

Shark Island Swim

Sunday 14th March, 2004

What a fantastic Club event this was! Never have I seen so many Members of any organisation put in so many hours and so much effort to make a community and fundraising event so successful. And wasn't it truly successful on both counts!

The Shark Island Swim Challenge Events are made possible by a team of over 130 people, comprising Club Members, their family and their friends. And a better *Team* function you will be hard pressed to find. The effort put in by the entire working team was fantastic and there are too many people to mention individually, but I would like to sincerely express my gratitude to each and every one of you for your part in making the Swim Events so successful.

The sea was again quite flat for this year's events. The sky was cloudy and the air was warm, the seas were choppy, but a mild 22 to 23 degrees. A wonderful day for the Cronulla Shark Island Swim Challenge! Even though we had a lack of sand, exposed rocks and a beach covered in kelp, we had 753 entrants in the 2.3 km Shark Island Swim Challenge and 180 entrants in the 1.0 km Ocean Fun Swim. A total of 933 entrants.

The 1.0 km Ocean Fun Swim was officially started on time at 9.30 am by triple NSW State Ironman Champion and Club Member, Nathan Smith. This event was fiercely contested by the competitors who entered the swim with ages ranging from 10 to 69. The younger swimmers dominated the results with Hayden Allum being the first Male Swimmer and Cassie Davenport the first Female Swimmer across the line.

The 2.3 km Shark Island Swim Challenge was officially started at 10.30 am by Sharks Coach, Stuart Raper. We had 753 competitors entered in this event and the finish was the closest we could remember. Josh Santacaterina (26.46) won the event, with Grant Cleland (26.50) in second place and Chris Allum in third place (27.42). The first three Female Swimmers to cross the line were Chloe Abbott (29.20), Kelly Boxwell (29.56) and Kristie Ogilvie (30.42).

A special mention needs to be made of Helen Evans – 72 years old – who completed the swim with a time of 45.50, as well as John Kelso and Donald Tierney, both 74 years old – who completed the swim in times of 42.30 and 44.48 respectively. A fantastic swim by all competitors and we congratulate each and every one of you!

This year we had swimmers enter the events from as far a field as the South Coast and North Coast of NSW, Alice Springs, Darwin, Melbourne, New Zealand and the USA. We would like to thank every competitor for joining in the fun and swimming in our events this year. We look forward to seeing you all again around the same time next year.

This year these events raised around \$30,000 in net funds, to be used in all Sections of Club activity and to fund the purchase of our much needed Lifesaving Equipment over the ensuing year – not to mention the outstanding publicity the Club receives within our local and national community.

Our sponsors were again magnificent this year and their generosity in supporting our Surf Lifesaving Activities is appreciated more than we can ever express to them. *Frank Doran from Financial Services Partners (Frank Doran Financial Services)* of Miranda, was again our major sponsor, donating \$6,600 cash, plus supply of the T-shirts for the working party. What a fantastic individual effort Frank, your generosity and help in organising and running this major

fundraising activity for the Club is greatly appreciated. Our other sponsors also added significantly to the financial success of the events. These are: CommInsure, who donated \$5,500 cash – Eyeline, who through Shaun Ryan, have kindly donated the swim caps for the events for many years – HPA, who designed, printed and mailed out our entry forms, as well as mailed out our result certificates – Cadbury Schweppes, who donated Gatorade for the competitors – GC Apparel, who supplied the Shark Island T-shirts at greatly reduced prices – and radio station 2KY-1017, who supported our major sponsors and advertised our events on radio.

I would also like to make mention of the unquestioning help and support provided by Sutherland Shire Council, who regularly assist us through cleaning the beach and surrounding areas and the provision of Lifeguards and their Lifesaving equipment for Water Safety for these events. In addition, this year they spent several days clearing kelp and seaweed, which had been washed onto the beach in the week preceding the events. We could not have conducted the Swims without this help.

The courses for both events were professionally set out, thanks to our early morning team of helpers and the Club's IRB Section, who arrived at 6.00 am to place a total of 20 buoys and markers throughout both courses. These people, led by Daniel Wood and Paul MacSweeney, are always the first to start and the last to finish and certainly deserve a special mention for their selfless efforts.

The organisation of the Events was superb, the deep water start worked extremely well and the Water Safety was second to none – for Water Safety we had the Offshore-2 Rescue Boat with a paramedic on board, 6 IRBs (rubber duckies), 3 Rescue Water Craft (jet skis) and dozens of skis, boards and individual swimmers – all of whom are professionally qualified and proficient. Phil Hamilton was responsible for enrolling, controlling and co-ordinating the Water Safety Activities and carried out his responsibilities exceptionally well – Phil and his team of Water Safety Personnel are to be thoroughly congratulated on a superb result.

The entrants were very complimentary with regard to the quantity and quality of the Water Safety. One competitor contacted us after the Shark Island Swim to say "My thanks to all for making this a great swim and particularly to the young lady board rider who was great company helping me make it to the finish line" – and this was typical of the comments from the event competitors.

Dr. Robyn Jordan was again available on shore to professionally attend to any swimmers or spectators requiring assistance. We are extremely grateful to Robyn for volunteering her services and helping to make this event one of the safest on the Ocean Swim Calendar.

Shirley O'Donnell and her team of helpers worked tirelessly to process the pre-entries and late entries and ensure that swim caps and apparel were distributed as smoothly as possible. Thanks heaps to Shirley and your team.

A special thanks needs to be given to Rob Short and his team of helpers. Rob assisted in the layout of the courses, the set up of the tents and fair stalls and then assisted with Water Safety and the dismantling and clean-up activities. Rob is a great Team Member and provides some comic relief at the appropriate times.

John Wilson and his team of merry men and women performed an enormously successful role in setting up and dismantling the start and finish areas and worked extremely well with limited resources – thanks John and your team.



Shark Island Swim – Season 2004-2005.

The procedures and systems for accurately recording and processing the results of our events is a delicate and demanding issue, and I would like to thank and congratulate Wanda SLSC Members Chris Stephenson (and his partner June) and Ron Smith for their expertise and experience in conducting these activities.

Once again Matthew Bruce did a fine job of updating our website – www.sharkislandswim.com.au – with the details regarding race entry, plus a downloadable copy of our entry form, prior to the events taking place. The results of the Shark Island Swim were available on the Cronulla Shark Island Swim website by 4.00 pm on the day of the events.

Thanks also to Ken English, our Announcer and MC – Col Elliott, our Event Referee – Brian Henderson, who designed the Shark Island T-shirts – Allan Hanson, Graham Giles, Kathy Piggott, Michelle Giles and Annette Yazbek, for their unending Office and Administration duties – our quiet achievers.

Two additional people must also be recognised for their huge contribution to the success of these events. Firstly, John Hollingdale, who has been Convenor of these events since 1992-93 Season and has worked tirelessly to ensure their success and assisted and directed me in so many ways this year. Secondly, Ken O'Donnell, who worked non-stop to procure, erect and remove our signs and banners and worked so hard on the day of the events in many different areas. Thank you so much John and Ken.

Finally, I would like to express my enormous gratitude to the Shark Island Swim Committee, who spent many hours throughout the year to organise and conduct these events.

The Committee Members for 2003-2004 were: Frank Doran, Chris Giles, Greg Hewitt, John Hollingdale, Kelly Hollingdale, Ken O'Donnell, Shirley O'Donnell, Dave Piggott, Rob Short, Ron Smith, Chris Stephenson and John Wilson.

Again, we learned a lot from this year's events and next year we will be putting more organisation and emphasis into the following:

- Greater promotion with the Schools and Swim Clubs for the 1.0 km Ocean Fun Swim – we would like to have 500 entrants in this event next year
- A simpler and quicker method for ascertaining the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placings in each age category – plus the commencement of the presentation by 12.30 pm
- Greater promotion and publicity for the events
- Increased sponsorship, and
- The introduction of new Team Members to take some of the load off the longer standing Members

Thanks once again to all Club Members, for making the Shark Island Swim Challenge such a success. I am very proud to have such a great team supporting me in so many ways with the running of the Cronulla Shark Island Swim Challenge.

*Bruce Guthrie, Convenor,
Shark Island Swim Committee.*

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