



# WHALES TALES

Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2025



## General (IMPORTANT) Message

Please see the download button above to access the full copy of this week's newsletter, as it provides a complete view on your device or computer.



## Saturday Races

Welcome to Championship week 5!! We have swimmers competing in the 400IM this week! Good luck to everyone who qualified and is competing.

A reminder that all swimmers competing in Championship events need to be at the pool by 6:45am (especially if they want to warm up). Arriving late may mean you miss your event.

Set up generally falls to a couple of people, so arriving before 6.45am helps us have set up completed and races ready to start on time. We have a packed program each Saturday and starting late impacts on our finish time and has flow on impacts on presentation and Learn to Swim.

We would love to recognise help with set up by nominating helpers in our monthly Lions Club award voting.



## Why is Timekeeping important?

Accurate times provide feedback on the swimmer's performance in races and also provides officially recognised times for them to use to enter meets with Qualification times.

How can you help achieve accurate timekeeping?

- Watch the swimmer in your lane and move to the front of the wall as they approach the wall (approx. 15m from the wall);
- Take split times when races are longer than 100m (ie every time the swimmer touches the wall in a turn at the start end of the pool);
- Stop your timing device when the swimmer first touches the wall (or noodle rope);
- Record your lane swimmer (not another lane);
- If you do not have a swimmer in your lane do not take a time on your device.

If an issue arises (eg your watch stops, you miss a split, press the button too early or late, timed the wrong lane) please tell the chief timekeeper (Denise) immediately, so that the issue can be resolved by the Referee, Timing Operator & Recorder.

Your help in following this process will help us finalise race results quicker and to attend to issues that arise in a structured way.



## Merrylands SwimFest

The Merrylands SwimFest will be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026 and we are already planning for the meet.

Entries for **SwimFest** are now open in SwimCentral. Merrylands members can use the **special member button** for **discounted entry fees**.



## New Club Record

Congratulations to Kylee Murray, who smashed the Veteran's Women's record in the 400m Freestyle Championships last Saturday.

Kylee finished in a time of 6:11.45, just 0.06 outside her all-time personal best set at the World Championships in August. Kylee broke the old record (which she set in 2023) by just over 14 seconds.



## Whales Challenge #2 result

Last Saturday we held the second of our Whales Challenges for the season and what a close result. The White team led all the way until the team relays and 15m races.

The wash up saw the Maroon team (1,720 points) swim past the White team (1,639 points) to claim the victory and prizes.

Can the White team claim victory in the third and final Whales Challenge, to be held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026?

## 50m Freestyle Skins

As part of the Whales Challenge we also held the Freestyle Skins. The field of 8 swimmers (Alison, Varant, Leo, Le, Joseph, Tomas, William & Marcus) was whittled down to the final two. Congratulations to Leo (Maroon team) who was able to touch the wall before Joseph (White team) in the final.

## Training Over Christmas & New Year

### Putting your Enrolment on hold

If you are going to miss a **full calendar month** of training, you can place your enrolment **on hold for that month**.

To do this, please submit the form **before the last day of the previous month**. If the form is not submitted in time, you will still be charged for the upcoming month.

 **Training Break Form:** [Missed Training Sessions](#)

If you are only missing a **small number of sessions**, please log your absences through the **Swim School System**.

## Christmas Breakfast BBQ – Saturday 20th December

Join us after club races for our annual Christmas Breakfast BBQ! There will be food, fun, Christmas novelty swim races, and plenty of festive cheer.

### Christmas Raffle Prizes

Every member and volunteer attending on the day will receive one free raffle ticket. Extra tickets can be purchased before or on the day:

- **\$2 each or \$5 for 3 tickets**

#### Prizes include:

- \$20 Fat Jaks vouchers
- \$50 Bunnings voucher
- Kyle Chalmers autographed T-shirts, caps & hoodies
- L'Occitane hair care travel kit
- TYR Junior goggles pack
- Christmas lolly jar (strawberry & tutti frutti candy canes)

### Lolly Jar Guessing Game

- \$2 per guess or \$5 for 3 guesses
- Available from Week 6 at club races & squads

- Winners must be present on **20th December** to claim prizes

See **Sylvia** for raffle tickets and lolly jar guesses.

## Secret Santa

Kids and adults are invited to join in!

Bring a wrapped gift (maximum value \$10) if you'd like to participate in our Club Secret Santa.

## Raging Waters Club Day – Saturday 10th January 2026

After club races, we're heading to Raging Waters for a club day out!

Discounted tickets are available for \$45 per person. If you'd like to join, contact Sylvia (0435 178 628) by 20<sup>th</sup> December.

## NSW State Championships

A huge congratulations to **Coralie Havea**, **Jay Shrestha**, and **Leo Zhu**, who will represent Merrylands at the **2025/26 NSW Senior State Age Championships**, held **13–19 December** at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre.

- This is the **first State Championship appearance** for Coralie and Jay — an outstanding milestone that reflects their growth, persistence, and hard work throughout the year.
- **Leo**, now a seasoned competitor, will contest two **Breaststroke** events, continuing his strong run at major meets.



## Swimmer Spotlight – Leo Zhu



This week we spotlight a swimmer whose journey has crossed pools, clubs, and even regions of NSW, and who still chooses to come back to Merrylands for the community, the coaching, and the competition.

### Q1. Tell us about your swimming journey.

**A:** I've been doing swimming lessons since I was young, but only in a very small 20m pool. At my first swimming carnival in Year 4, I had a problem with the 50m pool with all the lines and lanes—and I froze up. I didn't do well individually, but I was on the 50m relay team, and we made it to State!

I joined the Moss Vale Swimming Club until Year 6, then in Year 7, my family moved to Sydney, and I joined the Liverpool Swimming Club. I didn't really like it so my friend, Ren Jie, introduced me to Merrylands Swimming Club, where I swam for a few years, then my family moved to Goulburn. I do squad training there, and I travel back to Merrylands to squad train during school holidays when I can, but mostly nowadays I come back to Sydney for meets and our Saturday Club races.

### Q2. What keeps you coming back to Merrylands?

(Whale joke: What makes this pod worth the long swim — or in this case, the long drive?)

**A:** Whilst Goulburn is 2 hours away, it's worth the road trip to Merrylands to visit my club friends and the familiar, friendly club environment. Honestly, I





don't feel the competition drive at the Goulburn Club. The nearby Canberra club has it but is way too big of a club. I like smaller clubs as I'm used to smaller groups (I grew up with a very small primary school of 30 kids!). Also, having been at various swim clubs across NSW and going through about 6 swim coaches, I can vouch that Peter is THE BEST swim coach. Thank you, Peter, for inspiring and guiding me along my swimming journey. I'm very grateful for the time and effort you've invested into helping me achieve my dreams.

### Q3. What is your favourite swim stroke?

**A:** Freestyle! I like that you can go crazy with it and it doesn't require much thinking. Race wise, I'm better suited for breaststroke. My least favourite stroke is backstroke because I can't see anything (except the ceiling, if it's indoors). As there's nothing for me to look at, I start fidgeting and can't zone out in backstroke like I do with other strokes.

### Q4. Something interesting about you?

**A:** I can play piano and I love snow sports. I started with skiing but now I prefer snowboarding. I'm currently trying to learn 'butters' trick.

### Q5. Your favourite swimming achievement so far?

**A:** Last year was the closest I've been to making it to Nationals for breaststroke!

### Q6. What is your swimming goal for next year?

**A:** I haven't been able to train as much as I'd like with school commitments and generally being lazy. My intention has been to prioritise study, but often I don't end up studying! So next year, I'm hoping to increase my training from 2-3 times a week to 4-5 times a week, with a big goal to swim at Nationals! And its Year 12, so I will try to also focus on getting through my studies!

## Club Uniforms

We have a great range of club uniforms in stock available for sale. These can be purchased through the club's online shop [club shop](#). Some items may require a special order to be placed with our suppliers, so planning orders ahead of time will allow for the items to be delivered.



**We have had a number of items of clothing and training equipment left behind after club races and squad training. Without names on items it is impossible to locate the owner. So a reminder, please put your (or your child's name) on every item of clothing and equipment.**

## Lions Club Award

Seen someone that deserves recognition for their efforts in helping? Nominate them for the Lions Club Award, our peak award to recognise our volunteers over the season.

[Nominate a volunteer](#)

## P-Plate Award

As the season rolls along keep an eye out for someone making a silly mistake. We like to recognise and reward all efforts during the season, and the P-Plate award is the perfect way to do this.

[Nominate a silly mistake](#)

## Seen a Problem? Get it Fixed

If you see something that needs fixing you can elevate this directly with Council by logging the issue [here](#).

## Donations

Our partnership with the Australian Sports Foundation allows supporters to make tax-deductible donations to the club. Funds raised help us upgrade and maintain our equipment and systems, providing better facilities for you, our members.

We appreciate the great support our members have provided since the partnership commenced. Donations can be made here.

## Club Merrylands Christmas Events

### At Club Merrylands

Ham and Pork Raffle - Monday 15th December from 7.30pm (tickets on sale at 5.30pm)

Seafood voucher Raffle -Monday 22 December from 7.30pm (tickets on sale at 5.30pm)

### At Guildford Bowling Club

Ham and Seafood voucher Raffle - Saturday 20 December from 7pm (tickets on sale at 5pm)



## Upcoming Meet Calendar

Check the [website](https://merrylandsasc.asn.au/) for the full list of upcoming meets, closing dates, programs and qualifying times.

MEET NAME	MEET DATE	ENTRY CLOSING
NSW Senior State Age Championships	Saturday 13th to Friday 19th December 2025	Closed
NSW Senior Metropolitan Championships	Friday 13th to Sunday 15th February 2026	Tuesday, 3rd February @ 11:55 PM
Merrylands SwimFest	Saturday, 21st February 2026	Saturday, 7th February @ 5:00 PM

