

## **Bill Stewart**

1930 - 2016

Years Active 1989 - 2010

Bill was a member of Hobart Dolphins and the MST Branch Safety Officer 1991 -2009, the first person to hold the position.



Bill's love of the water and swimming started at an early age with much of his swimming in local rivers.

After completing his schooling Bill's parents were keen for him to do his apprenticeship in marine engineering, which meant leaving home to live with extended family in Hobart, later moving to the YMCA where his love of sports became a big part of his life.

As a late teenager Bill also joined the crew of the Wanderer to take part in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

After completing 4 years of his marine engineering apprenticeship, he was encouraged by a friend to join him as a Physical Education Teacher. After much consideration Bill applied and was successful, and an amazing career followed. His teaching took him to all parts of Tasmania including Queenstown and then to the Huon as an itinerant for all the Huon schools. He was in Strahan for a fortnight to teach the first Learn to Swim Program at the school.

Once while swimming from a jetty, Bill dived into rescue a young boy in distress. The boy was unconscious, and he applied CPR for 20 minutes. This increased his passion for water safety, and he was later presented with a Commonwealth Award at the Grand Chancellor for his contributions to water safety.

Bill was a strong swimmer and surf life saver. During the 1956 Olympics, it was decided to include surf lifesaving as an introductory sport and Bill was selected in the Australian Team as well as being a leader at the international Lifesaving Championships.

Bill also had a passion for diving ranging from catching crayfish, building artificial reefs and exploring the coast of Tasmania and its many underwater wrecks, such as the Katherine Shearer and The SS Nord at Fortescue. This led him to becoming a fully certified Diving Instructor.

In 1964, Bill chose to enter University studies and was successful in obtaining his Diploma of Physical Education and his Bachelor of Arts Degree, whilst continuing his teaching in the Huon schools.

In 1966, Bill transferred to Taroona HS and during lunch hours advanced swimming was conducted at the Taroona Beach



During the 80s and 90s Bill was chosen to represent Tasmania in the forming of an Australian-wide Learn to Swim Campaign which was to be known as AustSwim.

Through Bill, the Education Department soon became aware that there was a need for the state to play a major role in water safety and he was approached to form a division of water safety, which included Water Police, Hydro, Inland fisheries and salmon breeding fisheries. During this time, he won an award for Innovative Design for Wader Safety.

He joined the Hobart Masters Swimming Club, and this became a big part of his life with weekly swims and seasonal championships. At the age of 70 and again at 72, he swam the Trans Derwent during the Hobart Regatta. At the completion of the event when he was 72, a photo was taken for the Mercury newspaper featuring him as the oldest competitor together with the youngest competitor.

During 1995, the National Safety Committee was also based in Tasmania with Bill Stewart, Frank Meumann and Pauline Samson as members. The Committee was responsible for the development and production of the National Safety Policy to be implemented in each Branch.

In 1996, the completed National Safety Policy was endorsed by the National Board and the NSP came into effect in January 1997. It was to be a resource for the swimmers and administrators and would be at the forefront of what could be achieved within a sports organisation.

In 1997, a re-write of the Minimum Medical Standards for the conduct of swim meets and open-water swims, as part of the AUSSI Safety Policy, was completed.

Bill was a regular participant in the National Aerobics program, swimming freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke.

He also held 16 MST records from 1989 to 1996 and won the Swimmer of the Meet Award in 1993 (the Royce Bracken Award).