

VORGEE MILLION METRES MILESTONE SALLY HATCHER – ONE MILLION METRES

Sally started back swimming early in 2012 when she found out that The World Firefighter Games (WFFG) were being held at the Sydney Olympic Aquatic Centre in October 2012. She is a volunteer firefighter with the Yarramundi Brigade of the NSW Rural Fire Service, so was eligible to swim.

When she returned to the water she weighed almost 130 kg and couldn't swim 25 metres freestyle without being puffed out, getting her distances up by doing backstroke instead. The pool staff used to rush to get the 'flags' up when they saw her coming and it didn't take long for her to realise that she needed some help, so she joined an Adult Squad with the YMCA at Oasis at Windsor. Luckily she had an amazing young woman, Jasmine, encouraging her to stretch out and pretend she had her head on a pillow with each stroke.

Jasmine gave Sally four drills to practice and she religiously went to her local 50 metre pool, at Richmond, to do at least 200 metres of each drill nearly every morning. Sally had also joined the gym connected to the Windsor pool and one afternoon, a month or so later, while over there she decided to have a swim in the indoor 25 metre pool as well. Sally happily swam 300 metres Freestyle so thought to herself, "why not go to 500 metres?" and she did. She then thought, "well, why not swim 1 kilometre?" and she did. And from there she kept going and swam her first two kilometres since training as a child. She was ecstatic and hasn't looked back!

Sally started training with the Penrith Aussi Masters crew in March 2012 and soon joined the Masters Swimming NSW club, so that she could start attending carnivals for some urgently needed race practice and some race times to hopefully improve on. Her first carnival was the 'Wett Ones' Round 7 at Sydney Uni Pool on May 26th 2012. She entered 3 x 50 metre events and came last in each one. Her main memory though is of being disappointed that she hadn't entered some longer distance events.

Sally trains with at least four adult squads every week, each with a different coach and finds this really helpful, as she never get bored and glean hints off each of them. Three of the squads are with mainly Hawkesbury Triathlete Club members and she trains on Saturday mornings with Penrith Masters. Sally also does a couple of sessions a week herself, where she swims two kilometres of Freestyle without stopping followed by a 400 metre warm down; then if she has time she will do 20 laps of Butterfly if she am training in a 25 metre pool or 10 laps of Butterfly if she am in a 50 metre pool.

Sally write the distances she has swum that session on the calendar when she gets home and transferred the distances to her first Vorgee Million Metre forms; doing the adds while travelling on the train. Thankfully she found out about the Excel sheet for the calculations and left it until the end of the year to transfer all her distances to it during the Christmas, New Year break! With all the swimming she discovered she was already well into her second million metres milestone. Sally submitted her forms in January and was awarded her first Vorgee Million Metres shirt at the NSW State Championships at the Aquatic Centre in 2013. It had taken her about 18 months to swim her first million metres.

With the Christmas and New Years break just gone, Sally recently submitted her Two Million Metres application form for the February 2015 order. "I know there are plenty of other members out there who would well and truly qualify for a Million Metres shirt, quicker than I do," she said, "but won't go to the trouble of recording and calculating their distances. I think this is a fantastic program that gives us some recognition for the time and effort we put into our training. Thank you Vorgee for sponsoring this initiative."

Congratulations Sally!

