

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday 9 October 2015

### **PROPOSAL TO ASSIGN A COOTAMUNDRA RESERVE NAME**

The Geographical Names Board is calling for public comment on a proposal by Cootamundra Shire Council to name a reserve in Cootamundra.

Chair of the Geographical Names Board, Des Mooney, said feedback is being sought on the proposal to name the reserve on the corner of Bourke and Olney Street as Gordon Vesperman Park.

Gordon Vesperman was born in Coolamon in 1923. As a 14 year old he joined the Cootamundra Cadet Corps, rising to be a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in what became the 56th Battalion – Riverina Regiment.

As Combined Allied Forces swimming champion he was an obvious choice to head a group of NCOs whose task it was to instruct 5,000 members of the Australian Infantry Forces 5th Mobile Brigade about water safety.

During a period of 39 years as chief instructor for the Cootamundra Amateur Swimming Club, Gordon Vesperman encouraged children and adults to become proficient in the water.

He said that ‘to teach a child to swim was to give a gift that was to be enjoyed for the rest of their life’.

Gordon joined the local RSL club in 1946 and was first elected to the Board of Directors in 1965, a position he held until his death in 2002.

He was proud of the fact that he served all three levels of government – a soldier for the Federal Government, a railway worker for State Government and as swimming pool manager for Local Government.

He was awarded an OAM in 1985 for his services to the sport of swimming. He was also a recipient of the Cootamundra Lions Club *Citizen of the Year*.

Mr Mooney said the board is encouraging community comment before it considers the proposal.

“It is important that place names reflect the character and history of the local area and community,” he said.

“We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to provide their feedback on the proposed name.”

Details of the proposal can be viewed and submissions lodged on the Geographical Names Board’s website at [www.gnb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au).

Alternatively written submissions may be lodged with the Secretary, Geographical Names Board, 346 Panorama Ave, Bathurst, NSW, 2795.

The closing date for submissions is Wednesday 11 November 2015.