

## Carol Davis (now Carol Dawson)


Carol Davis was a novice when she joined at a time when almost all members of A.U.S.S.I. (the Australian Union of Senior Swimmers International) were long time swimmers. Carol had no swimming background at all, her interests were musical theatre and a little social tennis. However, when Como Ladies Amateur Swimming Club offered free “Learn to Swim” lessons to local playgroups, Carol took her daughters along and joined their ranks. Once a year they swam with a nearby group, the Cronulla Ladies Club, where she met Beryl Stenhouse in the early 1970’s.



In 1976 members of both clubs attended a swim meet held at Cronulla North Surf Life Saving Club’s Pool that was being run for A.U.S.S.I. The night was lots of fun, so when it was suggested some of the ladies attend an A.U.S.S.I. National Swim at Harbord Diggers Club, Carol attended, swimming the 25m and 50m freestyle. In 1977 she swam at the National Swim again, but this time up to and including the 400 metres Freestyle.

Carol was a founding member of Cronulla Sutherland AUSSI Club when it formed in 1978. At the invitation of Gary Stutsel, Carol attended a meeting for NSW and ended up as the Publicity Officer for A.U.S.S.I.-NSW. In July 1977 Carol was co-opted to the A.U.S.S.I. National Committee as Publicity Officer and this role was confirmed in the following year (1978) at the Annual General Meeting in Melbourne, where Carol was elected to the National Executive as Publicity Officer. For the next eight years she played a very active role as Publicity Officer and as a member of the National Executive team.

Carol had assisted Gary Stutsel, the then National Secretary, with compiling and editing the A.U.S.S.I. Yearbook in 1978. In 1979 she took on these jobs by herself, believing fervently that the organisation needed its own journal. (Remember back then, there was no Social Media and people did not own PCs or have personal email accounts). Carol encountered many problems, especially regarding covering expenses, however in 1980 A.A.S. (for A.U.S.S.I. Adult Swimming) became a journal published four times a year with a nominal price of \$1.50 per issue. Through Carol’s initiative, personality and persuasiveness the content flowed in, and the presentation was continually improved. The magazine was an organ of communication between the National Body and the then State Branches, but it also allowed a forum for questions from members far and wide. Questions were answered by specialists such as Kay Cox, Des McCormick and Helen Rees which was to the benefit all readers. The magazine was such a success that the National Council (consisting of state representatives and the national executive) voted to include an automatic subscription as part of every members subscription in 1981. This helped to minimise the “them and us mind set “that was separating club members from their state body and from the national body.



The stated aims of the magazine were:

- To inform members (swimmers) of all activities
- To publish items on exercise, swim training programmes and techniques, and diet
- To act as a forum for the exchange of opinions and ideas.

Some of the ideas put forward at this time were that the membership age be dropped from 25 to 20 or even 18. Neither of these suggestions were accepted until later due to the influence of FINA, the Australian Swimming Union and the then state amateur associations.

Carol laid the groundwork for the next iteration of AUSSI Adult Swimming. Carol edited A.A.S. magazine for a total of five years until her resignation in 1984 to take up full time employment. Carol continued as Editor for Swimming in Australia as an after work role.

Carol did much to gain sponsorship support for A.U.S.S.I. due to her efforts and smiling manner that the long and loyal support of City Mutual Insurances came to A.U.S.S.I. Her original efforts saw AUSSI adopt the City Mutual/ASU awards swim badges for swims from 200m up as encouragement to new swimmers. She followed this up by obtaining their sponsorship for the AUSSI award badges for swims from 400m to 5000m that were eventually abandoned in favour of the National Aerobics Program that is now the Vorgee Endurance 1000 program. Carol also obtained City Mutual funding to produce the 1980 promotional film that ran on an endless loop for use in shopping centres and at expos.

Carol also negotiated City Mutual sponsorship that enabled the finance and support needed for AUSSI to conduct of the 1981 and 1983 Pan Pacific international swim meets. City Mutual were also the major sponsors supported by Speedo and Gestetner for several National Swims and the City of Sydney Relay Championships that raised money for charity by swimming AUSSI members with business house's teams in relay events at the North Sydney pool.

In 1982 Carol engineered the offer of space at City Mutual's Sutherland offices for an office that was shared between NSW and National. Carol was the Office administrator from 1982 till the end of 1984.

At the Pan Pacific Meets in 1981 and 1983 Carol was responsible for Publicity plus the Announcing and Overseas Hospitality. At the meeting to form Masters Swimming International (M.S.I.) she was elected Secretary/Treasurer and with Ian Butterworth of New Zealand lobbied Gary Stutsel into the role of President of MSI, a position he went on to hold through nine elections for 13 years. In the following year, 1984, at the Christchurch, New Zealand International Meet Carol was re-elected as Secretary when the roles of Secretary and Treasurer were split. She held this office until 1986.

In 1987 Carol re-joined the National Executive, so in 1988 when Brisbane was hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Masters Championships, Gary suggested Carol go to Brisbane to see if she could assist them with publicity. Given her connections with Wayne Smith of the Brisbane Courier Mail, great publicity was generated by organising a Business Houses'



Relay between the Courier Mail, Brisbane City Council and a group of recently returned young Olympians. During the World Championships Carol handled media releases and assisted in producing the meet newsletter. In the late 1990s/2000 she edited the MSNSW magazine Splash. Carol was an MSA accredited official and refereed at many meets in NSW.

Carol's was an unsung hero of the early years of Masters Swimming and her outstanding contribution to the establishment and growth of the organisation for more than four decades Membership of Masters Swimming Australia.