



MST Guide for New Committee Members

The Masters Swimming Tasmania guide for new committee members
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1. The structure of masters swimming in Australia

Masters Swimming Australia (MSA) is the parent body that represents the interests of seven branches, 190 clubs and currently around 6500 adult swimming members across Australia. Members are adults of at least 18 years of age.

2. The Structure and Management of the Tasmanian Branch

Masters Swimming Tasmania (MST) is the second-smallest Branch of MSA, with eight Clubs and about 300 members, with well over half of them being women. The Clubs are:

- Burnie
- Devonport
- Hobart Aquatic
- Hobart Dolphins
- Huon Valley
- Launceston
- Talays
- Tomatoes

Each Club pays an annual affiliation fee MST. A person must become a member of a Club in order to be a member of MSA and to swim in Branch, National and International competitions. The annual fee paid by a member to his or her club is apportioned between MSA, MST and the club. Part of the MSA portion goes towards insurance for all masters swimming activities.

Van Diemens is a 'virtual' Club. It is established by MST as a means for people to join the organisation but for various reasons are unable or don't wish to join an actual Club. It is occasionally used as a means for a swimmer to join only to swim in competitions.

Management of the Branch is through the Committee and conducted under Rules documented in the MST Constitution. The Committee is established each year at the Annual General Meeting by election of the following Officials:

- President, who manages the business of the Branch and acts as its official representative;
- Secretary, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Branch;
- Treasurer, who manages Branch finances;
- Recorder, who maintains and publishes the results of Branch swimming events including record times;
- Coordinator of Coaching and Education, who facilitates coach training, education and achievement of accreditation; and
- Coordinator of Safety and Health, who liaises with Club Safety Officers in ensuring the safety of members and visitors at all sanctioned activities;

The newly elected Officials then appoint:

- Registrar, who maintains the register of members;
- Coordinator of Publicity and Publications, who manages the distribution of information within the Branch and to the public;
- Delegate to MSA NBM meetings, representing the Branch;
- Technical Coordinator, who manages the training and provision of technical officers for the conduct of swim meets; and
- Public Officer, who represents MST for regulatory requirements.

Further details are in a separate document 'MST Branch Committee Roles and Responsibilities'.

Each Club then nominates two members as Club delegates to the Committee.

The Committee meets, usually at least four times each year, either in person or by videoconference. Business is conducted during these meetings or by correspondence between meetings, by Committee members or through sub-Committees comprising Committee members and other MST members as required. Where issues come up for debate, especially those relating to changes to the Constitution, a Special General Meeting may be convened. At any meeting, voting is confined to Committee Officials and up to two representatives from each Club.

In addition to the specific roles of each Committee member, they jointly have responsibility promote the interests of the Branch and its members. These include an awareness of safety (including compliance with Covid-19 requirements), privacy considerations and of member protection against any form of abuse or discrimination. The Good Governance Checklist and other MSA Policies and Guidelines are useful resources: <https://mastersswimming.org.au/rules-and-policies/>

Because we are a small organisation, we tend to operate on a fairly informal basis, but we need to recognise the responsibilities, including appropriate attention to legal, financial and other integrity issues.

The Branch generally conducts four swim meets each year:

- the Summer Long Course Championships;
- the Winter Short Course Championships;
- the Short Course Long Distance meet; and
- the Long Course Long Distance meet.

The meets are overseen by a Swim Meet Sub-committee, appointed by the Branch Committee, in conjunction with the Technical Coordinator, who ensures the availability of Referee, Starter, Stroke and Turns officials and timekeepers.

Awards are made in various categories, including Swimmer of the Meet and for Championships, gender/age group award for highest score for the meet. Swim times are recorded and Branch, National and World records. World records are only valid using automatic (AOE) electronic timing.

3. MSA policies and operation

At the Federal Government level, sport is administered through the Office of Sport, within the Commonwealth Department of Health. There is a general policy of trying to rationalise the number of sporting bodies, for administrative and funding reasons and for swimming, there has been an encouragement for MSA to work more closely with Swimming Australia. This has led, for example, to development of a standard process of development for coaches, with modules within the program specifically for masters swimming coaches. There has also been discussion of cross-accreditation of technical officers. Such initiatives can be useful for Tasmania, with our relatively small pool of people to fill technical positions for competitions.

There is also some encouragement for Masters clubs to amalgamate with Open clubs, as a 'one-club' approach. Historically, cooperation between masters and open administrations has proved difficult so the approach is being developed with caution. We have one Club, Huon Valley, which operates on a one-club basis.

The Mission of MSA is to offer an environment at club, branch and national level that encourages all adults, regardless of ability, to swim regularly and to compete in order to promote fitness and improve their general wellbeing. MSA has a range of Rules and Policies which MST are required to abide by. Details are on the website at <https://mastersswimming.org.au/rules-and-policies/>

MSA has a National Board of Management (NBM), which comprises the President, Finance Director and three other elected members. As well as their management meetings, NBM also conducts General Meetings, at which one delegate from each Branch attends. Day-to-day management is through the National Office, with a small staff headed by the General Manager.

The NBM is responsible for the governance and overall direction of the organisation, with the day-to-day running of the organisation the responsibility of the staff in the National Office. Decision making rests with branch delegates, who meet at a National General Meeting twice a year.

There are three permanent national committees that serve the organisation: Coaching, Swim Meets and Technical. These volunteer committees are the engine room of the national organisation, providing the necessary skills to develop and deliver programs appropriate for the organisation to conduct its affairs and support its membership. Branches may nominate members to serve on the Committee and if elected, act on a national level, rather than as Branch representation.

MSA administers annual National Championships, nominating a member from the host Branch to head a management committee, reporting to MSA. Generally, hosting of National Championships is on a rotating basis between the seven Branches.

MSA also runs a National Swim Series (NSS), being nominated meets, one or two in each Branch, in which members can compete and earn points toward annual awards. MST generally nominates our Winter Championships for the NSS. MSA also manages Vorgee- sponsored programs e1000 Endurance and Million Metres awards.