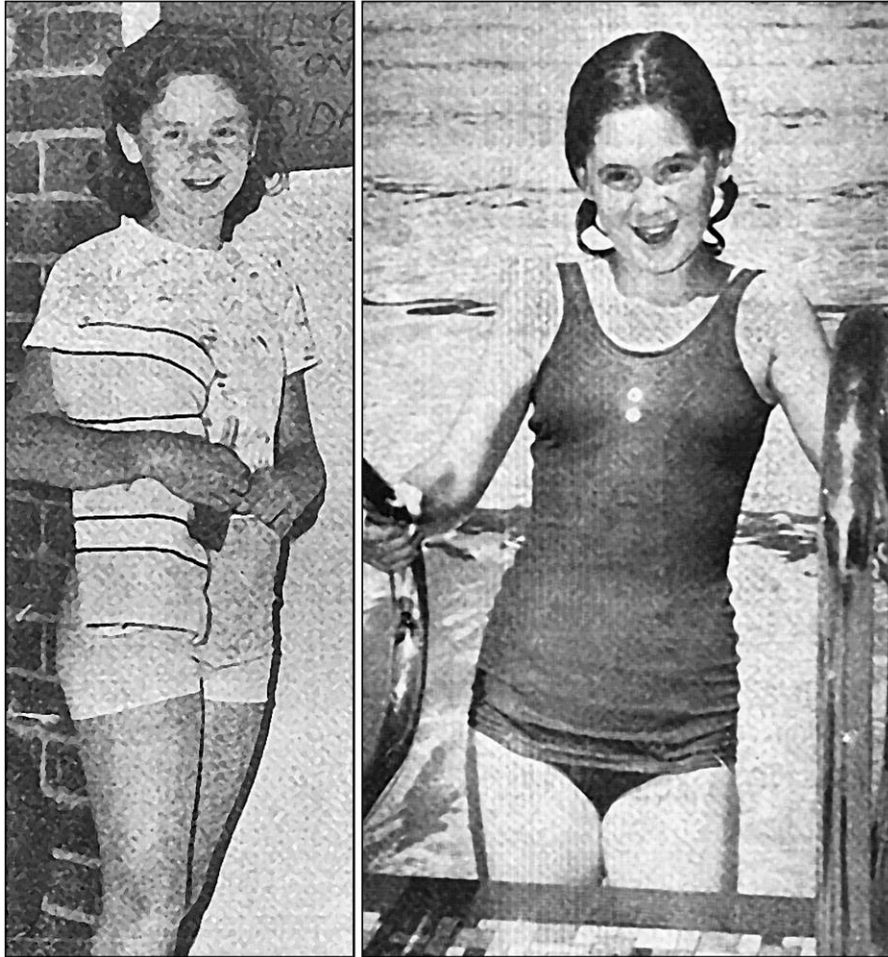


Getting and Keeping a Swimming Pool in Lavington

Bruce Pennay

The *Border Morning Mail* carried a front-page picture story celebrating the opening of the North Albury-Lavington Swimming Pool on 10 December 1966. It showed 13-year-old Christine Gale of Alamein Avenue as the first to venture ever so tentatively into the water.



Christine Gale, first into the water on opening day.

The new multi-purpose pool facility, with its competition-length swimming pool and adjacent teaching, wading and diving pools, was hailed, nearly sixty years ago, as a modern convenience to serve the young in Albury's fast growing northern suburbs.

The photographer's choice of Christine helped readers understand what was imagined for the pool. She could reach this new teenage meeting place independently with a short bike-ride or walk. She could now more easily swim for fun or take up opportunities for competitive swimming via the soon to be established swimming or water polo club. The pool, presumably, expanded and enhanced her idea of where she lived. She could now feel proud that her North Albury-Lavington neighbourhood had an amenity that matched that in central Albury.

Lavington grew very quickly as a village in Hume Shire during the immediate post-war years. The population of 1,000 in 1947 had increased five-fold by 1966.

At the instigation of Albury City Council, a proposal to move Lavington from Hume Shire to Albury was investigated in 1961 and acted on in 1962. Not all Lavington ratepayers agreed to the proposal that would inevitably increase rates. Most, however, seem to have thought amalgamation could bring Lavington better prospects of a sewerage system, sealed roads, more street trees, garbage collections, and even a swimming pool.

Earlier articles in the *Border Morning Mail* had explained the economics and politics of winning the swimming pool. A beneficent local government, State government and local community had made this amenity possible. In today's terms, the new pool cost \$280,500. It was funded in part by a grant from the NSW Government, which also agreed to Albury City Council taking a loan to pay for the rest.

The local neighbourhood community, principally working through the North Albury-Lavington Progress Association, contributed \$5,000 it had raised over two years. Schemes for raising loans from ratepayers were discussed but never implemented.

Fund-raising was made difficult by Council's procrastination over whether it wanted a second pool no further north than Billson, Bunton or even Sarvaas Park, before it opted, after much lobbying, for the more distant Jelbart Park. The lobbying was intense.