

Bess Barrie

1915 – 2011

Years active 1975-1994

World Records 3 LCM

National Records 21 SCM, 16 LCM

NSW State Records 16 LCM



Bess had been active in sport for many years and from 1924-1930, she was swimming and track champion at Woodcourt College, Dulwich, NSW. She started swimming again when her children started swimming training and swam with the Spit Women's Club and later with Randwick and Coogee Ladies Club before joining Maroubra Seals. She also became a swimming teacher.

Her 1st master's competition was at Heffron Park in March 1974, and she went on to compete for the next 20 years with her husband Doug as her coach. Her 50m breaststroke time was the best recorded in the world at that time.

Bess collected a lot of medals along the way (mostly gold).

At one of her last competitions, at the 1994 World Masters Games in Brisbane, aged 79, Bess won the 50, 100 and 200m breaststroke, and the 50m butterfly.

In 1995, she received the Hastings Council Australia Day sportsperson of the year award for 20 years of achievements in the pool. In 1996, she received the NSW Premier's Award for contributions to her community and the people of NSW.

A keen and skilful knitter - a craft she honed during the war - Bess continued to knit squares for others to sew into blankets for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, even as her eyesight failed.