



Club of the Year

Nomination for Mount Gambier Swimming Club

A small club, punching well above its weight in performance, training, coach development and delivery of high quality swim meets.



Check out the website:
mountgambier.swimmingclub.org.au



89 Current Members

Membership

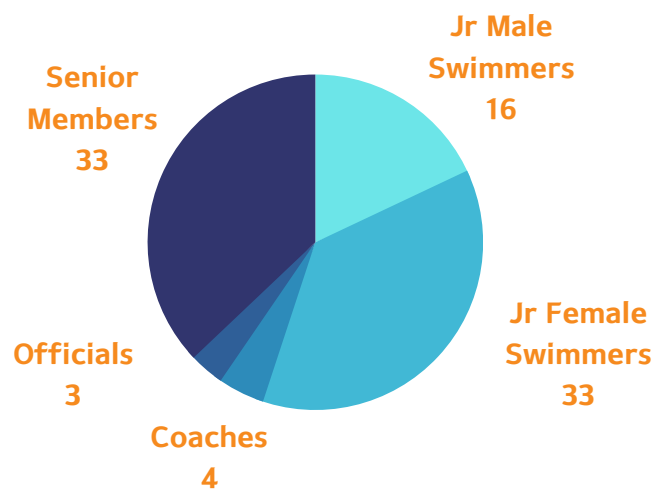
Without any formal membership drive, the Club gained an additional 28 swimmers and 12 senior members in 22/23, as well as an additional coach and technical official. This growth forced a rethink of the Come & Try process, which had previously been quite informal. In September 2023, the Club hosted its first formal Come & Try Intake session, with 11 potential members attending. Of these, 9 have continued for the 30 day free trial.

Monthly intake sessions are planned to give new families a structured way to enter the club, maximising the experience for new members, while ensuring continuation of coaching for existing swimmers.

Registration, medical details and training time nominations are all online, with a QR code included on posters and Facebook posts.

12 swimmers did not continue with the club, due to other interests, the distance traveled and moving away.

Breakdown of members:



67% of our junior swimmers are female and 33% are male.

1 Multi-class swimmer & a pathway for others

**4 qualified coaches
3 junior coaches in training
3 about to commence**

28 new swimmers & 12 new senior members in 22/23

Technical Officials

The Club currently has three qualified technical officials and another one in training. Our officials have represented the Club at Country and State Championships, as well as local meets in South Australia and Victoria.

We have sought expressions of interest from our Senior Members and are providing information about pathways to officiating. It is expected that as our long course season commences, we will start to train additional officials.

Governance & Administration

Constitution

In October 2022, the Club adopted an updated constitution to ensure that it reflected the current operations of the Club and its members. This process engaged members and laid the foundation for a number of governance improvements. Changes included the membership types, composition of the committee, recognition of current club colours and removal of outdated clauses. The updated constitution was accepted by the Office of Consumer & Business Affairs and has been referenced in decision making such as the AGM.

Committee

With rapid growth from only 9 swimmers to almost 50, the administration of the club has also grown significantly. The committee now comprises 15 members, with a view to sharing the load. The current committee has a good blend of new members to compliment the knowledge and experience of those that have been around for many years. Coaches are also well represented. The Executive Committee, comprised of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary are also meeting between full committee meetings, to discuss operational issues, open communication and ensure regular opportunities to identify risks and opportunities.

Policies, Procedures & Templates

The Club has embarked on the creation of policies and procedures to give clarity and transparency to decision making, as well as streamlining processes. Examples of templates include the use of Google Forms for Come & Try, family registrations, nomination of training times and medical information, as well as meeting agenda and minute templates.

In early August 2023, the Club adopted a Procurement and Purchasing Policy, which outlined the financial delegations of the committee, the process for approval of expenditure, the requirements for quotes and additions to the asset register for goods valued over \$200. A reimbursement form was also introduced to ensure that the Treasurer has adequate information, correct bank details and authorisation for the expenditure. This is in addition to the need for two signatories to approve payments.

Next Steps

The Committee is working on a Strategic Plan and has already undertaken a Values survey. The Club is affiliated with StarClub and working towards best practice in governance and risk management.

Fundraising & Grants

The Committee and members have worked hard at fundraising, sponsorship and grants to ensure the Club is financially viable, while minimising the cost to families.

Sponsorship

The Club has attracted a number of sponsors, both as annual commitments and for specific events.

Sponsorship ranges from cash to products and services. We appreciate every donation towards the club and recognise these businesses and families on our website, social media and print advertising.

Our Purchasing Policy also states that we will support our sponsors first if all other factors are relatively equal.

Grant Funding

This year, the Club has been awarded two grants, with other applications still pending. A successful Active Club Grant for \$1,500 will be used for equipment, especially as we rapidly gain new members.

The \$2,500 from the Junior Sports Assistance Fund will contribute to a stroke correction clinic with Effortless Swimming.

The 7 swimmers that traveled to Darwin for the Country Championships were also successful in being awarded Local Sporting Champions funding to assist with travel costs.

Fundraising

In addition, the Club has:

- hosted 2 Bunnings BBQs
- run numerous raffles and lucky squares
- catered at Countries & SESA meets
- hosted a fundraising dinner
- made a small profit on Robe camp
- made a small profit on Countries
- hosted a pop-up swimwear shop

Performance in the Pool

**2 swimmers at National
Championships**

**6 swimmers at State Age
Championships**

**8 swimmers at State Short
Course Championships**

**7 Swimmers at Australian
Country Championships in
Darwin**

**32 Swimmers at SA Country
Championships in Mt Gambier**



Performance in the Pool

Australian Age Championships

Coach Haylea Crowe traveled to support Lucy Dening and Hinako Holman at their first National Championship on the Gold Coast in April 2023. The commitment to qualify and travel to this competition not only from the swimmers, but by their families cannot be underestimated.

Inaugural Australian Country Championships in Darwin

7 swimmers (pictured right) and 2 coaches made the long trek to Darwin for the first ever Australian Country Championships. 5 medals and 42 top 10 finishes between heats, finals and relays, the Club had a very successful event.



SA State Age Championships

Six swimmers achieved 29 Top 10 finishes at the 2023 State Age Long Course Championships, including our first multi-class swimmer competing at this level.

State Short Course Championships

For the first time, the Club was able to train through the winter, short course season with a high class facility including dive blocks. The difference was evident with smashing PB's from all swimmers throughout the event. The team of 8 attending the recent State Short Course Championships represented our club with pride.

Limestone Coast Sporting Academy

The Club has 5 participants in the Academy, Lucy Dening, Nevae Brooksby, Vaughn Stratford, Indee Stratford and Hinako Holman.



More Performance

Winner SESA Championship Shield

For the second year in a row, the Club won the coveted South East Swimming Association (SESA) Championship Shield (shown below).



Exceptional Junior Award

The Club nominated Vaughn Stratford for the City of Mount Gambier Junior Sports Assistance Fund Exceptional Junior Award. Vaughn (right) won overall and received \$1,500 for his commitment not only to his own training and performance, but for the time that he gives back to the club coaching juniors.

SA Country Championships 2023

Our Club had a record 32 swimmers participating in Countries in 2023, up from only 10 at Renmark the previous year. Our swimmers recorded 49 PB's over the four days, breaking records, winning medals and demonstrating great sportsmanship despite their parents being otherwise occupied (more on that later). The team finished 8th overall for SA.



JX Swimmers

The Club currently has 5 swimmers recognised by JX.

2023 SA Country Swimming Championships

The Road to Wulanda

The 2023 SA Country Swimming Championships was the first event to be held at the brand new Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre in Mt Gambier, which only opened to the public 16 days prior.

Attracting more than 430 swimmers from SA, Victoria, Qld and NSW, as well as support crew and spectators, the 4-day event is estimated to have brought more than \$1 million to the local economy. It also paved the way for other large events to be held at the Centre and showcased what the facility and the region have to offer.

The opening night, Thursday 5th January 2023, saw the rare occurrence of swimmers competing concurrently in the 50m outdoor pool, as well as the 25m indoor pool. The Club also hosted Olympic medalist, Madi Wilson to speak to swimmers and invited guests about her journey to success. The event ran smoothly and many records were broken.

One of the unique factors that has since been utilised by other events was a food village showcasing local food trucks, available not only to attendees, but to the public. This allowed vendors to access more customers, as well as attracting spectators to the event that would not have otherwise come. Feedback from attendees throughout the event was resoundingly positive and many local businesses reported a significant uplift in trade during this time.



Countries Before & After

30 Days Prior
still under construction



During Countries



More Countries

During the lead up and throughout the competition, the volunteer committee managed many unforeseen issues with calm and grace. As a brand new facility, there were many unknowns, such as availability of power, a lack of shade, need for a sound system, managing access and community expectations.



The most significant risk was committing to and planning for an event 18 months out, at a facility that wasn't even finished yet! It took courage from the small but dedicated committee with the support of Swimming SA, as well as commitment and belief from our sponsors to sign up without a guaranteed venue.

This was also the first major regional swimming event following Covid, which posed challenges, but also significant opportunities for young swimmers to gather, make lifelong friendships and show their abilities in the pool.

The Club received letters of commendation from the Chair of Swimming SA, Peter Graham OAM and City of Mt Gambier Mayor, Lynette Martin OAM, congratulating the Club on an outstanding event. Overall, the event raised the bar for the annual SA Country Swimming Championships. Attendance was high, the swimming was fast and the local economy received a significant boost. Following the success of the 2023 event, the Mt Gambier Swimming Club has made a bid to host the 2025 event.



Connection to Community

It is no accident that the Club is well connected to the local community, not only in Mt Gambier, but with our neighbours in Victoria, fellow SESA Clubs and across the State.

Transition to Wulanda

Throughout the design and consultation period for the new recreation centre, our Club had two coaches on the community reference group. This built a solid foundation for communication and a respectful working relationship.

We are working collaboratively with Belgravia to negotiate access and affordable pricing for the new centre. We also maintain a strong working relationship with City of Mt Gambier as demonstrated through Countries.

Connecting and Supporting Others

The Club has had a representative on the Country Committee for the past five years, as well as taking an active role in the management of SESA. We are also a member of the Barwon South West District Association, making the most of our location on the border.

Swimming SA Interactions

Our finances are up to date, we have demonstrated vast improvements in the use of Swim Central and our accreditation was completed satisfactorily in record time.



Promotion of Swimming

One of the objects of the Club described in our constitution is promotion of the sport of swimming. This is an area where the club has excelled over the last season.



The Club engaged a local marketing expert to design the brand for Countries, as well as a social media strategy to promote the event and our sponsors. This was very well received and laid a solid foundation for a continued online presence, including a website update, active public and private Facebook pages and hard copy promotional materials.

SAPSASA

The Club is a strong supporter of SAPSASA swimming, encouraging interested swimmers to train with the Club and providing coaches for school trainings.

What's the Splash...

Our Club newsletter follows the same branding from Countries and provides information for our members



Why Mt Gambier Swim Club?

We pride ourselves on being friendly, child-focused and supportive of swimmer goals, whatever they may be. The Club has a history of producing swimmers who have competed at National level, as well as medal winners at State Championships, medals and records at Country Championships, SAPSASA and local meets. In 2021, the Club won the Championship and Handicap Shields for the South East Swimming Association season.

More importantly, we welcome families and swimmers of any ability and support them to set and reach their personal goals. We have experienced coaches and a committed group of volunteers to help swimmers at each stage of their journey.

Source: Come & Try Information pack

Social Nights

In Term 3 of 2023, the Club introduced Social Nights, where all 3 squads train together (pic below). This was an opportunity for the older and more experienced swimmers to form a connection with some of our newer and younger members. Activities included synchronized swimming, relays, pairs and races. We then had families gather for pizza and a chat, with a short presentation updating them on Club events. The two social nights were definitely well received and will continue over the summer.

Annual Robe Camp

All families are invited to the annual camp in Robe. With a mix of dryland and swimming activities, the weekend is a chance for swimmers to mix outside of the pool environment. We take the opportunity to share information about the upcoming season and there's always strong competition for the Ocean Swim trophy.

Countries Caps

Once swimmers achieve a Countries Qualifying Time, they receive a special black cap with racing stripes, a "Countries Cap".

These caps show progression in training and are worn with pride at meets and clinics.

Participation in Medal Ceremonies

As a small club with limited opportunities for medals, our swimmers participate in medal ceremonies with pride. It is a very rare occurrence indeed if a Mount Gambier swimmer is not on the podium when required.



Coaching & Development

The Club has a strong philosophy of growing and developing coaches to support not only our club but to secure the future of swimming in our region.

The Club currently has:

- two qualified Development Coaches
- two qualified Foundation Coaches
- two junior coaches who have completed the Foundation course and are awaiting final approval
- one Foundation coach currently undertaking the Development Course
- three new members signed up for the Foundation course

Our Head Coach is also mentoring prospective coaches at other clubs including Blue Lake Y & Portland.

In late 2022, Julie became accredited as a trainer & presenter, to enable her to deliver coaching clinics.

All of the Club's coaches are actively undertaking learning and development to ensure they are supporting our swimmers in the best possible way.

The Future of Swimming

The future of swimming in Mount Gambier and surrounding districts looks very bright, with at least ten current or former swimmers now coaching, teaching swim lessons or working at the a local pool. This includes Wulanda, SwimSkool, Squashbrook and the Penola Pool, as well as Vacswim.

