

SECOND CLAIM MEMBERSHIP –

PROMOTING FITNESS, FRIENDSHIP AND FUN FOR ALL

A response to the article by Sandra Mutch in the Spring Edition of Different Strokes on the viability of second claim membership

Claremont Masters Swimming Club have wholeheartedly embraced the option of second claim membership in the past twelve months opening up our training sessions to other clubs and providing further racing opportunities for those swimmers who enjoy the competitive aspect of swimming. Our Friday morning training session regularly attracts more than 20 swimmers from up to as many as four different Masters Clubs including second claim members of Claremont and casual visitors to the session. The atmosphere at these sessions is one that embodies the motto of Masters Swimming – fitness, friendship and fun – where everyone enjoys the social and physical advantages to training in a large, friendly and welcoming group.

For those non-Claremont swimmers who were regularly attending our sessions the ease of paying one lump sum second claim membership fee instead of a weekly lane hire contribution was not only appealing but also considerably cheaper. From an administrative point of view, it is easier for us to accept a one-off fee and have these members listed on our database as well as our club email distribution list so we can keep them well-informed of club and Masters Swimming activities, something that some of the smaller clubs simply do not have the infrastructure or man-power to deliver. We do still offer casual attendance for those swimmers who cannot make the sessions regularly and prefer to pay each time they attend.

We welcome all our second claim members as **full and equal** members of our club as they effectively pay the same club component as all our first claim members. We endeavour to promote a cohesive, friendly and inclusive atmosphere at our club rather than make the distinction between social, second claim or first claim members. Second claim members, like all our members, are invited to attend our social functions and asked to contribute to club activities and, if they so choose, compete at carnivals. The concept that you have competing loyalties by being a member of two clubs is reminiscent of the arguments against dual-citizenship and ignores the idea that two clubs can be complementary entities.

For those swimmers who do enjoy competing and relish the opportunity to swim at more than their allocated BACC each year the attraction of being able to swim as part of a team is considerable. As we welcome our second claim members as equal members to our club there is no exclusion of swimmers from relay team selection based on first or second claim membership status, ability or any other factor for that matter. **ALL** our swimmers who want to swim relays at carnivals are given the opportunity to swim. At carnivals where the first

claim club of our second claim members are competing we actively encourage them to swim with their first claim club as was the case in the recent Short Course Relay Carnival. Contrary to common belief, Claremont is not interested in “stacking the decks”. We are interested in offering our members an atmosphere of encouragement where each individual can realise their full potential within a team framework.

Several of our second claim members joined Claremont with no intention of ever competing for either their first or second claim clubs, but have subsequently decided to give racing a try and have loved the experience competing for both their clubs. Had we not been able to provide the opportunity of competition for those swimmers they may never have taken the plunge into racing.

We accept that there may be some issues with the recording system for those few swimmers who choose to swim at an interclub for their second claim club but from a club administrative point of view it is clearly easier to have one simple membership that gives members the flexibility to choose whether to race or not. Surely in this day and age it is not too difficult to override the existing system or even introduce a new facility whereby second claim members can be accommodated on the very rare occasions where they are competing for their second claim club?

We had two second claim swimmers swimming as part of the Claremont team at the 2009 Nationals as their first claim clubs could not field teams or their teams were too small to field relays. There were absolutely no issues arising from this from a recording point of view.

The concept of the Black Swan Club is a great one and would be terrific for a situation like the Worlds and possibly to some extent at the Nationals although at the Nationals if there was the option of competing for a disparate Black Swan team or a second claim club for which you had already established an association with we know which one we would rather compete for. If, however, the Black Swan team idea is reinstated then surely this is a second claim issue anyway and presents all the associated recording problems that Sandra has mentioned so would it not be better to try and make the system work better and accommodate second claim membership across the board?

Claremont Masters is strongly in support of retaining the option of second claim membership. We do not see that it presents issues of club loyalty rather it strongly promotes interclub friendship and support and surely this is what Masters Swimming is all about. We should not see our clubs as cliques but rather as part of the bigger Masters Swimming family. Second claim membership is just one of the many ways we can help promote fitness, friendship and fun to all Masters swimmers.

Committee, Claremont Masters Swimming Club

Read what some of our second claim members have to say;

Mark Barlow – 1st Claim Bold Park, 2nd Claim Claremont

As a shift-worker who loves his swimming, I must tell you how much I appreciate the opportunity to be a second-claim member of Claremont AUSSI Masters.

1. Claremont AUSSI is a great club, professionally run with excellent coaches and facilities, but its greatest asset is its welcoming inclusive culture – you feel very strongly this club's ethos is to enable its members be the best swimmer they can be whilst enjoying their swimming to the maximum.
2. Claremont AUSSI's welcoming culture sets an example to all AUSSI Masters clubs. I may be a second-claim member but have never been made to feel second-class at Claremont AUSSI Masters.
3. I am a primary member of Bold Park AUSSI Masters, but can only regularly get to one session. Being a second-claim member of Claremont AUSSI enables me get to another quality session with a qualified coach on deck.
4. AUSSI Masters is all about participation and has a strong social aspect – you get to meet other swimmers from all over the place. For the record, I often attend the Stadium Snappers Saturday afternoon session en route to work and would be happy to be a 'third claim' member there. Also, when I visit my mum in Melbourne, I attend the Malvern Marlins sessions and am made to feel very welcome - at my fourth-claim AUSSI Masters club!

Gale Martin – 1st Claim Bold Park, 2nd Claim Claremont

1. Pool-side coaching is not always available at some First Club training sessions. Second Claim club members are able to take advantage of other coaching opportunities
2. A small membership club might not be able to field sufficient entrants in events such as relays. Being a Second Club member may enable a swimmer to compete in a team with others known to them.
3. The camaraderie engendered by belonging to more than one club is invaluable.

Lucy Stuart – 1st claim Bold Park, 2nd claim Claremont

As a generally non-competitive and social masters swimmer, I do not feel strongly about what other individuals care to do when they compete, and I can understand the reasoning of a couple of very good swimmers who have swum for their 2nd club on occasions, even when it has disadvantaged my 1st membership club.

Therefore, can only speak for myself, and I chose to join Claremont as a 2nd claim member purely as I get a lot from attending your sessions - good coaching, another approach, great social group, fits into my weekly routine well - but I would never intend to compete for Claremont (that is the cross that Bold Park has to bear!). I joined in order to make some sort of a financial contribution to Claremont, as the club does not charge lane hire and we get great coaching. I did not want to be too much of a freeloader. Plus I enjoy the inclusiveness.

Robyn Wilson – 1st claim Stadium Snappers, 2nd claim Claremont

I became a second claim member primarily for financial reasons - rather than pay lane hire every week for the Friday morning Claremont session, it was cheaper to become a second claim member. However, since coming to the Claremont morning session, I now find that the social aspect has become equally, if not more important, than the financial aspect. I swim with the Snappers - my first club - twice a week but because I am now retired I prefer to do my swimming during the day. Even though the Snappers do swim during the day, Claremont offers me another group of swimmers to socialise with as well and I am more than happy with the combination of what both clubs offer me as a swimmer.

So far I see no disadvantages in belonging to more than one club. In fact, the advantages are numerous - different coaching styles, a bigger choice of times and days for swimming, new swimming buddies and last but not least new "coffee" mates! It is certainly a definite plus for being able to join more than one club and I am certain that more members could become second club members depending on their circumstances and their needs.

Ray Plowman – 1st claim Osborne Park, 2nd claim Claremont

I would be most disappointed if 2nd claim memberships were abolished as I have gained so much improvement from the Friday morning sessions with Claremont Masters for more than a year now. I don't swim nights and this is the only opportunity I have to get extra training and expert coaching from Elena and Sally, when she is there.

Karen Sandover – 1st claim Bold Park, 2nd claim Claremont

In response to the article "To Second Claim or Not To Second Claim" in September's Different Strokes, I would like to make the following points:

1. My motivation in joining Masters swimming is involvement in club recreational swimming, with competition being the secondary consideration.
2. Masters swimming with my first club and with my second club allows me to attend a wider choice of training sessions and club activities which I otherwise would be denied due to work and family commitments.
3. I have found over the past year that involvement with my second club has increased my enjoyment of recreational swimming, introduced to me to a wide circle of like-minded people, and improved my swimming beyond my expectations.
4. At no time have I felt any pressure to compete for my second club, nor have I found any conflict of loyalty.

In summary, by joining both clubs my swimming has improved, the swimming social network has increased, and as a consequence swimming has become a very enjoyable part of my life which would not have occurred through just my first club.