



Masters Swimming
Australia
41st National
Championships

Final Report

Executive Overview

For the past two Nationals that have been held in Melbourne (2001 and 2008), there had been difficulty in attracting interstate and international swimmers.

There were a number of factors influencing this:

- Timing, where scheduling the Championships were too close to other National or International events and thus potential competitors would choose international/World events over the Nationals,
- Marketing and sponsorship/fundraising, where focus was needed by specialists to make coming to Melbourne both attractive and a desirable travel destination.

We also wanted to make these Championships a 'little different'; something which the participants would remember well into the future.

A strong focus was discussed and agreed by the Convening Committee that we would make every attempt to set the benchmark for future Championships in terms of sustainability, by engaging sponsors/partners who could provide assistance in 'greening' the Championships.

We looked at the last 4 National Championships to determine what worked well and what we could improve on.

We had booked the venue (MSAC) after we had 'swapped' with Tasmania, with them hosting the 2015 Nationals and ourselves the 2016 Nationals. The date had been established to avoid the Grand Prix, Easter and other National/International events. Planning the meet to conclude over the Anzac Day weekend gave Melbourne extra appeal for people coming from interstate and overseas.

With all this lined up, we were confident we could come close to the numbers that Hobart had achieved in 2015 and set forth with a vengeance to ensure that we would.

We utilised the Club Assistant (CA) on-line Meet registration system. Linked to the MSA IMGSTG database on a daily basis, ensuring that only registered MSA/FINA/US-Masters registered swimmers could register. Additionally, CA has a powerful and flexible merchandising gateway, which allowed swimmers to also purchase product/services as part of their registration, as well as a 'public' gateway, which allows non-swimmers to purchase e.g. Presentation Dinner tickets.

The registrations opened in early January, with swimmers starting to register fairly quickly. Updates to both Meet Mobile and SwimPhone were done on a weekly basis.

We achieved our 'target' of 550 with 10 days of the close of entries, however to our surprise and growing dismay, it continued to climb over the 720 mark, finally peaking at 728 at close.

In hindsight, the Marketing and Social team (Sal Cuming and Suzie Kempson) did a fantastic job. We had a great representation from all of the 5 new clubs, recently established in Victoria

We also recognised that we needed to arrange our volunteers in a simple way, with an effective, simple on-line registration capability. It worked, but could have worked much better. Neil Mitchell and Jane Monk did an outstanding job in organising and managing the volunteers, particularly timekeepers and support staff. They ensured that we did not have to call on swimmers to assist until the final two days.

Swimmers Registration and merchandise handout as well as volunteer registration, were superbly handled by a range of volunteers, Jeanette Holowiuk (something of a veteran of these events) and Catherine Watmough. They all worked tirelessly in sometimes difficult circumstances to make the processes work.

Executive Overview(Cont.)

This report wouldn't be complete with a special mention of The Opening Ceremony, which was notable and a pleasure for those who watched and participated. A special thank you to Todd Patrick of Patrick Studios, who with his studio of dancers (70 in all) and production staff; was able to delight and entrance us for 20-30 minutes. Jane Monk and her nephew Lachie topped it off with a superb rendition of the National Anthem

The running of the meet went relatively smoothly, however, like the duck who seems to effortlessly glide through the water, but paddling frantically beneath the water, quite a number were frantically working behind the scenes to ensure any obstacles were minimised or removed.

Throughout the Championships, Jan Williams and her team of efficient volunteers ensured that the technical officials timekeepers and general volunteers – 165 in total, were well fed and watered.

Lee Chaplin enthusiastically managed the Information and Awards desks, ensuring that swimmers got their medals and were kept up to date as the Championships progressed

Jane Monk and her team of Marshals kept the swimmers moving through to start each race, without fuss or panic.

The AOE team of Maz Strong, Linda Gunzburg and Heather O'Connor, together with the recorders – Pauline Sampson and Leanne Beames, kept the AOE room ticking

Neil Mitchell and his superb team of technical officials also ensured that the proceeding moved swiftly and smoothly.

Last but not least; Jeanette Holowiuk, Archer Talbot, Sal Cuming, Bruce 'Bad Boy' Allender and for their enthusiastic and delightful commentary throughout the Championships.

Executive Overview(Cont.)

Learnings:

Whilst we are always wiser in hindsight, there a number of learnings which came out of planning and running the Championships:

We found that MSAC struggled as a venue to deliver what was needed for this type of event; partly because the Event Coordinator was new and we assumed that this was a super-sized variation of one of our State Championships and they had the facilities to cater for it.

- We should have provided all of our own furnishings: tables, chairs, whiteboards. Much of what MSAC has is old and broken/unusable.
- We should have booked a larger area (upstairs) for Swimmer/Volunteer registration and Merchandise, with our own tables and chairs.
- We should have booked outside pool lanes as an overflow for the inside pool.
- We should have booked the indoor competition pool until 7pm each day.
- While we assured that all other stakeholders were aware that the Championships were on, one of the stakeholders insisted she wasn't aware and refused to move or limit her activities while the Championships were on. We found out, that she had been notified very early in the piece but 'forgot'.

Lastly, we could not have achieved the success of this Championships without the effort of an outstanding team:

- Neil Mitchell & Jane Monk – Technical and Volunteers,
- Jeanette Holowiuk – Program,
- Catherine Watmough and Jeanette Holowiuk – Merchandise
- Suzie Kempson, Sal Cuming, *Janes Barnes (MSA Office) – Marketing and Social
- Tim Boness – Finance

Thanks team, couldn't have done it without you.

Paul

Paul Watmough
Convenor – 2016 National Championships

* Jane Barnes became seriously ill during the latter part of the lead up to the Championships and consequently had to withdraw, while her absence was sorely felt, Noeleen Dix (GM – MSA) and her team scrambled to successfully fill the void left by Jane.

Meet Online Registration and Running the Meet Report Online Registration System

Whilst Victoria had persevered for some years with the IMGSTG on-line meet registration 'system', which had been developed specifically for Swimming Australia, when they were using IMGSTG. It became obvious that it was not 'suitable for purpose' for the 2016 Nationals. Victoria had been investigating effective web-based meet registration software in preparation for the 2015 Championships, which unfortunately, we were unable to host due to the lack of a suitable venue (MSAC) and we are eternally grateful to MSTAS, who unselfishly voted to host the 2015 Nationals in our place.

Coincidentally, we had both chosen the same software, without consultation.

By the time 2016 MSA swimmer registration renewals were opened, we had the meet registrations and merchandise gateway open and available. We could have had it open earlier, had it not been for the recalcitrance of one of the major banks we were dealing with.

We chose to allow swimmers to purchase merchandise and book for the Presentation Dinner before they registered for any events. For the vast majority of swimmers, this worked, with the odd one or two registering believing that they had to register for a single event in order to purchase merchandise.

MSTAS agreed to load the IMGSTG swimmer registration files on a daily basis, which provides current registration information from the National MSA IMGSTG database into the Club Assistant system.

We found that during this process that many swimmers who had re-registered, had not been activated by their club registrar and on a number of occasions there was something of a scramble to 'find' the club registrar and get them to activate the swimmer. Additionally, there were also a number of new members who registered with IMGSTG and within an hour were attempting to register for the Nationals and then advised that 'they had registered (financial), but were unable to enter the Nationals'. The latter was quickly resolved by advising prospective competitors to wait 24 hours and try again.

The problem with the former issue is an on-going one that all Branches have each year, where club registrars are not checking regularly to see who is a newly registered swimmer and who has re-registered. A simple solution would be for IMGSTG to automatically generate an e-mail report to the club registrar when this occurs. However, given IMGSTG's current position in relation to their support and development of the member registration database, MSA would need to look at alternatives for a better integrated registration membership system.

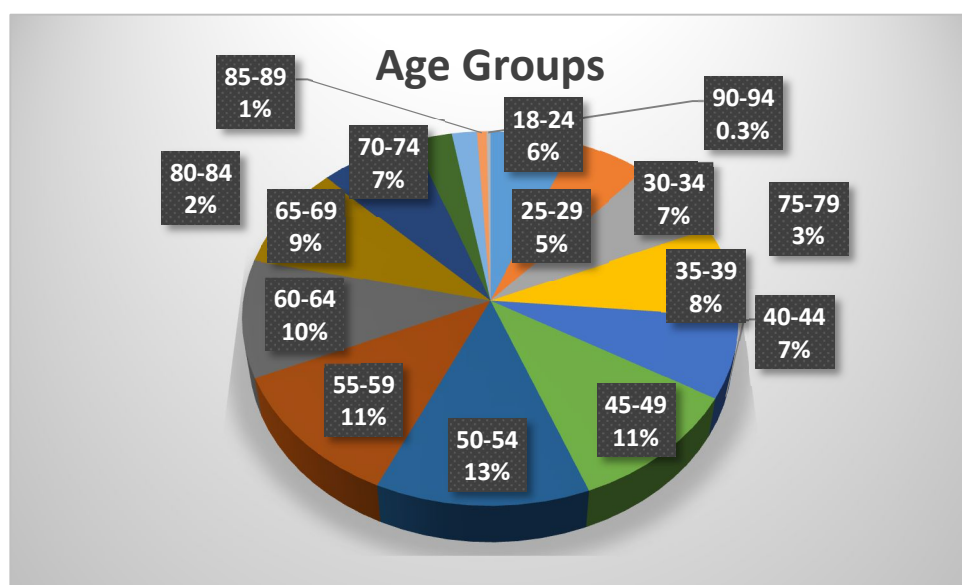
Meet Online Registration and Running the Meet Report(Cont.)

Statistics:

Registrations: 728 - Male (358 - 49%), Female (370 - 51%)

Entries: Day 1 – 1,210, Day 2 – 1,037, Day 3 – 1,265, Day 4 – 1,244

Age Groups:



Up to 35 year olds – 27% of competitors, up to 54 year olds 57%, up to 64 year olds 79%, therefore the median for this competition is around the 50 year olds

Records: 2 Worlds, 56 Individual Nationals, 8 Relay Nationals

Branch/Internationals – Clubs and Percentage of total competitors

Northern Territory: (2 Clubs - 1%)

New South Wales: (26 Clubs - 21%)

Queensland: (22 Clubs - 12%)

South Australia: (7 Clubs - 4%)

Tasmania: (5 Clubs - 4%)

Victoria: (26 Clubs - 50%)

Western Australia: (4 Clubs - 6%)

Internationals: 2% (US-Masters(4), Indonesia(1), Mexico(1), New Zealand(2), Papua New Guinea(1))

Swimmer registration

The pattern of swimmer on-line registrations for these Championships, were very similar to that which occurred in Hobart in 2015, with a steady flow of registrations – between 2-5 registrations per day once entries had opened; ramping up in the last 10 days to 50-60 per day.

Given Victoria's past experience with holding National Championships, our 'aspirational' target number of registrations was in the 500-550 range; upon which we predicated all of our estimates (timings, number of events etc.). We achieved this within 10 days of registrations closing.

Meet Online Registration and Running the Meet Report(Cont.)

The addition of another 200 swimmers in the last 10 days took us completely by surprise and forced us into a rethink of our timings and the way we would run the events.

In particular, numbers also had a major impact on how we ran the 800m event, which would have run until late in the evening (almost 10pm). We looked at other options, including the hiring of the outside pool, however MSAC are by their charter, expressly forbidden to hire both pools for competition at the same time. As a result, we were forced to run the event '2 to a lane', which brought the day's finish time back to a reasonable time.

There was, understandably, a degree of negative reaction to this decision. However, none withdrew from the event and due to the fact that we had the manual timekeeping covered (60+ timekeepers), the event ran smoothly, with only two DQ's.

The increase in numbers also had an effect on how long each day's event ran. Our original plan when we booked the MSAC facility, was to operate from 8:00am to 5:00pm each day, with the expectation that we would finish earlier on most days.

MSAC had scheduled other users of the facility around our planned timings. When we were faced with a massive increase in numbers, we recognised that things would be close.

Unfortunately, during the 400m Medley event, where we had 'shrunk' two events to save time, two technical officials had created confusion with the AOE operator; which in turn had the opposite effect and added another 45 minutes to our exceedingly tight finish time.

As a consequence, we had no choice but to defer the final event (Relay) until Saturday morning. This again caused a degree of angst among various clubs, but most were positive and we ran the following morning without issue. Those clubs who were forced to cancel teams were offered refunds, some of whom accepted the offer.

Another factor of the unexpected attendance is the provision of adequate warm-up/cool-down facilities. We had between 600-650 swimmers on pool-deck for all four days of the competition. The facility was only able to provide us with 4x25m lanes, which proved to be inadequate. As we had predicated the facility bookings on 550 competitors, it proved impossible to change/add access to other parts of the facility i.e. additional lanes in the outside pool.

The difficulty when planning for this type of contingency is cost. Had we made provision for a numbers blow-out, our facilities cost would have increased by 30%.

Meet Online Registration and Running the Meet Report(Cont.) Running the Meet

As is mostly the case; once the preliminaries are over with, the actual swimming part of the Championships ran smoothly, with the exception of the 400m Medley on Day 2 and deferring of the relay to the morning of Day 3.

Whilst we ran the 800m Freestyle '2 to a lane', there were only a few minor incidents.

This year, there were 251 entries for the 800 freestyle event, with very few scratching's.

The 800m event has been somewhat contentious at recent Championships and has been a point of discussion, following National Championships for a number of years. From the negative reaction via e-mail and social media, when we had to change the running of the 800m event, it is obvious the it has become a firm favourite on the National calendar. However, if we are seeing an increase in attendance at the National Championships, the inclusion of an 800m event will continue to be problematic, as most Long Course venues in Australia do not have the capability to provide concurrent access to 2x50 metre pools.

Typically, the National Championships are run over 4 days, while trying to fit in a range of events, which include both 400 and 800 swims. Understandably, many see the 800m as the only offering for a Long Distance event, which provides a competitive 'race' at that distance. Swimming '2 to a lane' does not provide that 'race' capability i.e. give many competitors the sense that they can swim as quickly as possible.

There are a number of options:

- Run the 800 on its own on a separate day i.e. increase the length of the Championships by another day, Typically, the 800 will take 6-7 hours to run, depending upon the number of entries and age group spread.
 - Disadvantages – Increase the cost/availability of the venue and accommodation costs to interstate swimmers; additional officials/volunteers to cover, swimmer event registration scheduled earlier.
- Arrange for the event to be swum at another 50m facility,
 - Disadvantages – arranging transport, duplication of officials, volunteers and cost
- Exclude the 800 from the National Championships, but have it included as part of a co-ordinated National Swim Championships, with Branches having it included as either LD Short Course or LD Long Course meets during the course of the year.
 - Disadvantages – additional travel costs for swimmers, some of whom are on fixed incomes.

Recommendations:

- **Include** the 800 as part of the MSA National Championships, but have it as an extra day, without other events, or
- **Exclude** the 800 from the National Championships, instead having it as part of a nationally coordinated program, where the Branches include it (in either Short Course or Long Course format) as part of their Championship program (not interclub).

Merchandise and Swimmer Event Registration Report

The Organising Committee chose EVO, a local company, to provide the clothing. EVO specializes in corporate branded sportswear. Two of the committee members had had experience with using them before.

A stunning design in red white and blue, to match the “Eat, Pray Love” theme for The Nationals, was chosen for the polo top, track jacket and pants, long sleeved crew neck t shirt and the razor back women’s singlet.

An EVO sizing chart for men and women was placed for sizing guidance on the web site and swimmer registration page. EVO sizing is small, thus sizes could be ordered up to Women’s and Men’s 4XL.

A black EVO sports bag was also offered.

Only EVO 160 items were ordered by swimmers. This was disappointing, considering how attractive the merchandise was

The Officials and selected volunteers who volunteered for a minimum period of time were provided with the EVO polo tops.

Due to a misunderstanding, the EVO merchandise, which is manufactured in China, was delivered to the pool on the first day of swimmer registrations, rather than the previous week as had been planned. This caused considerable difficulty for the Registration Desk staff and volunteers who were unable to check items carefully or thoroughly nor to place the items in the swimmers bags.

Two different Silicon Swim Caps, provided by Vorgee were also included.

Both were very attractive, with red and white writing, one was aqua, the other dark blue. A large number were ordered. The caps also were not delivered until the first day of registration and could not be placed in the bags prior to registration opening.

Printed Programs and Printed Results were offered. The Committee was surprised by the large Number of Programs ordered.

A Myki Traveler pack including \$5 worth of free travel, a map of Melbourne and discounts to various Melbourne locations was offered for \$14. A number were purchased by interstate and international competitors.

In conjunction with the Environmental Sustainability theme of these Nationals, Free Bike passes supplied by The RACV were offered. A few were taken up.

Keep-Cups (RRP \$10) were ‘gifted’ to all swimmers and were also available for purchase. The Committee had arranged a \$0.50 discount per coffee for anyone who had a Keep-Cup, thus reducing land fill from “disposable” coffee cups

Swimmer Event Registration

728 swimmers were registered for The Nationals, the largest number at any Nationals for almost 20 years

The Swimmer Bags selected by the Committee were eco-friendly (manufactured from recycled materials), floral bags provided by a local company.

Each bag contained a Keep-Cup, a free drink bottle, a magazine, an eco-friendly biro, 4 free raffle tickets, some discount vouchers for the Queen Victoria market and a health bar.

Merchandise and Swimmer Event Registration Report(Cont.)

The bags were packed off-site on the weekend before the Championships and transported to MSAC early on the Wednesday; the day prior to Day 1 of the Championships.

Due to the late delivery of some of the merchandise, a decision was made, that all merchandise would be offered on a separate table to be collected as necessary after swimmers picked up their swimming bag and the lanyard that contained information about all their events and a sticker to indicate those attending the Presentation Dinner.

It had been planned to open The Registration Desk at 2PM on the eve of the Championships, however people were arriving at the pool early in the morning; either to have a swim or check out the venue, or both. With the help of several volunteers who worked tirelessly, the desk was able to be open for business from about 11 am.

Unfortunately, the area designated by the event providers to set up the registration desks was too small, just inside the entrance to the aquatic complex and some distance from the competition pool. Despite being promised a larger area with 3-4 large trestle tables, there were only two available and a small table for the merchandise.

Swimmers "registered" at the first desk, were handed their bag and lanyard then directed to the merchandise desk.

Surprisingly, a very large number of swimmers had no idea whether they had ordered merchandise. Thus it took the volunteers much longer to search through all the lists to 'see' if a name was there or not. A few wise swimmers brought their order forms with them (as was recommended as part of their on-line registration process) and were able to be processed quickly.

Because of the limited space, this process became messy and errors were made by volunteers in missing some of the merchandise ordered or giving incorrect items to people. Some of this was corrected in subsequent days, however some refunds were necessary where merchandise had been given away to competitors who had not ordered the correct sized merchandise.

About 350 swimmers registered the 1st day. The desk closed at about 8pm

From Day 1 of the Championships; registration took place on the mezzanine floor of the competition pool close to the Awards and Information desks

Jeanette Holowiuk; assisted in part by Catherine Watmough and a great group of volunteers are to be thanked for their tireless efforts over the 5 days.

Recommendation:

- in future, merchandise be either sourced with manufacturing taking place locally or if manufacturing takes place overseas; provide reasonable time for delivery (5-6 weeks) in the project schedule to avoid delivery timing problems.



Marketing and Social Report

The committee for the 2016 Nationals wanted to build on the momentum on what the last 3 Nationals had created with terrific swimmer numbers in Sydney, a memorable ANZAC Day opening ceremony in Rockhampton and a terrific presentation dinner in Hobart.

The previous Nationals held in Melbourne in 2008, over the Easter long weekend and were only 3 weeks from the FINA World championships in Perth saw less than 400 entrants. We knew we needed to do something different in order to attract swimmers to Melbourne in 2016.

Our main objectives included:

- Focus on Melbourne as a destination.
 - This was achieved with building the 'EAT, PLAY, LOVE' theme for the event.
 - Theme the gift bags with showcasing what Melbourne has to offer – shopping (LOVE) and dining out (EAT).
- Encourage as many MSV members to take part in the championships and give perceived value for money to competing swimmers.
 - MSV members supported the event with over half the participants coming from Victoria.
 - A gift bag was presented to both swimmers and officials.
 - A reusable Keep Cup to use and receive a discount at the MSAC cafe.
 - Water bottle to use at the water stations. Saves participants having to purchase bottled water.
 - Eco-shopping bag to take into Melbourne to go shopping. A shopping map was also provided.
 - Eco-friendly pen was provided for participants to use when filling in their complimentary raffle tickets.
 - Reading their complimentary magazine and also encouraged to recycle their magazine with another one during the event.
 - Provided discounts for neighboring cafe and bars around South Melbourne.
 - Complimentary injury management advice from Physio Health.

Marketing and Social Report (Cont.)

Communication:

- A professional looking brochure was produced for the event with photographs show-casing Melbourne as a tourist destination as well as the presentation dinner and the swimming venue (MSAC).
- Advertising for the event started at the 2015 Nationals, where attending members of the Convening Committee wore colorful 'Ask Me' 2016 Nationals t-shirts advertising the event and spoke to individual swimmers on what they could expect when in Melbourne.



- A number of well-known MSA swimmers and officials were our 'Ambassadors' for the event with wearing their National 'Ask Me' event t-shirts at various MSA meets around Australia. Photograph below showing the illustrious Beames family from MSSA.



Marketing and Social Report (Cont.)

Communication:

- A dedicated page on the MSA website provided up-to-date information for swimmers and officials.
- Count down photographs were used involving many Victorian clubs via social media and also the regular MSV/MSA e-News to maintain and grow momentum for the event.
- A Count-Down clock was established on the main MSA web-page to keep the focus on the 2016 Nationals.



Sponsors:

MSV, through the hard work of Sonia Halsvik (Malvern Marlins), was able to secure a government grant to help cover the costs of facilities hire. Additionally, a large number of sponsors were able to give us discounts on their goods or in-kind support.

Sponsors included:

- Vorgee
- TENA
- SBR body products
- BSSound
- Evo Sportwear
- One Stop Press
- Cousins Tours and Travel
- Swimming Victoria
- Patrick Dance Studios
- Kez's Kitchen.
- Powershop
- Ethical Investment Services (EIS)
- IOOF
- Keep Cup
- Sports Environmental Alliance (SEA).

Marketing and Social Report (Cont.)

Opening ceremony:

This year the Committee wanted to put on an opening ceremony that was quite different from previous National opening ceremonies. It was also a chance to thank our sponsors, Branch and National Life members and other special guests with a special VIP area for them and have catering provided by one of our sponsors (Kez's Kitchen).

A really special thanks to Todd Patrick (Glamourheads) from Patrick Studios who organized over 70 dancers to be part of the opening ceremony. The theme of the dance number was the 'Boy from Oz' and tied in nicely with the Rio Olympics coming up in August.

We also had over 110 club members represented in the ceremony, taken through a 'lap of honour' of the pool. This really got everyone in the right mood to enjoy themselves while in Melbourne and from the majority of responses, will be remembered for years to come.



Marketing and Social Report (Cont.)

Social Media:

Participants were encouraged to take plenty of photographs and use the event hashtags #MSAnats16 and #MSAnationals2016.

We also had an EAT, PLAY, LOVE stand for swimmers to use for selfies and photographs when picking up their medals.

We could have spent more time in the social media space but unfortunately our volunteer to run social media was unable to attend the first two days of competition. Over the weekend when she was available she was able to do plenty of posting of swimmers and link to the MSA club FaceBook pages.



Marketing and Social Report(Cont.)

The Presentation dinner:

This year the dinner was at an iconic Melbourne restaurant; BlueTrain, situated in the heart of South Bank, overlooking the Yarra River and Flinders Street station.

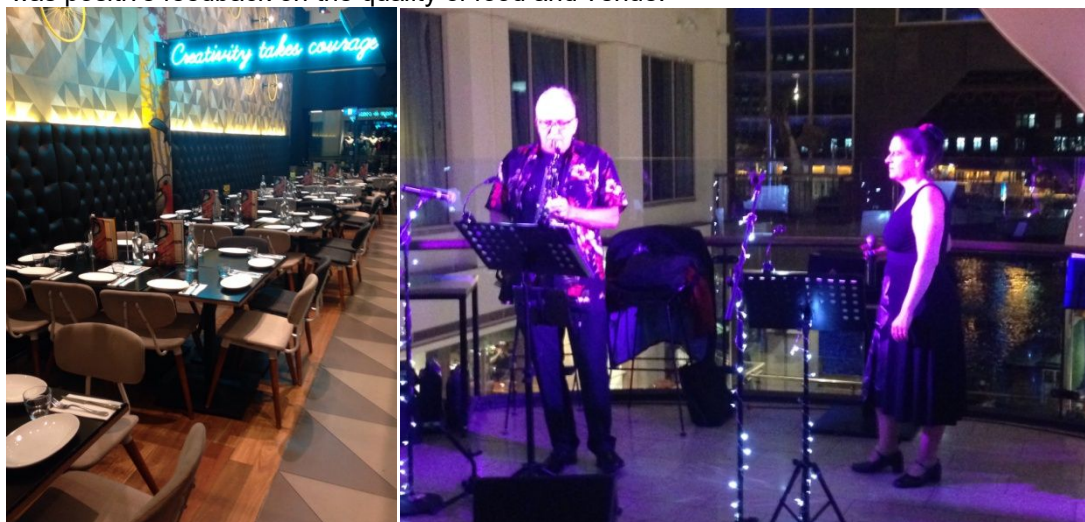
In reviewing numbers attending in previous years Nationals and the potential problems we could incur, the Committee decided to limit the dinner to 200 guests. This limitation was advertised early in the process and repeated through-out as bookings were quickly taken up. In particular, we ensured that participants were able to book their dinner ticket before having to enter any events. This worked well and we had a sellout.

We were able to keep the price reasonable at the same level as the 2015 Nationals and provide pre-dinner music and a DJ after the meal.

With the layout of the restaurant, the presentations were held first in the 'public' area outside the restaurant with a complimentary glass of wine or beer with canapés.

This approach worked well, with participants able to mingle and chat or dance.

Overall there was positive feedback on the quality of food and venue.



Technical Sub-Committee Report

Timelines and a WBS (work breakdown schedule) were invaluable in keeping track of tasks in the lead up months to this event.

The technical sub-committee comprised of Neil Mitchell, John Marshall, Jane Monk, Calvin I, and Anton Shapiro. Calvin and Anton, were from Deakin University studying in the Sports Management faculty. They used this experience as a placement for their studies in Sports Management and Coaching.

This sub-committee naturally divided into

- i) technical officials and
- ii) volunteer portfolios; with Jane Monk becoming the volunteer coordinator. A separate report has been prepared for the volunteer aspect of this Meet.

A trained team of volunteer timekeepers - from North Geelong Secondary College and SEDA meant that for the first two days we did not need to call for swimmer volunteers. From late Fri, through Sat and Sun there was a backbone of volunteer timekeepers who were supplemented with volunteers from the stands. This worked well as it ensured sufficient number of timekeepers for each lane.

The presence of volunteer timekeepers for the 800 metres event meant that, on Friday morning, we had over 60 timekeepers covering the 20 lanes at any one time for over 4 hours! This allowed this challenging event to proceed very smoothly with the use of manual rather than electronic timing.

Yellow Hi-Vis vests were provided for timekeepers and Orange vests were provided for the Chief and Assistant Chief timekeepers. This worked well and drew positive responses from event Referees.

45 Technical officials from all States and Territories worked well together. Special mention to John Marshall who drafted and reviewed rosters for the pool deck officials. It was necessary to remind officials that they needed to stay in their specific roles without supervising other areas – especially during the 200 Butterfly when, in an effort to gain time, the first two heats were collapsed. Unfortunately, two officials gave incorrect directions to the AOE operator and this resulted in a loss of time rather than gaining time. This situation was instrumental in the Meet Director having to make the decision (due to venue time constraints) to move the next event (Event 10 – 200 Mixed medley Relay) to the Saturday morning session of the program. Correcting the effects of the changes made by these officials also gave the recorders several hours of extra work the next day.

Sharing the role of Meet Referee and rotating pool deck officials was a great help and maintained focus and positive energy on long days. Communication with the recording team (prior to and during the event) was positive.

Morning briefings generally took place in the marshalling room to cater for the large number of people and to relieve any pressure on the catering crew in the official's room.

The decision not to stop the meet and have a common lunchbreak, seemed to work well as the momentum and pace of the meet was maintained. Officials and volunteers were then able to have more than one substantial break each day. This also allowed each day's session to finish within the projected time.

The marshalling room ran smoothly and was a key component in the fact that on three of the four days competition finished ahead of the predicted time. One of the changes to the Marshalling process which was introduced and trialed in the previous 12mths was to have swimmers know their lane and heat before entering the marshalling room and then taking their seat without waiting for them name to be called or ticked off. Swimmer could confirm detail either from their lanyard or from the large print program on the wall outside the Marshalling room. This enabled the Marshalling team to focus on the few who needed assistance with this process.

Technical Sub-Committee Report(Cont.)

Catering for officials and volunteers was a mammoth task but was ably handled by Jan Williams and her team of volunteers.

Registration, information and medal presentation desks ran smoothly and were well supervised by Lee Chaplin and Jeanette Holowiuk.

While warm up pool signage was used on all days, the supervision of the crowded warm up / swim down facilities could have been more consistent - with lane signage being changed to reflect the events for that day. Having only four short warm up / swim down lanes led to a crowded and busy pool.

All equipment generally ran well. There were no issues with stopwatches or lap counters. AOE timing was good. Several touch pads were replaced during the meet and lane ropes needed to be tightened on several occasions. Starting equipment ran out of power on two occasions.

Poolside matting was an ongoing OH&S concern. The use of double sided tape underneath and "gaffer" tape on joins was helpful. The matting needed to be continually monitored throughout the meet with major areas of concern being the mid and end points of the mat behind the timekeeper chairs at the start end of the pool and the matting at the entry to the marshalling room.

DQ Report

There were 67 disqualifications for the Meet, these included:

Stroke	Starts	Stroke	Turn	Finishes	DNF
Backstroke	1		4	3	
Breaststroke	3	7		3	
Butterfly	1	3		1	
Freestyle	8		1	1	2
Indiv. Med		2	3		1

Relays	Starts	Changes	Stroke	Finishes	Other
Medley	2	4	8		1
Freestyle	1	4			1

Protests:

There were 7 protests lodged - as well as two requests for clarification of recording details. Of these seven, 2 recording errors were corrected and the protest was allowed. 5 protests regarding official decisions were disallowed – 3 questioned judgements that were correct, 1 was disallowed due to lateness of submission and 1 was submitted where a decision had not been made (hence a protest was irrelevant).

Several protests had the appearance of people "trying their luck".

I would suggest that a fee be attached to submitting protests and that there be a clear delineation between clarifying the details of a DQ and submitting a Protest.

Volunteers Sub-Committee Report

When the committee reviewed a number of recent National Championships, it was recognized that obtaining and maintaining volunteers to cover all aspects of running the meet was problematic. From experience, we knew that technical officials who swam at the Nationals offered their services during the meet. The more difficult area for maintaining volunteers were for the myriad of other activities needed to keep the meet running smoothly. The committee recognized that traditionally, timekeeping was a problem area and that attempting to draw timekeepers from amongst the swimmers impacted upon availability and interrupted the enjoyment of swimmers in participating in the competition.

Therefore, the committee made a concerted effort to 'find' volunteers who were not likely to be competing at the Nationals. This effort was a huge success.

154 Volunteers including:

- 45 Technical Officials
- 13 Volunteers from SEDA
- 45 Volunteers from Nth Geelong Secondary College
- 40 Volunteers drawn from the MSA community or the public via ads on
 - the MSA website;
 - SportsPeople;
 - Volunteer Victoria; and
 - Seek Volunteer

Volunteers fulfilled the following roles:

- Technical Officials
 - Pool Deck Official
 - Marshalling
 - AOE Room
 - Chief Timekeeping
- General Volunteers
 - Swimmers Event Registration/Merchandise
 - Information
 - Medals
 - Catering
 - Property Management of Masters Swimming Equipment
 - Volunteer Support
 - Sustainability Management and Metrics
 - Warm Up Pool Supervision
 - Runners for the AOE team
 - OHS in conjunction with MSAC

Aspects of Volunteer Management:

- Use of the 'Your Volunteers'* website to register interests and availability
- Regular emails to Volunteers regarding rosters and other relevant info.
- Development and use of a Volunteer Handbook and the provision of a short on-line quiz to train volunteers.
- Use of whiteboard sign-in sheets on a daily basis.
- Welcome kits for all volunteers with various items dependent on number of shifts and roles.
- Team Leaders who were responsible for ensuring their team had adequate breaks including a lunch break.
- Volunteer support team who facilitated movement of volunteers to teams of greatest need throughout the four days of the Championships.
- Certificate of Appreciation sent to all Volunteers
- Name tags (on lanyards) provided to all Volunteers
- Lunch, plus morning / afternoon tea snacks provided

Volunteers Sub-Committee Report(Cont.)

As part of the sustainability approach to these Championships, the underlying focus was to reduce the amount of paper we generated and thus the committee looked to technology solutions to facilitate the collection of volunteer information, which would provide a common 'view' by all team leaders and feedback to the individual volunteer as to what function/tasks they had been allocated to and on what days.

The 'Your Volunteers' facility had both advantages and disadvantages:

- **Advantages:**
 - Volunteers entered their own information (Contact, interests, availability) which was easily accessible by the Volunteer Coordinator and downloadable into Excel.
 - Volunteers could change their availability on the website
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Not all volunteers found it easy to use and hence information was patchy and often unreliable.
 - The coordinator was not advised when a volunteer changed their availability which made it time consuming when amending rosters. This could be due to using the basic (free) version of 'Your Volunteers'
 - Due to either using the 'free' version of 'Your Volunteers' and/or the lack of skills of the coordinator, preparing the roster created some challenges as the shifts did not always align with the reality of the meet.
 - Many volunteers were not able to access the final roster and hence a decision was made to convert the final roster to an excel spreadsheet and email it to volunteers.

Recommendations:

- Either register for a premium version (paid) of 'Your Volunteers', with extensive testing first or use Excel forms and emails and / or Google docs for rostering.
- Pursue a volunteer workforce from beyond the MSA community as swimmers can't (and shouldn't be) relied on to cover the volunteer requirements. By not relying on swimmers for the volunteer roles, when swimmers were asked to assist; they were willing.
- Continue to use and update the Volunteer Handbook to ensure the Convening Committee meets each legal requirements.

*After a considerable search, we chose the 'free' version of a web based volunteer registration and management system called 'Your Volunteers'.



NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2016 MELBOURNE

Final Report

Financial Report