



Milestones

Ken Smith

Irrigation specialist, sportsman and community leader

Born: Cleve, August 18, 1930

Died: Berri, January 5, 2013

Leader in water issues

Ken Smith

KEN spent much of his early life in a tent as his father looked for work during the Depression.

They finally settled on a fruit block in the Riverland and in 1947 Ken took a job as a junior draftsman with the E&WS (now SA Water).

Denied the opportunity for schooling in early life, Ken embarked on a program of self-education. He rose to the position of superintending technical officer, supervising the provision of irrigation and drainage advisory design services for irrigation properties throughout the Riverland. He made a huge contribution to the understanding of drainage and salinity issues. His expertise extended to wetlands development and included advice on natural resource management of the Murray Darling Basin.

Ken was recognised internationally through his involvement as South Australian representative on the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage.

He retired from E&WS in 1992 but immediately surfaced as Ken Smith Technical Services and for the next 20 years provided support to many government departments, consultants, and community and industry groups. It was during this time that he made an enormous contribution to irrigator and community understanding of the River Murray system and the need to manage both environment and irrigation in a long-term, sustainable manner.

He was always one for an informed, balanced approach.

But Ken was much more than irrigation professional; he was an avid sportsman and a community leader.

Ken not only played senior tennis in the Riverland for 50 years

but coached too – and he played a key role in the development and administration of the game at all levels.

Ken also played badminton and was an enthusiastic football player and follower.

He also played a leading role in the development of TAFE services in the region as president of the Riverland College, services for the disabled, and the new TAFE complex in Berri and branches at Loxton and Cadell.

He was also active on school councils and the Riverland Regional Hospital board.

Ken's services were recognised through numerous awards.

Simply put, Ken Smith was a self-made expert in his field – and a humble, good man who gave himself to his family, community and profession.

He is survived by Rusty, his wife of 57 years, children Mark, Janet and Brad, and five grandchildren.