

**SUBJECT: LMM 01/05/2018 - CONDOLENCE MOTION: MR PETER WALMSLEY**

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## **MOTION**

### **That Council:**

- 1 Notes with sadness the passing of Mr Peter 'Walmo' Walmsley, former long term manager of Newcastle Ocean Baths from 1976 to 2000; and
- 2 Acknowledges and commends Mr Walmsley for his service to the City of Newcastle, noting his 43 years as an officer of Newcastle City Council.

### **Background:**

Mr Peter Walmsley was a Newcastle icon, with anyone visiting the Newcastle Ocean Baths between 1976 and 2000 inevitably encountering the larger than life 'Walmo'. Mr Walmsley was passionate about the Newcastle Ocean Baths, and administered them with pride and distinction.

It is important that we acknowledge such long-term and dedicated service to the people and the City of Newcastle.

The City of Newcastle's thoughts and prayers are with Mr Walmsley's family at this difficult time.

**'Death of popular Newcastle ocean baths manager Peter Walmsley'**  
*Ian Kirkwood - Newcastle Herald, 27 April 2018*



*Former Newcastle baths manager Peter Walmsley in 2008, looking out across the 'canoe' pool that was part of his bailiwick when he was in charge of "Walmo's Water Wonderland" from 1976 to 2000. Picture: Simone De Peak.*

Peter Walmsley, the “larger-than-life” identity who ran Newcastle Ocean Baths with his wife Jeanette – turning them into “Walmo’s Water Wonderland” – died on Wednesday, a few days short of his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday.



*Mr Walmsley in 1985 after two toddlers nearly drowned in the shallow pool. Picture: Steve Tickner.*

A superintendent at Mayfield pool before he moved to the baths in 1976, Mr Walmsley’s love of his job, and the pride he took in his white-washed surroundings, were legendary.

He retired after 43 years with Newcastle City Council in October 2000, but plenty of beach-goers still remember him fondly. The fluctuating state of the baths today are still measured against the years when “Walmo” was charge.

Mrs Walmsley said it was wonderful living at the baths, where she ran the kiosk. They moved to Mayfield West after Mr Walmsley retired.

She said her husband liked a punt and had gained a lot of pleasure from syndicate stakes in a few Broadmeadow winners, including Steve’s Return, which took out 13 races including a maiden win by 10 lengths.

But age began to take its toll, and after being diagnosed with dementia, Mr Walmsley moved to the nearby Mayfield Aged Care Centre in March last year.

His step-daughter, Sonya Mancinelli, said he had declined “very rapidly” in the past two months.

She grew up at the baths, and said it was “wonderful in summer but sometimes not so fun in winter”.

“He was a fun-loving father, and he wanted everyone else to have fun too,” Ms Mancinelli said.

One of his good friends, lifelong “East Ender” Jeff Dawson, 73, said he had known Mr Walmsley for 60 years.

“I met him when I was 13 at Newcastle Surf Club,” Mr Dawson said.

“His parents came out of Alfred Street [Newcastle East] and I was living [a street away] in Telford Street.

“The East End was like a little village then.

“Families knocked around together. It was the surf club, football and hockey. The East End had its own hockey team.”

Mr Dawson said “Walmo” was “a larger-than-life” character.

“He loved Newcastle, he loved the baths and he made you feel welcome every time you went there,” Mr Dawson said.

“He called everyone ‘buddy-buddy-mate’. ‘How you going, buddy-buddy-mate?’”

When Mr Walmsley retired, his service was formally recognised at that week’s Newcastle council meeting.

The Lord Mayor of the day, John Tate, recounted a few anecdotes, including an oft-repeated one in which Mr Walmsley and his brother, (the late) Ron Walmsley, second-rowers for South Newcastle, were both sent off for fighting each other in a scrum. Interviewed in 2008, Mr Walmsley recalled getting a job as a boy with a man who hired canoes out at the baths, being paid “threepence an hour, which was good money in those days”.

“I had to win 14 fights to get that job, and I’m not joking,” Mr Walmsley said at the time.

Mrs Walmsley said her husband’s funeral would be at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on Hunter Street, Newcastle West, at 2pm on Wednesday, May 2.

As well as his wife Jeanette and step-daughter, Mr Wamsley is survived by his first wife, Yvonne, and their children Mark, Cindy and Glen.