



WHALES TALES

Saturday 5th September, 2026

Welcome to Spring Racing

Welcome back to Merrylands Swimming Centre and our Spring Racing Carnival. With the centre opening earlier this year we are holding 4 weeks of Spring Races before we commence our Summer Season on Saturday 3rd October. During September the swimming centre will open at 7.00am and we aim to commence races at 7.15am.

Spring Racing Carnival events do not accumulate any points towards the Summer Season Graded Races Point Score and these swims do not qualify for Club Championship qualification in the Summer Season.

The Social Committee have obtained 2 Day Passes to Sydney Action Park (renamed Wet & Wild), and we are excited to provide the opportunity to every swimmer and volunteer participating in our Spring Racing Carnival with the chance to win these 2 passes by. The winner will be drawn on our first summer season race day on Saturday 3rd October. So, make sure you attend every week of Spring races to increase your chances to win. See the flyer at the end of Whales Tales for more information.

Committee for 2026/2027

We are pleased to advise you that following the Club's AGM in May the following members were elected to the Committee for the coming season:

Executive Members

President	Graham Edwards
Vice President	Matthew Vivic
Secretary	Leanne Tovkach
Treasurer	Ian Johnston
Race Secretary	Alison Johnston
Social Secretary	Denise Assi

Committee Members

Peter Johnston	Margaret Edwards
Tricia Johnston	Kylee Murray
Varant Jambazian	Sylvia Chan

Registrar

Sylvia Chan. If you have any questions about membership, please speak with Sylvia.

Competition Committee

Alison Johnston (Race Secretary)

Peter Johnston

Tricia Johnston

Social Committee

Denise Assi (Social Secretary)

Sylvia Chan

Kylee Murray

Learn to Swim Committee

Kylee Murray (LTS Co-ordinator)

Leanne Tovkach

Matthew Vivic

Swimming NSW Registration is open

All existing members have been sent an email about registrations for the 2026/2027 season.

Instructions on how to re-register for the summer are on the [How to Join](#) page. Swimmers can enter our Spring Racing Carnival before renewing their 2026/2027 memberships but won't be able to enter events after 1st October unless they have a 2026/2027 membership.

With the kind support of Club Merrylands, we are again able to provide [Free Membership](#) for swimmers 8yrs & Under, who regularly swim in our club races. See the club website for more information about this.



Coaches Corner

It's great to be back at Merrylands! We had a wonderful season at Wenty with the swimmers' consistent hard work at training culminating in excellent results during the short course season.

We've had one week of training already at Merrylands in glorious weather conditions and we are so excited to see what we can achieve this

2026/27 (Six Seven) season 🤖

Swim Rule Changes

Earlier this year World Aquatics (WA) altered the finish rules for Butterfly and Freestyle strokes and also now require lap counters for 400m Freestyle events (as they already do for 800m & 1500m Freestyle).

The changes include:

- **FREESTYLE, BACKSTROKE & BUTTERFLY** Once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the 5m mark, immediately prior to reaching for the finish wall, the swimmer may be completely submerged;
- **BREASTSTROKE & BUTTERFLY** It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time, except at the turn after the touch of the wall when it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast from the beginning of the first arm stroke after leaving the wall;
- A swimmer will be permitted to use tape on one (1) or two (2) fingers or toes (including to bind together two fingers or toes) if use of the tape is required to treat or protect an injury to a finger or toe.

Whilst we do not use lap counters, we ask timekeepers to ring a bell when the swimmer in their lane has **two laps plus 5m** to swim to finish (for all 400m, 800m & 1500m Freestyle events). The signal must be repeated after the turn until the swimmer has reached the 5m mark on the lane rope.

This will replace the referee blowing a whistle at this time in these distance events. We have purchased a set of bells (one to share between each two lanes) to assist with this new task. The first week for this will be on Week 3 (19th September) of the Spring Racing Carnival.

We will provide more information and instructions for this at that time.

Swimmer Spotlight – Alison Johnston

What a great way to start the year by shining the spotlight on our Head Coach Alison Johnston, oh and a swimmer who has excelled at all levels.

Tell us about your swimming journey

I started swim lessons at 3yrs old with a community run Learn to Swim program through the Berowra RSL Swimming Club. I started club races at 6yrs old and joined their Squad program around 8-9yrs old. By 14, I'd outgrown the 4-lane, 20m pool and moved to Hornsby Swim Club with their 50m pool. My initiation to the larger pool was a reality check: the coach warned me that the 9yr olds would overtake me while I adjusted to the longer distance—and he was right! Still, those days hold fond memories, right down to my routine post-swim treat - a cheap bag of stale pool-side popcorn.

Then, when I was working full-time, I moved out of the Berowra area and into Western Sydney and asked around for a local swim club to join. It was between McCredie Park and Merrylands Amateur Swimming Club (MASC). My aunty happened to work with Ian Wilson, and he had been saying great things about MASC, so I signed up here and the rest is history!

Favourite stroke

50m freestyle! I am a sprinter and it's my fastest stroke! I don't have the mental fortitude for distance. My least favourite stroke is Breaststroke - only because my HIPS DON'T LIE, they just can't do the kicking motion. But it's my favourite stroke to teach!

What do you love about the Club to keep coming back?

The Club has an amazing community about it, and I love that it's a place to allow you to challenge yourself - no matter your age or ability. I absolutely love swimming and I've been doing it for over 30 years. This is my swimming family - real and chosen!

Favourite or most memorable swimming achievement

My highest achievement would be getting Top 10 as an NSW State finalist in 50m freestyle in the 19&over event.

The most memorable moments would be having to stay focused and resilient during challenging times - competing in a 200m butterfly event right after a typhoon rudely delayed the event, and another time at a State event right before COVID lock downs kicked in. The vibe at SOPAC was eerie with the unknown of COVID, like the world was ending. Yet there I was, determined, locked in and smashed some Pbs!

My proudest achievement has been returning to the pool after having William and proving that new priorities don't have to slow down your passion. I have Peter to thank for that because he helped me achieve things I didn't know I could achieve. The water doesn't know your age - If you bring the determination and give it your all, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

Swimming goals

As a coach, I never ask my Squad members to push their limits without pushing my own. My main target this season is breaking back under the 30-seconds for 50m Freestyle. My stretch goal is to earn a spot on the World Aquatics Masters Top 10 list. Every Masters meet is an opportunity for me to make this dream come true.

Something interesting about you

I have a fear of mannequins! It started from a seemingly innocent childhood school excursion to Old Sydney Town. We visited a classroom where a mannequin teacher was pointing to a blackboard. As

I walked past it, admiring the remake of an old classroom, the mannequin yelled out and started moving! It was a person pretending to be a mannequin! Now I have this fear any mannequin is a person and will talk and jump scare me at any moment. Dressing mannequins in my past casual jobs and doing CPR refresher courses, terrify me! I even tried exposure therapy at Madame Tussauds - wasn't helpful.

Message to the Squad members

"I'm so proud of the work you've put in and everything you've achieved so far. As we head into another great season back at our home pool, keep pushing yourself and raise the bar. I can't wait to watch each of you grow, hit new PBs, and unlock your full potential!"



Club Uniforms

As the new season starts it is time to check what uniforms you may need to purchase. Our range of club uniforms and equipment can be ordered and purchased through the club's online shop [club shop](#).

If you have any questions, please speak to Margaret Edwards (Property Officer).

A reminder to ensure all uniforms and equipment have the swimmers name on them, as it difficult to identify who owns items left behind at the pool.



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Saturday 5th September, 2026

SPRING Carnival
GIVEAWAY

ENTER! to WIN!

Every helping volunteer and race swim in September is a **FREE CHANCE** to win ...

2 X DAY PASSES **Sydney ACTION PARK**
LET THE ACTION BEGIN!

The **more** races you do or the more weeks you help, the more chances to **WIN!**

No additional raffle tickets can be purchased
September Spring Carnival race weeks only
Winner drawn Sat 03/10/2026 at Club brekky BBQ
Only **ONE** winner, day passes are a set of 2 tickets

Upcoming Meet Calendar

Check the [website](#) for the full list of upcoming meets, closing dates, programs and qualifying times.

MEET NAME	MEET DATE	ENTRY CLOSING
NSW Youth State Age SC C/Ships	12 th & 13 th September	1 st September
NSW State Masters SC C/Ships	10 th & 11 th October	2 nd October
MSW Long Course Championships	14 th & 15 th November	TBA
Masters LC LD Championships	22 nd November	13 th November
SNSW Youth Metropolitan C/Ships	28 th & 29 th November	TBA
NSW Senior State Championships	15 th – 21 st December	TBA
Speedo Sprint Heats	30 th January	TBA
Merrylands SwimFest	13 th February	TBA
NSW Senior Metropolitan C/Ships	19 th – 21 st February	TBA
Speedo Sprint Final	27 th February	Heat Qualifying
NSW State Open Championships	5 th – 7 th March	TBA
NSW State Youth Championships	20 th – 21 st March	TBA

