

## Masters Swimming Tasmania meet

### MST Christmas friendly meet - Oatlands Aquatic Centre, 2 December 2023

In what was described as 'a great little meet - another brilliant initiative that looks like becoming a regular feature', some 40+ MST members enjoyed the drive through Tasmania's scenic Midlands to meet at the beautiful Oatlands Aquatic Centre right in the centre of the state on Saturday, 2 December.



This is a state-of-the-art facility, barely one-year old, which includes a six-lane 25-metre indoor swimming pool, warm clear water, friendly staff, and a lovely outdoor area for our post-carnival BBQ. Where better to meet up with old and new friends and enjoy swimming a few sprint events with no pressure?

The relaxed format saw a number of our more seasoned swimmers make welcome returns to the water after dealing with illness or injury in recent times, while several newer swimmers debuted in a variety of events.

Relay racing is always popular, and the highlight of the meet was again the mixed medley handicapped relay, which this year attracted five teams.

The purpose of handicapping is to level the playing field and create a fair competition among participants with varying abilities.

Handicapper Di Gregory was busy throughout the afternoon carefully assessing swimmers' performances, and then assigning handicaps to the teams based on those performances. This meant that teams started at different times according to their handicaps.

With the Launceston Lemmings starting on the gun, it seemed an impossible task for the other teams to catch them with handicaps of 50+ seconds and more. However, catch them they did, with all teams going head-for-head over the freestyle leg of the race.



In the end the backmarkers, the mighty Hobart Aquatic team (pictured above) of Tony Forman, Rebecca Laletin, Donna Rickwood and Bradley McTye - which had started on a handicap of 71 seconds - was victorious, overtaking Launceston Lemmings with only a few metres to go, and just touching out the Hobart Dolphins. Exciting racing indeed!

Donna Rickwood (TAC) was presented with an Award to acknowledge her Vorgee 5 million metres and once again we saw fierce competition for the Best



Dressed (Christmas-themed) Club award. Ultimately the heroines from Huon Valley (Sharon and Jacqui, pictured above) triumphed over Hobart Aquatic - as well as some very determined (albeit somewhat dubious) individual challengers!

Thanks as always to our wonderful team of officials, and everyone else who helped to make this a fun and festive meet.

And yes, as suggested, the event looks certain to be held again next year - most likely on 30 November 2024 (tbc), so mark the date in your calendar now.

---

**Megan Stronach**  
President, Masters Swimming Tasmania