

# MARION MARLINS MASTERS SWIMMING CLUB INC

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2020

### Summary

Your club, now in its 40<sup>th</sup> year, faced a very new challenge in 2020 but still enjoyed another successful year. All of our activities (training, social, fund raising) were impacted to some degree by the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant additional work for the Committee, in particular the Acting Secretary, Safety Officer, Coaching Coordinator and coaches to ensure that we were able to return safely to training when we were permitted to do so. As a testament to their efforts, we were one of the first Masters swim clubs to return to training in late June. Despite some uncertainty going forward your Committee and volunteers will continue to work hard to meet the fitness, training and competition needs of members. Some of the key accomplishments in 2020 were as follows:

- Maintained a strong balance sheet with expenses (primarily coaching and lane hire) being met by the club's share of the registration fee, training tickets, our open water swim and fund-raising events.
- Despite a drop in membership, welcomed 15 new members to the club during the year.
- Hosted a successful SA State Masters Open Water Swimming Championships in 2020, raising \$2,293. (And an even more successful 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event this year at a new venue, Somerton SLSC, attracting record entries and raising \$3,885).
- Some excellent results achieved by the club and by individuals in pool and open water competitions.
- Hosted a number of well attended social functions and fund-raising events (BBQs)

### Committee:

A club like ours cannot function and continue to prosper without the efforts of its Committee members, all of whom are volunteers. I personally would like to thank the Committee for their support and hard work throughout the year-it been another strong team effort.

Key positions on our Executive were filled by Max Yates and Ace Lewis as Treasurers, Heather Carbone as Nominations Officer/Recorder/Registrar, Tony Fowler as Safety Officer and me as Acting Secretary. Attempts to fill the roles of Vice President, Secretary and Social Media/Newsletter Coordinator during the year were unsuccessful and I undertook to fill these additional roles as best as I could. I also took on the role of OWS Coordinator for the 2020 event.

We were fortunate to have the services of two Treasurers in 2020. **Max Yates** re-joined the Committee in 2020 after a short absence and assumed the position of Treasurer at last year's AGM. He ensured that our accounts were in order, paying invoices and preparing monthly financial

summaries. We appreciated his commitment and thank him for his contribution. Unfortunately, personal matters intervened, and he had to resign from the position in late November.

We were extremely fortunate that **Ace Lewis** was then able to assume the role! With his background in banking he has done an excellent job stream- lining the club's accounts and developing a spreadsheet that allows attendance and costs (coaches and lane hire) to be simply and accurately recorded. Our banking arrangements have also been updated.

**Heather Carbone** is an extremely valuable member of our club, serving as both a coach and handling multiple roles as member of the Committee and Executive team. She has been our Registrar for many years, responsible for processing all new member registrations and maintains and updates the Club Records. In October Heather took on the role of Coaching Coordinator after Anki Schwedat's move interstate. She is also extremely generous of her time assisting with our fund- raising events, in particular the Bunnings BBQ.

**Tony Fowler** joined the Committee last year and assumed the important role of Safety Officer. He developed COVID Safety plans for each of the pools that allowed us to return safely to training.

**Ben Warr**, joined the Committee in late 2018, was the club's Safety and Public Relations Officer in 2019. In 2020 he took on the especially important role of Open Water Swim Coordinator, handling the shift to a new venue, the event preparation and compliance work, and organising and managing activities on the day. A job very well done. Ben also assisted with our fund- raising efforts.

**Gavin Rowell** and **Deborah Wareing** share the Captaincy role. Gavin prepared a report entitled "The Swimming Competition – What's it all about?" to help first time competitors prepare for and enjoy their first competition. He also initiated a Winter Pool Series Competition (delayed to the start of the Summer Pool Series due to COVID) which we hope will encourage our members to participate in swim meets. Deb has led by example with her dedication to training and competition throughout the year and works hard, with Gavin, organising our relay teams and assisting with other club activities.

**Jane Sutton**, one of our Life Members and long- time Committee Member, was our Social Convenor and helped with planning, organising and catering for the club's successful social events and fund - raising sausage sizzles. **Helen Walsh** assisted by preparing flyers for these events and our open water swim. Thanks ladies!

**Robyn Brown** continues to assist the club in many ways as a General Committee member. She has been recording the Minutes at our Committee meetings, volunteered at our OWS and fund- raising events and Xmas party and ordered the club beanie caps. I value her input on key decisions facing the club.

**Brenda Mangelsdorf**, our past Treasurer, was a General Committee member and assisted with sponsorship for this year's open water swim, the Bunnings BBQ and other club activities. After three years on the Committee, she has decided not to renominate for 2021. Thanks for your efforts Brenda!

**Ikaeho Osobase** is our Webmaster and despite a busy work and home life has been invaluable to the club updating the web site and ensuring information remains current for our members.

**Stephen Carthew** is our Member Protection Officer, an essential role mandated by the Branch and thankfully one that did not require any interventions on his part last year! Stephen has assisted as in previous years in securing sponsors for our open water swim.

**Meredith Taylor**, a long-time member of the club, took on the role of Club Historian during the year and has made a start on preparing a Club History report. This has involved scanning a large number of photos dating from the 1980s onward. Some of these have been posted on Facebook, rekindling fond memories from our older members.

**Jan Langan** took a lead role in organising a very successful fund-raising BBQ at Bunnings in December, ably assisted by Brenda Cook, Jane Sutton and Heather Carbone. Thanks ladies!

**Garth Hayter** is always willing to assist the club in a volunteer role. He helped mentor Ben in the OWS Coordinator's role and assisted on the day of the event. No one does the Swimmers' Briefing better! He has also led the Team of Marlins who assist with registrations on the day at the 2020 Jetty to Jetty swim.

Apart from the Committee many of our members have helped with our club's social and fund-raising activities and Branch open water swims in the past year. In no specific order thanks to: Glenda Cook, Michael Perkins, Jane Horgan, Ruth Henty, George Crowder, Nola Sutton, Claire Lenehan, Gayle Noolan, Sue Tennant, John Van Loggem, Ruth Henty, Tony Fowler, Max Yates, Charlie Roberts, Lindsay Martin, Jan Langan, Andrea Kurauskas, David Lovering, Sue Tennant, Maryanne Heffernan, Anki Schwedat, Sharyn Roach Anleu, Judy Vowles, Nicolla Cowan, Mark Trenwith and Neil Anderson (with sincere apologies to anyone I've missed!)

On behalf of the club, I would like to thank all our members for their efforts.

### **Membership:**

In order to support our clubs' activities, it is important that we maintain or ideally increase our membership base. It is equally important that we continue to provide programs that appeal to our members so that participation in our activities, particularly our training sessions, is maintained.

At YE 2020 we had 92 financial members, down from 109 at YE 2019. The 2019 membership was boosted by a very successful free Come and Try program but unfortunately only a small number of these new members renewed their membership in 2020. Membership has been impacted by moves interstate, a few transfers (disappointingly) to other local clubs and of course COVID-19 which affected most clubs in Australia.

As of today, we have 80 members. Our year end membership target (2018-21 Strategic Plan) remains 100 members so hopefully we can build back toward this number later in the year. We are looking at ways to appeal to younger swimmers with Flinders University, which has no pool, being one possible target. The Committee will be tasked with identifying ways to attract and retain new members and we will continue to offer incentives to members to assist us with this.

### **Coaching and Training Sessions:**

Training sessions will always be our main club activity and in 2020 we continued to host five sessions per week at the Marion Outdoor Pool, Westminster School and SAALC. Our return to SAALC for our

week- day morning sessions proved to be popular, and we will be using this facility again in the upcoming Winter season. Our program was obviously impacted by pool closures due to the COVID pandemic with training cancelled for a three- month period between 23 March and 29 June and between 17 November and 1 December. During these periods, which were relatively short compared to other States, many of our members maintained their fitness by joining ocean swimming groups at Brighton and Seacliff.

Our club has been very fortunate over many years to have as many as five experienced and accredited coaches (club members) available to oversee our training programs. However, that situation did change in 2020. In April, **Robyn Brown**, our Senior (Head) Coach for the past 20 years announced her retirement from active coaching. An end to an era! We are all indebted to Robyn for coaching and managing our training programs over this period; her sessions were always well structured, varied, challenging, and rewarding (if we survived!). We gathered to honour Robyn at a special breakfast at Café Finniss on 4 July and reminisce about the club and her contributions.

In late May we farewelled **Jen Sturm** who moved to the Gold Coast with her partner and club member **Simon Mulligan**. Jen, an outstanding triathlete, had conducted many of our evening sessions in the past few years.

Following Robyn's retirement **Änki Schwedat** kindly agreed to take on the Coaching Coordinator's role, effective from late June when training resumed. Apart from Änki the coaching roster then included **Heather Carbone** and **Leila Nazimi** with **Meredith Ryan** available in "emergencies". Also joining us for the first time was **Frank Lindsay**. His sessions (currently Thursday evening and Saturday morning) have been very well received by members and this has boosted attendance.

Unfortunately, this arrangement was short lived with Änki moving to Perth with her partner in mid-October. Heather kindly agreed to step up and take on the role of Coordinator at this time (on top of her other roles) and has done a great job managing the roster and meeting regularly with our coaches. With the "loss" of three of our coaches in 2020 we have been very fortunate in being able to secure the services of experienced coaches from other clubs. In addition to Leila and Frank we welcomed **Sandy Bennett** in mid- January who now handles the Monday morning session. However, it is in the long- term interests of the club that we encourage our members to become qualified coaches and the club will provide any financial support that may be required.

Despite the drop in membership and COVID restrictions attendance at training sessions in 2020 was down only marginally compared to 2019. A couple of initiatives were undertaken which have helped improve attendance. In October we held a Swim Ticket Sale, which offered extra free tickets when purchasing a book of ten. A second initiative, introduced early this year, allowed members to use 1- hour session tickets to swim up to an hour in the 1.5 hour sessions. This provided greater flexibility and improved attendance at these sessions. Further initiatives will be considered later this year.

### **Open Water Swim:**

Our club has been organising an open water swim under various formats and at a number of different venues since 1981. For the last ten years we have been proud to host the SA State Open Water Swim Championships, one of the premier events in the Channel Nine Open Water Swim Series. It is our main fund- raising activity and in 2020 it raised \$2,293 for the club (and \$3,885 this

year). The event has attracted an average of 150 competitors and although attendance (and profit) was down in 2020 we received excellent support and participation from our own members. At late notice I assumed the role of Open Water Coordinator for the 2020 event but was ably assisted by a great team!

Although a full summary of this years event will be included in the 2021 AGM report it would be remiss not to mention the very successful Championships we held at Somerton SLSC on 17 January. We had a record equalling number of entries (162), including 37 Marlins (great effort!), and we successfully defended the Team trophy. A big thanks to Ben Warr who did an outstanding job organising the event. Somerton SLSC proved to be an excellent venue and we look forward to working with the club in the years ahead and building on our success.

As always, our open water swim requires a big team effort on the day with beach set-up, registrations, time keeping and presentations- thanks to everyone who provided assistance. With COVID guidelines much more work was required this year. Once again Mike Perkins (Register and Chief Time- Keeper) and Jane Horgan managed the very difficult task of time keeping and preparing results - we only hope they will consider taking on the role for one more year! We are known for the generous prizes we offer so thanks to Stephen Carthew, Jane Sutton, Ben Warr and Brenda Mangelsdorf for their efforts (and of course our sponsors!)

### **Fund Raising:**

To maintain membership and training costs at affordable levels we held fund raising sausage sizzles at Bunnings (Marion) on 19 January and 12 December. As noted by our Treasurer these events were successful, raising over \$1,800 and helping to promote the club. Thanks to all our members who assisted in organising these events and manning the stands. Appreciation is also extended to Bakers Delight at Marion (through member Ron Hardy) for providing loaves of bread for free.

### **Competition:**

Although the 2020 season was impacted by COVID (five meets cancelled between March and August) our members achieved some excellent results individually and for the club in pool and open water swim competitions. At a club level we were Runners-up in both the Short Course State Cup and SC Long Distance meet (Distance Shield Trophy). In open water swim competition, we won the Team trophy for Aggregate points at the 2020 State Masters Championships for the ninth consecutive year (and repeated again earlier this year). Our strong performance at the State Championships, an event we host, is based on the strong participation of our members with 32 competing in the 2020 event and 34 this year.

**Diane Ross** had an outstanding year in the pool, competing in the Women's 85-89 age group. She set 1 National and 15 State records! Others to set State records were **Andrew Stephenson** (5 events), **Judy Vowles** (1 event), **Ron Hardie** (1 event) and **Ace Lewis** (1 event). Seven of our members achieved FINA World Top Ten rankings in 2020: **Maryanne Heffernan** (12 events), **Diane Ross** (7 events), **Deb Wareing** (3 events), **Barb Pearce** (2 events); **Ian Young** (11 events) and **Andrew Stephenson** (1 event); The relay teams of **Maryanne Heffernan, Nicola Cowan, Judy Vowles, Deb Wareing** and **Deb Wareing, Maryanne Heffernan, Ian Young, Ron Hardie** also achieved a Top Ten ranking. Congratulations all!

Due to meet cancellations the annual Interclub competition for individual and club honours was not held in 2020. Medallists for the 2019-20 Summer Pool Series were **Nicola Cowan** (1<sup>st</sup>, W30-34), **Maryanne Heffernan** (1<sup>st</sup>, W60-64), **Deb Wareing** (2<sup>nd</sup>, W 60-64), **Barb Pearce** (1<sup>st</sup>, W80-84), **Michael Gaibinger** (1<sup>st</sup>, M40-44), **Ace Lewis** (2<sup>nd</sup>, M40-44), **Gavin Rowell** (1<sup>st</sup>, M50-54) and **Ian Young** (2<sup>nd</sup>, M65-69). In addition to these medallists **Ron Hardie**, **Ben Warr**, **Dean Shard**, **George Crowder** and **Andrew Smith** were regular competitors and achieved some excellent results, including many PBs.

More of our members who compete do so in the ocean rather than the pool and some excellent results were achieved in Channel Nine Ocean Swim Series events. At the 2020 Jetty to Jetty, the biggest event, podium finishes were achieved by **Deb Wareing** (2<sup>nd</sup>, W60-64), **Barb Pearce** (1<sup>st</sup> W80-84), **Charlie Roberts** (3<sup>rd</sup>, M50-54) and **Ian Young** (1<sup>st</sup>, 65-69). At the 2020 Masters State Championships there were many age group medallists amongst our members. In overall results podium finishes in the 1km event were achieved by **Maryanne Heffernan** (3<sup>rd</sup>) in the Women and **Ian Young** (2<sup>nd</sup>) and **Ben Warr** (3<sup>rd</sup>) in the Men while in the 3km event **Simon Mulligan** placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Lindsay Martin** and **Charlie Roberts** received embroidered towels for completing all the swims in the 2019-20 series.

Congratulations also to **David Lovering** on completing 3 million meters in the Vorgee Million Meters program and **Barb Pearce** who participated in and completed all the distance swims in the Bunbury Postal Swim competition.

Apart from swimming competitions many of our members competed in and excelled in related sports, using our club training sessions in their preparation. Masters Surf Life Saving events were popular with **Robyn Brown**, **Deb Wareing**, **Heather Carbone**, **Helen Walsh**, **Ruth Henty**, **Dennis Hay**, **Ben Warr** and **Tony Fowler**.

### **Social:**

A "Return to Marion Outdoor Pool" brekkie was held on 10 October at Café Finniss and our annual Xmas Party was held on 12 December at the Marion Outdoor Pool. Both events were well attended; special thanks to Jane and the ladies for organising. As is custom Robyn Brown handed out prizes to some well-deserving club members at the Xmas function. We normally organise a club dinner during the Winter months but were unable to do so in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

On a more informal basis our weekday morning swimmers enjoy coffees after training at Café Finniss in Marion while a number of our Saturday morning group enjoy breakfast at Jetty Rd, Brighton (currently ETC Café). Our evening swimmers are not to be left out and on the first Thursday of the month starting next month they will be heading off to enjoy a curry (or similar) after training.

### **The Year Ahead:**

Consistent with our 2018-21 Strategic Plan and subject to no further restrictions being imposed by COVID-19 this year I consider the following to be the key opportunities and challenges for the club in the year ahead:

- **Values:** Continue to maintain an inclusive training and social program to encourage and support member participation and provide a courteous and welcoming environment. Ensure that swimming is available to members at an affordable cost.
- **Strategic Plan:** needs to be updated later this year and to assist in this process a survey of the membership should be conducted.
- **Membership:** To better support the club's activities we need to increase our YE membership back up to the target of 100 members. To do so we need to attract new members and improve our member retention rate. We should consider conducting a Come and Try program during the Winter season at SAALC and/or Westminster pools.
- **Coaching:** After the "loss" of three of our club coaches in 2020 we must encourage and support members to gain accreditation using the new Online Club Coach course under the mentorship of **Frank Lindsay**.
- **Finance:** Maintain the club's strong financial position by limiting losses associated with pool training sessions, particularly during the winter months, and increase revenue sources by seeking opportunities for sponsorship, fundraising and grants.
- **Committee:** Encourage members to take up Executive positions at the club and Technical or Board positions with the Branch. Ensure that position descriptions are up to date and understood and facilitate handovers in key roles.
- **Competition:** Actively encourage and support members to compete, regardless of ability, in pool and open water swim events and in the process, help develop a strong team spirit.
- **Open Water Swim:** Build on the success of this year's event at Somerton SLSC by improving delivery, promotion (attendance) and considering other initiatives.
- **Stakeholder Relationships:** Maintain and build relationships with other stakeholders including the Branch, other Masters Swim clubs, Aquatic Facilities, Somerton SLSC, Marion, Star Club, State and local government and their agencies (Department of Sport & Recreation) and sponsors. Create a positive awareness in the local community of the Club's activities through marketing, promotion, and other initiatives.
- **Constitution:** Our Constitution, which was prepared in 2011, needs to be modified to better conform with principles propagated by Swimming Australia, Masters Swimming Australia and Australian sporting clubs in general. **George Crowder** is working with **Frank Lindsay** on this with the intention of preparing a new constitution for consideration and approval by members at the March 2022 AGM.

Ian Young  
 President & Acting Secretary, Marion Marlins  
 March 2021