Masters Swimming Australia
40 Years of National Championships

1975 – Sydney, New South Wales

Following a successful carnival in 1974, the first Australian Masters National Championships was held on March 8, 1975, six months before AUSSI was established.

1976 –Sydney, New South Wales

The 1976 National Swim was held in the suburb of Harbord, in Sydney. The meet saw 95 competitors in the pool, with NSW members swimming with Northern Territorians, South Australians, Queenslanders and Victorians.

1977 – Sydney, New South Wales

The 1977 National Swim saw an increase in attendance from the previous year, with 146 eager swimmers travelling to Sydney to compete. The third National Swim for Masters Swimmers saw the introduction of the point-score trophy, the Founders Cup. The trophy was, and still is, awarded to the club with the highest point score at the conclusion of the National Swim. Donated by the National Treasurer, Mary Connolly, the trophy was to commemorate Jack Brownjohn's contribution to establish Masters Swimming in Australia. In 1977, NSW's Manly would take out the trophy. Pictured are members from Tamworth enjoying the meet.

1978 – Melbourne, Victoria

The 1978 National Swim was a meet filled with many firsts. With AUSSI members travelling to Melbourne, the meet was the first National Swim to be held out of NSW. The word AUSSI was also spreading and the 1978 National Swim saw the first international guests to the meet, with a team travelling over from New Zealand. The Founders Trophy was not to stay with Manly or in NSW, as the North Lodge Neptunes (pictured) were to become the first of many non-NSW clubs to take the trophy home.

1979 – North Sydney, New South Wales

In 1979 the National Swim returned to Sydney, with the North Sydney Masters pool hosting 348 entrants. The last National Swim of the 70's saw a change in competition, as the meet was run in a long course format for the first time, resulting in 68 National Records. The meet did not just change for the swimmers, but for the technical officials as well, as electronic timing was introduced. The North Lodge Neptunes blitzed the competition once again, taking home the Founders Cup for the second year in a row.

1980 – Adelaide, South Australia

The beginning of a new decade saw the National Swim travel to Adelaide for the first time and take place over three days in March. Members who attended the meet were able to purchase a vintage bottle of Port, commissioned by the Adelaide Masters (pictured left). Instructions were given that the bottle would be at its best 20 years on, so hopefully everyone enjoyed the 1980's National Swim's Port in 2000! Preventing North Lodge from winning the Founders Cup three years in a row, the Adelaide Masters were victorious for the first time. Pictured right is Josie Samson receiving the trophy.

1981 – Perth, Western Australia

In March of 1981, the National Swim travelled west to Perth for the first time. The meet, hosted at the Beatty Park Masters' pool, kicked off with a welcome BBQ at the Cottesloe SLSC and was later described as the "biggest, best, friendliest" National Swim. Osborne Park Masters made sure that the Founders Cup would stay in WA for the first time, while a special mention was made to Canberra's Helen Rees, who broke five National Records.

Oldest and youngest competitors: Vera Fernance (Blacktown) & Robert Vernoon (Osborne)

1982 – Sydney, New South Wales

The 1982 National Swim saw the meet return to Sydney, where the Warringah Masters welcomed 557 fellow AUSSI members from 50 clubs to their pool. In the meet report, Carnival Committee member Carol Davis admitted to being the "group worry wart", however the Pan Pacific Masters Games in Sydney in 1981 somewhat calmed her nerves.

As usual, members supported and encouraged each other, while Graham had a little extra support from Jayne (right) and Ettalong would make sure the Founders cup stayed in NSW for the year.

1983 – Brisbane, Queensland

The 1983 National Swim saw Brisbane host the event for the first time, providing a "wonderful atmosphere of friendliness" at the Chandler Aquatic Complex. Up from the 1982 meet, the 1983 National Swim boasted 52 AUSSI clubs competing for the Founders Trophy, as well as members from 12 overseas masters clubs. "The old look to the young for style and the young look to the old for inspiration," said Brad Cooper. With 55 swimmers focusing on the "one pointers", Gold Coast AUSSI was awarded the Founders Trophy (pictured).

1984 – Melbourne, Victoria

1984 saw the National Swim return to Melbourne for the second time, with AUSSI members joined by one Swiss and two Canadian members. With technical difficulties in place, thanks to issues with the electronic timing system, 32 timekeepers and 32 stopwatches came to the rescue. This did not stop Myrtle Wright from Osborne, pictured above with admirers, set four World Records. For a third time, the Founders Trophy belonged to the North Lodge Neptunes.

1985 – ACT

The 1985 National Swim was held in the Australian Capital Territory. For the second time, the North Lodge Neptunes were named back-to-back winners of the Founders Trophy.

1986 – Adelaide, South Australia

The 1986 National Swim were held in Adelaide and featured many memorable moments for competitors. From Peter Gillett and Chris Potter swimming in "Mickey Mouse" bathers (apologies that no photos of this could be found!), to Dawn Fraser swimming in a few heats, the biggest highlight was that thanks to a computer, results were able to be posted almost straight away! Taking home the Founders Trophy for 1986 was a victorious Adelaide Masters (pictured).

1987 – Perth, Western Australia

The 1987 National Swim saw the members from MSWA "say g'day" to all competing. Entry directions for the meet were tough, with instructions that entry cards must be completed in "blue biro only." However, a record number of 844 swimmers managed to use the correct pen! While overall the competition ran smoothly, for one swimmer in the 280+ relay, help was required as their dentures sank to the bottom of the pool. The 1987 Founders Trophy went to Claremont, capping off their success of winning the 1986 National Aerobic Trophy.

1988 – Postal Swim

1988 saw the National Swim take on the form of a Postal Swim. This proved advantageous for MSV's Powerpoints, who won their first Founders Trophy.

1989 – Sydney, New South Wales

"Put your PBs on the line, swim in Sydney in '89" was the motto of the 1989 National Swim and saw 585 members from 67 clubs take on the challenge. The motto seemed to attract them all, including four mermaids – Naughty Nell, Fabulous Fanny, Sensuous Sylvie, Wicked Wanda, otherwise known as Lesley Buchanan, Julie Priest, Carol Woodhouse and Melita Sutton – and two mermen, Mervin and Marlin (Bob Dorrington and Peter Jackson). Yet it was those in their 80s that were the stars of the pool, with the Male and Female Swimmers of the Meet going to octogenarians Frank Griffiths and Myrtle Wright. The meet, held at the Warringah pool, saw the Founders Trophy go to North Sydney.

1990 – Brisbane, Queensland

With the start of a new decade, the 1990 National Swim returned to Brisbane for the second time. A strong club performance by Miami Masters, allowed them to win the Founders Trophy for the first time.

1991 – Devonport, Tasmania

The 1991 National Swim saw Masters Swimming Tasmania welcome members down south for the first time. Held in Devonport, the weather-gods turned it on, with fine, warm weather and even reports that the "water wasn't too cold for the Open Water Swim." The interstate travel proved an enjoyable experience for the Powerpoints, who took the Founders Trophy back to Melbourne.

1992 – Melbourne, Victoria

The 1992 National Swim saw the second largest Nationals to date, with 798 members compete. Held in Melbourne, it allowed the Powerpoints to defend their title on home turf. However, the meet was not just about the pool events, as lunchtime saw a series of free seminars offered to the community. Buddy Portier, an exercise physiologist with the Victorian Institute of Sport, provoked questions with his topic of "Defining Workloads", while MSV's Coaching Director, Ted Tullberg looked at welcoming new members and Tasmania's Director of Programs, Trish Beveridge focus on stroke improvement.

1993 – Darwin, Northern Territory

The 1993 National Swim saw members travel to Darwin for the first time. One year out from the meet, MSNT's Rick Barnes was praised for his professional report where he promised "a lovely, sunny week with no rain." The home pool advantage worked for the Darwin Stingers, who won the Founders Trophy.

1994 – Adelaide, South Australia

The 1994 National Swim was hosted in Adelaide and saw a new World Record set by Gladstone Groper, Frank Griffiths. Setting the 85 – 89years 400IM record (10m28.43s) in the first event, set the tone for Frank, who went on to set five National Records and be named Male Swimmer of the Meet. The outstanding achievement from MSQ's Frank was not enough to stop the Adelaide Masters taking home the Founders Trophy. Happy hour (pictured right) was also action packed, as MSSA raffled off a limousine ride to the Casino, which was won by MSNT's Rick Barnes. Rick was not alone on his trip to the casino, as everyone else went by bus, sipping champagne on arrival.

1995 – Perth, Western Australia

The 1995 National Swim saw members travel to Perth for the event and finished with WA's Claremont taking home the Founders Trophy. On the Monday, 180 members finished off the 20th National Swim with a 3000m Open Water Swim. With the water a warm 22 degrees, swimmers were drenched at the start of the event, with a heavy downpour, which cleared as all members took on the circuit in under two hours.
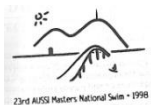
1996 – Canberra, ACT

With the 1996 Olympics looming, some events at the 1996 National Swim had to be rescheduled to meet the requirements of the AIS. However, this did not seem to faze the 300 members, as National and Branch records were broken and many PBs were set. Warringah Masters took the Founders Trophy home from Canberra.

1997 – Sydney, New South Wales

The 1997 National Swim saw AUSSI call for members to book accommodation early, as the National Age Championships would take place at the same venue over the same long weekend. Fifteen years after their first win in 1982, Ettalong won the Founders Trophy again.

1998 – Hobart, Tasmania

The meet logo for the 1998 National Swim was released in October of 1997 and featured on windcheaters, polo tops and embroidered patches, which were available for members to purchase. Hobart was praised for running a "fabulous meet", which saw roughly 30 National Records broken. For the first time in Nationals history, the Founders Trophy stayed in Hobart, with the Hobart Masters victorious.

1999 – Darwin, Northern Territory

400 swimmers from 63 clubs travelled to Darwin for the 1999 National Swim, including five clubs from South Australia. A big focus for the last National Swim of the millennium was the sun smart message, with members encouraged to "slip, slop slap" with 40+ SPF sunscreen. Overall the 1999 National Swim was a friendly and fun meet, which began with excited members at the welcome function enjoying the free-flowing drinks and ended with a member completing the OWS with butterfly. Once again the home pool advantage worked for the Darwin Stingers, as the Founders Trophy stayed in Darwin.

2000 – Gladstone, Queensland

The 2000 National Swim was a fitting celebration of AUSSI's 25 year history. While in the pool, records were broken as the rain fell, the highlight for many was the Presentation Dinner. In attendance to cut to anniversary cake was foundation members, Gary Stutsel (NSW), Paul Wyatt (NSW; in 25-year-old green and gold t-shirt), Kay Cox (WA), Barb Brooks (Vic), Di Simmons (SA) and Judy Ford (ACT).

2001 – Melbourne, Victoria

In 2001, with the National Swim held at the new Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, members were encouraged to "Tram for Melbourne", with the tram chosen as the official logo. The results showed just how well Victorian's supported the meet, with the Malvern Marlins (pictured) taking home the Founders Trophy by 216 points over the Doncaster Dolphins. The highlight of the meet however, seemed to be outside of the pool, with a 25 piece orchestra entertaining the crowd at the Presentation Dinner.

2002 – Sydney, New South Wales

The 2002 National Swim was held in Sydney and saw 41 overseas visitors enter the competition. Swimmers at the meet were able to register fast times, as 39 World Records and 123 National Records were set. 95-year-old Alfredo Cherchi of Trinity was one World Record breaker, breaking the 200m backstroke record by 1.31minutes. For the first time, the Seaside Pirates were named winners of the Founders Trophy.

2003 – Perth, Western Australia

Challenge Stadium in Perth was the location for the 2003 National Swim. The camaraderie between swimmers was a highlight of the meet, with the crowd and a fantastic commentator acknowledging even the slowest of swimmers – "exactly what AUSSI is all about, getting in the pool and giving it a go... just to finish", it was reported. Another highlight for many swimmers was watching Shane Gould set the 45-49 200m IM World Record. It was the first time Shane had swam a 200IM since the 1970s. Taking home the Founders Trophy in 2003 was Osborne Park.

2004 – Adelaide, South Australia

The 2004 National Swim in Adelaide was officially opened by Her Excellency, Marjory Jackson-Nelson, who welcomed visitors from interstate to the hospitality of Adelaide. Representing their home state well, 176 South Australians entered the 23 events, including the 2km OWS at Brighton Beach. This is evident in results from the meet, with the Founders Trophy going to Adelaide Masters.

2005 – Hobart, Tasmania

The 2005 National Swim saw members travel to Hobart for the 30th National Swim. The oldest competitor in the pool was North Lodge member Clarice Artis (pictured), who was in the pool at the age of 90! Blacktown City travelled to Hobart with a strong team and returned to New South Wales with the Founders Trophy.

2006 – Canberra, New South Wales

2006 saw the National Swim travel to Australia's capital, with the awe-inspiring Australian Institute of Sport's pool hosting the meet. The Seaside Pirates made sure the Founders Trophy would stay in NSW for another year.

2007 – Darwin, Northern Territory

The 2007 National Swim saw members travel to Darwin for the third time in Nationals history and enabled, Singapore our international neighbours to compete, with five Singapore Masters on pool deck. A long day in the pool, Day 1 took nine hours to complete! For the third time, the Founders Trophy would go to an MSNT club, with the Darwin Stingers winning.

2008 – Melbourne, Victoria

Members were welcomed back to the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre for the 2008 National Swim. A total of 64 MSA clubs were represented by 353 members, who were joined by four overseas swimmers. The catering for the meet allowed MSV clubs to showcase their flair for morning teas, lunches and afternoon teas, under the guidance of Jan Williams. The 2008 Founders Trophy was won by the Powerpoints.

2009 – Brisbane, Queensland

2009 saw change take place, with the National Swim officially changing its name to the National Championships. Held at the Brisbane Aquatic Centre (Chandler), the swimming events saw 601 entries, while 147 registered for the OWS at Lake Kawana. Opening the 34th National Championships was the Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley, AC and an Aboriginal Welcome, complete with didgeridoo. For the second time, Powerpoints won the Founders Trophy for the second year running.

2010 – Launceston, Tasmania

The 2010 National Championships saw the new Launceston Aquatic Centre host their first major meet, receiving great praise post-meet from all competitors. A total of 563 swimmers from 93 MSA clubs dived into the short course program, with all but day one running to schedule. With a hometown advantage, the Launceston Lemmings won the Founders Trophy for the first time.

2011 – Perth, Western Australia

The 2011 National Championships organisers pulled on their experience from the 2008 World Masters Swimming Championships, held in WA, to provide a fondly remembered meet. While 565 swimmers from 84 clubs attended the meet, the highlight was that 30 of the 60 volunteers were non-swimmers, willing and excited to be involved. Highlighting the importance of assistance outside of the pool, WA were pleased to share that 44 Technical Officials were on pool deck, covering 433 positions. The efforts of those not in the water surely helped the 42 National Records set during the meet and helped Claremont win the Founders Trophy.

2012 – Adelaide, South Australia

The National Championships returned to Adelaide in 2012 at the relatively new South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre. Female competitors outnumbered their male counterparts, with 398 athletes from 82 MSA clubs swimming at the meet. The new venue kept AOE Operator, Phil Bowen on his toes, as the timing pads required replacement three times over the four days of competition. While the Powerpoints took the Founders Trophy back to Victoria, the Branch Challenge Relay Trophy stayed in South Australia, thanks to their 8 x 50m Freestyle swimmers.

2013 – Sydney, New South Wales

Swimmers were keen to compete at the 2013 National Championships, with the first entry received in the MSNSW office in February and a steady stream following until entries closed in early March. A total of 688 entries were received, including four international swimmers. 2013 saw the meet enter a new world of social media, with Facebook and Twitter used for the first time to send instant updates and photos from the meet to all followers and the inclusion of the MSNSW Live Results site. The hard work from the army of volunteers and officials provided a great meet, and saw the Powerpoints take home the Founders Trophy.

2014 – Rockhampton, Queensland

Queensland took the 2014 National Championships to the regional setting of the newly refurbished Rockhampton Southside Memorial Pool. 423 competitors, between the ages of 18 and 91, swam, including River City's Elise Hoyer (left), who turned 21 on day two of the meet. The highlight for many and a condition set by the Queensland Government, was the ANZAC Day commemoration service. At 10:30am, following the first event for the day, all competitors and spectators assembled in the grandstand for the traditional ANZAC Day Commemoration. All Officials, together with a former regular army person, who was also a competitor in the Nationals, assembled on the pool deck for the Last Post, the Soldiers Ode and the National Anthem (right). For the third year running, MSV's Powerpoints won the Founders Trophy – a first in Nationals history.

2015 – Hobart, Tasmania

With the 2015 National Championships two weeks away, what anecdotes will come from the 40th National Championships? See you in Tassie!