



## **FINAL REPORT – 2017 MASTERS SWIMMING AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

PREPARED BY:

Rachael Keogh, Helga Ward, Shane Knight, David Findlay, Stan Pearson.

It has been our absolute pleasure to host the 2017 MSA National Championships at the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre. In this report, we address each area of the National Meet Guide in detail. We also list our recommendations based on our experiences and feedback from all interested parties to this event. We wish Masters Swimming Western Australia all the best in hosting the 2018 National Championships, and thank Masters Swimming Australia and all Branches for their support of this event.

Regards

*Rachael Keogh*

Meet Convenor, 2017 MSA National Championships

Branch President, Masters Swimming Queensland

Ph: 0402 498 853

### **Initial Actions Required to Conduct a National Championships**

The 2017 MSA National Championships were held between 8 and 11 March 2017. The reason for this early date was other international masters swimming events were being held this year. E.g. The World Masters Games in Auckland, New Zealand between 21 and 30 April. Queensland is also hosting the Great Barrier Reef Masters Games in Cairns between 25 and 28 May. World FINA Masters Swimming in Budapest between 14 and 20 August, Australian Masters Games in Launceston between 21 and 22 October, not to mention regular club, state and open water events.

The Queensland State Surf Life Saving Championships were on the weekend of 11 and 12 March and the Mooloolaba Triathlon was on 12 March.

Queensland received confirmation that we would be host well within the 2-year period. Rachael Keogh was appointed Meet Convenor at a Queensland Board meeting. There was some opposition by Board members to hosting this event considering we had hosted it in Rockhampton in 2014, PPMG in November 2016 and Great Barrier Reef Masters Games set for May 2017.

Queensland is also host to the Pan Pacific Masters Games, which is held every second year. We last hosted the meet in November 2016. The pool specifications were then the same for the National Championships.

Queensland did hold the State Championships in conjunction with Nationals. Recording was not affected – two sets of medals were given out to competitors, using the results supplied by our Recorder.

The presentation function for the State Trophies were made after the conclusion of the meet. This was done in a private function room.



No reference to the State Championships were made in the program. However, to ensure our State members were aware that the meet was both our State and National Championships, it was advertised once on social media. This post received some feedback from MSWA members.

## Organising Committee

Due to the vast distances in Queensland, we were unable to meet with all committee members on a regular basis. Planning was done via email, phone or messaging service, Slack. We had a total of three face to face meetings and updates were emailed to the GM. Approvals were sought for all aspects of the meet.

A draft budget was prepared for approval by our Administrator. The Queensland Treasurer did not have any input into this budget. The tracking was done by the Meet Convenor and the Administrator. Julie Bott and Therese Crollick were responsible for the development of a flyer. The flyer was distributed at the 2016 National Championships. We thank Victoria for allowing this. The same assistance was offered to MSWA.

The email address [convenor2017@mastersswimmingqld.org.au](mailto:convenor2017@mastersswimmingqld.org.au) was created. This was an alias for [msqnationals17@gmail.com](mailto:msqnationals17@gmail.com)

Our Audit took some time to complete. The Auditor signed off on the financials during the week commencing 29 June 2017.

## Program Sub-committee

Entry forms and summary sheets are no longer necessary. After a lengthy battle with Westpac Bank we were unable to attain a merchant bank account which was required to interface with Club Assistant and Payment Gateway, Authorize.net. We sought permission from the National Board President to use the Queensland Entry Manager System, developed by Branch Recorder, David Findlay.

We did allow NT for swimmers. Some swimmers were moved into earlier heats if space allowed. We believe in being as flexible as possible which provides good customer services to our members.

**Recommendation:** The statement regarding manual entry forms be removed from the National Meet Guide or as a last resort if a Branch cannot do online entries for unforeseen circumstances.

**Recommendation:** The statement regarding entry receipt procedures is also redundant. Using our Entry Manager System, we had the capabilities to see every entry, payment, and other purchases within the Entry Management System. A report could be easily extracted in various formats.

The extract we had of the members database was not the most current. As a result, two members were not registered during the meet. This was rectified before the meet concluded.

We had quite many international swimmers attend the meet. All records were obtained by our Meet Recorder.

Our Meet Recorder has developed a Relay Entry System. This system allows clubs to either enter relays online or enter and pay on the day of competition. Clubs were to have entered relays and paid by 11am on each day. Payment could be made either in cash, cheque or by PayPal credit card reader. Receipts were issued for each relay. Any changes were also allowed up to 11am on each day.

We held a Branch relay and included PNG as well. In hindsight, New Zealand should have been invited as well. Teams consisted of two male and two female members where the winner was calculated by swimming closest



to nominated time. The winner was within 0.02 of their time. This is a great event, especially with the inclusion of the international teams.

We sought approval to use our own Entry System. Meet Manager was used for the meet and we had employed two recorders for the entire meet.

The program contained all relevant information as defined in the National Meet Guide.

Recording of results were handled as per the National Meet Guide. Results were posted for both National and State placings near the medal table. Large headings were used for Male and Female and well as by event. A magnifying sheet was made available for those swimmers who required it. The results and medals were handled very well by our Volunteers.

With regards to the trophy calculations, this took quite some time on the last day to compile. In the future, our Recorder will produce a report to quickly calculate this from the database, for both state and national trophies.

We had our regular engraver on site each day for medal engraving. We did run out of medals as the volunteers handed out medals to international competitors as well as local. Due to the early placement of the medal order, it is difficult to calculate how many are required. All outstanding medals have been delivered.

### **Recorder Report – David Findlay**

- Entry system worked well for most users despite the last-minute nature of setting it up. 80% of users entered with no manual intervention. We normally onboard 50 new users per year, but for this meet we onboarded more than 250.
- The mix of relay entries in advance and on the day worked well and was welcomed by smaller clubs.
- The relay entry system with relay data entry done at the relay desk worked well to ensure that there were duplicate members or other errors when it came time to load relays into Meet Manager.
- The mini-program on the lanyards was well received.
- There's a need to be able to sell meal tickets and other merchandise items at the entrant pack pick up point the day before the meet as members expect to be able to do so.

### **Finance Sub-Committee**

We did not have a Finance Sub-committee. The budget and all finances were handled by the Meet Convenor and Administrator in conjunction with the Swimming Queensland Accountant.

We opened the Nationals Bank Account after a very long process with Westpac towards the end of 2016. We also created a PayPal account due to the inability of our Branch to be approved for a Merchant Account. The PayPal account was used to interface with our Entry Management System.

The Audit was successfully completed during the week starting 29 May 2017.

Souvenirs were able to be purchased online. The decision was made not to hold stock for sale at the pool due to time and resource restrictions. An online store was set up via The T-shirt Mill. Numerous items were available for purchase and delivery by this company. A commission was paid monthly to our PayPal account.

The online store was left open for one month after the event. This was advertised to members.



We purchased a PayPal credit card reader to be able to take payments on the day at the venue. This proved quite popular and easy to use.

## **Marketing Sub-Committee**

There was no Marketing Sub-Committee. We engaged a Marketing Consultant who prepared a video for our YouTube channel and created our event logo.

A volunteer placed an ad on all free community calendars within Queensland.

Julie Bott created media releases which were sent to local media.

A monthly newsletter was developed and it was accessed via a sign-up page on Facebook or the MSQ Website.

Many clubs, including PNG Masters were featured in their local media.

We used our regular photographer, Gary Brinkman, and his staff for the four days of competition. We used another photographer (at the last minute) for the presentation dinner.

An application was put in for a visit from Borobi the Commonwealth Games Mascot to attend. On the success of the application, the organisers advised of the cost to have the Mascot attend. We did not go ahead with the booking.

## **Sponsors**

Sponsors were approached by a few Volunteers including the Meet Convenor. A letter was developed to assist. All sponsorship was in-kind, except for funding supplied by the City of Gold Coast and cash sponsorship by three Queensland Clubs for relays.

Sponsors received appropriate acknowledgment. One Queensland Club did submit a letter of complaint to the MSQ board regarding the length of time it took to send a thank you letter. This issue has been resolved.

We would like to thank all our event sponsors, including National Sponsor, Vorgee.

## **Social Sub-Committee**

Information was sought from Tourism Gold Coast for distribution at the 2016 National Championships. Because of that donation, we were unable to receive any further publications for our competitor bags.

The Junior Club was approached to provide refreshments for Officials and Volunteers during the meet. They were our providers at PPMG16 also. This worked extremely well. We had both the Café and mobile coffee area for our competitors to use as well.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by the Deputy Mayor of the City of Gold Coast. Cr Donna Gates spoke during the ceremony and stayed for morning tea afterwards. This was attended by MSA and MSQ Presidents and the Meet Convenor. The Minister for Sport was also invited but due to a change in portfolio, was unable to attend.

The National Anthem was sung at the event but due to the venues' poor PA system, this was not heard by all competitors.

Due to lack of time and resources we decided not to have social functions at bag collection or on other nights.



The presentation function was held at the Southport RSL. The decision for this venue was cost and location. The 2017 National Championship dinner ticket was the most inexpensive in several years. The alternative was SeaWorld with a dolphin show, but we considered the price to high.

The presentation dinner was set up and organised as per the National Meet Guide.

## **Technical Sub-Committee**

There was no formal Technical Sub-Committee with Stan Pearson, Director of Technical Services, MSQ Board assuming the role of Coordinator.

We used two marshalling areas – one for 50m events and one for 100 and over. This was a result of running PPMG16 and the time and confusion to marshal the 50m events. With the use of large signage, the event ran smoothly.

We became members of Volunteering Gold Coast who advertised our event and as a result we received quite many Volunteers through this organisation. Those Volunteers made an enormous impact on the smooth running of the event.

Our Meet Director liaised with Pool Management, Technical Officials and Recording to ensure all necessary equipment was available for the meet.

### **Technical Report – Stan Pearson**

From a Technical point the Nationals/States at Southport was a success. The Technical Officials, both from Queensland and Interstate worked well together and all were most appreciative of the support from other areas throughout the 4 days. 2 world records were set during the Nationals. The necessary paper work was provided by David Findlay, it has been signed off by me and sent to MSA Recorder for processing.

## **Safety Sub-Committee**

We did not have a Safety Sub-Committee with Shane Knight, Meet Director, assuming that role.

Shane liaised with Pool Management to ensure all safety requirements were met. As we had recently run PPMG16 a lot of the same requirements were in place.

### **Meet Director's Report – Shane Knight**

Day 1

- We couldn't set up tents for shade due to windy conditions. Pool staff were very strict with this stating workplace health and safety, but it was overcast conditions which did help.
- There were complaints that the PA system was too loud upstairs.
- Backstroke flags weren't set up in the warm-up pool. This resulted in a swimmer hitting her head on the wall and hurting her neck. I organised first aid to look at her and she refused any more treating stating she was ok.
- Backstroke flags were placed in the warm-up pool straight away. Being day one it was missed by myself and pool staff.

Day 2



- There were complaints that there were not enough warm-up lanes in the warm-up pool. Competitors took to swimming in other pools nearby with caused complaints to pool staff from paying locals. Myself and the pool manager spoke to the swimmers involved. The pool opened 2 more lanes in another pool during peak periods.
- Several injuries occurred. Stubbed toe, a woman walked into seating causing bruising to her lower leg. Both injuries were attended and recorded by lifeguards.
- Several timekeepers time kept all day.

#### Day 3

- The pool announcer had trouble finding batteries for the mic.
- One timekeeper approached several other timekeepers and told them that they stank and needed new shirts. This was quite a delicate issue that was handled very well by Linda Daffy the chief timekeeper and myself.
- Backup chief timekeeper was overheard making inappropriate comment about a volunteer. I had a quiet word with him.

#### Day 4

- State relays. This started with confusion as it was quickly put together. As Meet Director, I had no real involvement in its set up. Result was that I was approached about its set up and how it was to be run but I couldn't give out any info. Meet Director needs to be involved in all running's of meet.
- Swimmer fell off blocks injuring himself quite badly. He was strapped up by lifeguards and swam in another heat and won gold.

#### Wrap up

- Meet announcer suggested better communication during the 50m events. We need our own radios so communication is more efficient.
- Pool staff didn't have the pa set up ready for the National Anthem. The mic was also not turned on for the Anthem.
- Announcers need to have an event program.
- These were all points put to me by Greg Flanders, Meet Announcer.
- Greg's overall view was it was a well-run event with a great team management.
- He said that I was always very approachable.
- Overall there were no significant issues, just lots of trivial things that will come around during any major event.
- I would recommend that we don't use the diving pool as a warmup pool.
- We should also update our stroke lane markers. They are very flimsy and awkward to use.
- I think radios are a must for key people on pool deck. Meet Referee, Meet Director, Chief Timekeeper, pool Announcer and David in the computer room. Also, maybe a runner for David with the results sheets.



## REPORT

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

The process of preparing for the championships started a little later than the required two-year period as a result of the withdrawal of Western Australia's commitment to the event at the time.

Once the decision was made to take on the event, Rachael Keogh took on the role of Meet Convenor and she quickly set about forming a committee and a group of volunteers. The process of putting into place a venue, both pool and dinner and getting the flyers out was done quickly. Shane Knight was appointed Meet Director and together with other members of the committee, we covered all aspects of the requirements, including regular meetings.

The expectation was for MSQ to use the online payment system, Club Assistant as had been done in Hobart and Melbourne and although the requirements and negotiations were set in place in good time, difficulties arose with in particular Westpac.

As a result of discrepancies in the MSQ officially registered name, a lot of time was lost, which had it been picked up early, the Merchant Bank would have been set up in good time. Communication between the bank and MSQ was inadequate and often confusing.

Fortunately, David Findlay, the MSQ Recorder had been quietly working on an online payment system through our previously established PayPal system, in preparation for MSQ major events. We received permission from MSA President, Craig Smith to use this system as the Merchant Bank had still not been set up and the nomination date for members to register was already overdue.

The Gold Coast Aquatic Centre Management is most accommodating. Whatever we required they catered for and that included providing much of the shade for our swimmers. On very windy days, however, they would not set up the marquees for safety reasons, but fortunately, that only happened on the first day.

The risk management put in place by the centre was taken seriously and regardless of whether it met with the approval of our competitors, they took safety of our swimmers seriously.

We were able to receive support from Volunteering Gold Coast, which allowed us to have more 'permanent' timekeepers and to add to this volunteers from our clubs were able to assist the administrator in different areas.

A dedicated Facebook page was set up for the event and the feed was posted on the webpage for the Nationals.

The audit preparations took some time as discrepancies in the online payments and the reconciliation were picked up. This was mainly to do with PayPal. However, the discrepancy was not a shortfall, but rather a larger income than reflected through PayPal. This too was resolved.

The role of the administrator in the past was to ensure that all monies received during the event were organised clearly so that accountability was evident. However, a few volunteers took on the task of handling much of the income without a more structured approach and this led to some confusion with how income was recorded.



Ultimately, this was resolved and my only criticism is that each role of all involved during the 4 days needs to be clearly defined with all the relevant structures in place. Enthusiasm and officiousness can get out of hand, despite all the best intentions of those involved.

Although the numbers were smaller than the previous two events, MSQ was still happy with the competitor numbers. It was always going to be difficult to get the numbers because only four months prior to the nationals, we hosted the PPMG and less than two months after the event, the Masters Games in New Zealand were held. To add to that the World Championships are also being held this year.

Results were posted quickly and David allowed for tremendous flexibility in catering to everyone's needs. No changes expected from swimmers was too much for him.

Overall we were happy with the competition, the atmosphere during the four days, the dinner presentation and the wonderful feedback we received.

Helga Ward

Administrator.