

2015 National Championships Organising Committee MSTas Volunteers

For this newsletter, we would like to change the focus on volunteering from an individual to a small hard working team.

Masters Swimming Tasmania was asked to step up and conduct the **2015 National Championships** when the original venue - Melbourne Sport and Aquatic Centre - was scheduled for major maintenance which precluded the Victorian Branch conducting the event. With a time frame of less than 18 months, a small team of dedicated volunteers worked overtime to plan and conduct this very successful event. When asked to comment on why they volunteered and any highlights, as a group they tended to shy off any personal glory but highlighted the efforts of everyone else including members of all the Hobart based Masters Clubs.

The team was led by co-coordinators **Pauline Samson** and **Maciej Slugocki**. Pauline is well known for her involvement at Club, State and National levels but to step up again as part of the organising committee for the fourth time in Tassie takes a special level of commitment.

Maciej is a long time member of MSA, holding the position as state treasurer for the last two years. This was his first stint at delivering a National event as co-convenor and financial director.

The remainder of the team comprised of Katherine Daft, Ian Shuey, Philip Tyrrell, Di Gregory, Mendelt Tillema, Perri Brereton and James Graham. This group had a diverse range of experience with a couple of first timers and others with one or more major swim meets under their belt.

Extracts from their comments:

Ian Shuey: *I've been a member of Masters Swimming Australia for the past four years, however this was my first committee involvement for a Nationals championship. I volunteered to be on the Nationals organising committee because of my engineering and project management background, event design and management experience and in recent years construction of unique theme displays. This proved useful in building a 30m long balloon mural over the pool, reading "NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2015 HOBART", which was well received. I also provided the "70's" and MSA's 40th Anniversary theme decorations for the Awards Presentation Dinner, as well as a brief "Dame Edna" act during the evening.*

James Graham: *I put my hand up to assist Phil Tyrrell as co-meet director because of my deep respect for him and the challenge of seeing something like this major national event being seen by Hobartians and others as a great success. There were an extraordinary number of people involved including Masters members and other equally dedicated volunteers. It would not have worked without them. The highlight was the ease with which the Meet Referee, Don Reynolds and his team cooperated with Phil and me to turn the meet into a memorable affair. There were some organisational low lights but they were more than outweighed by the positives. Would I do it again? Maybe!*

Di Gregory: *I got involved because I knew from previous experience how much work is involved but also how it can be a great event for engendering club spirit. I've been involved in masters swimming since about 1996. I have been on the National Board, as well as being President of two different clubs and have previously been involved in organising the Nationals in 2006 and Masters Games in 2003. Not sure if I would do it again. My responsibilities included setting up a volunteer roster as well as heading up a Hobart Dolphins social committee, which organized the social events throughout the event. Given we only have 37 members, the Hobart Dolphins put in a tremendous effort to support the meet.*

Philip Tyrrell: *I took on the role of co-Meet Director with James Graham because we felt for a major event like Nationals that two sets of eyes would be better than one, particularly as I also wanted to swim in individual events and relays. This arrangement worked extremely well and ensured one of us was available in the MD role at all times. The other part of the role, in the months leading up to the event, was to liaise with the Hobart Aquatic Centre staff to ensure the pool complex was prepared in all respects to host the event. This generated an extensive repair and maintenance program as well as obtaining other types of support from Hobart City Council such as additional parking, signage and potted plants to dress up the pool area. This part of the role was very much a team effort between us, the pool staff and the Council. Nationals 2015 was my first time as MD for an event on this scale. I went to Nationals 2014 in Rockhampton to swim and see how it was run from a MD's perspective, and this experience helped me get my head around the range of things a MD needs to watch over. I also took away some important lessons from Rocky. On top of that, the MSA Meet Directors Guide proved to be most helpful in helping us to identify a myriad of things behind the scenes that need to be considered. We ended up with a huge checklist, but managed to tick every item off before day one. The highlight of the experience was seeing the event run smoothly (despite a couple of surprise challenges like having to operate two ends of the pool simultaneously for 800m and 400m events) and seeing swimmers obviously enjoying themselves over the four days, both at the pool and after hours. The Saturday night dinner was a terrific party! I would certainly be happy to take on the MD role for Nationals again in the future, preferably as co-MD because that worked particularly well this time.*

Perri Brereton: *Over the years I have competed at Nationals, Australian Masters Games & even World Masters Games & Swims. Consequently I didn't have a problem putting up my hand to volunteer for the organizing committee of these Nationals. Together with Mendelt Tillema, we decided that our club would be responsible for the merchandising and all that entailed - this was not a small task. However, all went well on registration day and we had many happy-chappies. Both Mendelt and I also gave of our time as Technical Officials on the 4 days of the meet - that was amazing and well worth the experience. Would I do it again?? Of course!! Highlights?? There were many - but one stands out - Ian Shuey's silver balloons swinging beautifully over the pool.*

Katherine Daft: *I joined Masters Swimming in 1990, have held various roles on the Club Committee and currently am the Hobart Dolphins Secretary. At one stage, I was the Branch Secretary for a few years. I have competed in Three National Swims, two of those were hosted by the Tasmanian Branch and played an active role in the organising of the 1998 National Swim in Hobart. My role within the National Swim Organising Committee for 2015 was to support and assist Hobart Dolphins President, Di Gregory, in whatever capacity I could. This was given that the Hobart Dolphins as a Club were delegated the task of organising and coordinating the various Social activities associated with hosting the National Meet. The highlight for me was the coming together of the Presentation Dinner and the positive feedback that I personally received. A low point possibly is the fact that I didn't enjoy my competition swims, although I did manage to swim 5 out of the 6 individual events!!*



*L to R Back row: Maciej Slugocki, Mendelt Tillema, James Graham, Ian Shuey, Philip Tyrrell
L to R Front row: Di Gregory, Pauline Samson, Katherine Daft
Absent: Perri Brereton.*