



# “Great Duck Race”

11<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Soldiers Memorial Gardens Strathalbyn



Editorial –

Strathalbyn Great Duck Race

Next Sunday 11th November is the much anticipated date for the 29th consecutive annual Strathalbyn Rotary Club Great Duck Race. The event is held in the magnificent natural setting within the Soldiers Memorial Gardens on the Angas River in the heart of Strathalbyn, which we all regard as the best park in the state.

The Strathalbyn Rotary Club began the Great Duck Race in 1990 and the club is continuing the tradition in what is their major fundraising event of the year. Funds raised by Rotary are spent in the local community.

As chairman of the Club Service Committee within Rotary in 1990, Frank Clennett was charged with the responsibility of fund-raising on behalf of the club. In Frank's words, the best way to clear Dawson Street at that time was to wander down the street with a raffle book in your hand. Raising money to establish Kalimna was a major project at the time.

Frank bought 2,000 small yellow ducks and presented the bill at the next Rotary Club meeting, and the Great Duck Race was off and flying.

For the first race the club contacted 5MU who brought over their outside broadcast van and actually broadcast the race. Once word got out that the Strathalbyn Rotary Club were holding a duck race, Frank was invited by 5AA to be interviewed and to discuss the duck race and answer questions from the public on air. One irate lady rang up and severely berated Frank for being so cruel as to put numbers on ducks.

This was the start of The Great Duck Race.

The 1990 race started in what was the swimming pool, over the weir and finished where it does to this day.

Val Ball was mayor of Strathalbyn at the time and according to the Argus, "emptied the last of the ducks into the Angas for the big start".

Through a series of pipes, water was released from higher up the river and created quite a flow of water, and the race was all over in a few minutes. The following year, the race had a head-wind and it took 2.5 hours with lots of persuading going on. In 1992, the CFS used water jets from small boats which sent ducks flying all over the place (as ducks do) and this still took half an hour.

Over the years boats have been sunk and a lot of fun has been had by all. May the tradition continue.

Move forward to 2018 and we will have a wind machine to encourage the ducks to the finish line.

This year the day will begin at 10.00am.

Voting for the Best Dressed Corporate Duck will be a vote by the public attending on the day from 10.00am till 11.30am and voting slips will be available from the Corporate Duck tent. A substantial prize is available to the winner.