



NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIPS
2015
H O B A R T

INNOVATION AND DELIVERY

Report for Masters Swimming Australia

On the conduct of the

40th MSA National Championships

Hobart 8-11 April 2015

Prepared by

The Co-convenors of the 2015 National Championships

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Executive Summary

Following the granting of rights to stage the 2015 Championships to Masters Swimming Tasmania (MST) the MST Branch committee appointed Pauline Samson and Maciej Slugocki as Co-convenors of the championships.

The Co-convenors were jointly accountable to the National Board and Branch for the operations of the championships. Financial delegations were provided to the Co-convenors and the MST Secretary.

In preparing to stage the 2015 Australian Masters Championships the Co-convenors made a deliberate decision to introduce event staging innovations and imprint a style of championships unique to the city of Hobart and Tasmania.

The many innovations introduced included:

- adding Inclusiveness as an additional underlying key theme to complement our emphasis on Fun, Fitness and Friendship
- marketing Hobart and indeed Tasmania as a must see destination
- introducing a new, on line registration system
- provision of merchant banking facilities
- shopping cart facilities were provided for all attendees
- design and creation of the Showcase Racing Arena
- measured and tailored social marketing
- parking and “walk to the pool” instruction videos
- social events centred around the Salamanca and Wharf areas of the city
- provision of a cost included souvenir program for all competitors
- moving to a downloadable online event and heat programme
- branding consistency covering medal ribbons, publications and video clips
- provision of an additional free results service using SwimPhone
- creation of a YouTube channel and the posting of short competition event video clips
- direct email-outs to competitors

A separate interim finance report has been produced and provided to MSA. For MST the staging of the event was an outstanding financial success. Additional, non-budgeted expenses were not approved until registrations exceeded 400. Expenses met budget with additional surpluses generated through merchandise and programme sales.

The 600 competitor registrations posed a significant challenge to the organising committee especially in the conduct of the 800 and 400m freestyle events. This large number of competitors required the hiring of an additional short course pool for those events and the provision of additional warm up space to meet the demand of the 50m sprint events. Additional costs were easily absorbed within already budget items and tight expenditure controls.

The Co-convenors expressly acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by members of the Talays, Hobart Aquatic and Hobart Dolphins clubs who responded to an invitation to provide members to the organising committee supporting the Co-convenors – Mendelt Tillema, Perri Brereton, Ian Shuey, Philip Tyrell, James Graham, Diane Gregory and Katherine Daft. A special thanks is also extended to Noeleen Dix, General Manager Masters Swimming Australia for her invaluable counsel, assistance and timely advice.

Introduction

Staging the 2015 MSA National Championships in Hobart provided a unique challenge for the branch.

The challenge was how to harness a small membership base, with relatively few members possessing the MSA specific expertise. Necessity, as ever is the, mother of invention. Hence the determination of the convenors to focus on innovation as a way to address the branch's logistical challenges.

The focus of this report is not on the number of competitors, events heats, records or statistics. Its focus is on what was done to achieve the staging of the championships in Hobart at the Hobart Aquatic Centre.

Essentially, the staging of an event such as these championships, revolves around how to:

- tempt and engage
- organise
- get the racing going
- entertain; and
- finance.

The following sections deal with the innovations that were introduced in each element required for the staging of the championships.

Tempting and engaging

Tasmania is a destination and its attractions are unique.

The challenge therefore was to use those unique attractions to tempt masters to think about the championships in a different way. In general, competitors attend national championships as they have the inclination to compete, the time and the financial resources. The deliberate strategy adopted for the 2015 National Championships was to say to competitors – 'there is more to Hobart and Tasmania so have a look at what else we have to offer'. And they did.

The approach was to market Hobart's natural attributes - the mountain, the Derwent estuary, easy access between the city and the pool, and the Salamanca/wharf precinct. Our initial brochure pack included material on Hobart's latest, privately owned and managed, avant garde and controversial MONA – the Museum of Old and New Art. Marketing then moved to promoting various destinations around Tasmania – Cradle Mountain and our rugged west coast. Our use of social media received a great amount of very positive feedback.

The timing circumstances leading to the award of the championships to MST meant that a branding strategy could not be implemented before the marketing campaign commenced. Branding was however developed in time for orders of the medal ribbons, publications and video clips.

Inclusiveness was also a focus of arrangements for the championships. The physical location of the Aquatic Centre poses a challenge to physically disabled and elderly competitors. Special arrangements were made with Centre management to ensure sufficient disabled parking was available and access to the centre for those requiring it, was made available via the main

entrance while all other competitors used a separate entrance. YouTube video clips were produced to familiarise all competitors with entrance and parking arrangements.

Traditionally registrations for championships are submitted very close to the deadline. A special “early bird” prize was made available to encourage early registration although this didn’t appear to influence the actual entries coming in any earlier.

Our web based event page was regularly updated and used as a tool to keep the masters community engaged and updated on developments. All competitors also received regular personal mail outs to keep them updated.

Organising the competition

- introducing a new, on line registration system
- provision of merchant banking facilities
- shopping cart facilities were provided for all attendees

The racing going

- design and creation of the showcase racing arena
- provision of a cost included souvenir programme for all competitors
- provision of a downloadable online event and heat programme
- provision of an additional free results service using SwimPhone

Entertaining

- creating a YouTube channel and the posting of short competition event video clips
- social events centred around the Salamanca and wharf areas of the city
- use of social media by the organisers and also the attendees to showcase the event (e.g. people enjoying their swimming and the presentation dinner)

Financing

A separate report has been provided to MSA detailing all Championship income and expenditures. The income and expenditure report shows:

- Net operation income \$87,000
- Operating expenses \$43,000
- Surplus \$38,000

A budget was submitted to the National Board as part of the process involved in awarding the championships to the Tasmanian Branch.

To minimise the exposure of the Branch, the budget was prepared using a very conservative break-even level of 300 entries. There was a predicted indicative loss of \$700 at this level. A

more realistic, but still conservative level of 400 entries was used as the budgetary control mechanism.

The delegation to the Co-conveners from Masters Swimming Tasmania was treated as the financial delegation applicable to all National Championship expenditures. All expenditures received pre-approval by the Co-conveners and all payments were jointly authorised by the Co-conveners.

With nearly 600 registered competitors at the Championships, budget predictions were for a profit of \$34,000. It is anticipated that the championships will make a surplus of \$38,000. The positive variance from budget of \$4,000 is mainly attributed to merchandise, sponsorships and other profits from sales not originally budgeted for. All other expenditures did not materially differ from those anticipated in the budget initially submitted to the National Board.

Online Registration System

After much searching and with the assistance of the World Recorder, an approach was made to Club Assistant, a USA based company which has more than 10 years' experience in providing services to swimming clubs, mostly masters.

The online registration system provided a 'one-stop' shop for the conduct of the meet, including full registration of all events, a shopping cart (merchandise and presentation dinner) all paid by individual members using a credit card facility. The shopping cart was also made available to non-swimmers.

The system is monitored by Club Assistant and is hired for the meet, so no outlay for software.

The only issue at the time of setting up the meet to go live, was finding a bank which would enable MST to have a merchant banking facility using Authorize.net.

As the system needed access to a database of members, Club Assistant built an Import Tool to enable this information to be included. This list of members was created manually each day as new registrations were added to IMGSTG and clubs activated those registrations (this was problematic for some members).

We were also able to monitor the entries and merchandise orders – this enabled us to order merchandise on a regular basis and to close the numbers for the Presentation Dinner when the venue accommodation reached 270.

Although we had a late closing date for entries (4 weeks from starting date), there were requests received for late entries up to a week after the closing date; these requests were denied.

Relay entries were also left open until midday on the first day of competition and payment was made after the closing date and only those relays that swam incurred an entry fee.

Individual entries were downloaded from Club Assistant (SD3 file) and imported into Meet Manager. The entries were heat seeded and then transferred to SwimPhone and also a printed version was generated. The printed version was made available to all officials and to those who had ordered and paid at the time of entry. A PDF copy was also added to the webpage for easy download.

During the meet at the conclusion of each event, results were presented in printed format, transferred to SwimPhone and at the end of each day could be viewed on the Records/Results Portal.

SwimPhone was an added bonus of viewing results with points scoring and a graph analysis of each swim.

Each meet has a 'dashboard' which generates information about such things as age groups, gender, number of events per swimmer (details below) during the entry process time.

Swim Meet Dashboard

Meet date 8/04/15 – 11/04/15 Online registration closed 2/03/15

Entrants and Revenue		
	Entrants	Entry Fee
Anticipated	0	\$0.00
Actual	627	\$154.57
Event Entries: 4282		

Fee Structure	
Meet Set-Up Fee	\$0.00
Swimmer Registration Surcharge	\$0.00
Percentage	0%
Minimum Fee	\$100.00

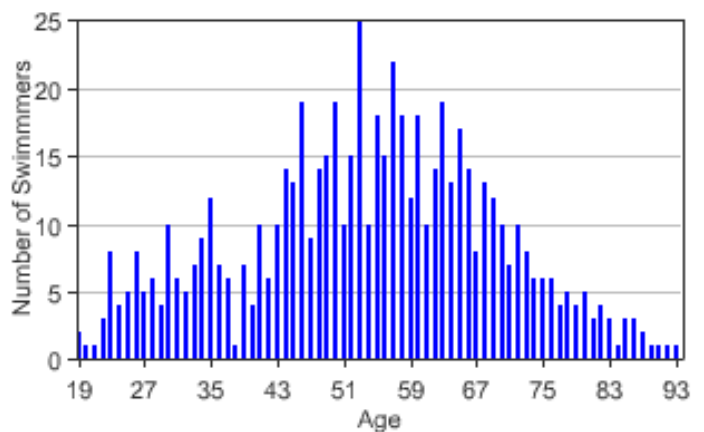
This included swimmers and non-swimmers in the actual revenue.

Swimmers By Gender

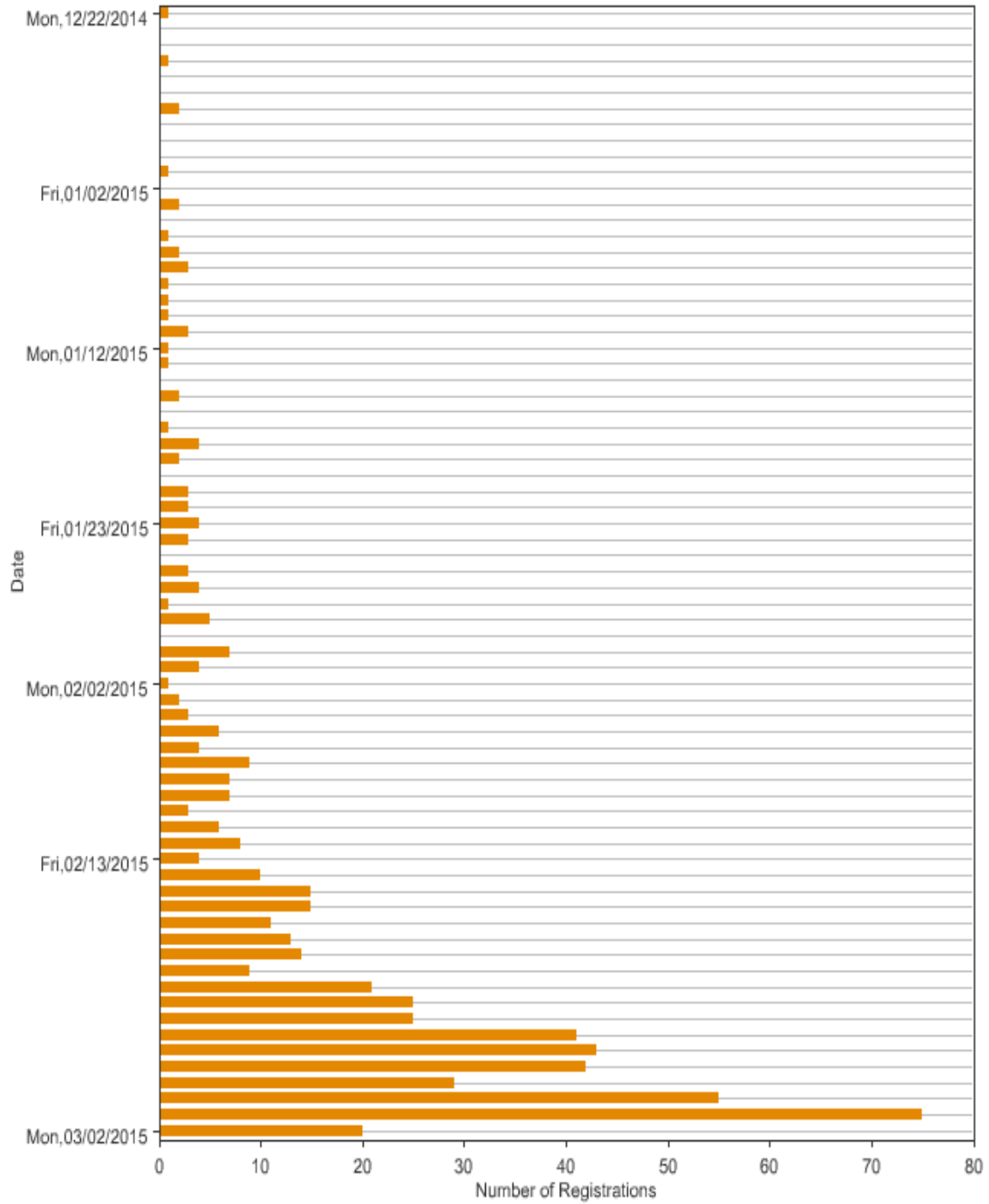
Female Male



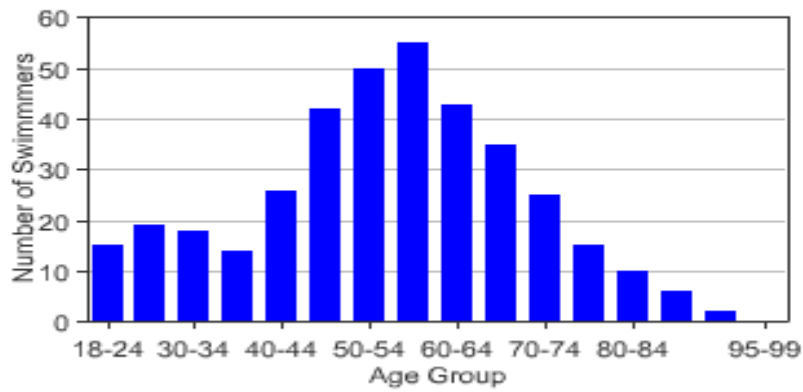
Swimmers By Age



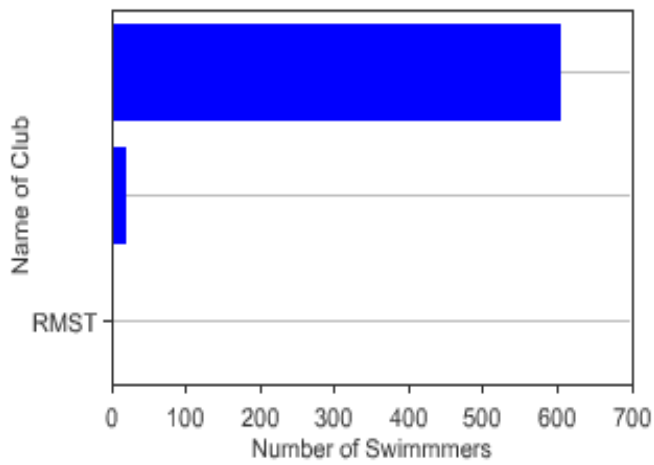
Registrations By Date



Swimmers By Age Group



Swimmers By Club



Events By Swimmer

