

## SWIMMING NEW ZEALAND

# A THOUGHT FOR ALL

Every morning when I awake, the very first thing that I ask myself is “what can I do today to ensure that I help New Zealand win more medals at the Olympics?”

IS THIS YOU?

“The challenge for all in Team NZ Swimming is “will you be better tomorrow because of what you did or didn’t do today?” - **NOW**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

(This statement would be developed by consensus, negotiation and consultation at an annual Swimming New Zealand Conference which would include all committed stakeholders of New Zealand Swimming)

## **VISION STATEMENT**

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## **REPORT TO SWIMMING NEW ZEALAND**

By Bill Sweetenham  
10<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### **INTRODUCTION**

Successful nations in the world of competitive swimming will have their staff, programmes and structures all in place now for immediate action after the 2008 Olympic Games. This is vital to the process of all nations for continued and aggressive programming of athletes and events immediately post Olympics. It is an observation of past performances of successful nations that there is no down-time immediately post Olympics and all plans are immediately put into place from one quadrennium to the other.

Competitive swimming is today the most progressive sport in the world. There are more countries than ever competing at the global level, there are certainly more swimmers winning medals at the podium level from more countries than ever before. No sport is breaking more world records or advancing faster on the world stage than swimming. In terms of competitiveness at global level and the diversity of athletes winning medals at this same level, only track and field can compare. Swimming has moved faster and more aggressively than any other sport. To compare swimming with other less progressive sports is nonsensical, and not a good way to compare standards domestically in New Zealand.

The success of swimming has come from smarter and more intelligent coaching programmes, not from doing more work. Swim coaches the world over have made an enormous impact on the above areas and with the right leadership and direction, there is absolutely no reason why New Zealand coaches cannot achieve the same and be just as good. It will take planning, strategic foresight and a massive uplifting of skills, both in coaching standards and club organization.

In competitive swimming's history, any nation that has been dominant in world swimming has done so due to coaching excellence and the strengths of clubs. Regions have been unsuccessfully trialled by many nations but have not produced the same results that clubs have achieved. The strength of a swimming nation comes back to creative and innovative coaching, club representation, athlete and coach support (including funding, sports science/medicine and in-kind support) and a well organised national body that provides superior leadership.

Swimming New Zealand (SNZ) should have reviewed their programmes and structures and have in place both their strategic and business plan ready for immediate implementation after the Olympics. In this regard, the timing of this review and the considerations within it are ideal.

With reviews of this nature, there tends to be a focus on the weak areas encountered when completing a detailed review of any organization. This then follows that negative areas, along with weak areas are highlighted. It must be remembered that the areas for greatest improvement in any organization are the areas of weakness. Hopefully, this review will focus Swimming New Zealand on both maintaining and improving its areas of strength and eliminating and/or strengthening its areas of weakness.

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In regard to the areas of strength, it should be highlighted that Swimming New Zealand has many. After completion of an extensive interview process and observations of many years of Swimming New Zealand, it is my belief that the following are areas of strength:

1. Small countries have two identifiable strengths and they are unity of force and patriotism. Usually, this is combined with close proximity of population which means travel for national camps and competitions is much easier than in larger nations. With New Zealand, travel north/south can be difficult and expensive, and travel east/west is extremely easy and cost-effective. This should be taken into account with competition structures and inter-club competitions.
2. The competition structure of Swimming New Zealand appears to meet the needs of athletes and coaches, however it is my belief that competitions could be well advised to look for dates immediately following key and related events in Australia in order that the more advanced athletes could compete in Australia on one weekend and return to New Zealand compete in the corresponding meet the following weekend.
3. The athlete support mechanisms in terms of bonuses for high performance, Prime Minister Scholarships, Hillary Scholarships and CPEGS are very supportive of athletes and coaches. In particular, the bonus scheme aimed at the international podium is an excellent one.
4. Small countries tend to be able to offer their athletes more in terms of international competitions due to the fact that there are fewer athletes for the same number of competitions per country around the world. For example, smaller countries have the same athletes representing at more competitions in comparison to the bigger countries like Australia and the USA where different athletes attend different meets and domestically, the competition to get onto international teams is much more difficult for athletes and coaches in bigger countries. The depth of exposure to international competition per athlete in a small country is much greater than that of the larger countries.
5. The international centre at the Millenium Stadium in most areas is as good as any university in the USA, and should be encouraged and developed with the highest level of commitment to the athletes and home coaches who choose to use this programme as much as possible. However, a corresponding amount of support must go from the Millenium International Centre to the home programmes. This facility must be utilised to a greater extent, as it is the strength of New Zealand swimming.
6. The national age programme appears to be focused and process driven, and whilst only being in operation for a short period of time it is achieving its objective of preparing athletes and coaches to take the next step to the National Youth Programme. This is in preference to being an end within itself in terms of focusing on results, rather than the process. I believe that the Head Coach of this programme, Mr Trevor Nicholls is doing a great job of leading this programme, however a review of best times at National Age Championships would clearly indicate that more coach development is required at this level (see Appendix IV). This programme is and can be a real strength of Swimming New Zealand.

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I would envisage that after 2010 Commonwealth Games or early in 2010, the youth and age programmes would be reviewed with the thought of combining both programmes.

7. Although in the early stages of operation, the National Youth Programme is having a significant and positive effect on this stage of development for Swimming New Zealand. Results over the past 8 years indicate quite clearly that this has been the key weakness for Swimming New Zealand and its athletes and coaches. It is still currently the weak area of New Zealand swimming but under the leadership of National Youth Coach, Mr Clive Power, it appears to also be focused and process driven in terms of preparing athletes for senior level in preference to short term results at the youth level.

I believe this is the area where New Zealand can make the greatest impact on the future results at the international podium level, and requires significantly more financial support within its budget. Combined with this there must be a well planned practical national plan and support from New Zealand Academy of Sport. Up-skilling of coaches at this level and a new club structure in preference to the current out-dated regional structure of competition means that this programme is the key programme for the future of a better representation on the international podium. Regions can serve a purpose in conducting inter-club competition but there is no evidence of improved membership or performance due to representation at national competition.

8. New Zealand's passion for all things sporting and a desire to compete on the world stage. Combine this with Swimming New Zealand's desire to improve, given that the core essentials required to achieve are evident.
9. The amount of support given by SPARC, New Zealand Academy of Sport and the Millenium Institute.

There are three documents missing from this report. They are:

- (a) Athlete Mapping – I did request this several times but the Performance Director was unable to supply this information. This is where using a map of New Zealand, it can be identified where athletes on the youth and senior programme originated from.
- (b) I have not included the key athletes' performance analysis which has already been provided in ample detail by SPARC. However, I strongly suggest that these statistics be enhanced to include comparisons of each individual against world rankings, world records, Olympic results, World Championship results and other current competition athletes.
- (c) The submission requested from the National Head Coach (Jan Cameron) which was only received at the last minute and too late to be included in the report, however the CEO has these documents and they should be attached to the report.

I have purposely not included the national senior team in the above points. I have requested Jan Cameron to make an evaluation of this in detail and submit this to the CEO. These are for reasons that will be outlined in this report. It must be said however that in the eyes of the rest of the swimming world, there is a clear perception that New Zealand swimming in

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terms of its open senior team is performing well and that Jan Cameron is held in high esteem as a National Head Coach by most coaches around the world.

I believe that two changes are required and I would prefer to put these in the most positive way that I can. The decision to have the High Performance Coaching Director and the Director of Coaching in very similar roles separately and individually answering to the Chief Executive Officer was one that was always going to have problems, regardless of the personnel involved. This has not had positive outcomes. I believe that to change this is crucial to the future of Swimming New Zealand, and must be addressed as the key change that is required. Their roles must be spelt out very clearly and there must be only one person reporting on high performance to the CEO and the Board. Both people have worthy attributes at the international level.

The second of these changes is that the appointment of a Head Coach (High Performance Coaching Director) to be both the national head coach and the Millenium head coach was also one that drew conflict. Both of these above decisions (and once again, regardless of the personnel involved) were always going to lead to the problems associated with items (A – High Performance Leadership) and (B – Trust, Transparency and National Team Unity) referred to below. These two issues would not have continued to manifest and divide Swimming New Zealand had they been addressed some years back when the problems first came to light.

With regard to the national plan and the “Mining for Gold” document, it is felt by the vast majority of those interviewed that it was initially accepted as an extremely good document but most felt that its announcement and circulation was premature in that it lacked the resources to deliver the content. Certainly, the 5 top 5 placings in Olympic events was never really going to be achievable and most expressed concerns over this target.

Whilst I believe these points are the key points for the future of New Zealand swimming, they will require attention and constant monitoring. Strong field-based leadership and support from Swimming New Zealand will be required so that these programmes are sustainable, repeatable and move in a cohesive direction with the ever-changing goalposts on the playing field of world swimming.

Certainly, there is a strong feeling that swim coaches are under-valued and unappreciated in New Zealand. There is also evidence which suggests that this is a fact. Coaches most certainly feel this and Swimming New Zealand and NZSCAT must take steps to address this with a step-by-step promotion to the swimming public and the public in general.

Currently, there are very few coaching pathways. Coaches can be their own worst enemies and must also take responsibility for this aspect of their profession as well. Coaching CPEG is an excellent coaching support mechanism to support coaches, and SPARC must be encouraged to increase this wherever they can for coaches who have achieved an international standard which supports Olympic and world long course results.

The Prime Ministers Scholarships and CPEG must be linked directly to elite performance (open) as a first priority and then identified elite youth athletes. There should be a significant increase in numbers of coaches included on national youth squads.

New Zealand with its small number of participants must do all things better than any other country, and aim to be superior in every way possible. Small countries like New Zealand must have unity under pressure. When this unity is evident for a consistent and lengthy

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period of time, it will experience a team support practice that will lift all on the national team and promote unprecedented patriotism.

Small countries with their swim programmes managed correctly have two strengths over larger countries and they are unity and patriotism, but one is dependant on the other.

### INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interview process took place based on a list of identified New Zealand swimming stakeholder personnel. This ranged from all employees, Board members and consultants of New Zealand Swimming, along with coaches, athletes and sports science investors.

Although there were surprisingly no parents, officials or pool managers (identified or listed), I took it upon myself to identify as best I could and solicit opinions from a limited few parents and officials, along with several people from the general public.

The few general public people who I spoke to had no understanding as would be expected of any technical issues, were for the most part supportive of New Zealand Swimming and made very positive comments, but with limited knowledge.

The consensus of opinion from the personnel identified by New Zealand Swimming were unanimous (well above 95%) in their views, observations and perceptions of the operation and management of New Zealand Swimming. A list of questions developed by me was circulated to all identified by Swimming New Zealand with the coaching staff/swimmers being the focused target group of these people and the interview process. It was optional to answer any or all of the questions. Advice and opinion was also invited outside of the perimeters of the questionnaire.

There is a strong feeling by the vast majority of athletes that there was a significant lack of quality coaching and a lack of knowledge of technical skills. These athletes felt that there needed to be a higher component of coach development in respect of technical skills. National team athletes also had the perception that the Performance Director was not fully engaged in the team, supportive of the athletes or having a contribution and a role to play. There was also a strong feeling from athletes that there needed to be provision of more recovery aspects in the coaching.

All those interviewed were very open and indicated that they had no problems with the questions. The interviews went much further than the questions listed, with those being interviewed invited to offer opinions or facts on any other associated issues. A sample of the questionnaire is included in this review report.

**Swimming New Zealand must address a key philosophical question – “Does Swimming New Zealand wish to send large numbers of competitors to major (Olympics/World Long Course) events to win a small number of medals and finalists, or does it wish to send smaller numbers of athletes to target the same or more medals?”**

It is thought that perhaps if the relay selection policy is going to be top 12 in the world, then there is a good argument for extension of the individual qualifying times to be softened as most would consider top 12 relay performances as being much softer than the individual criteria for getting on the team. These are choices that must be made prior to the acceptance of the recommendations within this report.

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In some cases, it was difficult to differentiate in terms of priorities the areas of concern and the importance of the key issues. The alphabetical section below were ones that were identified in the main as of high priority to those being interviewed. These were prioritised as high performance issues rather than structural or operational issues. Where there is alphabetical identified attached to the subject, these can be considered as high priority from the stakeholders point of view accumulatively. Those issues not identified by alphabetical numbering were considered to be of a lesser priority to the stakeholders (however could be of greater importance to Swimming New Zealand).

The key issues identified were as follows and in order of priority:

### (A) High Performance Leadership

There was an overwhelming feeling of the need for a much stronger leadership role from the Swimming New Zealand office. This was so in the areas of weaknesses of communication, technical field contact, consistency of policies, a greater need for transparency, team logistics, selection policies, follow up etc. Most coaches (over 95%) indicated that they had not experienced “field” contact in the previous 2 years or more, and felt strongly that this was one of, if not the most significant benefit to both them, their programme and their athletes. Some contact from both the Youth Coach (Mr Clive Power) and Age Coach (Mr Trevor Nicholls) had been welcomed and appreciated.

New Zealand Swimming has an urgent need for consistent field-based leadership and direction for its coaching expertise. Certainly, a clear national plan which was answered in Question 14 of the questionnaire indicated no real understanding by **all** surveyed. This lack of understanding of a detailed national plan including a calendar of events, camps, competitions etc. was an indicator of poor communication (information dissemination) and requires urgent attention and rectification. This must include a camp programme (18 months in advance) and a detailed competition itinerary containing clear selection policies and funding support for 2-4 years in advance (2012 and updated every second year). This should also include goals and targets. This must be extended to elite performance groups in the categories of open, youth and age. One category process must lead into the higher level. There must be a fully integrated programme. By observation and questioning, it certainly became apparent that the three programmes (age, youth and high performance) operated independently and in several key areas in isolation. This was considered by those interviewed as the No. 1 area for improvement.

### (B) Trust, Transparency and National Team Unity

Whilst for the vast majority (over 95%), it was felt that the Head Coach had done an outstanding job in driving the national team, the Millenium programme and the development of the North Shore programme, there exists an equal amount of distrust with this situation. It could be argued that a percentage of this related to “jealousy” from other programmes. It was considered that there was a “preferential” policy on national teams for the Millenium group of athletes.

This situation also occurs when the Head National Coach is also the Head “Institute” Coach. It is very difficult not to have a conflict of interest, along with a “perceived” conflict of interest. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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The decision to appoint the Head Coach to be the centre (Millenium) coach as a combined role was one more than likely made with great consideration to the economic environment rather than the practicalities of a National Head Coach being a centre coach as well. It was not a good one as it placed this person in an unwinnable situation, ie. to be the Head Coach of a national team and a centre coach in competition with other national team members has a conflict of interest which results in a compromise approach for the personal involved.

I believe that the National Head Coach, to be successful has to be independent of other responsibilities in terms of a daily on-deck environment which pitches the Head Coach against club coaches and is not one that is productive or supportive of unity in a national team effort. On considering results, one would have to confirm that the current Head Coach and Millenium Head Coach has done an outstanding job in combining these two roles within this very difficult situation. This area of concern was considered to be the No. 2 priority of those interviewed.

### (C) High Performance Recognition – (Measurable Targets)

There was a feeling that high performance, apart from the Millenium group was not encouraged, recognised or rewarded. It appeared that many of those suggesting this were struggling to comprehend what is “high performance”. There is a misunderstanding of exactly what is the purpose of funding by SPARC for New Zealand Swimming to achieve. This must be spelt out very clearly as to why funding is given and what is the expected outcome. This will require New Zealand Swimming to identify a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement. These must be developed in an environment of consultation, negotiation and consensus.

My recommendation is:

		2008 →	2010
Open	18 years and older	world top 20 →	world top 8
Youth	under 18 years	world top 25 →	world top 12
		world youth top25 →	world youth top8

These should be guidelines, and whilst there may be exceptions, guidelines and policies should not be expressed or based on exceptions. Limited flexibility can be employed.

### Youth and Age Identifications (Guidelines)

Age group	Male	14-15-16 years
	Female	13-14-15 years
Youth group	Male	16-17-18 years
	Female	15-16-17 years

The youth group must be identified and developed 6 years out from each Olympics with a driven, organised and focused effort. The goal should be to have a large (approximately 30%) representation of the national team for the Commonwealth Games.

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An international target of having New Zealand swimmers make up 5% of the world's top 20 youth rankings is one that should be introduced. This will mean a continual monitoring of world rankings to keep updated a "current" list of world youth rankings. In 2006-2007, I believe that New Zealand had 2 swimmers from 1 swimmer in the world youth rankings. The national youth programme must address this statistic immediately with targeted development of "identifiable" and "winnable" events in 2012 and onwards.

### (D) Performance Programmes (Refer to Appendix III and Appendix V)

In order to support the efforts of the Millennium "international" performance centre, there is a need for the athletes achieving high performance criteria to have a choice of programmes identified and supported at programmes with university and Academy of Sport connections. These should be identified by a bidding process. There is a need for one of these programmes additional to the Millennium programme in the North Island and one in the South Island. These could be supported by satellite performance clubs.

This programme must exist in accordance with the high performance recognition guidelines.

The vast majority of coaches were supportive of the Millennium programme but felt there should be more programmes recognised in perhaps not the same amount of support as Millennium, but recognised for what they contribute to the senior international teams. Coach Donna Bouzaid was continually mentioned as having contributed consistently to the senior team. The Dunedin programmes of Coach Andy Adair and Gennadi could be combined to be a very competitive environment and conducive to high performance as Andy was focused on endurance events and Gennadi had a skill-driven sprint programme. Together and combined, this programme could be well recognised for support once they have swimmers in the top 20 in the world in Olympic events. However, individually they lack the fire-power to attract either sponsorship or support.

Dunedin, with these two programmes, a university close by and the swim flume and New Zealand Academy of Sport facility located close by would make an ideal spot for another centre. Coach Donna Bouzaid could also be considered with her programme at Wave (sprint focused) to fit the same category. It was felt by me that the potential was there with Dunedin, Wave and perhaps Christchurch for a "centre" approach similar but with less support to the Millennium programme. In terms of age and youth, the South Island appears to be seriously under-performing.

There can be no question that Coach Ian Turner's addition to North Shore in support of the outstanding job that Scott Talbot-Cameron is doing will further strengthen this programme and if so, should attract some support from Swimming New Zealand. However, this could be skewed by the dominance of the Hamilton programmes and that of North Shore. The South Island needs to be looked at for opportunities for improved performances.

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### (E) Guidelines

#### **INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRE**

A minimum requirement will be to have 3 swimmers ranked top twelve in the world, plus a combination of all of the standards and expectations listed in the below two categories.

#### **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRES**

The requirement will be to be placed in the top 6 clubs in New Zealand and have a minimum of 1 swimmer ranked top 12 in the world. It would be expected that all of these programmes would have medal winners annually at Australian Age and Open Championships, team members in the New Zealand senior team (long course) and medal winners at Commonwealth Games and World Oceania Youth Meets.

Facility to include trust support, 50 metre indoor pool, adequate pool space and access to NZAS, gym, international coaching expertise and local authority support.

#### **SATELLITE CLUBS**

Expectations of these programmes will be to have swimmers on the podium and medal winners at youth and senior Australasian competitions.

All support requests will be channelled through the High Performance Advisory Group Meeting and be based on commitment to New Zealand Swimming programmes, eg. Camps, relay camps, competitions etc.

Club funding support could be provided based on athlete performance at major international competitions and the placement/performance of swimmers on international teams.

**It would be necessary and essential that all carded athletes and identified programmes have agreement contracts (Athlete Agreements, Coach and Programme Contracts) prior to the launch of this programme.**

#### **INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRE**

##### Millenium Stadium, Auckland

Available to athletes ranked top 25 annual world ranked and improving each year. This international training centre will provide constant athlete support with the programme applying every 2 years for programme support and funding.

Goal focused at World Long Course and Olympic podium.

The review Committee would be made up of two Board Members, the Chief Executive Officer, SPARC representative, Director of Performance and Head Coach.

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### **NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES**

Location examples for consideration – Dunedin, West Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch etc.

Apply every 2 years for support and funding.

Goal focused at Commonwealth podium, Olympic and World Long Course finals and semi-finals performances.

### **SATELLITE TRAINING CLUBS** (Club Enhanced)

Locations – to be identified (Invercargill etc.)

Apply annually for support and funding.

Goal focused where there is a national team member with adequate training facilities, coaching strength and a feeder system to the youth programme.

### **Athletes' Pathway to Global Podium**

12-14 years    Maximum skills to match high talent and high training volumes  
                  "Breakpoint Volumes"  
                  Top 4 in New Zealand  
                  Balanced competition programme

Females

15-17 years    Top 20 (well within) World Youth Rankings

Males

16-18 years

Relays\*        Top 6 in the World Open Rankings

Females

17-19 years    Top 16 within Annual World Open Rankings

Males

18-20 years

Relays\*        Top 6 in the World Open Rankings

Females

19-21 years    Top 8 within Annual World Open Rankings

Males

20-22 years

Relays\*        Top 6 in the World Open Rankings

Females

21-24 years    Top 3 within Annual World Open Rankings

Males

21-24 years

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Relays\*            Top 3 in the World Open Rankings

\*NOTE – Relays should be valued on slowest 4 swimmers in relay squad.

All coaches and swimmers should have a thorough knowledge of performances in all other competitive countries as well as World Youth Rankings and World Open Rankings. Every athlete should also know their last 10 best times in every event and also know the average of that time so that each time they compete at a major meet, they try to replace the 10<sup>th</sup> time on their list with a faster time and improve their average. Youth swimmers and age group swimmers should also be aware of their average times for Heat, semi-final and final times and should pursue competitions where there are heats, semi-finals, finals and relays and where there is a Call Room present. Call Room practices should be introduced to SNZ domestic competitions in order to prepare athletes for international competition conditions.

The following coaching issues are what all coaches should now be considering in developing their age group and youth swimmers for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

The benefits of being part of the New Zealand International and National Centre Programmes are:

- Increases inclusive attitudes - “Team New Zealand”
- Increases percentage potential for success
- Maximises use of resources
- Provides a presence on the world stage and in New Zealand
- Maximises and increases confidence of success, thus bringing belief and reality ahead of hope
- Maximises positive experiences whilst minimising negative ones
- Provides the athlete with greater longevity in the sport by enhancing enjoyment, reward and recognition
- Enhances and increases opportunities for the individual performance by being part of the team
- Provides fulfilment for both the athletes and coaches
- Maximises opportunities of winning the close events
- Provides team unity with enhanced support
- Provides an opportunity where the individual athlete may on occasions struggle, but where they can still be a winner as part of a team
- Being part of a team dilutes the lows, which can be managed and enhances the highs which can be shared
- Being part of a team maximises success at Global Podium level
- Provides a “winning” profile for individual and team

T            ogether  
E            ach  
**I**            ndividual  
A            chieves  
M            ore

Note – there is an “I” in “TEAM”

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Negatives that can result in a team under-achieving are:

- Single mindedness
- Selfishness
- Outsider
- Disrespect
- Unprofessional
- Negativity
- Cheating
- Laziness
- Being a quitter
- Inefficiency
- Fear of change

### Expectations, Accountability and Responsibilities

All programmes will be expected to operate a minimum of 48 weeks per year and have gym support programmes and pool space available, both long and short course for senior athletes up to 24 hours per week.

All of these New Zealand programmes will be expected to fully integrate with international programmes. There will be an expectation to attend the camps and programmes of New Zealand Swimming and they will be able to request additional support for national team members or open athletes ranked top 12 in the world, relay athletes ranked top 6 in the world relays or youth swimmers ranked top 12 in the world youth rankings.

The focus for all of these three programmes will be to meet the expectations outlined in the Athlete's Pathway to Global Podium document.

Athletes must have a minimum of 12 weeks long course (with the NZ team) training per year and preferably 50 metre outdoors. All athletes selected on long course teams will be required to prepare long course for a minimum of 3 weeks immediately prior to any long course competition.

Athletes, after selection, must notify in writing the National Head Coach and Team Manager of any travel for camps and competitions between selection and the meet selected for. This information must be relayed immediately to the Director of Performance and approved by the national Head Coach.

The National Head Coach, Athlete Representative and Team Manager will conduct individual athlete interviews at the annual December competition.

During the interview process, it was the opinion expressed by many that the lack of a cohesive approach and the division and fragmentation between the Performance Director and the National Head Coach was one that was having a destructive influence on the national team.

### (F) Tiered Programmes, Pathways and Identification

<u>Academy</u>	<u>Centre</u>	<u>Support</u>
<u>Performance</u>	<u>Support</u>	

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### Support

World Top 4  
World Top 8  
World Top 12  
World Top 16  
World Top 20/World Youth Top 12

**The current bonus system currently in place in New Zealand Swimming is a very clear and positive one, and should continue to be supported. This must be protected in the budget and notified to all in New Zealand Swimming. It must be supported by coach recognition and club support.**

Youth programmes must focus on the link from age group to open **and** national to international. This will require a significant increase on focus internationally, and a larger budget commitment for the youth project.

Whilst the relay standard is at top 12 in the world rankings for the world and Olympics, it will provide soft option backdoor entry to the Olympics and World Long Course Championship teams. Are Olympics and World Championships considered development meets? If so, perhaps the youth relay teams should be sent if the senior/open team cannot achieve top 8 in the world standard.

### (G) Branding – Image – Pride

The highest achieving open athletes and staff should be identified individually and as a team with special identified branding available only to those who achieved the recognised standard, ie. world annual top 12 athletes 2 per nation. For others, it should be “youth” or “age” identified outfitting/branding.

I have been informed that the words “black fins” would be used and I think this would be ideal. All those who were canvassed felt that the silver fern must appear in the logo as well.

There should be generic NZ kit for all other teams other than top world ranked open top 12 (2 per nation) athletes or those athletes and staff selected to World Long Course and Olympics, and medallists at World Short Course, Commonwealth Games and Pan Pacific Open Meets. Staff should be recognised differently to team athletes and office staff.

Currently, I believe there is a culture that approves of “ambush” marketing which will cost the national body dearly when the next negotiations occur for a sponsor to outfit the national team. The Athlete Agreement which each team member signs should state very clearly and without compromise that all team staff and swimmers will wear only Swimming New Zealand sponsorship outfitting, ie. all clothing apparel displaying the national team sponsor for interviews relating to the team and whilst they are part of the team. This should have been presented to the Olympic Team at the conclusion of the Trials and worn for media interviews.

The goal should be for Swimming New Zealand to encourage and negotiate a deal with a national sponsor to cover all outfitting that will also include the International Performance Centre at the Millenium Stadium.

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The Athlete Agreement as in the Staff Agreement should leave no room for manoeuvring or manipulating in terms of approving in any way “ambush” marketing. This certainly must include all paid national team employees as well as team staff and athletes.

Staff receiving payments from other companies other than Swimming New Zealand should declare those earnings annually and they should be subject to approval by the Board of Swimming New Zealand.

### (H) Marketing

Sponsorship for Swimming New Zealand must be the key area of concern for the organization as a whole but certainly the CEO with the support of a marketing company. Swimming New Zealand requires more sponsorship support so it is not entirely reliant on funds from the SPARC organization.

In terms of facilitating this, a priority must be provision of a data base for athletes and all registered members in Swimming New Zealand. In support of this, it is my opinion that Swimming New Zealand should develop strategies to maximise membership growth across all aspects of its swimming programmes and in particular, competitive swimmers. The membership growth should be used to indicate the success and acceptance of competitive swimming in the New Zealand sporting culture. Currently and world-wide, swimming memberships and registrations are decreasing whilst performance is growing. Both of these aspects can improve with one dependent on the other.

- There must be a unified approach from all within Swimming New Zealand to support the sponsors in every way possible and all ambush marketing removed. The immediate goal of Swimming New Zealand should be to have a finalist in every Olympic event at the Commonwealth Games in 2010 which should include 30% of the team minimum, made up from youth level swimmers. This should be promoted to the media and the general public and a campaign of both increased membership and the attainment of significant sponsorship aimed at this event.

This could be supported by utilising the services with payment of Danyon Loader, Alison Fitch and Scott Talbot-Cameron for corporate presentations etc. Training should be provided to these three ex-athletes. Suitable and professional training must be provided for this to be successful.

- Media training must be incorporated into all programmes with youth level and above athletes. This media training should be extended to all staff on national teams, in particular Head Coaches and Managers. This should also include all aspects of media training in terms of SNZ promotion, personal promotion and a professional dress sense.
- A website should be set up for swimmers on tour where each day a different athlete will outline their day’s activities in a positive manner to all in New Zealand. This would include the athlete’s local media, the media at large, swimmers, parents, officials etc.
- A swim parents online website could also be set up where one Friday each month, an experienced and trained parent or two could answer questions of a general nature

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to other parents of swimmers. This could be extended to national championships and national level meets where a small group of selected parents could receive information during the heat warm-up. This would include nutritional advice, being a swimming parent, competition information, behaviour on national teams, protocols for advancement – age, youth open etc.

Communication between all stakeholders is vital and a parents support group should be included as a result of last two points above. This could be partly driven by this group of people.

- To further support all of the above points, it is suggested that team coaches on national teams during the 2 day media black-out period for athletes prior to competitions contact selected members of the media and provide positive team and individual stories to them. Coaches should be allocated media contacts to promote and foster good relations which assist in this process. The Team Manager should co-ordinate this.
- Posters and cards from high performing athletes should be used as promotional material at national championships, swim schools and most importantly, schools in general around the country.

### (I) Role Clarity and Task Prioritisation (Refer to Appendix II)

Clearly, this is an area of concern as I felt whilst there was tremendous teamwork in the office and a very successful working relationship between staff, there certainly appeared to be a need for role clarity and definition so that prioritisation of tasks would be clear and easily identified.

This not only applied to the office but was certainly one area that is causing great conflict between the National Head Coach and the National Performance Director. This situation needs to be clarified as it has the potential to cause Swimming New Zealand to fail to optimise its potential, both domestically and internationally.

I questioned at length all stakeholders as to whether the coach at the Millenium Centre was actually the National Head Coach's assistant, a permanent fixture on the national team etc. and I never really got a clear answer, nor understood where his role lay. He was obviously concerned as I believe he also did not understand his professional standing in New Zealand swimming.

Role clarity and task prioritisation is a problem across all Swimming New Zealand and its staff members. I have suggested that all high performance and elite performance issues should come under a high performance stream in a new structure and that the assistant executive staff member be the responsible person in the office for administration and operational issues of the high performance and elite performance streams.

Athletes, coaches, parents and officials in the field need to have one point of contact within Swimming New Zealand regarding high performance issues and a High Performance Manager (re-direction of Executive Assistant) would solve this problem and avoid any conflicting information being distributed from the office. All tasks relating to high performance from other staff members would be incorporated into the role of this position.

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In the high performance stream, there could be a facilitator of coach development. This would mean that the current National Education Manager would then be responsible to look after all education activities below Level 1 (coach entry course). All coach development and education would then be facilitated and led by the Coach Education and Development Officer in the high performance team. This person could have the title of Coach Education and Development Officer (High Performance).

With the limited number of coaches in New Zealand, the Australian coach education opportunity might be a consideration. Should this option be considered, then considerable work would still be required for this aspect of SNZ to produce world class coaches. This currently does not occur successfully in the New Zealand swimming fraternity.

During the interview process, only three to five coaches were identified as young open-minded coaches who could be prepared for the task of international world class coaches. Also, during this process, the vast majority of those interviewed indicated that they felt that Jan Cameron was currently the only international world class coach operating in New Zealand. It was also strongly felt that New Zealand should be preparing four or five world class coaches to successfully take on this position, should and when Jan Cameron move on, take a new position or retire. The planning involved in this is vital for succession of New Zealand's key role in the coaching field and the development of this process is key to the future of New Zealand swimming on the world stage. A sharing of Head Coach positions on teams outside the very important ones (World Long Course/Olympics/Commonwealth Games) should be considered as a Head Coach development opportunity.

### (J) Budgeting and Finance

Budgeting should be completed by the head of each section and approved/adjusted etc. by the Chief Executive Officer. This should then be put together by the Finance person in conjunction with the approval of the CEO who should then sit with each head of section and go through it in detail.

This annual budget should then be monitored by Finance and any variance approved in advance and in writing by the CEO a minimum of 3 months in advance. The total budget would be presented in detail by the CEO to the Board. Any over-spend must be approved. All spending in accordance with the approved budget must be "signed off" 3 months in advance on a form signed off by the CEO (Operations) or Director of Performance (Performance).

Any spending for \$200 or less may be approved by the head of section and anything and everything over this should be approved by head of section and Finance (in accordance with the budget) and the CEO. This process will ensure that every responsible manager is aware of the budget implications, travel, projects etc. in advance. Any last minute, late spending or over-spend must be signed off by the CEO, head of section and Finance.

Responsibility and accountability must be with all three managers. Forms will be filled out and submitted for approval 3 months in advance by those requesting the spend. The form would be multi-purpose entitled "Expense and Travel Form".

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Nothing should be approved and spent without this form. There is a real concern that head of operations is over-extended and this process will alleviate this problem and concern.

### (K) High Performance Structure

I have recommended a change in role for both the Performance Director and the National Head Coach. The Performance Director would now become the Director of Performance (age, youth, senior and open). The change in Job Description would also coincide with the change in Job Description of the National Head Coach. The National Head Coach's title could change to National Team Director (refer to Appendix I and II).

#### *Executive Assistant – Performance:*

As per the structure chart, I would recommend that after the staff have documented their 10 most important jobs, any tasks that are evaluated or tagged as high performance should be moved to the job description of Executive Assistant – Performance. Any tasks not identified as high performance should be moved from the role of Executive Assistant – Performance to other appropriate and applicable job descriptions.

This would mean that the Executive Assistant – Performance would be responsible for only high performance related tasks.

#### *Logistics Manager:*

The incumbent would not necessarily come from a swimming background but would need to have an inquisitive knowledge of statistics. He/she would also need to have strengths in education processes and great organisational skills.

These skills would be listed with the “grey” area being coach education. This may warrant a department of its own, but would still need to report to the Logistics Manager.

### **SNZ INTERNATIONAL PODIUM COMMITTEE** (Refer to Appendix XII and XV)

This Committee must be focused on the big picture of national and international planning.

My initial reaction to NZ Swimming is that there needs to be put in place as soon as possible after my report is finished "international podium meeting/committee" which meets every month to review the progress of the programme, address future planning and advise the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Performance and the Board on progress etc. This should be kept to a very small number of staff, ie. Director of Performance, head coach, logistics manager, selector, national team manager, independent coach, sport scientist and maybe one or two others, but no more.

I think NZ Swimming is in a unique situation to move ahead of the field of other sports in NZ and show the funding agencies a much more professional and responsible, and organised structure so that success can occur by design, rather than by chance. This Committee and the drive and leadership that it must provide is the essential factor for success internationally.

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### **SNZ ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT GROUP COMMITTEE** (Refer to Appendix VII, XII and XV)

*Incorporating New Zealand Academy of Sport*

“Competition is maintaining speed throughout the entire last half of the race without compromising efficient skills of stroke length and stroke rate, breathing patterns etc. under pressure from fatigue, opposition athletes and the clock, whilst knowing that the world and everyone you respect and acknowledge are all observing you in this position.”

.... Bill Sweetenham

There should also be put in place an "athlete development group committee". This should meet on a monthly basis with the key athlete providers, ie. physio, NYC, NAC, exercise physiologist, strength and conditioning, nutritionist, education support, biomechanist, head coach and an independent coach to review the progress of each athlete on the programme and evaluate their needs and how the programme can move them forward onto the podium at world long course and Olympics. This should be Chaired either by an Academy of Sport representative or Director of Performance and should be the focused committee and group moving athletes forward.

Every second month, this committee should meet and identified athletes, programmes and coaches are invited (request with acceptance) to attend and discuss the progress or the lack of it pertaining to athletes in their care. Attendance at these meetings and the provision of an annual individual performance plan should be conditional and occur prior to funding and support being provided to athletes, coaches and programmes.

New Zealand's best swimmers must be tracked against the world rankings, the World Championship performances, world record progression and Olympic results, and where the athlete is moving towards these world standards ahead of the world record, this should represent a true evaluation of the coaching of the athlete, the talent of the athlete and the performance of Swimming New Zealand programmes. This should be kept religiously and should apply to youth and open swimmers in preference to the FINA points scores. All athletes and coaches should be made aware of this and as stated before, they must be the primary statistics used to evaluate performance.

A detailed, recorded and monitored athlete tracking system needs to be put in place by the Logistics Manager similar to that on [www.swimrankings.net](http://www.swimrankings.net). Whilst this website only deals with European athletes, it is a good example of how New Zealand should track its best athletes and their performances against the best in the world in terms of improved rankings and improved performances also against the progression of the world records in each event. I was unable to obtain this information from the office of the coaching staff of Swimming New Zealand.

Two extremely important issues are identified and they are:

- (a) Clear re-definition of role clarity.
- (b) Prioritisation of tasks and responsibilities in job descriptions.

Combine this with protocols for being on the programme and team, and certainly being involved with "the centre programmes", either in a visiting, camp or permanent situation and conditions and expectations of participation signed off by the home coach, centre coach and athlete will provide a much clearer structure for progress into the future. This should also include protocols for the athlete to continue to stay part of the programme and avenues

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for the athlete and coach to be released from the programme. Entry and exit protocols must be set in place for all programme camp and team activities of SNZ.

For both the “SNZ International Podium Committee” and the “SNZ Athlete Development Committee”, their meetings should run back to back every two months. The dates should be worked in place now until the 2010 Commonwealth Games, and then every 18 months in advance from that and advertised to all those involved.

There should not be any compromise with these two committees and they should run, regardless of varying attendances. An all or nothing participation policy should be encouraged on all SNZ activities.

This Committee must be open, honest and provide an extremely “safe” environment for athletes to express any views, opinions or facts that they have concerns about in the provision of services affecting their performance.

All on this Committee must have a clear understanding that the environment is crucial, both to the individual performance and the team performance and as such, each programme will require the following:

1. Talent
2. Facilities
3. Competition
4. Budget
5. Coaching
6. Total package

Motivation is the key to success:

1. Understanding motivation
2. Personal view

Athlete driver/coach navigator:

1. The concept – mission – vision
2. Individuals have needs
3. Needs produce motives (reasons to do things)
4. Drives determine behaviour
5. Selection/non-selection/re-direction of the athlete
6. Enthusiasm – strength, persistence, sacrifice.

Understanding needs/motives/incentives of athletes is critical coaching knowledge.

A thorough knowledge of all of the above must be both evident and practised by all staff within Swimming New Zealand and these issues should be incorporated into the coach education model of Swimming New Zealand. These practices apply to age, youth and open swimming competitors and coaching.

### **NEW ZEALAND ACADEMY OF SPORT** (Refer to Appendix VI)

The support services provided by the Academy should be co-ordinated, directed and led through the Swimming New Zealand Athlete Development Group Committee. Athletes and

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coaches receiving support along with teams must report their progress through this Committee. All requests for support should come through this Committee. Swimming New Zealand should supply the Academy through the Athlete Development Group Committee with “Athlete Roadmaps” for both Youth and Elite performance swimmers (refer to section below).

There is a lack of understanding of what elite performance is and therefore there is confusion about access to support. There must be communication including clear directions from SPARC and Swimming New Zealand with regard to the objectives of SPARC funding and the New Zealand Academy of Sport provision of services.

The difference between Prime Ministers Scholarships and carded athlete support must be clear. The office of Swimming New Zealand is frustrated with last minute information and it must be a requirement that wherever possible, services and the allocation of services must be done well in advance. Notification of who is receiving this support which has been indicated to me is around \$110,000 per year in total and this is allocated with some flexibility – 50% to the elite performance group at Millenium and the rest is spread throughout the country. I would suggest that a significant part of this 50% is allocated to youth team activities and elite youth individual performances.

Individual performance plans as required by both SPARC and New Zealand Academy of Sport should be presented in detail and as a complete document to the National Performance Director/Head Coach who would then present them to the SNZ Athlete Development Group Committee before the commencement of any provision of services. Failure to present this document in detail would result in no service provision. Coaches of individual athletes should not see this as an additional task required by New Zealand Academy of Sport (NZAS), as this should be an integral part of the coach’s preparation in terms of individual athlete performance and tracking which should be done without the request of SPARC or NZAS.

On display at the presentation of this report will be an Olympic Preparation Planner and Diary, a sample of a business and club strategic plan, and a club visit carbon copy book. This carbon copy book is specially designed for club visits and programme advice, and all national team staff and NZAS staff should keep one of these in terms of reporting on club or athlete visitations and they should be on hand at every Athlete Development Group Committee Meeting.

Other areas for improvement in terms of the provision of service is biomechanical analysis and where teams are of a limited size, staff members or other athletes should be trained to videotape swimming performances and these can be brought back to New Zealand for biomechanists to analyse at a later time. However, with all sports science service provision, feedback should be as soon as possible after the testing or evaluation. The sooner feedback is received, it is far more likely to be received and appreciated by the athlete.

Nutrition is another area requiring attention. My observations of youth and age athletes and to some extent, the senior athletes are that skinfolds are in a negative range and athletes, coaches and parents need advice and support. Perhaps a study done in very simple terms could look at the minimisation and intake of root vegetables, especially the preparation of these in terms of cooking methods.

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### NATIONAL SENIOR TEAM/PROGRAMME (Elite Athletes)

“Coaching is convincing the willing and unwilling to give totally, and to be enthusiastic about doing what they might like or dislike at any given point in time, in any given conditions to achieve what they previously considered desirable but impossible.” ..... Bill Sweetenham

Key staff members on national teams should be exposed to selected leadership courses and media training prior to and conditional upon being on national teams.

Approximately 50% of coaches interviewed felt strongly that coaches placing swimmers on teams in both youth and open needed to have more accountability for performance once they were on the team and there should be a greater sharing of knowledge between coaches. There was a feeling that there was a lack of faith in New Zealand swimming and the organization and that there was in some areas a much greater need for improved discipline whilst on teams. Whilst I believe there is a significant amount of “kick the boss while you have the chance” attitude in the above information, I believe this is worthy of being seriously addressed.

Once a swimmer has made a senior touring team, then that swimmer should become part of the national senior team in terms of coming under the direction of a programme headed up by the National Head Coach and no longer come under the guidance of the National Youth Programme. The National Youth Programme should also release athletes onto the National Senior Team at the age of 18. These athletes over 18 could move either to the National Senior Team if they have reached the right international ranking or have been part of a senior international team. This would include relays. Failing to achieve this standard, athletes 18 years and over would become part of a high performance group whose rankings fell short of the senior elite performance group.

It is important that a “no part time participation” rule apply for both athletes and coaches on any of the teams.

For an athlete to participate in a national senior team, it should be the greatest experience of their swimming career, with great examples of strong leadership, direction, re-direction, motivation and support above any previous swimming experience. This experience should develop life skills and provide a sense of belonging and being part of a team that has one focused goal and concept. There should be no lack of unity and no stone should be unturned in the pursuit of performance and satisfaction for all concerned.

Both the National Head Coach and Director of Performance should possess a thorough knowledge and have experience and understanding of the following philosophies:

1. Success/status/power (fear of failure)
2. Excellence – being the best
3. Challenge – excitement
4. Affiliation – the team
5. Financial gain

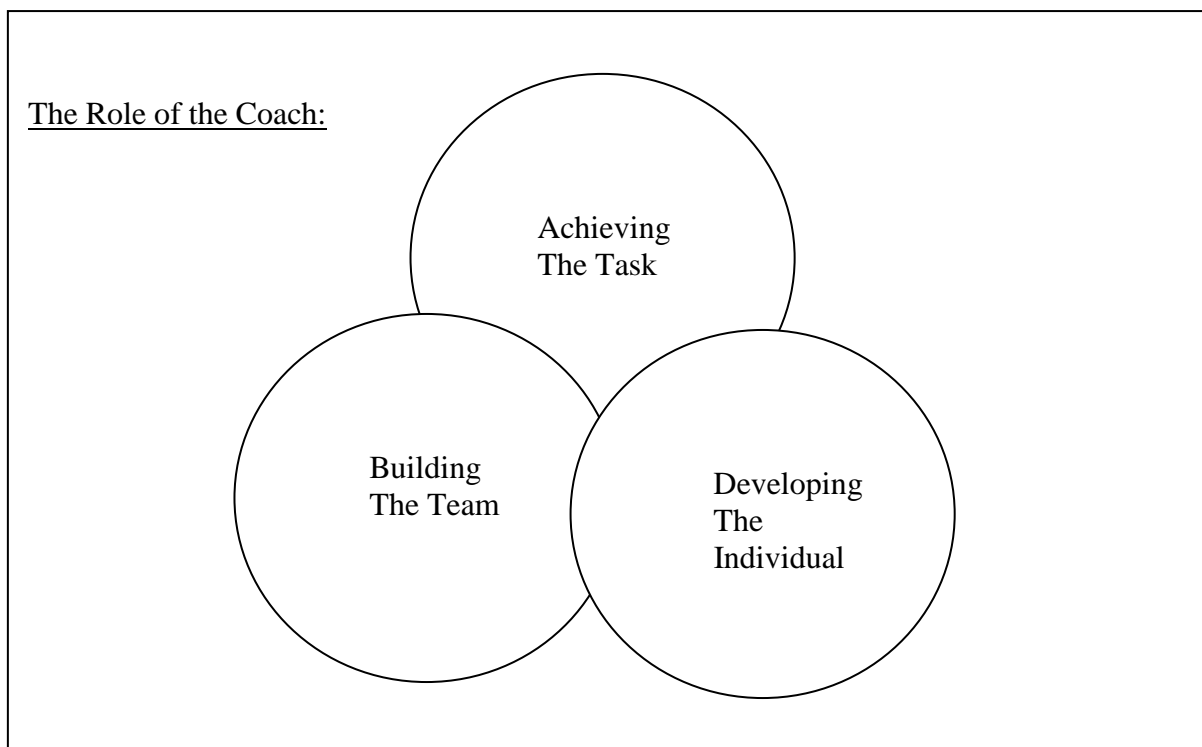
An understanding of the motivations and incentives for this level must be the focus of the programme and a driver of behaviours of individuals within the programme.

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Coaching on a national team or as a matter of fact coaching as a head coach in any club programme has a three-fold role:

1. Developing the individual:
  - Skills and techniques
  - Physical attributes
  - Psychological make-up
2. Building the team:
  - Predictable/habitual
  - Committee
  - Independent/inter-dependent
3. Achieving the task:
  - Optimising performance
  - Goal setting
  - Preparation
  - Feedback

If the end result in each of the above areas is to be achieved, then it will require complete and competent leadership and understanding of these principles from the coach. There can be no compromise in any of these areas if the successful completion of the task is to be the outcome.



Competent and Successful Coaching Behaviours:

1. Reinforcement/Feedback
2. Communication
3. Leadership

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4. Counselling
5. Organisation and Planning

### Communication:

- Two-way process
- Clear explanations
- Coach values opinion – group – individual
- Best approach – positive – strengths
- Criticism – individual and private
- Coach credibility
- Try not to judge constantly
- Non-verbal –
  - Body motion
  - Body position
  - Touching behaviour
  - Voice
  - Example
- High information messages

### Feedback:

#### Most important coach behaviours:

- Cannot improve without consistent feedback
- Must be objective and immediate
- Must balance positive with negative
- The coach is best (not only) source
- Can be verbal individual/group
- Can be audio/visual media
- Can be in written form
- Must be specific and accurate
- Requires time, effort, expertise and assistance
- Provide evidence – strengths and weaknesses
- Reinforce and motivate and re-direct where required

### Counselling:

- Athletes anxious people
- Coach is “significant other”
- Level of involvement
- Know yourself
- Don’t look to – problems
- Avoid intellectualising
- Avoid emotions
- Be trusting and listen

### Organisation:

- Often the basis of coaching aspect requires time, energy, planning and preparation:

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- Work to a plan
- Efficient practices
- Consistent method (repeatable and sustainable)
- Quality, not quantity
- Coach is indicator
- Maximise participation
- Minimise interruptions
- Add variety and stimulus
- Functional in nature

Consistently long term, high level team performance requires:

1. Careful selection/placement of personnel.
2. Optimising arousal levels.
3. Appropriate goal setting.
4. Positive reinforcement and reward – re-direction or penalty.
5. Continual objective feedback.
6. Well thought out tactical plan.
7. Competent administration/organisation.
8. Maintenance of discipline.
9. Constant attention to morale.
10. Understanding ability and accountability/responsibility to deal with failure (a “no blame” culture).
11. High degree of professionalism.
12. Constant attention to detail.
13. Unity under pressure.
14. Trust by all stakeholders.

“Leadership is providing direction and opportunity in all situations and ensuring success for average people to achieve greatness because of your influence and presence.”

... Bill Sweetenham

On a national team, all team members should feel part of the success of any individual on that team just as they should feel responsible and accountable for any lack of performance or under-achievement of any member on that team.

**NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMME** (Athletes 15-18 Years) (Refer to Appendix IV, V, VII, IX and XI)

Coaches involved in the National Youth Programme should have a clear understanding of the major and minor incentives and motivation factors for this age group.

There are three major incentives:

1. Affiliation
2. Excellence
3. Stress

There are four minor incentives:

1. Success
2. Aggression

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3. Power
4. Independence

An understanding of the motivations and incentives for this level and age group must be the focus of the programme and a driver of behaviours of individuals within the programme.

The more recent introduction of this programme makes the impact difficult to evaluate. However, there can be no question about the importance of this programme which on any evaluation has both under-achieved and under-performed.

This must change, where a budget of approximately 20% of the high performance budget annually should be strategically invested in the youth programme upon the development of a plan outlining the expected pathway projection to the international senior podium. The “user pays” programme must be planned and advertised in advance with percentages devoted and allocated to the importance of the youth level meet.

Of concern is the age between 16 years and 18 years as this is a breakthrough area/age into world senior competition and finalist/podium success. The goal for this programme is to have finalists at World Youth Championships in relay events and top 12 world youth ranked performances, along with a minimum team make-up of 30% of all New Zealand Commonwealth Games finalists in 2010.

The National Youth Coach should report directly to the National Head Coach. The national Head Coach and National Youth Coach should meet immediately after each and every major tour/competition and the Youth Coach should be informed of the areas of the team/staff’s weaknesses in order that these may be addressed. This process must be continual and supervised/monitored by the Director of Performance.

Identification of international youth events is of paramount importance as it is not feasible to pursue all that are currently available on the world scene. They have to be incorporated into the senior high performance and elite performance structure and progression plan.

One international camp and one major international competition is recommended annually. In every situation, successful youth swimmers should be kept hungry for winning and the rewards and recognition that are associated with winning.

Australia should be considered as a “domestic” environment for youth swimmers rather than “international”, depending on the nature and importance of the competitions. For age group competitions in preference to but as well as camps, Australia should be considered “international” rather than “domestic”.

The youth programme should conduct one camp annually at the Millenium Institute and this should include the better age group performers. It should include all home coaches with the highest level of encouragement to attend. Attendance at this annual camp should be conditional as a preparation camp for inclusion in all other tours and international activities of Swimming New Zealand for both athletes and staff for the forthcoming year.

The youth performances of New Zealand Swimming, noting that Olympic/World podium results occur at approximately 22-23 years of age are arriving too late for peak performances to meet international podium success. **This must be advanced.** Whilst it is important to encourage senior athletes to stay in the sport, it is also vital that individual peak

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performances move closer to the 22-24 year age group. Up until now, New Zealand's youth programme has largely failed to achieve this standard.

In particular, the focus of sports science for this age group should be biomechanical support and nutrition. The philosophy of having visiting coaches, ie. Bill Rose for the enhancement of distance swimming in New Zealand and Kim Swanwick are productive ones and ones that should be extended and varied.

On observation of the 2008 Olympic Trials and the results of the National Age Championships, I made the following observations of age group and youth swimmers (in general terms):

- Limited number of athletes utilising 15 metre underwater limitations from start, and even fewer utilising this distance at speed. Lack of speed dolphin kick.
- There is evidence that age group and early youth swimmers are being training, coached and prepared as though they are seasoned senior swimmers.
- After questioning of both coaches and swimmers, there is also a view that age and youth swimmers are being de-trained rather than rested and tapered during the race preparation period of the cycle.
- Also, there is evidence in breaststroke technique that age group and youth breaststrokers are over-exposed to full stroke breaststroke during the intense/distance phase of the training year. Technique breakdown and poor timing was evident.
- Core strength and power per body weight needs attention also for youth swimmers, in particular the females.
- In freestyle technique and in particular sprint (200 metres down), females could work more on a high anchored elbow early in the entry to catch position.
- Female age group (males in some smaller percentage) butterflyers recovering thumb first with a high elbow projectory which for most will not be sustainable after maturation. There are many areas of great technique in butterfly with both senior male and female butterflyers for comparison.
- It would appear that an improved work ethic is required in the youth area and a greater demand on skill enhancement in the age areas.
- A rationalisation and prioritisation of international youth meets is required, in particular youth relay strategies and focused stroke camps.

### **NATIONAL AGE PROGRAMME** (Refer to Appendix IV, VII, IX and XI)

I understand that the National Age Programme has 9 camps annually and involves 72 swimmers – 36 males and 36 females. I also have had explained to me about the “Accelerate” programme. Whilst there is great evidence that this Accelerate programme can be very productive if adhered to, standards must be included but also opportunity and flexibility should be provided for the outstanding athlete who can perform at a higher level in any one discipline.

Participation Motives for Age Adolescent Children Involved in Competitive Sport:

- To be on a team; experience team spirit; be with friends; make friends
- To improve skills; learn new skills; to be good at something
- To experience action; challenging, interesting and novel activities
- To win, feel important, gain recognition and obtain reward

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- To get exercise; stay in shape
- To get rid of tension
- 

An understanding of the motivations and incentives for this level and age group must be the focus of the programme and a driver of behaviours of individuals within the programme.

During my first tour of New Zealand, I observed the simulated tri-series conducted domestically for New Zealand age group athletes. Whilst I only witnessed one of the competitions, my observations were that this concept is an outstanding one which brought swimmers and staff together in a co-operative but competitive environment which should benefit all involved.

The original concept of compete then travel repeated three times is so that any mistakes technically or tactically that athletes make in one competition are repaired and skill-enhanced for the next competition. The provision of three competitions provides an opportunity for athletes and coaches to refine skills and work on tactics from one competition to the other whilst having to endure the discomfort and challenge of fatigue when travelling. This is a great concept and I think New Zealand (at least from the small window of opportunity that I had to observe) did it well. Coach Nicholls provided great leadership and direction through this process, and this should provide a great breeding ground for future coaches and athletes. The stimulus for trainee team managers was also significant.

However, on the negative side, I made the following observations:

- Age group athletes in this type of competition should not be utilising the skins costumes for enhanced performances.
- There were very few drink bottles on deck and they were not being checked, apart from one team.
- Overall, the freestyle technique requires attention as do the turning skills in this stroke.
- Turning skills overall would not rated in the high achievement category.
- Women were slightly better than men in the above two areas.
- The warm-ups tended to be “trained” in preference to being “coached”.
- Lack of one-to-one discussions between swimmers and coaches.
- There appeared to be a lack of individual feedback immediately after the athlete finished their event.
- The all-important swim-downs for this race and travel concept were not immediate, ie. within 3 minutes of the event finishing.
- Swim-downs were not monitored or recorded.

Further observations that I have made on watching New Zealand programmes mainly in the camp environments but also in the club environments are as follows (this applies to age, youth and open):

- (a) Swimmers need to be in better shape before coming into camps. They need to be ready for any challenge and for high volume and high intensity work.
- (b) Coaches need to be ready to coach, not just to be timekeepers and information recorders and deal with the challenges that are set for the swimmers, ie. dealing with training failures when they occur.
- (c) Swimmers would derive better skills, both physically and mentally if they were separated. The focus for training and the stimulus is different for males and

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females, in particular the broad-based aerobic/distance needs of the age group athlete.

- (d) I do not believe the females in New Zealand swimming from age, youth and open are doing the right type of physical and mental training, especially when preparing for the international challenges that lay ahead.
- (e) There needs to be a well directed, long term athlete development plan commencing at this age level where the age, youth and open feed into each other. I do not believe at this stage it is happening, but these programmes (age and youth) are in their infancy and I believe the leadership in the age (Trevor Nicholls) and youth (Clive Power) is going in the right direction. These two leaders need to be supported, allowing the programme under their direction to grow at the fastest rate possible and develop sooner rather than later.
- (f) The more talented age group athletes need to be partially integrated into the youth programme periodically just as the better youth programme swimmers need to be integrated into the high performance programme periodically. This is so that a move up is not a sudden or unexpected change.
- (g) Each programme of youth and age should be preparing athletes so that the step up to the next level is an easy one and is actually a step down in terms of programme requirements. This is a great challenge but one that needs to be addressed so athletes see the next programme as being more demanding in some areas but less demanding in others.
- (h) Team based competitions such as the Tri-Series should be installed in New Zealand Swimming, even if on a limited basis as this will assist with senior athletes staying in the sport.

Recruitment of talent into New Zealand Swimming is the vital aspect of the age programme. New Zealand faces the problem of the tall athletic females being recruited into netball, and that athletic males being recruited into rugby union or rugby league. In order to offset this, New Zealand Swimming needs to have a very aggressive recruitment programme into the age group section of its overall profile. It is a matter of teaching the skills, training the event and coaching the athlete. Skill acquisition at this stage has to be the primary target.

New Zealand must look to have age group athletes who are performing at high levels due to their skill levels being higher than their talent levels and certainly way above their training levels.

By my calculation, there are about 80-85% of coaching placing swimmers on the age programme, approximately 17 coaches placing swimmers on the youth programme and about 4 coaches represented on the senior programme. The national age programme should be club based and camp drive, focusing on athletes and coaches developing the essential performance based skills required to develop a successful pathway to higher competitive achievement.

A “skill” coach could be included on all camps to individualise all skill improvement and evaluate camp/team standards and progress. These camps should be skill based in preference to competition based. However, the domestic tri-series that I viewed was an excellent team building and upskilling opportunity for both coaches and swimmers.

Each programme must dove-tail into the other, ie. the club programmes must dove-tail into the age programme and the age programme should dove-tail into the youth programme

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which in turn locks into the senior programme. The pathway must be clear with minimal “grey” areas.

**Club** – all ages but given desired skills to be achieved by 12 year olds within the club programme



**Age** (13-16 years) plus or minus



**Youth** (16-18 years) plus or minus



**High Performance** (18 years plus or minus) – tracked and identified outside criteria but not as yet on elite performance but improving in competition.



**Elite Performance** (swimmers above 16 years or age who are top 12-16 annual world youth and/or top 12-16 annual world ranked open)

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### Success at National Age and National Youth Level

	<b>TALENT</b>	<b>WORK ETHOS</b>	<b>MENTAL FITNESS</b>
	Physical Skill	Ability and willingness to do the extra yards and work	Mental toughness Attitude
Athlete (A)	Talent being equal	Low work ethic	Extremely high mental attitude
<b>Then this athlete will rise to the level of the mental attitude</b>			
Athlete (B)	Talent being equal	High work ethic	Low mental attitude
<b>Then this athlete will fall to the level of the mental attitude</b>			

For youth and age group swimming, the skill level must always be in advance of the talent and fitness level of the athlete.

### **SNZ DISTANCE PROGRAMMES/OPEN WATER**

With the introduction of open water events to the Olympic Games calendar, there is a much greater emphasis on the importance of distance swimming, marathon open water events and preparation for these events. Certainly, the programme conducted by Coach Andy Adair in Dunedin addresses this aspect of competitive swimming. Coach Gary Hollywood also has significant experience with these events.

Both these coaches and programmes should be encouraged in any way possible. Opportunity to upskill these them with experience and information for the preparation of the 400/200 individual medley events should be to the advantage of Swimming New Zealand, as well as these coaches. These two coaches should be integral part of all New Zealand distance/open water and individual medley programmes and training camps.

The Japanese have early season camps for their 200/400 medley females incorporated into the mens open water and distance programmes, and this has been an exceptionally successful combination and practice.

The lake swim programmes, whilst being enjoyable and lots of fun for all concerned have not been beneficial in the identification and development of successful open water or distance athletes for Swimming New Zealand. This section of Swimming New Zealand needs a complete re-think as there is little or no transition from these lake swims into success with 800/1500 metre athletes, as well as open water athletes.

I would recommend that the Director of Performance, along with coaches Any Adair and Gary Hollywood be asked to look at how this social programme (lake swims) can be modified and manipulated to be way more productive at the competitive end of this market. Up until now, the podium open water results at international level have come from the pool 800 and 1500 metre athletes. A closer look at this is required if New Zealand can manipulate the many opportunities open to it to develop the social lake swims into competition reality.

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A strategy that has worked well with several countries is to identify athletes in the 1500 metre national championships and first and second placings be targeted for the distance programme in pool swimming, and third and fourth placings be targeted for the open water programme. Some countries have successfully been able to retain a high priority in distance swimming by identifying 20 year olds and older who are faster than 88% of the currently 1500 metre world record and have those swimmers guided towards open water swimming and triathlons. I know of several countries which utilise 88% of the current world record in their particular endurance event in swimming, in distance running and cycling to identify talent for the triathlon events. It sometimes to co-operate with triathlon so that these swimmers can be identified and retained in swim programmes across the country.

### **SNZ SPRINT PROGRAMMES/SHORT COURSE SWIMMING**

The question was asked how many true sprint-based programmes currently exist in New Zealand. That means programmes which cater solely for the focused 50/100 metre specialist. No-one that I questioned could identify a programme that was a specialist 50/100 metre programme.

Speed or sprint-based results in the 50 metres freestyle and 100 metre events of all strokes does suggest the same deficiency of speed-based programmes. One would have thought that regions would have had a positive influence on this sprint/speed base, but there is no evidence in terms of creative competition structure or imaginative and creative programmes to suggest that this is happening. A complete overhaul of sprint swimming and the ability of regions to influence this is required. A programme of speed swimming and team competitions needs to be addressed in order to provide an athlete stimulus to attain longevity of athletes in the sport.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TRUSTS AND FACILITIES**

Local authorities in nearly all countries have national and district local authority meetings on an annual basis. These need to be identified and targeted in Olympic and especially Commonwealth Games years for presentations to be made in a professional manner by well prepared Swimming New Zealand representatives to lobby for inclusion of Swimming New Zealand programmes etc. in local authority facilities. Partnerships with local authorities must be planned and co-ordinated in a very meticulous way.

Local authorities, academic programmes with pools and trusts all must be systematically targeted for appropriate, affordable access by Swimming New Zealand to their facilities and funding arms. A new system of less but stronger regions should be included in this lobby group. This should be a considerable responsibility of each region led and co-ordinated by Swimming New Zealand. Every source of contact should be utilised in this endeavour. A successful outcome and lobby is vital for the future of Swimming New Zealand.

I would recommend that 10-12 top age/youth/open clubs in New Zealand and their representative regions should be targeted first, as these will already have identifiable results.

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### **NATIONAL TESTING PROTOCOLS (YOUTH AND OPEN)**

I see very little value with testing protocols for age group athletes. This group should be technique driven and skill based. Any testing done in the age programme should be focused on enhanced techniques and skills. These could include technique and skills under pressure and some technique-based values in relation to 25 metre or 20 metre (maybe 50 metre) all-out speed. Certainly, there is no need for fitness testing, either aerobic or anaerobic and most certainly not inclusive of any type of lactate testing. The skill level and technique levels for age group swimmers must be in advance of the athletes' fitness or strength levels.

For youth and open (senior) athletes, a swim-related fitness test and strength test should be in operation and done by all periodically and/or as required by the Head Coach of the Athlete Development Group. There are ample tests, both specific and non-specific which can be used. However, the youth testing should be slightly different to the senior testing, but each group testing must be dove-tailed into each other to allow for continuity without monotony or repetitious boredom for the athlete.

Feedback from testing must be immediate or it will be lost with the athlete and coach unable to relate it to the present time. Whilst youth and open testing should be of a different focus to age testing, there must be an element of skill and technique tests carried forward to the fitness and specific strength/power tests.

The testing protocols should be decided by the Athlete Development Group Committee and documented in a booklet in precise detail of what, how and when. This should be updated and re-evaluated after each 2 yearly major meet by this same committee. It should include blood profiling and blood tests (health related). Testing days/dates should be included in a calendar booklet (sample provided). All testing must be mandatory and included in the athlete's individual performance plan and Athlete's Agreement.

### **NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL RELAY DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH AND OPEN)**

The 4X200 relay is used by most experienced practical coaches to evaluate a nation's strength and depth as a swimming nation. This event plus the 4X100 medley relay can provide quite an in-depth view of a nation's development programmes. By chance, some countries can periodically attain success in one or the other. However, continued repeatable, consistent and sustained success in these events will indicate a nation's youth and development programmes.

In business, there are not cycles of success and down periods. However in sport in general, one continually hears of cyclical development and re-building. This signifies poor planning when varied levels of performances at world level occur from high level to a re-building phase. In business, this would not be acceptable and it should not be so in sport. Continuous relay emphasis will prevent this, provided it is planned and programmed continuously in advance.

Each year, 15-16 year old swimmers should be graded into first, second, third, fourth etc. relay teams in 4X200 freestyle and 4X100 medley with a target of achieving world podium level in 5-6 years time. Rowing should be used as a lead to develop this process of depth in relays in terms of developing this depth of talent in relays which will feed key individual events as well.

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Publish internally these lists of graded relay fours and hold 4X200 and 4X100 relay camps for 15-16 year olds every second year, and teach relay skills etc. Then introduce team relays for under 18s and open at open nationals each year with enhanced rewards and team points and a team coach's name with each relay (not just Head Club Coach).

This long term athlete development relay programme will retain senior swimmers, build depth, be relay-focused, build a stronger club base and superior national team. The question is – how many times has a national relay team swum as such leading into a major competition? Whilst the major teams in the world can get away without doing this, smaller countries must focus on the relay being an event within itself. It is a fact that relays only have one entry per nation as against two or three individual entries per nation at major meets. For instance, England developed relay strategies working on all of the above principles and in both 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games, was able to defeat Australia in many relay events. This occurred because England viewed the relay as an event within itself and Australia relied on individual performances to come together as a team at the last minute.

Big international teams can be beaten by smaller countries who have strategic plans for relay development as an event.

### **SWIMMERS REPRESENTATION GROUP**

I have spoken at length with several swimmers and I believe that the formation of a Swimmers Representation Group, if handled correctly will be extremely positive. However, I do feel this need has occurred due to the Board of Swimming New Zealand not including a past athlete within its make-up. The swimmers' input is vital and important, and should be valued but with an understanding of the limitations of the powers of this group.

### **DISABILITY SWIMMING/INTEGRATION**

The integration of disability swimming into able-bodied swim training can be in most cases facilitated in the majority of training situations. This, however, takes an understanding coach who should have had training to do this effectively and efficiently with great empathy for the athletes involved. It is advisable to identify coaches and programmes which are “disability friendly” and direct athletes of this nature to the identified and supportive programmes. A list of these programmes should be available in the office so that so that appropriate advice can be given when enquiries are received, without the need to phone back.

Disability handling and coaching should be an “add on” to licensing and coaching accreditation courses. However, wherever possible full integration into able-bodied programmes in facilities which are disability-friendly provides the best answer for the development of these athletes. An office/operations staff member should be trained and experienced in this area to be market friendly and supportive to these athletes.

### **ENHANCED CLUB FUNDING**

The amount of funding suggested here will depend on the amount available. This is a vital activity of support in terms of recognition and reward of elite performance. It should not include in any way age or youth, as these programmes effectively do not evaluate as elite performers. This support should only recognise elite performers in all events at World Long Course Championships and Olympic Games.

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It can be argued that it should only recognise Olympic events at World Championships. This argument would remain the decision of SPARC as and if approved by the Podium Development Group Meeting. A recommendation would be as follows:

	Current Programme Recognition	Immediate Past Programme Recognition
<u>World/Olympic Selection -</u>		
Top 12 Individual Finish	\$5,000	\$3,000
Top 6 Relay Finish	\$5,000 per swimmer	\$3,000 per swimmer
<u>Podium Results at Worlds/Olympics -</u>		
Top 3 (medal) Individual Finish	\$8,000	\$4,000
Top 3 (medal) Relay Finish	\$8,000 per swimmer	\$4,000 per swimmer

For relays, the athlete must compete in finals to receive the full amount, or half for heats only. The coach, provided it was the same coach, would have discretionary power of fund allocation of this amount, and it could go half to the salary of the responsible coach and the balance to the club.

I have recommended minimum figures as this would relate to overall budget. A sponsor should be sought for this at \$100,000 per year with accumulating funds so that failure to achieve these targets at any given Worlds/Olympics each year would compound and increase the recognition amount. If funding was available, recognition could be given for Commonwealth Games at half the rate of recognition for Olympics and World Long Course Championships. The sponsorship provided by “Absolute” could be utilised here or a similar one sought, as it ties in the sponsor to all New Zealand’s highest performing coaches and clubs.

The highest amount would be available, not both but events would accumulate to a maximum of \$20,000. The Millenium and Centre programmes would also be allowed to be eligible for this funding. The National Head Coach and Director of Performance would receive 50% of the accumulative bonuses to a maximum of \$20,000 each.

Bonuses to coaches of any category would not apply to Commonwealth Games, Pan Pacs, World Short Course etc. or any meet of a lower stature than World Long Course Championships or Olympic Games.

This would prove to be a major motivating factor for all coaches and highlight the reasons that SPARC funds the programme – ie. major international podium success.

### **TEAM-BASED COMPETITIONS**

The National Championships provide an ideal time to motivate every club member and remind them that their points are important for the team. This is more so for the senior athlete and every effort must be made to make this athlete feel “special”. However, team-based competitions must be more than just National Championships.

Relays at club level and national level play an important role in the process of motivating senior athletes. This process should be enhanced by a much stronger regional competition that has some meaning to the national competition structure with a team-based focus.

## **SWIMMING NEW ZEALAND**

The regions do not appear to meet the needs of the athletes in terms of an intensive team competition where a limited number of regions can go head to head as a team competition. Whilst 2<sup>nd</sup> division and 3<sup>rd</sup> division play an important role in keeping social and less committed age group athletes in the sport, they do little to foster or produce performance at senior levels as it now stands.

Team-based competitions at university and club level along with regions need a complete overhaul and re-think with some meaning added to the process. A team skins could be conducted for senior athletes, as well as an invitation individual skins.

### **ADVANCE PARTY**

For all international competitions at all levels of age, youth and open high performance and elite performance, the Manager should ensure that there is an advance party to ALL aspects of the tour and competition. This should include arrival at camp and competition destination two full working days in advance. It should also include travel to training and competition venues, meal venues etc. They should carry with them accurate thermometers, tape measures, FINA Handbooks etc. which may be required to confirm and check venues.

The advance party must include one very experienced team staff member who will attend all pre-meet technical meetings etc. Relay entry forms should accompany these two people and a copy of the relay policy, with the relay coach, Head Coach and Team Manager all signing the relay order etc. and a copy kept. The manager must have a copy of all team entries with him/her at all times plus protest protocols and the appropriate amount of Swiss Francs, should it be required. All entries should be checked and confirmed pre-meet and on a daily basis.

The advance party should have team ribbons (as in backstroke flat type) to reserve seating when and where required. A team protocol/guidelines list must be put in place for all these activities and placed in the team/trip handbook (refer to example provided).

### **NEW ZEALAND SWIMMING REGIONS**

All information received was that the regions were ineffective in provision of opportunity for advancement of competition opportunities and skill refinement and enhancement for athletes and coaches. The report completed by Youth Coach, Clive Power covered many of the reasons why regions need to be reviewed very closely. I believe that they currently serve little purpose and re-setting of boundaries is certainly justified. A feeling that the “use-by” date for the current situation of regions is well and truly past.

However, there needs to be a “buy-in” for a new format and change solely for the sake of change is of no use. The role of regions must be purposeful and functional in competition structure and in design in terms of re-determining boundaries and process/outcome focus.

NZSCAT needs to be a strong and significant advisory on this re-distribution etc. as it is the coaches who must accept accountability and responsibility for making a new format successful in all of the above areas.

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### **CLUB DEVELOPMENT MODEL/LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

I have found that the strength of national team success comes from the strength of the clubs that develop young swimmers with strong foundations. New Zealand should look to have “model” clubs set up that will (or are already) develop into role model clubs that will set standards for others to follow.

This would have enough flexibility to encompass school programmes through to club programmes. The freedom for clubs to develop as they wish is still available to them, but protocols and guidelines can be established as standards for development.

I would suggest that the clubs of Alistaire Johnson, Gary Hollywood, Frank Tourelle and Donna Bousaid be asked to develop protocols for successful club formatting that could be implemented in most clubs in New Zealand which would ensure long term athlete development alongside successful financial management of the club as a business plan. Each club would have a business plan for the successful and financial management and strategic plan that would incorporate the athlete/staff development and competitive strategy along with detailed training plans.

**Swimming New Zealand must also have exactly the same:**

- **Strategic Plan**
- **Business Plan**

Wherever possible, the club plans (both strategic and business) should be dove-tailed into the Swimming New Zealand Strategic and Business Plans. Certainly, this must be the case with any Swimming New Zealand funded centres of performance.

With respect to the Athlete Development Guidelines, it has been my experience that the development of backstroke is essential in developing freestyle, butterfly and backstroke, just as it is in developing the individual medley. Backstroke and medley events should be emphasised and prioritised at an age just prior to maturation levels, as this ensures continued improvement at an age when performance plateauing can occur. Development of the individual medley ensures skills in all four strokes and an aerobic/skill base as well as covering the 200 metre event.

The introduction of “team” relays should be introduced just post maturation as the introduction of “team” events in both relays and club head-to-head competitions largely prevents loss of talent (drop out) at this key age.

New Zealand regions must focus on this and move to a more progressive and current model where success or lack of it can be monitored.

Incorporated into this club development/long term athlete development model, consideration should also be given to the requirements at each age for:

1. Expected gym/strength and conditioning programmes.
2. Cross training activities, ie. aerobic running, sprint running and cross country skiing.
3. Skin-fold requirements and expectations for athletes past maturation.
4. The importance of backstroke as a core stroke. Most number of achieving athletes in world swimming have this stroke as their primary background.

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5. At maturation age (approximately 13-14), the individual medley as an aerobic event with skills in all four strokes should be prioritised and developed in order to prevent performance plateauing post maturation. The inclusion of open water swimming as an event at post maturation age and not before. This could be included as part of an athlete's overall development.
6. The introduction of relay swimming as a concept into:
  - Club competition and training around maturation
  - Club competitions at national level just post maturation ie. 15-16 year age groups but not before
7. Differentials and requirements between male and female athletes post 15-16 year age group.
8. Competitions progressively required at each age, both standard and frequency.
9. Inclusion of youth, high performance and elite performance categories that would be based both on rankings as a priority, then point scores but only to separate athletes of equal rankings for selection on teams.
10. The introduction of short course competitions to the model would be post-maturation but as with all the other points above, it would be wise to identify an age group where athlete retention was a major issue and the stimulus of relays, short course swimming etc. would be introduced to the competition structure to stimulate a further interest so that athletes would have a reason to stay in the sport and have continued improvement.

Responsibilities of the club coach should include:

1. Offer the club Board professional advice regarding the overall direction of the club, especially regarding team goals and training objectives, team competitions and club selections. Provide a positive, progressive goal orientated teaching, development and training programme to meet the needs of the club's competition schedule.
2. Provide coaching and advice to challenge talented individuals within the club and to courage increased participation, involvement and commitment.
3. To teach, coach and train the club's more advanced and senior dedicated and committed athletes. Provide quality coaching and quality time with quality athletes.
4. To educate, advise and direct the coaching staff in identification, education, motivation, participation and evaluation of the club's athletes and parents. Provide a clearly identifiable teaching, coaching and training model to suit, stimulate and challenge the athlete's needs. The Head Coach would oversee and supervise this programme without interference or compromise from the Club Board or parents within the club on acceptance of the plan and programme by the Club's Board or parent body.
5. To ensure the Club has adequate, appropriate and suitable pool space, gym equipment, training equipment etc. by communicating these needs to the Club Board or by providing or arranging for provision of these items.
6. With the coaches' capabilities, ensure the health and wellbeing of swimmers participating in the programme. This includes injury prevention skills and drug education skills.
7. The Club and Head Coach work together to build a fully integrated, multi-dimensional teaching, training and education programme.
8. The Club must accept and understand that it is not possible nor is it expected that the Head Coach can coach each swimmer in the Club. Whilst this may be desirable by both parents and Head Coach, it is not practical or possible to

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suggest it. The Club has the Head Coach's programme, not the Head Coach coaching each and every swimmer in the programme. Allowance must also be made for periods when the Head Coach is absent at competitions/camps with the senior or higher achieving athletes.

9. Report to the Club Board regarding results and needs of the athletes and progress being made for required changes to the programme. I strongly believe that all competitive swimming clubs have a responsibility to offer on a graduating scale a minimum of 18 hours of supervised coaching each week for at least 45 weeks per year. This is the Club's responsibility and expectation.

### MILLENIUM/SNZ INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

The programme of the Swimming New Zealand Millenium Centre cannot be argued or questioned in terms of having a team of swimmers achieve outstanding results. The coaching team of Jan Cameron and Thomas Ansong has set a standard and example for all other programmes in New Zealand to follow. Lessons should be learnt from this in terms of coaching excellence.

New Zealand swimming would improve dramatically should Jan Cameron be able to do for others in New Zealand what she has done at both North Shore Swimming Club and the Millenium Institute. There is much work to be done to lift New Zealand swimming to the standards achieved by this outstanding programme. The process should commence as soon as possible.

It was generally felt that the concept of this was significant and it should be repeated, but on a smaller scale, in two more locations in New Zealand. However, at the same time it was felt that this was a concept that was excellent for some but not ideal for others.

This facility and the opportunity it offers to high performance athletes in New Zealand is as good as anything else offered anywhere in the world. Athletes attending this institute/programme should be afforded every possible support mechanism available that will provide opportunity to produce the podium result. This should include exercise physiology, training biomechanical analysis, competition biomechanical analysis, individualised strength and conditioning programmes, personal athlete development support, physiotherapy, massage and overall health management, as well as the best coaching expertise available in a cost-free environment to the athlete.

However, performance criteria and protocols must be put in place and athletes accepted into this programme should be aware of the tremendous opportunity and responsibility they are given in this environment. They must also be accountable for further improvement at world level and tracked and monitored accordingly.

My recommendations would be:

- (1) Senior athletes (18 years and over) should be top 20 in the world 2 per nation in Olympic events in order to be selected onto this programme as at the end of 2008, with an expectation that they would be top 16 at the end of 2009 and top 12 at the end of 2010.
- (2) For youth athletes 18 years and under in Olympic events, the entry standard should be top 20 in the world 2 per nation youth rankings or top 30 in the world 2 per nation open rankings as at the end of 2008, with the goal being top 20 in the world 2 per nation world open rankings and top 16 in the world

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2 per nation youth rankings at the end of 2009. This would be followed by top 12 in the world youth rankings 2 per nation at the end of 2010 or to meet the senior criteria top 20 in the world 2 per nation open rankings by the end of 2010. International point scores should not be used in any way to evaluate these standards.

- (3) Visiting opportunities should be provided to athletes in all events, Olympic and non-Olympic, who are top 20 in the world, both youth and open rankings and their coaches during selected periods of time, and at the discretion of both the National Head Coach and the Centre Head Coach.

All of the above should be approved by the SNZ International Podium Committee in advance of the athletes' application to attend the Millenium Institute being successful and approved.

Coaches of current swimmers at the Millenium Centre and their clubs should be represented and recognised on an Honour Board at the Millenium Institute. Coaches of swimmers on the programme should have an open invitation to attend training sessions at the Centre on condition they are supportive to the athlete of the programme and the direction of the programme with any concerns otherwise being directed to the Head Coach and the Centre Coach uniformly.

The Millenium Institute programme should sit completely separate to the North Shore Swimming Club programme with distinctly separate coaching offices and coaching staff. There should be no link to the North Shore Swimming Club programme and the Millenium programme which is different to the Millenium Institute and any other club programme. Coach Thomas Ansong continues to do an outstanding job in his coaching and will need Swimming New Zealand and NZSCAT support for continued post-Olympics support and success.

An Athlete Agreement to attend the Millenium Institute should be drawn up and include expectations from both parties and clauses dealing with the cessation of the Agreement and how it should be handled, if it should occur that this is a direction that must be taken. It should include attendance expectations, training and competition performance expectations, health expectations, availability for Swimming New Zealand activities. It would also need to outline an Agreement between Swimming New Zealand and the Millenium Institute and what would be provided to the athlete and their home coach/home programme.

### **BEST ATHLETES – BEST COACHES - BEST OPPORTUNITIES!**

Swimming New Zealand needs to have its best coaches and best athletes and support group working together for a minimum of 8 weeks per year in camps and ideally, 12 weeks per year in camps. A segment of this time should be allocated for combined training camps at the Millenium Institute.

In order to facilitate a career path that may lead to the athlete attending the Millenium Institute, one national youth camp per year should be held for youth and talented, identified age group swimmers at this facility.

The Academy sports science staff based at the Millenium Institute should work with only those athletes attending the Swimming New Zealand programme at the Millenium Institute. As stated earlier in the report, it is a conflict of interest and I believe not in the best interests of New Zealand swimming or its athletes to have the National Head Coach as the

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Millenium Institute Coach. However, the National Head Coach should have a strong influence in a supervisory role at the Millenium Institute.

After every major competition ie. Commonwealth Games, Olympics and World Long Course Championships, the National Head Coach would be expected to provide in person a detailed progression and result analysis at the earliest meeting of Swimming New Zealand's Board and the SNZ International Podium Committee. The Logistics Manager would facilitate these statistics. Note coaching group evaluation forms attached, something similar to this could be used.

Athletes choosing to attend this programme should continue to compete for their home club for 2 years and this should be conditional to their joining the Millenium programme. Should they then choose to want to compete for a club other than their home club, they would be required to sit out for 1 year of scoring points as an "unattached" athlete prior to being eligible to compete for a club other than their original home club.

The services of the Administration Assistant (Mrs Sarah Thomas) were highly praised and respected by athletes and coaches alike.

### **SWIM FLUME (DUNEDIN) – FUTURE SCIENTIFIC INVESTMENT**

This facility located in Dunedin should not be lost to sport. I believe it to be of incredible value to those coaches and sports science driven people who wish to have a vision of what might be possible into the future. However, this facility should not be of a compulsory nature. A small working group of Dr Dave Gerrard, Thomas Vandenberg, Swim New Zealand's Logistics Manager, an independent coach from NZSCAT and the National Head Coach should oversee the usage and operation of this facility.

Swimming New Zealand and the New Zealand Academy should unite on this project and locate a small group of talented, lateral-thinking sports science graduates from Dunedin University who could use their visionary skills and conduct projects utilising the opportunities available at this facility.

It will not be long before a costume specifically designed for training is developed that will have a computer chip within its structure that will measure heart rates, oxygen up-take, stroke length, stroke frequency and volumes of training done at differing speeds which may include hand pressure plates on the water. It is highly feasible that this could all be recorded by this chip embedded in the costume.

Athlete profiles utilising this information could be built up very quickly if activities could be programmes for visiting athletes to utilise this facility.

The opportunities for the use of this facility are endless. However, the costing may be an inhibiting factor but I feel sure if excitement about the opportunities and possibilities available at this facility, and with a leading group of outward and onward thinking researchers, the university, the Academy, Swimming New Zealand and the local "trust" could easily find the means to finance a visionary and pioneering usage of this facility.

I would see this as being one of the early goals of a Strategic Plan and one of the earliest considerations for inclusion into the overall Swimming New Zealand programme. It has been explained to me that the Flume faces extinction and in this regard, a date of 31<sup>st</sup> May should be a timeline for protocols to be put in place for its usage.

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This should be considered by a group meeting at the New Zealand Swim Coaches and Teachers Conference in May 2008, but it must include a buy-in from all of the above agencies.

### **NEW ZEALAND SWIM COACHES AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (NZSCAT)**

After questioning, it became obvious that there serious divisions between the New Zealand Swim Coaches and Teachers Association and Swimming New Zealand. If New Zealand is to become the best small swimming nation in the world, it will require a significant and positive working relationship to be developed between New Zealand swim coaches, NZSCAT and Swimming New Zealand. The coaches must firstly work together and be united as a group and profession in their operation, direction and unity. Only then, can they hope to be accepted by Swimming New Zealand and have the type of working relationship that will lead to overall success. There must be a feeling all round of a "Team NZ" approach. It was repeated to me on several occasions by both parties that there was a lack of trust and lack of unity between both bodies. This must change for ultimate success.

A very small focused coach education group should meet every three months and it should be made up of the Logistics Manager, Swimming New Zealand's Coach Education Officer and two representatives from NZSCAT. This should meet two weeks prior to a Board Meeting so that a report may be provided to the Board after passage through the SNZ International Podium Committee.

I believe that both parties should work together over a period of four years in order that a transition occurs for coach education apart from Level 1 could be delivered to the coaches, by the coaches and from the coaches. I do not believe at this point in time NZSCAT is ready to take on this responsibility, however many of the senior coaches who I spoke to expressed a serious credibility problem from the delivery aspect of Swimming New Zealand and its accreditation courses available to coaches.

NZSCAT should be included in all aspects of design and delivery of all coaching courses above junior development in order that the credibility issue disappears and that coaches in general will understand that their opinion is valued and appreciated. From New Zealand Swimming's Board's point of view, they must feel that they have the support, loyalty and trust of the coaches. There must also be accountability from NZSCAT to work responsibly with SNZ for this partnership to develop.

I think it is vitally important that members of the Board of Swimming New Zealand attend the Annual Conference of NZSCAT and invitations to selected coaches to attend Swimming New Zealand's activities are issued.

Senior coaches in New Zealand should be invited without refusal to deliver lectures at the annual coaching school each year. This will help the stature of these coaches and will encourage them to pass on knowledge and experience to their younger counterparts.

I believe a separate SPARC grant to the NZSCAT would be extremely beneficial, show trust and provide the Association with some feet to get up and running. This would not need to be a big grant, but it would need to be of a significant nature. Without coaching expertise and continued development, New Zealand Swimming will continue to under-perform. Jealousies will continue and mistrust will be paramount. The above co-operation would overcome all of these obstacles and challenges.

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On senior national teams, there should be coaching awards to the highest performing coach and swimmer combinations at Commonwealth Games, World Long Course Championships and Olympic Games, and one selected international high level youth competition. The coaching awards would be presented in front of the audience at New Zealand Championships and would honour NZ's past great coaches, ie. a Duncan Lang Award for the Olympics, a Tony Keenan Award for the World Long Course, and a Pic Parkhouse Award for the Commonwealth Games, and another coach to be honoured at the junior meet.

This would honour the coaching profession and those who achieved at the highest international level, and create a culture of coaching excellence and pride in those who went beyond the shores of New Zealand.

NZSCAT should develop policies for coach selection on New Zealand swim teams. 70% retention from Commonwealth Games prior to Olympic Games.

**Up-Skilling of coaching excellence at the international level is the weakest link in the make-up of Swimming New Zealand, and it is the one issue that will make a real difference, and as such is the area for greatest improvement.**

### **WORLD CUPS/WORLD YOUTH/WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS/WORLD SHORT COURSE/WORLD STUDENT GAMES ETC.**

In the current situation, world level swimming offers a plethora of opportunities for athletes in countries to compete, probably too often and places national bodies and their budgets under severe financial strain. A strategy which should be incorporated into the national plan for the long term athlete development of individual athletes to work in co-operation to support and develop the national swim team must be put in place. For instance, it will be well worth Swimming New Zealand identifying a meet like the World Youth Championships and sending their 4X100 mens and womens medley relay teams and their mens and womens 4X200 freestyle relay teams to compete in these events. As a secondary event, they may then compete in their individual events, but relays must be their priority.

There is a huge danger in today's competitive world and in particular in the youth area to over-expose athletes to competition opportunities. Winning athletes must be hungry for winning and the rewards and recognition that are associated with success. An athlete must have a winning profile, ie. 14 wins out of their last 20 starts and each one of these wins should replace a personal best time from their previous 10 best performances. This is a ratio that has produced winners on the podium at the international level for a long time.

Each athlete exposed to international or world level swimming should have a detailed performance strategy included in their Individual Performance Plan.

### **SELECTION POLICIES**

Both selection policies and selections should be approved by the Board prior to announcing/advertising/notification/publication to the swimming fraternity or general public. All policies and decisions that have in any way the possibility of impacting on the performance of the team in terms of selections must be done through consultation and negotiation with both the National Head Coach and/or Performance Director and must be signed off and agreed upon by this person(s). This should not be compromised in any way. To do so will only further isolate and complicate the Head Coach and team structure. Of

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course, once it is signed off by the above people it should go through the normal Board/CEO process.

It is highly recommended for all kinds of reasons but particularly for legal reasons that all selectors are independent of the organization in terms of being non-staff members. Written in to Athletes Agreements and Selection Policies should be that all team members must be available for relay selection.

Where it occurs, most countries now go with the policy of all non-Olympic events being selected from the respective Olympic event. Finals times swum must be given priority over heats and semi-final times swum when selecting teams.

Selections should be announced by the Media Representative to all media outlets at some time just prior to announcement to the swimming public. All selections must be signed off when presented to the Board by the Chief of Selectors and the National Head Coach. There should no exceptions to this.

In consultation with the Logistics Manager, the Head Coach and Director of Performance should present a selection policy a full 12 months in advance. After this policy has been agreed upon and approved by the International Podium Committee, and then reviewed/approved by the Selectors, it should be presented to the Board by the Chief Executive Officer.

At any stage of this process that it is not approved, the policy must be sent back to the International Podium Committee for reconsideration with detailed challenges. Each/every policy must be “aired” at least 8 months in advance of a selection meet.

The Selectors should be made up of at least three, with at least two of those to be non-employees of Swimming New Zealand. Each Selector must select independently according to the policy, only meeting to agree or disagree on the last day of the selection date or meet.

Consideration should be given to a 48 hour period after final selection is made before any announcement is made.

There was much criticism of changing policies, lack of transparency and inadequate notification time of selection policies. In the event of failure to have these finalised a clear 6 months in advance and processed in time, the Chief Executive Officer should be empowered to have this done independently outside the system.

On viewing the National Selection Trials held recently in Auckland, I could not help but feel that the selection policies were way too loose and open to interpretation. There was a feeling from my point of view of it being somewhat haphazard where swimmers, in acts of desperation were trying to qualify in regional relay lead-offs, by doing split times in longer events, use of converted short course to long course times, and from times in B Finals. These attitudes and policies are not conducive to preparing athletes for global swimming. Whilst every effort should be made to get the best team to represent New Zealand, there is also a responsibility to use the meet to more adequately and professionally prepare the athletes for the bigger picture.

After reviewing New Zealand teams over several years, there is a good argument why the Head Coach should be in charge of major teams but where other coaches are delegated with the responsibility of being Head Coach at minor meets.

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The national Championships should try to have the full field of either A and B Finals or semi-finals. Wild card entries could be used to fill up the field where these opportunities for entry occur.

I was surprised to see that MISH athletes funded by Swimming New Zealand were not named in the programme at the recent Selection Trials in Auckland.

### TEAM MANAGEMENT

The management of the national senior team is a vital and key role to achieving success on the international stage. This person must be fully included into the whole structure of Swimming New Zealand. Whilst the Manager is there to manage the team and the athletes, he or she should be supported by the team coaches and sports science staff, accepting responsibility in assisting the Team Manager wherever required. Coaching and sports science staff must be fully aware that they are totally and unconditionally accountable for the actions of the athletes on the team at all times. The coach of the swimmer(s) is responsible for all actions undertaken by the athlete at all times whilst on the team. In this regard, coaches must accept that they will share management responsibilities as well as coaching. Their personal exercise and down-time is prior to the team training in the morning and after dinner at night. Being part of a national team is not a time to pursue other activities other than coaching the athletes, supporting the Team Manager and being totally focused on achieving the task and building the team concept and confidence.

It would be expected that the Team Manager, after meeting with the National Head Coach and with approval of the Director of Performance would meet with the Logistics Manager and ensure that all team requirements are planned, organised and put in place in every minute detail 6 months and 3 months respectively out of the travel date.

The Team Manager, along with others who may require it should be invited to attend at Swimming New Zealand and the Olympic Association's cost an extensive team leadership course. This would be seen as their continued professional development opportunity. On the national team, the Team Manager should be kept fully informed of the exact whereabouts of every team member (staff and athletes) and basically should be empowered with the responsibility to organise and direct all non-coaching or specific related activities. There must be a strong bond and relationship between the National Team Head Coach and the National Team Manager with great lines of communication and delivery of information. This does not appear to currently be the situation. Vast improvements are required in this area. The Team Manager, to be effective, respected and appreciated should be a part-time paid position. They should also be responsible and involved in the training of all team managers for Swimming New Zealand teams, including age and youth. This is a key position and can have either a positive or negative influence on the overall results of the team.

On a daily basis, a routine something like this should be put in place as team protocol:

5.30am - Team Manager and Head Coach meet to discuss areas of concern for the forthcoming day. (They might invite the sports science or the coach of the day to attend only if required).

7.00am - Training session or competition heats/semi finals (coach of the day plus Head Coach to go to the pool 30 minutes in advance of the team).

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7.30-9.30am - Training. At least 1 manager should be at the pool from the start to the finish of the session. Coaching staff should not leave the pool until the last swimmer has left.

11.00am - Coaches Meeting where the Manager will also be in attendance. Other staff may be included but all coaches must attend. This meeting will run from 11.00-12.15 with the last 15 minutes having a senior swimmer attend to provide a view of how the team feels things are going or to bring up any issues of concern. The swimmer will nominate another swimmer to attend the next day's meeting.

If this is a competition, the Head Coach would be available to meet the media if required at the conclusion of the team's last swimmer performing.

3.00pm - Athletes Meeting - no longer than 20 minutes. If it is a competition, it would be a rah-rah session where the coach of the day would present the athletes competing that night and the swimmer from the morning's coaches meeting would present the swimmers who performed the night before or in the heats that morning. If it was only a camp and not a competition, the meeting would just address the current day's issues or the next day's issues.

The Head Coach would be expected to be extremely supportive and play a part in all of these activities, and lead with key information points.

3.15-6.00pm - Training session or competition. Coaches remain at pool until the last swimmer leaves the session. If it is competition, the coach of the day could meet the media. The coach of the day would be the coach who had the No. 1 swimmer competing for that day. All staff should have undergone media training prior to the tour. The media should only expect a maximum of 20 minutes with this coach. As athletes finish their competition, they can be included in this as well, and the policy should be for athletes and coaches that they can only speak about the performances of either their own swimmer and the swimmer can only speak about their own performances, not about anyone else in the team.

8.00pm - The coach of the day would host tea and coffee. This may be held at a different venue each night. The Head Coach may decide whether to attend or not and this decision would be the Head Coach's ability to read the situation in either attending or not attending, depending on the coach of the day, the performance of the team, the issues involved. If everything has gone to plan it is probably a good idea for the Head Coach to make only a very brief appearance at this meeting.

Where young coaches are involved, it is wise to try to do a deal with the hotel to provide at minimal or no cost pay TV for each of the staff. This keeps their nights active and their minds away from over-stress and provides some kind of relaxation without leaving the hotel.

At the end of competitions, the Head Coach and one other person of seniority (perhaps the Manager?) should individually review the performance of each coach in terms of their coaching and the performance of their swimmers in a confidential one-on-one meeting prior to the team's departure. This should not be confused with a staff de-brief conducted by a Board Member or the athlete de-brief conducted by the Athlete Liaison person and same Board Member. Both athlete and staff de-briefs should deal with logistics of the tour and not personalities. Overall performance de-briefs should be done at meetings once the team arrives back home.

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I might point out that where at all possible, relay teams and those competing in them should be announced at least 48 hours prior to the relay competing and certainly, there should be a clear policy within the team and consistency from team to team about how the relay team is selected. Opinion should really have minimal influence within these policies. It is also a good idea to give the swimmers a rest from the media by having two media black-out days for the 2 days immediately prior to competition starting. It is in this 2 day period that each coach on the team should be assigned a media person to contact and provide positive stories on the team to the different media personnel involved.

In respect of national teams, the standards of staff ratios should be considered.

### National Senior Team

Major Competitions (Olympics, World Long Course):

There should be 1 coach for every 4 athletes.

Minor Competitions (All Others):

There should be 1 coach for every 6 athletes.

### Youth Teams

Major Competitions (Junior Pan Pacs):

There should be 1 coach for every 6 athletes.

Minor Competitions (All Others):

There should be 1 coach for every 8 athletes.

### Age Group Teams

All Teams:

There should be coach for every 8 athletes.

For age and youth teams where there is 1 coach for 8 athletes and the team exceeds 16 athletes, 1 coach may be added to the team for experience and a second Team Manager would be required.

For senior and youth programmes (where there are less than 6 athletes per coach), a second Team Manager should be included where there is a team of more than 20 athletes.

### Coaching squads

International training centres:

There should be 1 coach for every 8-12 athletes (some coaches can handle more than this).

A junior assistant coach may be required if the number of athletes is above 10.

### Age and Youth Programmes

There should be 1 coach for every 20-30 athletes (ie. in club programmes)

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### **BOARD MEETINGS – DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE/HEAD COACH**

One point of contact on Performance Report to Board. Annually, and after world Championships/Olympic Games/Commonwealth Games.

### **TEAM DE-BRIEFS** (Refer to Appendix XIII)

On review of the de-brief formats both from the Director of Coaching and the High Performance Coaching Director, I certainly was of the opinion that there existed a “blame” and “find fault” culture. Whilst this conflict exists between these two positions, Swimming New Zealand will have a fragmented and fractured programme.

The team de-brief should be split into two parts, however the same questions and protocols must be addressed to both groups. If it is a major meet, the swimmers on their first major meet regardless of what else they have been on should be split into one group and the more experienced athletes into the second group.

Confidentiality is essential. These meetings should be focused on logistics, ie:

- 1) Team travel/venue
- 2) Accommodation
- 3) Meals
- 4) Outfitting
- 5) Provision of support
- 6) On-ground transport
- 7) Split first timers and others

The focus of the de-brief should be on how the preparation and organisation can be done better next time. The above de-brief could be split into athletes (first timers and more experienced athletes) and a separate one for staff. One experienced staff member however should sit in on the athlete de-briefs. These de-briefs should be conducted by a Board Member who can consistently do this however it must be pointed out that this Board Member should not be associated in any way with parenthood or a coach and must be completely independent. An athlete liaison person should be included in the de-brief.

### **ATHLETE PERFORMANCE DE-BRIEFS**

These de-briefs should not focus on personality issues whatsoever and they should be conducted by the SNZ Athlete Development Group Committee. This de-briefing situation should focus totally on the statistics of the athlete’s performance and how they can be improved.

### **SPARC**

The five key planning questions asked of sport by SPARC are:

1. What is your performance goal (or what do you want)?
2. Which athletes will deliver the performance goal?
  - Identifiable meets and athletes
  - Winnable events
  - Coaches capable of delivering

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3. What support do the athletes need to deliver the performance goal?
4. How will you measure that you are on track to deliver the performance goal?
5. What are the risks or obstacles associated with realising the performance goal?

As the government funding agency for Swimming New Zealand and by far the largest sponsor that Swimming New Zealand has, it must have inclusion without intrusion. The obvious question that came to mind when looking at the relationship between SPARC, Swimming New Zealand and the athletes was “why doesn’t SPARC fund athletes directly once they have been identified and approved by Swimming New Zealand?” It seems a completely unnecessary step that SPARC would deliver athlete funding to Swimming New Zealand who would then forward it on to the individual athlete. This would make a clearer line of communication and support and relieve Swimming New Zealand of a considerable amount of unnecessary administration work if this middle step was eliminated.

During the interview process, there was an extreme amount of criticism of the Prime Minister’s Scholarships and how the recipients were selected. There was a clear indication that more transparency in this process is required and that coaches were communicated with and informed how the application and selection process operated. There were suggestions of coaches wanting to be recognised and supported through the Prime Minister’s Scholarships but were unaware of the objectives and requirements of both SPARC and Swimming New Zealand. I believe more communication is required and that everyone understands quite clearly the not only the Prime Minister’s Scholarships but SPARC’s support in general is aimed at improving performances and podium level on the world stage. The question from SPARC’s point of view should be “will this project if funded through SPARC enhance the performance of Swimming New Zealand on the podium at world level?” I do not believe that there is a clear understanding of this at the present time.

It was indicated to me that there were 42 carded athletes. It was quite obvious that there should be a very specific criteria for athletes over 18 and world ranked in accordance with Swimming New Zealand’s protocols, and there was good argument where youth athletes heading towards the world record progression and improvements, both on the world youth stage and world open rankings should have a larger representation among these 42 positions. Identified relays who are on track from the youth or senior area for a top 6 finish in the world should also be included and recognised in this support mechanism.

### Roles and involvement of SPARC:

- Understanding of the provision of funding (team sport VS individual sport). Team sports and individual sports are very different and whilst government agencies can sometimes wish for a “one size fits all” approach, this has never worked and appears to have little chance of working in any country in the world. The “one stop shop” philosophy has also not been a positive or productive procedure.
- Role of funding agencies. Sponsorship must be a priority so that Swimming New Zealand is not dependent on just one source of income for its high performance programme.
- Protect investment. It is understood that SPARC wishes to have involvement in the conduct of the sports it supports. Swimming New Zealand must be pro-active in continually involving SPARC and also informing and educating them of its direction and opportunities.
- Involvement of senior appointments. As outlined earlier in the report, the appointment of senior staff at the top of Swimming New Zealand can influence the outcomes. It is acceptable that SPARC be involved in this process, however the final selection must rest with Swimming New Zealand.

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- Performance expectations. Whilst KPIs are acceptable, it must be accepted and understood that money alone does not buy results. Many countries today have struggled with this concept and have put the cart before the horse. Each national body and in turn each swimming club and then again each individual should have a plan incorporating strategic, performance and business elements prior to SPARC supporting these programmes.
- Accountable and responsible process and outcomes. Once again, it is acceptable that SPARC will wish to have a clear indication that their funding support is being used wisely and fully accounted for in terms of both process and outcomes, as process alone will not work, and there must be expectations of outcomes. These must be balanced. There are many examples in the world today where government agencies provide funding and expected results, and they do so without ensuring that the clubs and national bodies have the required platforms in place to launch their athletes onto the world stage. During the interview process, it has become very clear to me that nearly all in swimming in New Zealand desire high performance at the world level but very few, if any, understand what it will take for this to occur. The platforms required for New Zealand to move upwards and forwards are not in place as yet. To rely on what worked in yesteryear will not be enough in today's very competitive swimming world. Success by chance is very different to success by design. I feel chance combined with a committed, dedicated and single focused approach by a talented and talented athlete has carried New Zealand success in swimming up until now.
- Annual update. It would be a reasonable request for the Board of Swimming New Zealand to meet after each major competition where a member from SPARC would attend and the Head Coach/National Performance Director and Team Manager give an update in person on swimming's progress on the national and international stage.
- National short term/long term plan approvals. Both Swimming New Zealand and SPARC should be identifying a strategy and plan in detail but with flexibility for the next 12 years, and this should be updated every 4 years. It could be expected that in every quadrennium, Swimming New Zealand in terms of the CEO, the Chairman, National Performance Director/Head Coach and one or two other Swimming New Zealand key people would present a detailed 4 year plan to SPARC and have funding guaranteed from one Olympic Games to the next, after approval of a detailed report on the past 4 years.

### FACILITIES

Apart from USA and perhaps Australia, facilities remain a key issue for a nation's success in sport and in particular, swimming. Swimming New Zealand must utilise every inch of opportunity that it has in obtaining partnerships and relationships with the Department of Health and the Department of Education in setting guidelines for the provision and utilisation of facilities. There must be a concentrated effort at local authority, schools and the health areas with a strategic view on how to best get coaches into the best facilities.

It should also influence where facilities are built in terms of population increases, ie. Bureau of Statistics in terms of new business growth, new housing developments and birth rates. This must be strategically done as well as the continual lobby in areas such as the Asthma Foundation, compulsory swimming in schools in summer and the battle against obesity in children.

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### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The first 6 points were brought up as priorities by more than 95% of those interviewed.

2. Swimming NZ leadership
3. Trust within aspects of the high performance area of Swimming New Zealand
4. Unity on national teams
5. Youth programme (direction and support)
6. Lack of National Plan and understanding of “Mining for Gold” document
7. Role clarification of **all** positions within SNZ – structure of SNZ

These points were brought up by the senior staff etc. above 70% of the total group (non athletes):

2. Sponsorship – independence
3. Health – education and SPARC
4. Coaching upskilling
5. Regions

Areas of concern identified by the reviewer as well as the above points:

2. International point score versus rankings
3. Athletes/coaching individual performance plans implementation
4. Transparency of selection policies, pathway of athletes, pathway/approval of policies/teams etc.
5. Swimming club organization
6. World level strategies
7. Budget planning expense claims processed in advance

Early recommendations:

1. **Announce 2012 training squad (age range 15-18 years) with annual targets based on rankings for continued inclusion.**
2. **SNZ goal of 1 NZ swimmer in every Olympic event at 2010 Commonwealth Games.**
3. **A long term relay strategy commencing with 15-18 year olds across the 4X 200 F/S event followed by the 4 X 100 IM event, both men and women.**

### FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Office/Administration:

- Design and implement an expense claim form that would include any form of spending to be completed and signed off a minimum of 3 months in advance. For any amount above \$200 it would require the signature of the CEO and for any expense under \$200, it would require the signature of the Department Head. Where the 3 month advance notice cannot be applied, and this would only be on very rare exceptions, it would need to be signed off by the CEO and counter-signed by the Department Head and the Finance Officer.
- All expenditure must be coded and planned in advance rather than claimed in arrears.

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- Role clarity must become a key issue and all Job Descriptions redefined. High performance duties should be re-allocated to High Performance personnel.
- Re-allocation of duties and re-structuring of the coach education section.

### National Plan (Youth, High Performance, Elite Performance, Age Feeder Programmes):

- Provision of stronger leadership from a field operative National Performance Director/Head Coach.
- Identify and announce 2010 Commonwealth Games Training Squad.
- Set standards of expected performance levels on a 6 monthly review to remain part of this squad.
- Prioritise and identify winnable events at 2010 Commonwealth Games (not for publication or media – internal use only).
- Identify and set expected targets for 2010 Commonwealth Games, and sell to all stakeholders, ie. **“HAVE A FINALIST IN EVERY EVENT AT 2010 COMMONWEALTH GAMES”**. This is achievable and should be sold to the public at large, as against the current highly unlikely (but not impossible) 5 X top 5 finishes at the Olympic Games.
- I believe that for the Commonwealth Games in 2010, first and second place should be automatic selection in every Olympic event with third place selection offering a preferred selection to the highest ranked youth athlete, or if that is not possible, to the third ranked senior swimmer. The third position offered to the youth swimmer (18 and under) would mean that this youth swimmer would have to be top 5 in the final.
- Prioritise budgeting in advance for the above goals.
- Prepare to send the biggest team possible to the 2010 Commonwealth Games.
- Review the process of identifying talent and athletes above the national age group programme combining FINA points scores and current rankings for youth and **only** rankings for the national senior team. Over time, move more towards rankings and away from points scores.
- Increase focus and budget allocation for the National Youth Programme (Mens 16-18 years Womens 15-17 years).
- Identify and appoint a Senior National Team Manager (funded part-time on salary) utilised for senior national teams and the training of future managers.
- Team concept (unity under pressure).
- Development of a clear and transparent policy on self-funded through to fully funded meets for the next 4 years – guidelines for self-funding.
- Inclusion of an open water programme with transparent and identifiable selection policies. This should be inclusive into the distance programme.
- Integration of a disability programme into mainstream competitive swimming.
- Identification of events and selection policies for these events on the international stage for the next 4-6 years.
- Printing of a calendar/activities book diary indicating all camp activities for age, youth and open and competitions (refer to example provided).
- Identify the role of the Millenium Institute and key performance indicators, expectations and accountability for that programme. Currently, there does not appear to be any.
- Positively influence through coach development the following statistics:
  - 4 coaches placing swimmers on the senior international team since 2005 World Championships

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- 80% of coaches placing a swimmer on the age team (see statistics on PB ratings at National Age Championships for last 4 years).
- 16 coaches placing swimmers on the National Youth Programme

### **Millenium National/International Performance Programme:**

- **Additional funding and support for athletes attending the Millenium Institute Programme on a full-time basis.**
- Consideration for the development of two more national centre programmes.
- Athletes continue to perform for their home club.
- Open invitation for home coaches to visit Millenium Institute.
- Recognition and reward for home coaches placing swimmers on Millenium programme.
- North Shore Club to be independent and separate (office space, training space and sports science etc.).
- Millenium Head Coach to attend monthly meeting of Swimming New Zealand Athlete Development Group Committee and Swimming New Zealand staff meeting.
- Millenium Head Coach daily communication with High Performance Manager.
- Logistically support athlete tracking.

### **NZ Staff – Role Clarity:**

- Each staff member to provide list of 10 key duties (ensure none are duplicated).
- Office staff.
- Field staff (identification of field staff).
- Role changes.
- Logistics Manager role.
- National Performance Director/Head Coach role.
- High Performance Manager role.
- Annual Planning Meeting.
- Key staff (club visits) carbon books.
- Club visits/carbonated book.
- Calendar diary.

### **Primary School Swimming (Promotion, Guidelines and Recruitment):**

- 1 X 25 metre school pool with limited weekend public access in every 30,000 population base.
- Includes private enterprise (see Lang Warren in Australia).
- 1 in 6 pools to be 50 metre outdoors.
- 1 in 12 pools to be 50 metre indoors (universities)
- Primary school swimming clubs (affiliated).
- Referee – talent identification.

### **Health and Education (Established and Self-Funding):**

Given the limited funding available from SPARC and a future sponsorship arrangement based at this stage on hope rather than reality, the identified areas that could contribute significantly to Swimming New Zealand could come from the health agenda and the education budget. Consideration should be given to a Coach Education Centre (no funds from SPARC). This could be done by a bidding situation within the education and health

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programmes and perhaps even further facilities could be accessed as well as through the private sector.

This could be established where learn to swim teachers and all forms of coach education could be done “in-house” as well as provide a pool available for the coaching of programmes as a model for the future development of the above requirements listed in Primary School Swimming. This facility would be used for the practical development of coaches along with the theoretical education of coaches. It could also be used for the training of officials, in particular referees who would be skilled in talent identification.

### **Swimming New Zealand Board:**

Concern was expressed from many of those interviewed that they felt there was a conflict of interest where current coaches along with parents of current swimmers aspiring to be on the national team sat on the Board. Whilst it was agreed by most that they felt this conflict was not an issue, it provided doubt in some minds as to the objectivity of those involved.

Most Boards of successful sporting organizations include an immediate past high performance coach who is not currently involved in any way with the national teams, a past high performance athlete who has been out of the sport for 2 years or more and a representative from the Coaches and Teachers Association. This should be supported by independently selected business people and high ranking and experienced personnel from within swimming.

I believe that the role of Swimming New Zealand’s Board fits well within its guidelines and its operational boundaries, and requires minimum adjustments. The Board of Swimming New Zealand carries out its duties objectively and is considered very supportive of a high performance direction.

### **Marketing:**

1. A focused and organised sponsorship drive led by the CEO, a marketing organization and the media representative.
2. An athlete advisory group that is inclusive and supportive of Swimming New Zealand’s goals and objectives.

### **Influence of Australian Programme:**

Swimming New Zealand should utilise in every way possible the competition structure of Australian Swimming. They can do this by scheduling events in line with both Australian Swimming and the world stage. The Swimming New Zealand calendar should be set up so that Australia and New Zealand both benefit by having corresponding New Zealand meets one week after Australia has their meets which will allow New Zealand swimmers to compete one weekend in Australia and the following weekend in New Zealand and vice versa.

This would give tremendous athlete opportunities and educate coaches by experience and practical applications of coaching through long periods with travel included. Certainly, Swimming New Zealand and NZSCAT should utilise the coach education systems within Australia and try to set up an alliance with Australian Swimming to include all of the above.

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### **Relay and Performance Strategy:**

- Selection policy (clear and must be adhered to without compromise).
- Relay youth development programme –
  - Relay days – ie. weekend days where relay teams and strategies are developed 6 years in advance of expected outcomes.
  - Relays at national meets
  - Frequency of relay competitions
  - Create a need/pride in relays
  - Relay policy on all teams – clear and transparent guidelines of initial selection and final competition selection.
  - Approach relays around the 14-16 year old age groups with the same philosophy that rowing approaches the development of their 4s and 8s in preparation for Olympic representation in 6-8 years time.

This should be all inclusive in the National Plan.

### **Local Authorities:**

All local authorities (or at least most) will attend annual meetings of local authorities and local government to discuss common themes and issues. Swimming New Zealand should identify these meetings and solicit opportunities to guest speak and present so that partnerships can be built up with local council-built facilities and programmes can be enhanced with affordable and appropriate training times and access.

This should be a well planned strategy and kept in-house within Swimming New Zealand.

### **High Performance and Coaching:**

- Leadership from national body – field leadership is required and this was identified as the No. 1 area for improvement from well over 90% of those interviewed.
- Frequent field visitations from NZ technical staff.
- Clearly defined objectives – direction from national body – ownership.
- Stronger presence from NZSCAT.
- Unified approach from NZSCAT and SNZ.
- Outlined pathway for swim coaches.
- Recognition and reward:
  - Coach of Tour – Senior – Duncan Lang Award  
Junior/Youth – Tony Keenan Award
  - Athlete of Tour
  - Millenium/Universities
- Develop task force coaching group and plan development (succession planning to enhance and improve level of long term development of world class coaches in New Zealand -
  - Simon Maine
  - Scott Talbot-Cameron
  - John Winter
  - Jeremy Duncan
  - Glenn Hamblyn
  - Others as identified

## SWIMMING NEW ZEALAND

### CONCLUSIONS

In respect of Swimming New Zealand's operations, it has been my finding that the organization as a whole has exceedingly more positives than negatives. There are a couple of very obvious and almost unanimously identified challenge areas that need to be addressed soon after the Beijing Olympic Games. Swimming New Zealand stakeholders can feel confident that the high performance unit and the organization in general, with a new Chief Executive Officer and a preparedness to seriously address the required changes will move high performance swimming forward in both New Zealand and on the world stage.

Whilst I have not been requested to review budget rationalisation or prioritise budget allocation, it is very clear that Swimming New Zealand's high performance programme is under-resourced with both staffing and funding. Should the restructuring and change of programme direction outlined in this review be undertaken, then I believe that it will take a further (and a minimum) \$1 million investment from either SPARC and/or a major sponsor.

However, funding alone does not buy work ethic, and further increased funding will not achieve the advancement of the programme or the desired outcomes if the fundamentals are not rectified. It will need a very serious and focused up-skilling of coaches and a driven new club structure. Coaches in New Zealand must be valued and appreciated more. An attitude of consensus, consultation and negotiation must be in existence. A much stronger partnership between all stakeholders is required.

New Zealand's performance at the next Olympics should be judged on 70% (minimum) of all swimmers attending the Games (all relays a must) make finals and the other 30% or better achieve semi-final status. Should this not occur or be achieved, then questions must be asked about the selection policy, the coaching and management of the team, the professionalism and preparedness of the athletes and both the team and national planning. In order to achieve this result, the team will need to be strong with unity, trust and focus and a "blame" culture must be avoided at all costs.

There must be a "TEAM NZ" attitude and concept across all involved and committed to high performance swimming.

There should be no compromise in budget allocation in terms of the Olympic team's preparation. With this in mind, it can be appreciated that the womens 4X200 freestyle relay is a considerable distance away from both its potential and what it will take to be competitive in Beijing. Every effort should be made to develop this team's capability in terms of Olympic performance with a strategy and focus for a major improvement.

Whilst the selection policies need to be tightened up across the board, it must be appreciated that the correct (best) Olympic was selected. In this regard, the policy worked. Conducting one-off relay time trials in still (non-traffic) conditions could be argued strongly is not a good policy in terms of selecting an international standard team.

There would be good reason to send a senior team to another international meet (end of year) which would include the relay teams and senior individuals just missing the Olympic cut. This would include the coaching staff but would not include any Olympic swimmers and staff. This would ensure continuity of performance of the senior team.