



President's Message August 2014

Swimming Australia - 08/08/2014

Two years ago, the decision was made to migrate our membership management system onto a new operating system. This has proven problematic as we work through a wide range of issues and complications unforeseen at the time. To get the system up and running bug free is now our most important priority so all clubs and state members around the country can get on with the business of the day. I understand and appreciate the anxiety and additional workload this is causing. What I can say is we are working on it and we will solve it!

Much progress has been made since the 2012 London Olympics. As a result of external reports and reviews on culture, governance, and indeed leadership, Swimming Australia has undergone a revolution. A new strategic plan has been developed with the aim to expand the sport as a whole, to increase our profile to make swimming relevant every year instead of every four years as well as increasing our capability at the very highest international level.

Indeed our vision is to become #1 in the world from the Olympic and Paralympic podiums down to grass roots by the year 2020. A huge audacious challenge. But with collective minds and energy it can be done. Unlike the professional sports with associated large television revenues, as a sport we have limited financial resources. So we need to be very intelligent as to how we utilize these resources to execute on our strategic plan and meet our objectives.

Swimming is part of this country's DNA. Australia wants swimming to succeed. That is a huge advantage for us. And at the highest level, it is important our national team does well both in the pool and out of the pool. The team is the flagship of our sport. Our athletes are our ambassadors.

There has been much written about the success of the **Australian Swim Team** in the pool in Glasgow – a record 57 medals as a team and six days of sensational swimming, teamwork and camaraderie. Although we have a long way to go with much to learn, there's no doubt Glasgow was a major step forward.

In the pool, the performances and particularly the racing from our 59 athletes was terrific, but I'd also like to acknowledge just how well the Australian Swim Team conducted themselves outside the pool as part of the wider **Australian Commonwealth Games team**. Not only our athletes, but our coaches, and support staff. They were a credit to our sport.

Over the last 12 months, our CEO **Mark Anderson**, **Michael Scott**, Head of High Performance, and **Jacco Verhaeren** our Head Coach, have been working on cultural change within the entire organisation and to witness that change in Glasgow was exciting.

To see able bodied and Para Sport athletes perform together as one team in Scotland not only highlighted the inclusive nature of our sport, but also underlined the cultural values that our two senior teams and athlete leaders are demonstrating.

The Para team will now have the opportunity to harness that momentum at the Para Pan Pacs in California this week and with the leadership of athletes such as **Matthew Cowdrey** and **Kat Downie**, and enthusiasm of teenagers **Rowan Crothers** and **Maddi Elliott**, OUR TEAM is well placed for further success in and out of the pool.

The next challenge looms large. At the upcoming Pan Pacs at the new Gold Coast Aquatic Centre (August 21-24th) we are about to take on Japan, Canada, the Kiwis, South Africa, Brazil, China and of course the #1 team in the world – the USA. But we're taking them on at home on the Gold Coast, with the event to be broadcast live on Network 10 and One.

Go Australia!

JB

John Bertrand, AM,
President