

Cronulla Shark Island Swim

Sunday, 19 March 2006

Again, the "Cronulla Shark Island Swim Challenge" proved to be the major fundraising event for our Club this year.

The Shark Island Swim Challenge events are made possible by a team of over 160 people, comprising of Club members, their families and their friends, members from Wanda, Elouera and North Cronulla Surf Clubs, volunteers from Surf Life Saving Sydney and Offshore-2 and Lifeguards from Sutherland Shire Council. A better *team* effort, you will be hard pressed to find!

The effort put in by the entire working team was fantastic and there are too many people to mention individually, but I would like to sincerely express my gratitude to each and every one of you, for your part in making the swim events so successful.

The sea conditions, the weather, the sand on the beach and the lack of seaweed and kelp, were all in our favour this year, but unfortunately we had some 'uninvited guests' – blue-bottles! All was looking fine until five minutes after the start of the Ocean Fun Swim, when the wind changed direction and started to blow back onshore.

The Ocean Fun Swim, proceeded with only a few people stung by blue-bottles, but the Shark Island Swim Challenge Course, had to be altered and shortened three times, to a final distance of 0.85 km, before the start of the race and unfortunately, many swimmers were stung.

We had 757 entrants in the 19th Annual Shark Island Swim Challenge and 266 entrants in the Ocean Fun Swim. – A total of 1,023 entrants!

The 1.0 km Ocean Fun Swim, was officially started by the long standing former Convenor of the swim events, John Hollingdale. This event was fiercely contested by the 266 competitors, who entered the swim with ages ranging from 10 to 74.

The first male swimmer was a draw between Stuart Braine and Zak Abdallaoui (11.44) and Lauren Davenport (11.53) was the first female swimmer across the line.

The 0.85 km Shark Island Swim Challenge was officially started by Cronulla Sharks Captain, Brett Kimorley. We had 757 competitors entered in this event and Brendan Capell (8.51) won the event, with Andrew Beato (8.58) in second place and Tom O'Keefe (9.45) in third place.

The results for the first three female swimmers to cross the line were extremely close with Luane Row (10.02) in first place, Amanda Plescan (10.03) in second place and Alicia Burgess (10.04) in third place.

A special mention needs to be made of Helen Evans, 74 years old, who completed the swim with a time of 14.48 as well as John Kelso, 76 years old, who completed the swim in a time of 13.35. John Kelso also won the "Bill Stafford



Trophy" – for the best time in the 65-years-and-over age group. It was a great swim by all competitors, in difficult circumstances and we congratulate each and every one of you!

This year we had swimmers enter the events from Sydney, all over country NSW, ACT, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. We would like to thank every competitor for joining in the fun and swimming in our events this year.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year for the 20th Anniversary Cronulla Shark Island Swim Challenge, to be held on Sunday, 11 March 2007.

I am pleased to announce that the events raised around \$36,000 in net funds for the Club. These funds will be used in all avenues of Club activity over the ensuing year – not to mention the outstanding publicity the Club receives within our local and national community.

Our sponsors were again magnificent this year and their generosity in supporting our Surf Lifesaving activities, is appreciated more than we can ever express to them.

Frank Doran from *Financial Services Partners (Frank Doran Financial Services)* of Miranda, was again our Gold Sponsor, donating cash, plus the supply of the T-Shirts for the work party. What a fantastic individual effort Frank – your generosity and help in organising and running this major fundraising activity for the Club, is appreciated so much!

Our "Silver Sponsors" this year were – Commlinsure (cash donation), Sydney Airport Corporation (cash donation), HPA and Ayman Moubarak, who again designed, printed and mailed out our entry forms and result certificates and Eylene/AH Pearce – who through Shaun Ryan, have kindly donated the swim caps and prizes for the events for many years.

Our other sponsors also added significantly to the financial success of the events. These were – Pacific Ocean Swims (who donated air fares, plus four nights accommodation for two lucky swimmers in the Shark Island Swim Challenge, to compete in the 'Fiji Ocean Swim' and the 'Vanuatu Ocean Swim') – Multi Sport Australia, who supplied the electronic timing system – Elite Personal Training and Sports Coaching, who allowed competitors to use the Cronulla Sports Pavilion for change facilities, warm up, warm down and showers, as well as prizes for the age category winners – Coca Cola, who donated Powerade for the competitors – GC Apparel, who supplied Shark Island T-shirts at greatly reduced prices – BioMechanic Massage Therapy, who supplied prizes for the Age Group competitors – Action Sports and Corporate Wear, who supplied our commemorative caps free of charge – Sutherland United Services Club and radio station 2KY.1017, who supported our major sponsor and advertised our events on radio.





I would also like to make mention of the unquestioning help and support provided by Sutherland Shire Council, who regularly assist us through cleaning the beach and surrounding areas, plus Brad Whittaker, for making his team of Lifeguards and their lifesaving gear, available for water safety for these events. Your help and assistance this year was invaluable.

The courses for both events were professionally set out, thanks to our early morning team of helpers and the Club's IRB Section, who arrived at 6.00 am, to place a total of 20 buoys and markers throughout both courses.

These people, led by Richard Pinker and Daniel Wood, are always the first to start and the last to finish and certainly deserve a special mention for their selfless efforts!

The organisation of the events was superb, the starts were clean and the water safety was second to none.

For water safety, we had the Offshore-2 Rescue Boat, six IRB's two rescue water craft (jet skis), a surfboat and dozens of skis, boards and individual swimmers, all of whom are professionally qualified and proficient.

Phill Hamilton was responsible for enrolling, controlling and co-ordinating the water safety activities and carried out his responsibilities exceptionally well.

Phill and his team of water safety personnel, are to be thoroughly congratulated, on a superb result, under difficult circumstances with the blue-bottles!

Dr Robyn Jordan, was our honorary doctor during the swims, and professionally attended to many swimmers requiring assistance from blue-bottle stings.

We are extremely grateful to Robyn for volunteering her services and helping to make this event one of the safest on the Ocean Swim calendar. She well and truly 'earned her keep' this year!

Jenny Pinker, Debbie Short and Liz Guthrie, worked tirelessly to process the entries for the swims. For the first time, the number of entries processed prior to the swim, was significantly greater than those processed, as late entries on the morning of the swim. And this, we believe, was due to the availability of on-line entry and payment of entries through our website for the first time. Special thanks to Matt Bruce, for providing this facility on our website.

A big thank you also needs to be given to Rob Short and his team of helpers.

Rob managed the set up of the tents and fair stalls, as well as the drink stations and then assisted with water safety and the dismantling and clean up activities. Rob always gives his best to any task he takes responsibility for.

Ken O'Donnell and his team of men and women on the beach, performed a strategic role in setting up and dismantling the start and finish areas and worked extremely

well in record time, even with the introduction of the digital timing devices. Thanks Ken and your team!

The processing of results this year was absolutely fantastic – managed by Chris Stephenson and his wife June, with the help of Carol Lee.

We were fortunate enough to have been offered the facilities of the digital timing devices and associated equipment (free of charge) from Greg Darcy of Multi Sport Australia. This proved to be very successful (after some long hours in the set-up process) and we are enormously grateful to Chris Stephenson and Greg Darcy.

The results for all swimmers in the Shark Island Swim Challenge were available at 12.15 pm. The presentations to the overall and age category winners, commenced around 12.45 pm and were completed by 1.30 pm.

I would like to formally thank Ryan Guthrie, who did a superb job of creating a completely new website for us.

I know that Ryan put hours into this and it looks great. You can visit the web site at: www.sharkislandswim.com.au

The results of the Shark Island Swim, were available on the Cronulla Shark Island Swim Website, by 3.15pm, on the afternoon of the events!

Thanks also to Ken English, our Announcer and MC, Col Elliott our Event Referee, Ryan Guthrie who designed the Shark Island T-shirts, Jenny Pinker who put in many hours of work in the Club office, organising the myriad of tasks and answering enquiries prior to and after the event and Debbie Short and Liz Guthrie, for putting in long hours when needed!

Finally, I would like to express my enormous gratitude to the Shark Island Swim Committee, who spent many hours throughout the year to organise and conduct these events.

The Committee Members for 2005-2006 were: Frank Doran, Greg Hewett, Phil Hamilton, John Hollingdale, Ken O'Donnell, Richard Pinker, Rob Short, Chris Stephenson, David Swingler and John Wilson.

Again, we learned a lot from this year's events. We had many new Club members helping out with the organisation of the events again this year, (particularly the parents from our Nippers) and they worked superbly.

We plan to continue to improve the organisation and conduct of the swim events and next year, we will be putting in a special effort to "increase the number of waves for the swims and the times between waves" to make it less hectic for the competitors!!

Thanks once again to all Club members, for making the Shark Island Swim Challenge such a success. I am very proud to have such a great team supporting me in so many ways with the running of the Cronulla Shark Island Swim Challenge.

*Bruce Guthrie, Convenor,
Shark Island Swim Challenge Committee.*

