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Nan, 70, still has to fill lap quota

By DICK CRAWFORD

NAN LEWIS may not possess the talent of her "superfish" namesake Hayley, but she feels like a cod out of water if she goes a couple of days without swimming a few laps at her local pool.

Swimming has been part of the lifestyle of the Hobart grandmother since she was a fresh-faced 12-year-old day-dreaming about representing Australia.

Although she never achieved that high goal, Mrs Lewis made her mark in her chosen sport.

Back in the days when swimming officials frowned on anything skimpier than knee-length woollen cossies, Mrs Lewis claimed State titles in freestyle and backstroke and won five trans-Derwent races.

And at 70 she is not resting on her laurels.

Mrs Lewis will be among 400 competitors at the 16th AUSSI National Swim and Club Championships in Devonport from March 12 to 16.

She will compete in the 70 to 75 age group in the 50m, 100m and 400m freestyle and the 50m and 100m backstroke.

"You're only allowed to swim in five events," she said with a hint of regret.

As well as competing, Mrs Lewis is captain of the Talay's AUSSI Masters Club, publicity officer for AUSSI Tasmania, and a swimming instructor.

Mrs Lewis reckons you're never too old to take up the sport.

She said she had trained some people who had not taken the plunge until they were in their 60s.

Late starters often became "fanatical" about swimming.

Mrs Lewis has not considered the possibility of retirement.

"As long as I can get to the pool I'll keep swimming," she said.

And the answer to the question that has to be asked?

"No, I'm not related to Hayley, unfortunately," she said. "I'd love to claim that one."

● Nan Lewis . . . a dedicated swimmer for the last 58 years