

## 2016 President's Report

This is my final year as President of the Rottneest Channel Swim Association (I will move to the position of immediate past president following the AGM and will continue with the committee for as long as is required). I am extremely proud of the Association's achievements and it's important to acknowledge those who have made things happen.

I joined the RCSA committee in late 2008 and, since that time, have had the pleasure of serving with the following committee members:

<i>Ceri Writer</i>	<i>Richard Atkins</i>	<i>Jon McArdell</i>
<i>John Driscoll</i>	<i>Karen Hegney</i>	<i>Stuart Moran</i>
<i>Kim Leunig</i>	<i>Andrew Rose</i>	<i>Ivan Martinovich</i>
<i>Max Naismith (two times)</i>	<i>Steve Hicks</i>	<i>Hannah Waters</i>
<i>Ray Yong</i>	<i>Stephen O'Keefe</i>	<i>James Back</i>
<i>Richard Verboon</i>	<i>Tim Lefroy</i>	<i>Chris Turner</i>
<i>Shelley Hatton</i>	<i>Rebecca Manley</i>	<i>Shane Cartwright</i>

Each of these people donated their time and expertise to help grow the event and the association. I thank them all.

The Association's work is too much for volunteers only. During the mid-2000s, a decision was made to employ an Executive Officer. Later, workloads meant we had to also employ an Event Assistant. This role was part time and has developed into a full time role. I have had the pleasure of working with:

**Executive Officers:**

- *Matija Franetovich*
- *Stacey Herbertson*
- *Hayley Chandler*
- *Nat Beevis*

**Event Assistants:**

- *Jayne Northover*
- *Jess Duncan*
- *Nat Beevis*
- *Tarlina Martyn*

The Executive Officers and Event Assistants have worked incredibly hard, particularly in the months leading up to event day. Late nights and weekends spent making our event world class is acknowledged (often) by the Committee and I include them to acknowledge their efforts more formally. I've worked with each of our four EOs and four EAs and, as president, worked very closely with Stacey, Hayley, Nat and Tarlina. We have been incredibly fortunate to have recruited fantastic staff who have been dedicated to the Association and the Swim. I thank them all.

Retiring from the committee following our AGM are Tim Lefroy (2012-2016), Rebecca Manley (2012-2016) and Stuart Moran (2013-2016). Our Executive Officer, Hayley Chandler, left us in May after three years in the role. It is impossible to overstate the contributions of Tim (Committee Member and Race Director), Bec (Committee Member, wise legal counsel), Stuart (Financial Controller, commercial negotiator) and Hayley (go to person for just about everything and strategic thinker). We will miss each of them. Fortunately, the Association attracts really good people so I'm very confident that the Swim will continue to evolve and maintain its place as one of the best swimming events anywhere.

## **Now, a few stats, highlights and general information...**

The Association currently has a total of 1,463 members, comprising:

- 1,427 Ordinary members (committee, life and solo)
- 36 associate members

## **Swims we have registered – other than swim day**

We have had a material increase in the number of solo crossings undertaken outside of the event with 47 non-event solo crossings, including 33 from the Port to Pub event and 6 from Andrew Page since January (an absolutely extraordinary achievement!).

## **2016 Karma Resorts Rottneest Channel Swim**

- **Solos** – there were 314 registered; 260 started the event; 253 completed the swim. Just over a 3% decrease in registrants from 2015 and an increase of 11% from 2014.
- **Duos** – there were 189 (378 swimmers) registered and selected to race; 189 (378 swimmers) started the race; 188 (376 swimmers) completed the race.
- **Teams** – there were 413 (1,652 swimmers) registered and selected to race; 412 (1,648 swimmers) started the event; 409 (1,636 swimmers) teams completed the swim.
- **LLCC Teams** – 47 (188 swimmers) registered, 46 (184 swimmers) started the race; 46 (184 swimmers) completed the swim.
- **Overall**, there were 963 registrations (2,532 swimmers) and 896 entrants (2,449 swimmers) who finished the race. This means that 93% of those registered completed the race. Of those solos, duos and teams who started the race, 99% finished the event. This is an increase from 2015 when 92% finished the race. The increase is largely attributed to the conditions.
- **FVSRG/Medivac Stats**
  - 3 swimmers were treated by on-water medical staff
  - Three swimmers were evacuated from the water (two hypothermia; one for sea sickness), none of whom were hospitalised.
  - 46 swimmers received medical support at the finish line. Over 75% of these were for hypothermia.
  - One duo was disqualified for their boat's VHF radio not being turned on and volume up. The skipper of the boat has been excluded from the 2017 and 2018 events for the rule breach. The skipper was then given a further three year ban (exclusion from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 events) for misconduct, after being verbally abusive and aggressive towards RCSA committee and event staff.

## **Champions of the Channel (CoTC)**

The RCSA committee has been working towards growing the event and enhancing the experience for swimmers and in 2016 our new elite “event within the event”, Champions of the Channel, was introduced. Solos, duos and teams left the beach in the first wave at 5.45am. This is another step towards our long term vision of attracting top swimmers nationally and internationally, but maintaining the integrity of the Swim as an important iconic community event. The Champions wave was not included in our overall cap on numbers.

- **Stats**
  - Solos – 29 registered; 29 started the event; 28 completed the swim.
  - Duos – 10 swimmers registered and selected to race; all started and completed the race.
  - Teams – 16 swimmers registered and selected to race; all started and completed the race.
  - Overall, 55 swimmers started and 54 finished the race. This means that 97% of those registered completed the race. Of those solos, duos and teams who started the race, 97% finished the event.

### **Tandem Solos**

With concerning levels of oversubscription, the committee has looked for ways to increase the number of swimmers able to enter. This year we trialled allowing two solo swimmers to share a support boat. 50 solos took up the option, allowing 25 additional spots for duos and teams. Feedback from the post event survey indicated the trial was a success and it will continue for 2017.

### **Festival**

Some other events and activities were introduced on the island this year to help improve the on-island experience for swimmers and crews. We have also sought to expand the weekend activities to include junior swimmers. Eventually we see the weekend becoming more of a Rottneest festival of swimming. On Saturday, the Rottneest Island Chamber of Commerce organised a Kids Zone at Heritage Common and local businesses provided a food village set up in the mall. On Sunday after the swim, Swimming WA ran a successful kids swimming event in Thomson Bay – Champs of the Bay. In 2017 we will try to build on these activities.

### **Boat Safety Sub-Committee**

The Boat Safety Sub-Committee was a great initiative this year, made up of a group of people who collectively have marine safety expertise and event-specific experience. The objective of the sub-committee was: to have our boating rules considered by experts; skipper education to be reviewed and vetted by experts; and to consider anything we could do as an Association to make the event safer. There have been a number of changes as a result of the Boat Safety Sub-committee, including new rules, a support crew info night, no skippers' lanyards and a redesigned safety protocol.

### **New Rules**

Recommended by the Boat Safety Sub-Committee following significant congestion during the 2015 event, the following rules have been implemented:

- Support boats are not allowed to make way astern. They could only put the boat into reverse to stop forward way. This is a clarification of the existing 'no reverse' rule.
- Yachts and 10m+ boats are to leave the race at 18km; are required to have a tender; and are to stay to the extremities of the fleet.
- A 6 knot speed limit in the swim channel.

## Sponsorship

- During the year, Lavan Legal continued its official partnership for a further three years. Lavan Legal has been a sponsor of the event since 2007.

## Personnel

- Committee changes – there were no committee changes during this year, however I would like to thank Tyron Scott for sitting on our Champions of the Channel sub-committee. Tyron was vital in helping us get CoTC up and running.
- Our staffing during the year remained much the same from 2015. As mentioned, our Executive Officer of three years, Hayley Chandler, has left the Association. Our Event Officer, Natalie Beevis, was appointed into the position, and Tarlina Martyn was made a permanent full time employee in her Event Assistant role. We are most fortunate to be able to promote from within the team with two such capable people.

## Other things we've done

- **Rebrand:** The Association underwent a rebrand in 2015, updating the RCSA logo with the 'swimmer' and to help create a synergy between all activities under the RCSA umbrella.
- **New Registration Provider:** In 2015, we moved over to a new global registration provider, Active Network. One of their main features was that swimmer declaration forms were built into the registration system, which made signing them electronically a much simpler process. This new system will also use 'Active Passports', to create a database for swimmers.
- **Support Crew Info Night:** Aimed at first time skippers and support crew, the free info night held in January was designed to: give some insight into what to expect on swim day; tips and tricks for crossings; provide an opportunity to ask questions; and also to have safety checks on boats. Representatives from Fremantle Sailing Club, Fremantle Volunteers Sea Rescue Group and the Department of Transport (Marine Safety) attended, as well as experienced Rotto Swim paddlers and skippers. Over 200 people attended and, as it was so successful, it will feature again in the 2017 calendar.
- **Briefing Video:** with our aim to improve and refresh the metro safety briefing, we had Network Ten produce a special edition of TEN Eyewitness News to deliver the briefing this year. This enabled us to make the video available online for anyone who couldn't attend in person.
- **CoTC Documentary:** the RCSA commissioned a documentary to be made about the inaugural Champions of the Channel event. The documentary named – '*Champions of the Rottnest Channel*', features various swimmers taking part in the elite event, showing their journey in the lead up to the competition and their performance on race day. The video was aired on Channel Ten in March of this year and is now available via our Rottnest Channel Swim YouTube channel.
- **Volunteers:** At the main briefing, we had ~40 people who volunteered their time to help with the briefing. On event day, we had ~40 volunteers at the start line, ~15 volunteers on-water and ~60 volunteers at the finish line. There are also volunteer organisations involved with the event, such as Fremantle Volunteer Sea Group and a number of Surf Lifesaving Clubs. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our community!
- **Committee and Staff Involvement:** Committee and staff also work very hard to ensure a safe and successful event. During the 2016 year, we had 13 committee meetings and a half-day planning session. In addition, meetings were held with various stakeholder organisations. To give you some indication, we have around ~40 stakeholder organisations—many of whom we have almost daily

contact, others confined to a three month window (event time), and some are somewhere in-between. Further, committee members take on various tasks and projects – various sub-committees, drafting discussion papers, ongoing liaison with particular stakeholders, dealing with the association's financials, drafting and reviewing correspondence and external communications.

- **2017 Registrations:** You may have heard recently that we're moving to a first-in, first-served registration system for the 2017 event, thus removing the ballot. The ballot was originally introduced because entries were physically submitted to the RCSA office on paper and it wasn't fair on people that lived further away. As the event has grown, the RCSA has strived to make the registration system as fair as possible, and with the system now being managed online, we're able to move to a system that eliminates the issue of swimmers missing out several years in a row

As you can see, a lot has been happening. The committee seeks to improve the Swim every year and I believe we have generally succeeded in delivering a safe, well organised, and strongly supported event. I hope all members are as proud of it as our committee and staff.

David Corney  
President  
Rottnest Channel Swim Association.