great; we really like it' and I thought, my God that just goes to show. It doesn't mean that you don't listen to people but you know you have to distinguish between some people who just oppose things because they just can't cope or visualise change.