

## 2017 President's Report

This was my first year as President of the Rottneest Channel Swim Association (RCSA), and as I look back after the last 12 months I am extremely proud of the Association's achievements and our continued execution of a world class safe sporting event. On a personal note I would like to thank Natalie and Tarlina for their tremendous passion and commitment they have brought to the RCSA throughout the year. I'd also like to thank my fellow committee members who, even with full time jobs and busy lives, have always be willing to step up when I ask for volunteers to help with the various activities that have happened this year.

### **A few stats, highlights and general information...**

The Association currently has a total of 1,169 members, comprising:

- 1,088 Ordinary members (committee, life and solo)
- 81 associate members

### **Personnel**

- Committee changes – Kirsty Bellombra filled a casual vacancy in August 2016. Stacey Havenstein filled another casual vacancy in June of this year.
- Our staffing during the year remained much the same from 2016. Natalie Beevis is our Executive Officer and Tarlina Martyn was our Event Officer up until 2 weeks ago.
- We now welcome Nic Blackburn to the Association who has replaced Tarlina in the Event Officer role. Nic has joined us on a fixed term contract.

### **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 65 non-event solo crossings, including a remarkable double crossing by legally blind swimmer, Jeremy McClure, 56 from the Port to Pub and 5 from Julie Isbill since the previous AGM.

### **2017 Karma Resorts Rottneest Channel Swim**

- **Solos** – there were 336 registered; 272 started the event; 229 completed the swim. Just over a 7% increase in registrants from 2016 and an increase of 3% from 2015.
- **Duos** – there were 190 (380 swimmers) registered to race; 177 (354 swimmers) started the race; 171 (342 swimmers) completed the race.
- **Teams** – there were 419 (1,676 swimmers) registered to race; 413 (1,652 swimmers) started the event; 395 (1,580 swimmers) teams completed the swim.
- **Lavan Legal Charity Challenge (LLCC) Teams** – 31 (124 swimmers) registered, 31 (124 swimmers) started the race; 30 (120 swimmers) completed the swim.
- **Overall** - there were 976 registrations (2,516 swimmers) and 825 entrants (2,271 swimmers) who finished the race. This means that 84% of those registered completed the race. Of those solos, duos and teams who started the race, 92% finished the event. This is a decrease from 2016 when 99% finished the race. The decrease is largely attributed to the conditions.

- **FVSRG/Medivac Stats**

- 13 swimmers were treated by on-water medical staff.
- One swimmer was evacuated from the water and taken to hospital for Swimming Induced Pulmonary Edema – SIPE. Thankfully she has had a full recovery.
- 61 swimmers received medical support at the finish line. Over 49% of these were for hypothermia and 90% of which were solo swimmers. There was also a significant increase in nausea & vomiting cases (10 compared to 4 in 2016).
- One duo was disqualified for having a swimmer and paddler go beyond the 1500m mark without their support boat.

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

Now in its second year, our elite event, Champions of the Channel, attracted a significant amount of interest from national and international swimmers, particularly solos. Seeking advice from Swimming WA, the RCSA reviewed the Champions qualifying times and reduced male solos by 10 minutes. Solos, duos and teams again left the beach in the first wave at 5.45am with the first team arriving exactly 4.00 hours later at the finish line. The Champions wave was not included in our overall cap on numbers.

- **Stats**

- Solos – 33 registered; 33 started the event; 30 completed the swim.
- Duos – 14 swimmers registered and selected to race; all started and completed the race.
- Teams – 12 swimmers (3 teams) registered and selected to race; all started and completed the race.
- Overall, 59 swimmers started and 56 finished the race. This means that 94% of those registered and started the race, finished the event.

### **Festival**

Looking to build on the 2016 on island festival, we introduced live entertainment following this year's presentation ceremony. This was well received by visitors looking for a family friendly post event activity, as well as by island stakeholders. In 2018 we hope to build on this and introduce some food and drink options to combine with post event entertainment.

### **On Water Compliance Review Group (OWCRG)**

An On Water Compliance Review Group was formed this year, made up of Committee members and RCSA staff, in consultation with the Boat Safety Sub-Committee. The objective of the group was: to review race day roles and responsibilities and command structures relating to on-water compliance to improve consistency, fairness and overall coordination of a RCSA event. There have been a number of changes as a result of the On Water Compliance Review Group, including new appeal and breach processes, updated Event Rules, and a confirmed compliance organisational structure.

## New Rules

Recommended by the On Water Compliance Review Group and Boat Safety Sub Committee, the following rules have been implemented:

- All tenders must comply with the Dept. of Transport - Marine Safety legislation. This means any tender over 5hp and 3.1m must be registered.
- During swimmer change overs, boats with two or more engines must put their engine into neutral. Previously, boats with two or more engines were required to turn their motor off.
- To be considered 'Mixed', a team must include a minimum of two females.

## First In First Served Registration Process

By way of a recap the annual Rottneest Channel Swim started with a first-in first-served approach. The Committee of the day decided that this created an unfair advantage for those that lived close by, as participants would fill in a registration form and deliver it to the RCSA Office. To address this issue a ballot system was then introduced in 2006, along with an online registration system.

This year, based on feedback from swimmers we reintroduced the first-in first-served registration process via an online application as a way to increase the efficiency of the system and create fairness to those that missed out several years in a row from the ballot. This approach moves us to align with the vast majority of other mass participation events. We will continue to ring fence solo swimmers and allow them to apply before we open the registration system to duos and teams.

## Sponsorship

- During the year, Network Ten, VenuesWest and Vorgee continued their sponsorship for a further three years. We also welcomed a new sponsor, Masters, who came on board for the 2017 Event.
- We are vigorously pursuing a new Naming Rights Sponsor (NRS) as Karma Resorts, after 3 very successful years, are not renewing their sponsorship. I would like to thank Tyron Scott for all his efforts in sourcing and meeting with a wide range of potential NRS.

## Other things we've done this year based on feedback from swimmers and stakeholders...

- **Metro Safety Briefing:** was moved to a Saturday this year to help create a more enjoyable and relaxed experience. With the addition of t-shirts being available for purchase prior to the briefing, sponsor activations and a sausage sizzle, the new format was well received and will continue in 2018.
- **7km Buoy:** after considerable feedback, we trialled a marker buoy between the icon vessel (1500m mark) and the 10km Channel Ten buoys. Due to restriction on anchoring in the shipping channel, the buoy was placed on the rhumb line at the 7km mark.
- **Shade at the Finish Line:** a shade structure over the photo queuing area was introduced to alleviate swimmers from standing in the hot sun for long periods.
- **Nutrition at the Finish Line:** to help swimmers recover from such a major endurance event, fruit was provided at the finish line.
- **Event Management Tender:** with our current Event Management company TriEvents out of contract, the RCSA have gone through a competitive tendering process. After an extensive

process of tendering and review, the RCSA would like to congratulate TriEvents on being appointed the 2018-2020 Rottnest Channel Swim Event Managers.

- **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 event!
- **Committee and Staff Involvement:** Committee and staff also work very hard to ensure a safe and successful event. During the 2017 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, sourcing sponsors, drafting and reviewing correspondence and external communications.
- **We’ve Moved:** due to our previous lease not being renewed, the RCSA have sourced a new location and have moved to Seven West Media in Osborne Park where TriEvents are located.