

## THE BEGINNING.

Ernie Casper - Founder  
the Melbourne Swimming  
Club and First Honorary  
Secretary.

*On Wednesday 3rd October, 1894, a meeting was convened by Mr. Ernie Casper at the George Hotel of those interested in the formation of a Swimming Club at St. Kilda. Mr. S.G. Pirani presided, and the forty gentlemen present resolved to form a Club under the title of "The Melbourne Swimming Club".*

Such is the brief newspaper reference to the inauguration of that strong and influential body in the swimming world of Australia gone by and the water polo world of Australia today, and which celebrates its 100th year this day. Mr. Ernie Casper was elected the first Secretary. A further meeting occurred on the 17th October, 1894, at which the rules were adopted and it was decided to affiliate with the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association. The first Office Bearers for the Melbourne Swimming Club comprised the following people:

President:	The Rt Hon. Sir George Turner, K.C.M.G., P.C.
Vice Presidents:	Mr. S. Jacoby Mr. E. B. Koepfel Mr. I. Freedman Mr. H. M. Gooch Mr. S. G. Pirani Mr. F. Wimpole Mr. W.T. Coldham
Secretary:	Mr. E. Casper
Treasurer:	Mr. C.R. Shaw
Ass. Treasurer:	Mr. N.C. Thompson
Captain:	Mr. H. Heath
Vice Captain:	Mr. C. Allard
Committee Members:	Mr. J. G. Pearson Mr. J.W. Thomas Mr. J. J. Blake Mr. S. Fox Mr. M. Feldheim

The first Member's Carnival was held on the 24th November, 1894, at the St. Kilda Baths. An interesting feature of this carnival was the exhibition of Captain Boynton's Swimming Dress in

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which he crossed the English Channel, and the *piece de resistance* was the ability of Mr. Alexander Rushall to extricate himself, under the water, from a walking costume after being sewn up in a weighted bag, and emerge within a few seconds in fancy costume.

The first year of the Melbourne Swimming Club was bought to a close with a successful Smoke Concert at the George Hotel, St. Kilda, at which the distribution of prizes took place.

The outstanding features of the intervening periods may be briefly summarised as shown on the following pages.

**1894-1895 - Membership 140.** The notable performers for the season were Messrs. Harry Heath, A Casper, M. Blake (diving) and E.W. Pearson. Harry Heath was awarded the Club Champion after winning the 50 yds and 500 yds. An event known as the "George Gall Bequest Cup" took place. Water Polo Champions for the season. Sir George Turner, who was the Premier of Victoria at the time was elected first President. He was later the founder of R.M.I.T.

**1895-1896 - Membership 161.** A Feature of the second season was the visit of Mr. Percy Cavill (Champion of New South Wales). The club won the Water Polo Competition, competing on 21st March, 1896, at the Ladies Day Aquatic Carnival at Stubbs Baths, South Melbourne. The teams that competed were Melbourne Swimming Club, Middle Park Swimming Club, Collingwood Swimming Club and Brighton Swimming Club. Melbourne were successful in defeating Middle Park, whilst Collingwood were successful in defeating Brighton for 3rd place. The Melbourne Swimming Club was represented by Harry Heath (Captain), C. Allard (Vice Captain), R. Stewart, Arthur J. Pearson, A. Johnson, W. Hatch, Ernie Casper, A. Casper, C.F. Belcher, M. Feldheim. The emergencies were F. Blunt, M. Moss and T. Turnbull. During this season, Mr. James G. Pearson gave two Challenge Shields for the 440 and 880 Yards Championships of Victoria. The Shields were presented by the Club to the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association. Mr. Harry Heath was the most prominent performer for the year, representing the Club at the Inter-Colonial Championships in Sydney. This season saw the first official Victorian Swimming Championships held, with the 110, 220 and 440 yards freestyle events contested. Harry Heath was successful in becoming one of Victoria's first swimming champions in winning the 110 yards freestyle in 1 minute 10 seconds.

**1896-1897 - Membership 109.** Three carnivals were held. A feature of the March Meeting was the performance of Mr. Percy Cavill. The Water Polo team again successfully competed at the Ladies Day Aquatic Carnival at Stubbs Baths, Sth, Melbourne, with T. Turnbull, W. Hatch, M. Feldheim, A. Pearson, A. Casper, E. Casper, J. Meagher, T. Felstead, J. Daly, J. Edmonds, J.J. Blake and M. Moss representing the Club.

**1897-1898 - Membership 77.** A meeting held on the 3rd March, 1898, was styled "The Ladies' Championship Day." Chief interest centred in the race for 880 Yards Championship of Victoria, which was won by Mr. T. Maynard. The distribution of prizes took place at the Annual Smoke Night.

**1898-1899 - Membership 89.** A Grand Ladies' Day was held during the season. Two very funny farces, "A Connewarra Picnic" and "The Solution of the Chinese Connection," caused great merriment at this Carnival. This season saw the first race for the "City of St. Kilda Solicitors' Junior Championship" which was contested for the Best Junior Swimmer on Saturday 25th February, and was won by Master J. Lilley. Mr. Joseph Woolfe presented the

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trophy and for more than 20 years, this contest was recognised as the State Junior Championship. At the Victorian swimming championships, Arthur J. Pearson won the 110 yards freestyle championship in 1 minute 12 seconds, using the "trudgeon" stroke for the very first time in favour of the side stroke.

**1899-1900 - Membership 108.** The Club held a successful carnival and conducted a first-class Concert in the Melbourne Town Hall in aid of the Empire Fund and in connection with the South African War, which was resulted in the sum of £160/15/4 being raised. The Melbourne Club was successful in winning the title of Premier Swimming Club of Victoria after winning the Teams Championship covering 500 yards. The team comprised Arthur J. Pearson, P. Bishop, C.W. Seal, D.G. Robertson and E.S. Creaton. Arthur J. Pearson again won the Victorian 110 yards freestyle championship.

**1900-1901 - Membership 120.** Two Carnivals were held. The 100 yards championship of Victoria was competed for with Club Captain Arthur J. Pearson winning the event, for the third successive year. In addition, Mr. Pearson won the following Victorian Championships:- 220 yards, Quarter Mile and Half Mile Championships of Victoria, the first time the 1 person has won every freestyle event at the Victorian Championships. Mr Pearson was also the winner of the Championship of the Club Event, the 300 yards. The Ladies' Branch conducted a Members' Meeting at Hegarty's Ladies' Baths, St. Kilda, on 9th March, 1901, for ladies only. The second Annual Ball took place in the St. Kilda Town Hall and was a great success. Equal opportunity was very much alive and well in the Melbourne Swimming Club for it was decided to admit ladies to the membership for the first time. This "experiment" proved very satisfactory as 25 ladies were elected members of the club with the yearly subscription being half a crown. The balance sheet for the year revealed that 22 pound 5 shillings was received from subscriptions and 28 pound 15 shillings was expended on trophies for the season and 5 pound was expended for the rent of the St. Kilda Baths for the year. The first Life Members of the Club were elected, namely, Ernie Casper, James G. Pearson, Alex Rushall and the Right Hon. Sir George Turner, K.C.M.G.

**1901-1902 - Membership 125.** Two Open Carnivals were conducted, and both were successful in all respects. The chief performers were Messrs. A. V. Coutie and G. H. Bishop. Mr. A.V. Coutie was awarded the Champion of the Club, winning the 300 yards.

**1902-1903 - Membership 85.** Two Open Carnivals were conducted. The Annual Smoke Concert was held at the George Hotel, St. Kilda, at which the season's trophies were presented by Sir George Turner. W.L. Harris was the winner of the Club Championship, the 300 yards. The Club was again the Premier Swimming Club of Victoria after winning the Teams Championships. This team comprised P. Bishop, M.G. Robb, W.L. Harris, C.Cadden and R. Wright.

**1903-1904 - Membership 79.** Two Open Carnivals were held and both were successful. The outstanding swimmers for the year were:- Messrs. W.L. Harris and M.C. Robb (who won all the Victorian Championships between them). Two other prominent members were Messrs. W.G. Helpman and T.W. Johnstone. The season was brought to a close with a ball, which took place in the Masonic Hall, Melbourne, and proved a great success. Mr. W.L. Harris won the Club Championship for the 2nd successive year. The Club was successful in again winning the Premier Swimming Club of Victoria Title, winning the Teams' Championship. The team included M.G. Robb, Arthur J. Pearson, P. Bishop, W.L. Harris and W.H. Dismore.

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**1904-1905 - Membership 86.** Two successful Carnivals were held with the principal winners being K. D. Gordon, T. M. Johnstone and R. Donaldson, with K. D. Gordon awarded the Club Championship on winning the 300 yards. The Club was successful for the 3rd consecutive year in retaining the Premier Swimming Club of Victoria in winning the 500 yards Teams Championship. The team comprised Arthur J. Pearson, Horrie A. Bennett, T.M. Johnstone, M.G. Robb and W.L. Harris.

At the Annual Ladies' Day on Saturday afternoon, 28th January, 1905, the 100 and 800 Yards Australasian Championships were decided. The 100 yards event was won by the world's famous swimmer, Cecil Healy, of Sydney, who created a new Australasian record by covering the distance in 58 seconds. In this championship, A. Wickham (N.S.W.) and D. Galey (QLD) dead-heated for second place. In the swim-off, they tied again, but in the second swim-off, A. Wickham won by a yard. In appreciation of D. Galey's swim, the Melbourne Club presented him with a gold medal.

Another notable performance at this Carnival was that of New South Welshman Mr. Barney B. Kieran, who, having just returned from a distinguished tour of Europe creating a number of World Records, was successful in the 880 Yards Championship. However, shortly after this carnival and at the tender age of 18 years, he suddenly collapsed and died. In memory of this man, the Kieran Shield was introduced and is still awarded to the Premier State who accumulates the most points at each Australian Swimming Championships. Such was the popularity of this man, 30,000 people attended his funeral in Sydney.

**1905-1906 - Membership 74.** This season three successful Carnivals were held. The names of F. Fitts, W.L. Harris and W. Claringbold have been noted as the chief performers. Mr. Horrie A. Bennett was elected Club Captain. W.C. Claringbold was the Club Champion upon winning the 300 yards.

**1906-1907 - Membership 87.** This season a Ladies' Branch was reformed, with a membership of 29. A feature of the Annual carnival was the appearance of Mr. David Billington (England), professional champion of the world. The name of the club champion, Mr. T.W. Mason, appears for the first time. Mr. J.A. Miller also displayed good form. A football team was formed during the winter months, and it met with considerable success, winning 10 out of the 12 games played. W.H. Felstead, Esq. was elected the 2nd President.

**1907-1908 - Membership 245.** Membership increased by more than 300% on last years membership. Three successful Carnivals were held, and the football team joined the Melbourne District Association, and distinguished itself by playing in the semi-final match. The Water-Polo Championship was won by the Club, the first official Victorian Water Polo Premiership. The original trophy won by the Club for this water polo premiership is still in existence and will be presented to the Club at the Centenary Dinner by Mr. Bill Bennett. Bill's father, Horace, was Captain of this team. Other team members are not known. The backstroke Championship, over 100 yards, was won by Mr. Horace A. Bennett. Mr. T. W. Mason won the 100, 220, 300, 440, 500 and Half Mile Freestyle Championships and was duly awarded the Champion of the Club. Mr. Clarence Powell was successful in the Mile Championship. C.H. Browne was the Junior Champion for the season. F.L. Crane, T.W. Mason, F. Fitts, W.L. Harris and W.G. Grant were successful in winning the 500 yards Teams Championships and earning the club the title of, "Premier Swimming Club of Victoria."

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**1908-1909 - Membership 280.** Two successful Carnivals were held (Ladies' Day and Members' Meeting). Senior and Junior Squadron Teams visited Geelong. "A" Grade Water Polo championship again won by Melbourne in addition to "B" Grade premiership also obtained. The "B" Grade victorious side comprised G. Cochrane, A. Mason, D. Ferguson, W.H. Butcher, J.F. Toohey, J.P. Noonan, J.V. McNeil and M.C. Meeking. A photo of this team is herewith reproduced and is believed to be the oldest water polo premiership team photo in existence. T.W. Mason was the recipient of Club Champion for the 3rd successive time.

**1909-1910 - Membership 259.** Two Carnivals were held. The V.A.S.A. introduced a new criteria to be awarded the Premier Club of Victoria. Instead of the winner of the teams championship being awarded the title, the Club that accumulated the most points in the State Championships was awarded the Premier Club. This year, the Club won the Swimming Premiership of the Association with 92 points defeating Albert Park with 65 points. We were successful again in winning the "A" and "B" Grades of the Water-Polo Competition. The "A" Grade final results finished with Melbourne on top undefeated with 8 wins, Middle Park next with 5 wins, Richmond 3rd with 4 wins and Albert Park 4th, withdrawing after the second round. The final "B" Grade results also saw Melbourne on top undefeated with 7 wins. Middle Park were next with 6 wins, Eaglemont 3rd with 4 wins and 1 draw, Fitzroy 4th with 3 wins, Albert Park 5th with 3 wins, Footscray 6th with 2 wins and Fairfield 7th with 1 win and a draw. During the Australian Swimming Championship Carnival held at the Fitzroy Pool, the first ever Victorian Water Polo team was selected and played a match against the Rest of Australia, defeating them 10-0. The annual distribution of trophies took place at a Concert in the Parish Hall, Acland Street, St. Kilda. T.W. Mason was awarded the Club Champion award for the 4th consecutive time. For the first time, the State Swimming Championships included a diving event, consisting of a highboard and three metre championship. Melbourne member Stanley Crane was the first winner of this title.

**1910-1911 - Membership 242.** Two Members' and one Open Carnival were held. The Interstate Contests between Sydney and Melbourne Clubs were commenced on the 17th and 19th December, 1910, and were won by the Sydney Club, scores 45.5 points to 40.5 points. These contests consisted of each club being represented by three members in diving, 440 yards freestyle, 100 yards breaststroke, 500 yards team race and a water polo match. Points were allotted for each event with the team with the most points emerged the winner of the contest. No trophies were awarded as each man competes for the honor of his club. The first Melbourne Club Water Polo team consisted of Horrie A. Bennett, W. L. Harris, W. H. Butcher, Clarence Powell, William B. Bennett, Stanley C. Crane and G.A. Mason and were defeated 4 goals to 1 by the Sydney Club. The Melbourne Club again gained the Swimming Premiership of the Association. A Picture Night was held at the Paradise Gardens, and resulted in a great financial and social success. M. Crawcour was the Club Champion upon winning the 300 yards. Stanley Crane retained his Victorian diving title.

**1911-1912 - Membership 181.** The usual two Carnivals were conducted at the St. Kilda Baths. The Interstate Contests were decided in Sydney on the 26th and 28th February, and the honours went again to the Sydney Club, scores 49 points to 44 points. The club water polo team comprised H.A. Bennett, T.W. Mason, W.B. Bennett, Wells Eicke, J.D. Gordon, Stanley C. Crane and L. Grieve and were defeated 3 goals to nil. The First Annual Dinner was held on the 15th April, 1912. Mr. H. Snape was elected Honorary Secretary. Clarence Powell was the Club

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Champion upon winning the 100, 220 and 440 yards freestyle. Stanley Crane retained the diving title for the third consecutive year. Swimming Premiership retained for 8th consecutive year.

**1912-1913 - Membership 152.** The Melbourne Club again gained the Premiership of the V.A.S.A. This season three Carnivals were held:- one at the City Baths and two at the St. Kilda Baths. During the season, the Sydney Club were the guests of the Melbourne Club and the usual contests were decided. On this occasion, the Melbourne Club were successful, scores 52.5 points to 42.5 points. The water polo team comprised H.A. Bennett, A. Sauter, L. Grieve, C. Powell, W.B. Bennett, J.D. Gordon and S.C. Crane and were defeated by Sydney 5 goals to 1. The Second Annual Dinner took place and was presided over by the Hon. Agar Wynne. 44 swimmers completed the 3 mile swim in the Yarra River held on 27th January, 1913; 10 of which were Melbourne members. Clarence Powell came a credible 3rd with a time of 1h 24m 58s. W.B. Bennett was the winner of the Club Championship. For the 4th consecutive year, Stanly Crane won the Victorian Diving Championship.

**1913-1914 - Membership 154.** On the 17th January, 1914, the first Aquatic Evening Carnival was conducted at the St. Kilda Baths. Later in the season a Members' Carnival was held. The Melbourne Club visited Sydney on December 19th, 1914, with Sydney being the victors, scores 48 points to 47 points. The team comprised A. Sauter, Stanley Crane, L. Husbands, L. Grieve, Horace A. Bennett, W. B. Bennett, Clarence Powell and J. Gordon. In consequence of the Australian Championships, the Interstate Contests were deferred and the team competed in the N.S.W. Championships. The Annual Dinner was held on the 3rd April, in the Cafe Francais. The Swimming Premiership of the Association went to the Melbourne Club. Melbourne was also successful in winning the Water Polo Championship. 2 separate 3 Mile Swims in the Yarra River were conducted this year. On 1st February, 1914, 72 completed the course, 17 of which were Melbourne members. Clarence Powell had the fastest time of 1h 8m 39s. Ivan C. Stedman was the recipient of the Club Champion award.

**1914-1915 - Membership 201.** Premiers of the V.A.S.A. for the eighth successive year. The V.A.S.A. were unable to arrange a visit to Victoria of the famous Hawaiian swimmers, Duke Paoa Kahanamoku and George Cunha. In consequence, the club Committee communicated with the New South Wales A.S.A. for an extension of the tour to Melbourne. A visit was also paid to Victoria at this time by the Manly Life Saving Club. Duke Kahanamoku established a new Victorian Record for the 100 yards, covering the distance in 56 seconds. In the 110 Yards handicap, he equalled his own world's record of 1 minute 1 3/5 seconds. At the City Baths, he completed the 100 yards in 55 4/5 seconds, and George Cunha covered the distance in 58 1/5 seconds. On his tour, the Duke bought with him a 16 feet surf board and demonstrated the art of surfing on Manly Beach and in Victoria. This was the first time surfing had been witnessed in Australia. T.W. Mason was again awarded the title of Club Champion, for the 5th time, and shared it with M. Griffiths for diving.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Wickliffe Cafe, St. Kilda, at which the Hawaiian swimmers attended. The gathering was a unique one, champions of the World and Australia being present. The Melbourne Club visited Sydney, and the contests this season were won by the Sydney Club. The water polo team were victorious on this occasion defeating Sydney 5 goals to 3 and comprised Horace A. Bennett (4 goals), L. Grieve (1 goal), A. Sauter, F. Grieve, Ivan C. Stedman, T.W. Mason and C.F. Husbands. The 3 Mile swim in the Yarra River saw 18 club members all compete and finish and resulted in Horrie A. Bennett 2nd on handicap and

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Clarence Powell having the fastest time for the third successive year. 34 members were absent serving in the Australian Imperial Forces.

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**1915-1916 - Membership 179. (World War)** All State Championships and Inter-Club Races were deferred until after the conclusion of the war. Two club carnivals were held, one of which was plagued by rough water. Mr. Walter H. Browne was appointed Life Member. 51 members were honorary who were away serving with the Armed Forces. The Club's first President, the Rt. Hon. Sir George Turner, K.C.M.G., P.C., died during the year.

**1916-1917 - Membership 199. (World War)** One Members' Carnival was held on 17th March, 1917, which saw perfect water conditions. Resumption of annual visit to "The Dive", the only 100 metre long swimming pool in Melbourne that was Surrey Park Swimming Club's home base, took place. The Club suffered a great loss by the death of the President, Mr. W. H. Felstead. Hon. Agar Wynne was elected the 3rd President of the Club. A Football team was reformed, being based at the St. Kilda Cricket Ground and succeeded in winning 10 out of 13 games. 58 members were awarded honorary membership who were away serving their country.

**1917-1918 - Membership 282. (World War)** 90 new members joined the club during this year. A Members' Carnival was held, and the football team was continued. Extensive Club Room improvements were carried out, including a new sunbathing enclosure. 70 club members were now away serving with the armed forces, 6 of which had been killed in action including club champions Lieut. Stanley C. Crane and Sergeant Clarence Powell. Memorial Trophies were established in memory of these two club members; The Stanley Crane Memorial Trophy for Best Junior Under 16 diver and the Clarence Powell Memorial Trophy for winner of the Mens Open Championship.

**1918-1919 - Membership 294.** The 25th Annual General Meeting of the Club was conducted at The St. Kilda Town Hall. The Headquarters of the Melbourne Swimming Club was the New St. Kilda Baths, St. Kilda. A photograph of the Committee members for the 25th year of the Club was taken and is reproduced. With the conclusion of hostilities overseas, it was decided by the V.A.S.A. to re-establish the Australian Swimming Championships and the State Senior Swimming Championships. The Junior Championship of the Club was won by Master A. Staley. It was with regret to also record the untimely deaths of Lieutenant Jim L. Doubleday, former Committeeman, captain of the Football Team and a popular and active member of the Club; Gunner J.D. Gordon, Runner up in Junior Championship and member of Interstate Teams 1911-12 and 1912-13; and Gunner F.L. Bloch, another popular member of the Club, who were all killed in action. Gunner Ivan Stedman was awarded the medallion of the Royal Humane Society (England) for the brave rescue of an English Soldier from drowning in the under-growth in the muddy waters of the River Somme in France.

## THE SWIMMING DOMINANCE

**1919-1920 - Membership 283.** This season saw the beginning of an era that lasted many years in Victorian and Australian Swimming and was dominated by members of the Melbourne Swimming Club. At the Australian Championships held in Adelaide and Perth, Frank Beaurepaire, who came out of retirement and transferred to the Club from Albert Park, became the first Melbourne member to win an Australian Championship. He not only won 1, he picked up 3 titles winning the 220 yards freestyle in 2:33.2, the 880 yards freestyle in 11:35.8 and the mile freestyle in 24:15.0. He was also 2nd to American Champion, Mr. Norman Ross, in the 440 yards freestyle. Ivan Stedman was 2nd to Norman Ross in the 110 yards freestyle. Frank Beaurepaire also became the first Melbourne member to establish a World Record when he



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swam the 220 yards freestyle in 2:27.8 during the Club Championships. Messrs. Horace A. Bennett (Manager), Frank E. Beaurepaire and Ivan Stedman were selected to represent Australia at the Olympic Games in Antwerp. They sailed on the S.S. Ascanius on Saturday 22 May, 1920. At the Games, and after an absence from swimming for 8 years, Beaurepaire won a bronze medal in the 1500 metres freestyle and together with Ivan Stedman, both won a silver medal in the 4 X 200 metres freestyle relay. The Melbourne Club won the Swimming Premiership scoring 101 points, with Bendigo 2nd with 18 points and Fitzroy 3rd with 16 points. The State Swimming Championships were resumed and conducted at the Club Headquarters at St. Kilda Baths which resulted in every event being won by a Melbourne member. The Victorian Swimming team: Messrs. William Uren (Manager), Frank E. Beaurepaire, Ivan Stedman and Les Uren who were all members of the Melbourne Club, won the Kieran Shield for Victoria at the resumed Australian Swimming Championships held in Adelaide. Mr. Frank E. Beaurepaire established a world record for 1000 metres and won 3 Australian Championships. Interstate contests were resumed with the Sydney Swimming Club visiting Melbourne. The Melbourne team consisted of Messrs. Frank Beaurepaire, Ivan Stedman, Tom Logan, T.W. Mason, Les Uren, T.H. (Harry) Morris, Frank Stubbs and R. Ham and defeated the Sydney team 49.5 points to 33.5 points. The football team was re-organised and joined the Metropolitan Amateur District Association, now known as the V.A.F.A. On May 1st, 1920, the football team played a very strong Collegians Team and were defeated 37 points to 107. T. H. (Harry) Morris won the Club diving championship, the first time of what was to be 19 consecutive occasions he would win this title.

Mr. Horrace Albert Bennett was awarded Life Membership for his dedication and service to the Club. He was born in Mornington in 1881. For a period of 17 years, he was Captain of Melbourne Swimming Club, and whilst still holding this position, he was appointed General Manager of the Australian Olympic Team that competed in Antwerp in 1920. He became President of the V.A.S.A. in 1922, and held this position until he resigned in 1951. He was also a Life Governor of the V.A.S.A. In 1926, he was appointed as the first President of the V.A.W.P.A. and held this position until his death in 1960. He was a Vice President of the A.S.U. of Australia from 1929 - 1944, and was appointed President in 1944. He held this position until he retired in 1957, and in 1959, he was appointed the first Life member of the A.S.U. of Australia. Mr. Bennett was the first Australian to be appointed to F.I.N.A., and he was a bureau member from 1946 -1948.

**1920-1921 - Membership 289.** Melbourne Club members won every State swimming title for the second year in succession. The Club was again successful in winning the Swimming Premiership with a total of 114 points. Essendon was 2nd with 29 points and 3rd was Albert Park with 18 points. At the Australian Swimming Championships, Ivan Stedman won the 100 yards Freestyle Australian Championship in a time of 58.4 seconds and the 220 yards breaststroke in 3 minutes 6.8 seconds and Frank Beaurepaire won the 220, 440, 880, mile and 1320 yards Australian Championships. Ivan Stedman today, remains the only person to have won the freestyle sprint Australian title and the breaststroke Australian title in the same year. Frank E. Beaurepaire and Ivan Stedman were duly selected to represent Australia in the American National Championships, with Frank Beaurepaire establishing three world records and Ivan Stedman winning the 220 yards breaststroke title. Later in the year, Frank Beaurepaire moved residence to New South Wales. The Club Championships were cancelled due to inclement weather. Football team was still entered in the M.A.F.A. Competition with Mr. E.J. Letcher acting as Honorary Secretary. The H.A. Bennett Trophy for the Best Player in the football team was won by Mr. Jack Collins and the T. Wilson Trophy for the Most Improved

Player was won by Mr. A. Stickland. Harry Morris won the Victorian Diving title, the 1st of what was to be 10 Victorian diving titles in a row.

## THE WATER POLO DOMINANCE

**1921-1922 - Membership 284.** This season saw the irrefutable dominance in water polo competitions by the Melbourne Club emerge. We regained the premiership in water polo, which was resumed after a lapse of many years mainly due to the efforts of Mr. Horrie Bennett after his return from the Olympic Games. 10 teams were entered from Metropolitan clubs and the final consisted of Melbourne "A" 4 goals, defeating Melbourne "B" 1 goal. All but 1 swimming event was won by Melbourne Members at the State Swimming Championships. Melbourne were also again successful in winning the V.A.S.A. Swimming Premiership Contest by 34 points from the Footscray club. Horrie Bennett was elected President of the V.A.S.A. The Football team continued to survive, although had difficulties with lack of proper coaching, inadequate training facilities and insufficient support from the swimmers of the club. Frank Beaurepaire was awarded a Bravery Award in New South Wales for his involvement in the rescue of a young man, Milton Coughlan, who had been mauled by a shark at Coogee Beach. His courage was rewarded by a gift of 1000 pounds, raised by public subscription. This cash was wisely used by Frank Beaurepaire to start a business involving the repair and retreading service of tyres to cater for the worldwide boom in car sales; this business later becoming a very successful tyre company - Beaurepaire's Tyre Repairs. He later established the Olympic Tyre Company.

**1922-1923 - Membership 417.** All State swimming titles were won by Melbourne Club members. Melbourne won the V.A.S.A. Pennant for this season with a record score of 129 points. Footscray were next with 25 points followed by Williamstown with 19 points. Frank Beaurepaire returned to reside in Melbourne and was an immediate inclusion in the Victorian Swimming team that competed at the Australian Championships in Perth and Adelaide. Other members of this team consisted of Club members T.H. (Harry) Morris, V. Walters and Les Uren. Les Uren broke the Australian Record for 100 yards Breastroke with a time of 1min. 13 seconds and Frank Beaurepaire won the 220, 880 and Mile freestyle Championships of Australia. Water Polo premiership retained with Melbourne entering 2 teams in the competition. Our Number 1 team defeated Brunswick in the Grand Final. The football team, which had competed for three years in Metropolitan Amateur Football Association, finished just outside the final four on percentage. Mr. Horace A. Bennett retired from the position of Club Captain, held continuously by him since 1906. The Annual Three Mile Swim was held in the Yarra River with 16 club members completing the course. The first club member home was F. Byrne with a time of 1hr. 23min. 2sec. The First Annual Ball was held at the St. Kilda Town Hall on June 14, 1923.

**1923-1924 - Membership 339.** Membership decreased by 78 members probably owing to the subscription increase from 7/6 to 10/-. Interstate Contests with Manly Swimming Club inaugurated and were based on previous events conducted with the Sydney Swimming Club. Successful club team included Messrs. Horrie A. Bennett, Frank E. Bearepaire, Ivan Stedman, Les Uren, H. Robertson, Eric Cormack, R. Ham, Doug Hopkins and T.H. (Harry) Morris, whilst the Manly team included four Olympic Games representatives. The final score being Melbourne 49.5 points - Manly 47.5 points. Melbourne easily accounted for Manly in the water polo 10 goals to 1. Melbourne "A" Grade Water Polo team were successful in retaining the

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championship and the Melbourne Club were again successful in securing the VASA Swimming Premiership Pennant. The Keiran Shield was reclaimed by Victoria at the Australian Swimming Championships mainly due to Frank Beaurepaire who won 4 events. Frank Beaurepaire and Ivan Stedman were both selected in the Australian Olympic team to compete in Paris with Frank Beaurepaire again winning a bronze medal in the 1500 metres freestyle and a silver medal in the 4 X 200 freestyle relay. Ivan Stedman failed to qualify for the 200 metres Breastroke and 100 meters freestyle but also won a silver medal in the 4 X 200 metres freestyle relay. Members from the Melbourne Swimming Club won not only every Senior event, but also every Junior event at the Victorian Swimming Championships, a feat never seen before and never to be repeated. The Club Championships were held at the St. Kilda Baths for the first time since 1921 and witnessed by more than 200 people. This poor attendance was attributed to the extreme inclemency of the weather. For the first time, a Melbourne member, namely A.H. Hay, won the Annual Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River. 23 Melbourne members successfully completed the course. The Second Annual Ball was again held at the St. Kilda Town Hall which saw an attendance of 320 people, scarcely represented by Melbourne Club Members. The Football team disbanded owing to the inability to secure a suitable playing arena. A photo of the football team is reproduced with only Les and Bill Uren, Gerald Maynard and Reg Bennett being identified in the photograph.

**1924-1925 - Membership 299.** Successful in contest with Manly Swimming Club, 49-45 points. The team consisted of Les Uren (Captain), Frank Beaurepaire, H. Robertson, Eric Cormack, T.H. Morris, W. Cavanagh, Doug Hopkins and A. Kerr. Melbourne "A" Grade Water Polo team again successful in securing the championship without sustaining defeat. Melbourne were also again successful in securing the V.A.S.A. Swimming Premiership Pennant with a total of 98.5 points. Second was Footscray with 42 points and third was the City of Melbourne with 29.5 points. It is interesting to note that Footscray had the second highest membership in the V.A.S.A. with 90 members. The Victorian Swimming Team consisted solely of Melbourne Club members H. Robertson, T.H. Morris and Eric Cormack and competed in Sydney and Brisbane. 5 Club members completed the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with Doug Hopkins gaining the fastest time of 1 hour 6 minutes. The third Annual Ball was held at the St Kilda Town Hall.

**1925-1926 - Membership 281.** Club rooms at St. Kilda Baths destroyed by fire. Valuable property lost. Melbourne were again victorious in the Victorian Club Swimming Premiership with a total of 139 points, the highest points ever recorded. Eric Cormack and T.H."Harry" Morris were selected to represent Victoria at the Australian Swimming Championships and each succeeded in obtaining minor placings. Melbourne "A" Grade Water Polo team remained undefeated and retained the premiership. The team consisted of Reg Bennett, George Cassidy, Eric Cormack, Eric Crome, N.J. Fairless, Doug Hopkins, Gordon Robins and Les Uren (captain). The Club attempted to acquire an interest in the St. Kilda Baths Pty. Ltd. Company, but were unsuccessful. Plans were prepared to establish the possibility of securing a suitable pool and club house accommodation on the St. Kilda foreshore. The Annual Ball was again conducted with huge success. Other social activities included an Annual Picnic at Half Moon Bay, a Smoke Social at St. Kilda Town hall and 2 Dinners.

**1926-1927 - Membership 323.** 114 new members joined the club. Melbourne Team visited Manly and won interstate contest, 49-48 points. Annual Ball conducted at St. Kilda Town Hall at which officers of H.M.S. Renown were entertained - attendance exceeded 600. At the Australian Swimming Championships, Ivan Stedman again won both the 200 metres Breastroke and 100 metres freestyle Championships of Australia. Melbourne "A" water polo

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team continued to remain undefeated for the third consecutive season and retained the premiership cup beating the Park Club 7-1. This team consisted of Les Uren (captain), Eric Cormack, Reg Bennett, Eric Crome, Doug B. Hopkins, J.W. Butterworth, H.L. Morgan, W. Gutheridge, S. Abrahams and Les Phillips. Melbourne were again Premiers in the Victorian Club Swimming Championship with 101 points. Second was Y.M.C.A. with 81 points. Only 3 events in the State Swimming Championship were won by Melbourne members; a vast difference to the dominance of the years gone past. Mr. B Hay was the 1st Melbourne member to finish the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with Melbourne gaining 2nd place in the newly introduced teams event. A decision was still not determined regarding the proposal for proper swimming pool facilities on the St. Kilda foreshore. A Club outing was held in Bendigo during the year.

**1927-1928 - Membership 317.** Interstate contest with Manly again won by Melbourne Club, 40.5 - 38.5 points. Mr. T.H. (Harry) Morris, State and Club diving champion, represented Australia at Olympic Games in Amsterdam. Mr. Morris competed in wrestling as well as diving. Swimming premiership, as well as water polo premiership, lost for the first time in 20 years. Such was the dominance of Melbourne in water polo, this season it was conducted under different lines to previously with the introduction of a handicap system in an endeavour to make the competition more even. The handicap system worked by the strongest team playing off zero goals and other teams being allotted so many goals "head start," depending on where that team finished on the ladder the previous season. Although the "A" team won the Handicap Premiership from scratch, it was defeated in the semi final and the "B" team was also defeated in the final, both by the Park Club. Les Uren (captain), Doug B. Hopkins, George B. Cassidy and Reg Bennett were all selected to represent Victoria at the first ever Australian Water Polo Championships. Doug Hopkins was the recipient of the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens "A" Grade. 10 members competed in the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with J. Crawford being the first Melbourne member to finish in 7th place. The proposal for proper swimming facilities on the St. Kilda foreshore had been rejected by the St. Kilda City Council. Annual Ball continued to be held at the St. Kilda Town Hall. Frank Beaupaire was elected Mayor of Melbourne.

**1928-1929 - Membership 311.** Swimming premiership and water polo championship regained. The swimming team regained the Premiership by 26 points, winning many events and placing in all other events. R. Johanson and Ian Hopkins were selected in the Victorian Swimming team to compete at the Australian Swimming Championships. 20 Club members competed in the Annual Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with H. Gibson finishing 3rd overall and being the first Melbourne member to complete the course. The Interstate contest with the Manly Club did not materialise and was abandoned. Melbourne water polo won the "A" Grade premiership scoring 32 goals for the season (5 Games) and allowing 1 solitary goal to be scored against them. This team comprised Les Uren (Captain), Phil Bennett, Reg Bennett, George Cassidy, Eric Cormack, Eric Crome, Doug Hopkins and Ted Hurren. "B" Grade also were premiers scoring 54 goals for the season (8 Games) and allowing only 6 goals to be scored against them. The "B" Grade team comprised Eddie Hurren (Captain), J. Crawford, D. Gallagher, A. Hay, F. Price, Don McEwan and William "Jumbo" Sharland. Needless to say, both teams remained undefeated. In "C" Grade, Melbourne finished runners up to the Park Swimming Club. The C Grade team comprised H. Gutheridge, K. Allen, G. Barnard, W. Fairless, H. Gibson, A. King, I. Hopkins, G. Morris, F. Murphy, R. Nugent, F. Price, A. Recliffe and T. Withers. Reg Bennett was voted the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens A Grade. Six Melbourne Club members and one other comprised the Victorian Water Polo Team to compete against N.S.W at Coogee and

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Manly on 16th and 18th February, 1929, namely Messrs. Les Uren (Captain), Phil I. Bennett, Reg J. Bennett, George B. Cassidy, Eric Cormack (Vice Captain) and Doug B. Hopkins with Mr. Ted Hurren appointed Manager of the team. This team played devastating water polo and won the Championship winning the Regal Cup. It is interesting to note that of the 11 events on the program, it included "Throwing Water Polo Ball Through Life Bouy", "50 Yards Water Polo Dribbling Championship" and "Water Polo Test Between NSW and Vic." During the 2 Carnivals, the Official Program offered the following "hints" for the general public to follow in relation to water polo:

- Goal counts one point;
- Ball must be handled by one hand only, except by goalkeeper at any time, and other players when throwing from out of bounds;
- Players may be ducked when in possession of the ball only, and must immediately let go.
- Players must retain places after penalty awarded until ball is in play;
- There is no "offside" after the ball is in play;
- Ball must not be taken under water;
- Goalkeeper must not come out more than four yards from own goal posts;
- Any player taking up a position within two yards of goal line - put out of the water;
- Dribbling the ball is not in possession.

**1929-1930 - Membership 329.** Swimming and water polo titles won in previous year were retained, justifying a most successful dinner at the Danish Club for 52 members. 4 teams were entered in the ever growing popular water polo competition. "A" Grade remained undefeated for 8 games scoring 69 goals for the season and allowing only 6 goals to be scored against them. Messrs. Les Uren (captain), Reg Bennett, George Cassidy, Eric Cormack (Vice Captain) and Doug B. Hopkins were selected to represent Victoria in water polo at the Australian Championships and were successful in winning the Regal Cup. "B" Grade were Runners Up, "C" Grade made the semi finals and "D" Grade missed the finals matches. Personal trophies were awarded for the first time. D Gallagher was awarded the Most Improved Player, George Morris was awarded the Second Most Improved Player and Best Player in "C" Grade was J. Hopkins. Mr. Doug Gallagher, alias "1 punch", represented Australia in boxing at the Empire Games held in Canada. 21 club members successfully completed the Annual Three Mile Swim and J. Mackey, who gained 6th place, was the 1st Melbourne member to finish. The Annual Ball was abandoned due to lack of support by Club members. Harry Morris won the Tower Diving title at the Australian Championships. Eric Cormack was the author of a half page article that appeared in the Melbourne Sporting Globe on Saturday November 9th, 1929, entitled, "Extensive Training and Practice Essential to Water Polo Success. This article appeared complete with photographs of Eric demonstrating throwing, dribbling and holding the ball.

**1930-1931 - Membership 268.** State swimming premiership retained and "A", "B" and "C" grade water polo championships won. All teams remained undefeated throughout the season, an unbelievable feat. The "A" Grade team comprised Les Uren (Captain), Reg Bennett, George Cassidy, Eric Cormack, Max Cassidy, Doug Hopkins, H. King and William "Jumbo" Sharland. They played 8 games scoring 60 scores and allowing 4 goals to be scored against them. The "B" Grade team comprised Eddie Hurren (Captain), J. Crawford, D. Gallagher, A. Hay, I. Hopkins, Don McEwan, George Morris and F. Price. They played 15 matches and scored 129 goals allowing 18 goals against them. "C" Grade comprised Gordon Robins (Captain), S. Armstrong,

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Eric Crome, J. Hopkins, A. King, Frank "spud" Murphy, K. Stevens and Tom Withers and played 14 games. They scored 91 goals and had 16 goals scored against them. The promising "D" Grade team consisted of Les Phillips (Captain), G. Barnard, Ron Bennett, S. Brown, H. Black, W. Bruce, Gordon Godby, C. Kohler, V. Miller, Jack Parker, W. Rice, D. Richardson and A. Redcliffe. They played 12 games with 9 wins and 3 defeats scoring 41 goals and allowing 32 goals to be scored against them. Melbourne finished fifth in "D" Grade. The Most Improved Player trophy was awarded to Gordon Robins of "C" Grade. Victorian Water Polo team comprised Melbourne members Les Uren (Captain), Reg Bennett, Doug B. Hopkins, Eric Cormack (Vice Captain) and Eddie R. Hurren once again Manager. The swimming premierships was won by a margin of 40 points. 23 completed the Annual Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with our Teams entry of A. Barker, H. Gibson, Jack Parker and Gordon Robins winning our first teams title. A. Barker, who placed 3rd, was the 1st club member to finish. Harry Morris retained his Australian Championship title for the Tower Diving.

**1931-1932 - Membership 245.** Club members competed successfully in National Games and Harbour Bridge Championships. A. Barker, Alan Higginson, E. Horsnail, T.H. "Harry" Morris, Tom Withers and Ken Tanner were members of the National Games team and Alan Higginson, Tom Withers and Gordon Robins were members of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Games. All titles were retained by the Melbourne Club by big margins. Australian championship competitors entertained at dinner and cabaret ball. Mr. Doug B. Hopkins awarded Best and Fairest player at Australian Water Polo Championships. Other members of the Victorian Water Polo team from Melbourne included Les Uren (Coach), Reg J. Bennett (Captain), George B. Cassidy (Vice Captain), Doug B. Hopkins, Solly Glover, H. King and Don McEwan. 20 members completed the Annual Three Mile Swim with Rod Houston being the first member to finish. The "A" and "C" Grade water Polo teams retained their premierships remaining undefeated for the season. A handicap competition was continued and it is interesting to note that the A Grade team scored 83 goals (off scratch) and allowed 34 goals to be scored against them. However, 32 of these goals were conceded by handicap!! Les Uren, George Cassidy and Doug Hopkins were responsible for the coaching of the teams. The total income for the year was 122 pounds, 0 shillings and 4 pence.

**1932-1933 - Membership 213.** Australian and State records established. State swimming Premiership won by 86 points, and water polo championships won in three grades, namely "A", "B" and "C" Grades. In a period of five years, the "A" grade water polo team scored 337 goals for a total of 28 goals against. The victorious A Grade Team comprised Les Uren (Captain), Reg Bennett, Doug B. Hopkins, George B. Cassidy, Gordon Morris, H. King, Solly Glover, Gordon Robins and D. Gallagher. Reg Bennett (Captain) and George Cassidy (Vice Captain) were selected in the Victorian Mens Water Polo Team. At the Australian Swimming Championships, Alan Higginson won the 220 yards and 440 yards breaststroke and Arthur King won the 100 yards backstroke. The first Club member to complete the Yarra Three Mile Swim was Don McEwan and our teams entry secured third position.

**1933-1934 - Membership 240.** Honour Board of members who served in the 1914-1918 World war (replacing Board lost in 1925 fire) was unveiled by the Premier of Victoria, Sir Stanley Argyle. The Honour Board constructed in freestone, was 13 feet high and bore in incised letters the Club's Honour Roll of 70 names embellished in bronze and was situated in the facade to the St. Kilda Baths. It was with deepest regret to record the passing of the President, the Honourable Agar Wynne. Sir Harold Luxton, K.B., M.L.A. was elected as the 4th President of the Melbourne Swimming Club. State swimming premierships retained by narrow margin (8

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points). 4 teams were entered in the water polo competition, however, with many retirements, no water polo premierships were won. Due to the Handicap System, that was introduced to stop the dominance of the Melbourne Club, the "A" Team played 10 games and won only 2. Reg Bennett (Vice Captain), Phil I. Bennett, George B. Cassidy, Jack Millard and Les Phillips (Manager) were selected in the Victorian Water Polo team. Mr. Alan Higginson represented Australia in swimming at Empire Games in London. 14 members of the club completed the Annual Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River with P. Harris being the first member to finish.

**1934-1935 - Membership 213.** Club headquarters demolished by storm and the St. Kilda City Council agreed to rebuild a new Club House. The National Swimming Championships were a feature of the Melbourne Centenary Celebration. Rod Houston, A. King and Tom Withers were selected in the Victorian swimming team. The Club retained the swimming Premiership by a margin of 56 points. 3 teams were entered in the water polo championships. The A Grade played off scratch and were runners up. B Grade were the undefeated premiers and C Grade were fairly successful. Mr Reg J. Bennett was awarded the Best and Fairest player at the Victorian Water Polo championship and J. Dalton was awarded the Best and Fairest Player in B Grade. Mr. Max B. Cassidy was awarded Best and Fairest Player at the Australian Water Polo Championships. Reg Bennett (Vice Captain), Phil Bennett and Max B. Cassidy were the only Melbourne members selected to represent Victoria at the Australian Water Polo Championships this year, and were members of the Premiership team. W. Englehart was the first member to complete the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River. A Table Tennis tournament was held and won by Phil Bennett (Singles) and Reg J. Bennett and H.S. Pettiford (Doubles). A Golf Competition was also conducted and the winners were Bill Uren and Phil Bennett.

**1935-1936 - Membership 245.** Club quarters rebuilt by St. Kilda City Council. Series of radio broadcasts conducted on 3XY to attract young swimmers resulted in 26 promising boys being admitted to club. The Swimming Premiership was retained by the club by a margin of 49 points. There was a marked lack of interest in water polo this season with only 2 teams entered in the competition. However, the A Grade team, still playing off scratch, regained the premiership defeating Richmond and B Grade were eliminated in the Semi Finals. The victorious A Grade team comprised Phil Bennett (Captain), Max B. Cassidy, Eric Cormack, J. Dalton, D.C. Gallagher, Jack Millard and Jim Watkinson. Victorian State Water Polo team representatives were D. Gallagher (Vice Captain), Max B. Cassidy and Les Phillips (Manager). W. Englehart was again the first club member to complete the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River finishing 2nd overall. Table Tennis tournament was again conducted with George B. Cassidy winning A Grade and Ray Dodd winning B Grade. The Club Golf Tournament was continued and the winner of the A Grade Division was Horrie Bennett, B Grade was Solly Glover, and the Secret Nine was Les Phillips.

**1936-1937 - Membership 268.** New Club Rooms were completed at the Club Headquarters at the St. Kilda Baths. State swimming premiership lost for first time in many years to Y.M.C.A. by 5 points. Ron Winning was selected to represent Victoria at the Australia Swimming Championships. Mr. Reg J. Bennett awarded the Best and Fairest Player at the Victorian Water Polo Championships. Water Polo Premierships were gained in B Grade and C Grade, with each team suffering 1 loss each. A Grade were Runners Up, being the only team playing off scratch. Victorian Water Polo team selection was awarded to Reg Bennett (Vice Captain), Phil Bennett, Max B. Cassidy, D. Gallagher and Jim Watkinson. Les Uren was appointed Coach and Selector of this team. The Club team finished 2nd to Y.M.C.A. in the teams event of the Three Mile Yarra River Swim and A. Crockford was the first club member to finish the event,

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finishing 5th overall. A.B. Cassidy was successful in A Grade and R.W. Sanderson won the B Grade sections of the Club table tennis tournament. The Annual Golf Day was conducted with Dana Rushton winning A Grade, Les Phillips won B Grade and Reg J. Bennett won the Secret Nine holes.

**1937-1938 - Membership 274.** Melbourne Club won the inter-club contests with Sydney Swimming Club, 62 points to 32, which were resumed this year and conducted at the City Baths on December 4, 1937. Members of the Melbourne team consisted of Reg. J. Bennett, Ivan Stedman, Phil I. Bennett, Alan Gilchrist, Gordon Grant, Alan Higginson, David J. Norris, D. Stewart and Ron Winning. In these contests, the State record of 4 minutes 58 3/5ths seconds was established by the Melbourne Club team in the 500 yards Squadron race, the first time ever a team has gone under 5 minutes. The water polo saw Melbourne victorious with a 5-3 win over Sydney. In 1914, Ivan Stedman won the 440 yards event in the Melbourne V Sydney contest. This season, in a remarkable performance at a similar contest, he was placed in the 440 yards freestyle and 110 yards breaststroke. State swimming premiership was regained by a margin of 33.5 points. Ron Winning was the outstanding swimmer of the State Championships, obtaining the 220 yards, 440 yards, 1760 yards and intermediate 220 yards titles and also a member of the successful 500 yards team. Bill Cavanagh won the state 220 yards championship of Victoria in 1924-25. His performance this season in winning the 880 yards Victorian Championship was an outstanding achievement.

Mr. T. H. (Harry) Morris lost Club Diving Championship, a title he had held for a period of 19 years to Mr. David Norris. Mr. Norris was subsequently selected to represent Australia in the Spring-Board Diving at the British Empire Games held in Sydney.

Water polo teams were entered in A, B, C, and D Grades with all teams playing in the finals. However, none were successful in winning the premiership. Messrs. Les Uren (Coach) and Reginald J. Bennett were selected in Australian team versus Rest of Empire in water polo at Empire Games in Sydney. Reg J. Bennett was awarded Best and Fairest player in V.A.W.P.A Mens A Grade with S. Armstrong sharing the honor in B Grade. Reg Bennett (Vice Captain), Les Phillips (Manager/Referee) and Les Uren (Coach) were members of the Victoria Water Polo team. A Victorian team was selected to play a British Isles team in Melbourne and Reg Bennett, A. Bowen, Max Cassidy and Jim Watkinson were selected in this team. Gordon Watson was successful in winning the "A" Grade Golf Club Championship with Bill Atkinson winning "B" Grade. In the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River, Bill Englehart deadheaded for the fastest time and Alan Grant, 7th overall, was the first club member to complete the course. A number of club members competed in the Royal Life Saving Society Championships with Bill Atkinson winning the Life Saving category, Gordon Grant and Peter Haigh winning the Belt and Reel, Gordon Grant winning the Belt, Gordon Grant, Peter Haigh and Ron Winning successful in the Surf Teams event and Alan Grant in the Junior Surf. A promising junior, Peter Bennett, joined the club.

**1938-1939 - Membership 306.** Melbourne team visited Sydney Swimming Club and was successful, 50-44 points. The team comprised Reg Bennett, S. Armstrong, G. Grant, Ron Winning, David J. Norris, Hector Johameson, Jim Watkinson, Bill Atkinson and Keith Finlay. The Swimming Premiership was again retained by a margin of 69 points over Y.M.C.A. Bill Atkinson, Keith Finlay, Hector Johamsen, Jim Johnson, Ian Stewart and Ron Winning being selected in the Victorian team to compete at the Australian Swimming Championships. "A" and "B" Grade teams were entered in the Water Polo Championship with both teams being defeated



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by Richmond in the Grand Final. Reg J. Bennett (Vice Captain) and Ashley Cooper were selected to represent Victoria at the Australian Water Polo Championships with Reg Bennett being awarded the Best and Fairest player at these Championships. The annual Golf Competition resulted in George L. Watson winning the "A" Grade and K.A. Stevens winning the "B" Grade categories. R.W. Sheils won the B Grade final of the Table Tennis tournament. Alan Gilchrist was the first club member to complete the Annual Three Mile Swim in the Yarra River. David Norris won the Springboard Diving title at the Australian Championships with Ian Stewart winning the 110 yards Freestyle Championship of Australia.

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**1939-1940 - Membership 274. (Second World War)** Grade Swimming Premiership introduced by V.A.S.A. replacing former system of total scores based on placings in championships. The A Grade was won by the Melbourne Club. David J. Norris, Jim Johnson, Graeme Stewart and Ian Stewart were selected in the Victorian Swimming team with Dave Norris retaining his title of winning the Australian Springboard diving Championship. Melbourne entered 3 teams in the V.A.W.P.A. Competition with A and B Grades being beaten in the Grand Final by Richmond and Coburg successfully. C Grade were eliminated in the semi final. Melbourne members selected in the Victorian Water Polo team were Reg Bennett (Captain), Ashley Cooper, J. "Snowy" Lobban and Les Phillips (Manager). Reg Bennett was the recipient of the Best and Fairest Player Award at the Australian Championships for the 2nd consecutive year. Reg Bennett was awarded Life Membership of the Melbourne Swimming Club for outstanding sporting achievement. Some of Reg's achievements included:

- Australian Representative 1938;
- Australian Water polo Championship Best Player 1939,40;
- Victorian State Team Representative 1928,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,37,38,39,40;
- Victorian State Team Vice Captain 1934,35,37,38,39;
- Victorian State Team Captain 1932,33,40;
- Awarded V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens A Grade 1929,35,38;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Vice Captain 1926,27;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Captain 1934,35,36,37,38,39,40;
- Played 33 interstate matches.

**1940-1941 - Membership 297. (Second World War)** Active membership depleted by enlistments. Swimming premiership retained under difficulties due to absence of members overseas defeating Preston by 9 points. Ian Donaldson gained 2nd place in the 220 yards freestyle at the Australian Junior Swimming Championships. He was also successful in the Victorian Senior Championships winning the 220 yards freestyle and collected 4 titles in the Victorian Junior Championships. 2 teams were entered in the V.A.W.P.A. with A Grade being defeated in the Grand Final by Richmond. Ashley Cooper and Jim Watkinson were selected in Victorian Water Polo team with Les Uren appointed as Honorary Coach of this team. Victoria were successful in winning the Australian Water Polo Championship, thus regaining the Regal Cup. The Melbourne Club conducted swimming and physical culture classes at Wesley College for Air Force reservists awaiting call up with classes of 20-30 men conducted 4 nights per week.

**1941-1942 - Membership 213 (Second World War)** In water polo, after three rounds of competition, the V.A.W.P.A. went into recess for the duration of the war. The Swimming competition was also suspended. Only junior club events were conducted by the Melbourne Club. Melbourne Swimming Club were successful in winning the V.A.S.A. Junior Pennant with Preston 2nd and Brighton 3rd. Peter Bennett made his mark on the club winning 2 club championships and being a member of the successful Junior Pennant team. Frank Beaurepaire was knighted for his services as Lord Mayor of Melbourne for two terms.

**1942-1943 - Membership 205 (Second World War)** Water Polo was in recess due to the World War. Only junior events continued to be conducted with the Melbourne Junior team of L. Beare, D. Cathcart, Geoff Hearman, Peter Heighway and Vic Jennings winning the Junior Teams' Championship of Victoria and collecting the H. Snape Memorial Shield. John Nicholas won the Victorian Junior Diving Championship. Flight Lieutenant W. Newton, who was a prominent A Grade water polo player for our Club was killed in action and was posthumously

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awarded the Victoria Cross.

**1943-1944 - Membership 232 (Second World War)** The Melbourne Swimming Club's 50th anniversary celebrations were dampened due to the Second World War. Due to the recess for the remainder of the war in water polo, the club decided to foster the interest of junior members in this sport and practice games were held at the club headquarters. Ron Wootton, in his first year with the Club, was successful in winning the U/14 110 yard freestyle Club Championship. The Junior Pennant Championship was lost to the Richmond club, however, John Nicholas retained his Victorian Junior Diving Championship. Jack Basto was appointed Secretary of the Club.

**1944-1945 - Membership 251 (Second World War)** Water Polo was still suspended due to the World War. Ivan Stedman finished 2nd in the Three Mile Swim in the Yarra, a fantastic effort. Ron Wootton won the 110 yard freestyle club championship for both the U/14 and U/15 age groups. Doug Jennings was selected in the Victorian Junior Swimming team and gained a 2nd place in the 110 yards backstroke at the Australian Junior Championships. John Nicholas won the Victorian Junior Diving Championship for the third consecutive year. Club members A.W. (Sprint) Walker, Jim Wall and Phil Bennett became founding members of Victoria's first Surf Life Saving Club - Torquay, and so began the SurfLife Saving movement in Victoria.

**1945-1946 - Membership 277\* (Second World War)** The National and State Swimming Titles were resumed, after peace was declared. David J. Norris was the outstanding competitor at the National Titles successfully defending his springboard title and gaining a record number of points. Senior Club Championships were also resumed. Master Rod Huston won the Victorian Junior Springboard Championship and went on to win the Australian Junior Diving Championship. Master I. Donaldson transferred residence to N.S.W. and won that State's 220 yards and 440 yards, and was runner up in 110 yards and 880 yards championships. Ron Wootton, who was unexpectedly beaten into 2nd place in the Club 110 yards freestyle by Bill Bennett, won the 220 yards freestyle and was 3rd in the springboard diving. Water polo was resumed and one team was entered in each of the "A" and "B" Grade Competitions. The "A" team was eliminated in the 1st semi final, whilst the "B" team reached the semi final. Ashley Cooper was the captain of "A" team and Harry O. Blake was captain of "B" team. The club was represented in the Interstate Team by Ted F. Lynott (Captain and who had recently transferred to the Club), Ashley Cooper and J. "snowy" Lobban. Ted F. Lynott won the Best and Fairest player for the Interstate series. John Wilson joined the Club as a promising junior. Mr. Ivan Stedman, aged nearly 50 years, finished second for the second successive year in the 3 Mile Yarra River Swim in 1h 21m 2s, which was rated as one of the greatest swims considering his swimming career peaked between 1912-1924, when he was Australian Champion and was selected in 2 Olympic teams.

**1946-1947 - Membership 401.** 4 teams were entered in the Water Polo competition; A, B, C and D Grades. Captains of these teams were Ted Lynott, Harry Blake, Robert McLaren and Max Kent respectively. All teams, with the exclusion of B Grade, made it through to the finals but were eliminated before the Grand Final. A Grade were ousted in the Preliminary Final by Olympic 1-3. Harry Blake won the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player Trophy in B Grade. Ted Lynott (Captain), J. Kennedy and Les Uren (Coach) were selected in Victorian team for the Regal Cup Interstate Competition. David Norris successfully defended his Australian Springboard Diving Title, as did Rod Huston in the Junior Diving Championship in Adelaide. Ron Wootton competed in the U/16 swimming sections, winning the 55 metre freestyle and was 2nd in the 110 yards

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backstroke. He also won the Junior Singles Table Tennis Championships held at the Club Rooms during the year. Stuart Weavers won the Open Singles title. The Melbourne Club sponsored a promising British Olympic Swimmer, Miss C. Gibson of Scotland, who was the British record holder in the 500 yards freestyle and 150 yards backstroke. Foundation member of the Club, and Vice President for the past 50 years, Mr. Joseph Woolf, died during the year.

**1947-1948 - Membership 432\*.** The Swimming Premiership was retained by the Melbourne Club. In water polo, 5 teams were entered in the Summer Competition, with a team in every grade. The "A" Grade team were defeated in the Preliminary Final by Richmond 0-2, the "B" Grade team were defeated in the Grand Final by Richmond 1-8, the "C" Grade team were eliminated in the 1st Semi Final by Brighton Beach 1-10, the "D" Grade team finished 5th and the "E" Grade team finished 9th with only 1 win. The founder of the Club, Mr. Ernie Casper died through the year. Peter Bennett was selected in the Victorian Senior Mens Water Polo team; the 1st of what was to be 10 occasions. Des Webb was also selected in this team. Victoria ran out Premiers of the Australian Water Polo Championships.

**1948-1949 - Membership 458.** This year saw an amazing membership of 458, which was the biggest in the Clubs existence and the highest membership for any Club ever who were affiliated with the V.A.S.A. Swimming premiership lost, being defeated by Y.M.C.A. in the Grand Final 53 points to 37 points. A Melbourne team was also entered in "C" Grade and they were beaten by 1 point in the Grand Final by Brunswick. 3 teams were entered in the Water Polo Competition with all 3 teams making the finals, however, none were able to make it through to the Grand Final. Richmond defeated the "A" Grade team in the Preliminary final 6-3, Footscray defeated the "B" Grade team in the 1st semi final 10-2 and Brighton Beach defeated our "D" Grade team 5-3 in the 1st semi final. A great animosity had began between the Richmond and Melbourne water polo teams. Not only was violence occurring in the water, but it also spilled out onto pool side and in the stands. For a number of years, beginning in this year, many brawls occurred between players. There was one occasion when 2 "star" Melbourne players ended up in hospital and many times the Richmond Police were called to the Richmond Baths to break up the skirmishes.

Peter Bennett, Doug McKenzie and Des Webb were all selected in the Victorian Water Polo team that played in Queensland with Peter Bennett selected in the Australian Olympic team. However, Peter was later to withdraw from this team due to illness. Des Webb was the recipient of the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player for Junior Men. The founder of the Club, Mr. Ernie Casper, left a sum of money and a perpetual memorial was inaugurated to ensure that Mr Casper's memory will be conserved. David Norris was the only Melbourne member to be selected in the Victorian Swimming team. He later successfully defended his springboard title at the Australian Titles, the 5th time he has won this event.

**1949-1950 - Membership 454.** Club headquarters demolished at end of season by storm. Peter Bennett (Water Polo) and David J. Norris (Diving) gained selection in the Australian Team at the British Empire Games in Auckland. Peter Bennett, and Frank Acks were both members of the Victorian Water Polo Team, winning the Australian Championship. 3 teams were entered in the V.W.P.A. Competition with "A" Grade playing off in the Grand Final but were defeated by Olympic 1-4. "B" Grade were defeated 4-5 in the semi final by Brighton, and "D" Grade finished 5th. Peter Bennett and Frank Acks were coaches of the "A" Grade team, Ron Wootton coached the B Grade team and Bill Bennett coached the "D" Grade team. Swimming Premiership was won by the Club. Peter Bennett, who was playing V.F.L. football for St. Kilda, was selected in

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the Victorian Football team.

**1950-1951 - Membership 402\*.** 3 teams were entered in the water polo championship; "A", "B" and "C" Grade. The "A" Grade team, who were missing champion Peter Bennett who transferred to Bondi, remained undefeated all season until the Grand Final, where they were defeated by Olympic 4-5. The "B" Grade were also defeated in the Grand Final by Northcote, 4 goals to 5 with John Wilson being one of the Best Players for the year. "C" Grade finished equal 1st on the ladder also but were defeated in the Semi Final by Camberwell, 2-7 and were eliminated. Mervyn Potter was the Best Player in "C" Grade. Robert MacLaren, Frank Acs, Doug McKenzie and Harry Quitner, who had transferred to the Club from Olympic, were selected to represent Victoria at the Australian Water Polo Championships. Rob MacLaren was selected as the most outstanding player of the Australian Championships, as well as selected in the Australian Water Polo Team to tour New Zealand. Peter Bennett, playing for Bondi, was also selected in this team. Peter Bennett was again selected in the Victorian Football team.

**1951-1952 - Membership 386\*.** The notable occurrence for this season was the closure of the St. Kilda baths and the establishment of new temporary club headquarters at the City Baths. The swimming team finished 3rd in the V.A.S.A. interclub and John McCormack became Australian Champion over 1760 yards freestyle at the Australian Championships. Old Wesley were successful in obtaining the "E" Grade water polo premiership, tying with Preston. Peter Bennett returned to the Club after 1 year in Sydney. 4 teams were entered in the water polo competition with 2 teams in "A" Grade. The "A1" team finished on top of the ladder, but were again defeated by Olympic in the Grand Final 5-7. The "A2" team finished a creditable 5th on the ladder. B Grade finished 2nd on the ladder and were defeated in the preliminary final by Flinders Naval Depot 6-7. The "C" Grade team finished on top of the ladder but were defeated in the preliminary final by YMCA 6-7. 8 members were selected in the Victorian Water Polo team that won the Australian Championship in Adelaide; namely Peter Bennett (Captain), Frank Acs, Harry Quitner, Doug McKenzie, Des Webb, Robert MacLaren, Bill McCabe and Ron Wootton. Peter Bennett (Captain) and Bill Uren (General Manager) were selected in Australian Olympic Water Polo Team to compete in Helsinki. Kevin Coote was also selected in the Olympic Team as a wrestler. Albert V. Jennings, (later to be Sir Albert Jennings, K.B.E.) was elected the 5th President of the Club. John Wootton joined the club as a very young junior and Ken Bailey was awarded the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens "C" Grade. Ivan Stedman was successful in winning the Annual 3 Mile Swim in the Yarra with a time of 1 hour, 24 minutes and 53 seconds; another unbelievable feat considering he was over 50 years of age.

**1952-1953 - Membership 394\*.** 4 teams were entered in water polo with 2 teams again entered in the "A" Grade. The "A1" team won the A Grade Water Polo Premiership defeating Footscray 5-3 and losing only 1 game for the season. This premiership was the first premiership captured since before the war and comprised Peter Bennett, Frank Acs, Harry Quitner, Rob McLaren, Ron Wootton, Des Webb and John Wilson, who played his first season with the "A" Grade team. "B" Grade were defeated in the Grand Final 5-8 by Richmond and both "C" Grade and the "A2" team finished 8th on their respective ladders. Frank Acs won the Best Player in Mens "A1" and John Hunter won the Best Player with Mens "A2". Ken Bailey and William Stomps were joint winner of Mens "B" Grade Best Player and John Grant won the Mens "C" Grade Best Player. State Water Polo team representatives included Peter Bennett (Captain), Harry Quitner, Robert MacLaren, Bill McCabe and Ron Wootton with Victoria winning the Australian Championship. Ken Wood joined the Club and was the Under 14 Club Champion. B. Whiting was selected to represent Australia in Surf Life Saving. Peter Bennett was selected in

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the Victorian Football team for the 3rd occasion.

**1953-1954 - Membership 420\***. The Melbourne Swimming Club won the State "A" Grade Inter Club Swimming Championship. The "A" Grade Water Polo team were also premiers defeating Olympic 8 goals to 1. The victorious "A" Grade team comprised Peter Bennett, Frank Acks, Harry Quittner, Des Webb, Robert MacLaren, Ron Wootton and John Wilson. The team were beaten only once for the season; in the 2nd semi final by Olympic. However, revenge was sweet for the tables were turned in the Grand Final. "C" Grade were also premiers defeating Brighton Beach 3-2. The "C" Grade team only made it through to the Grand Final after a 1 3/4 hour battle with South Melbourne. "B" Grade, after remaining undefeated for the season, were defeated in the Grand Final by Preston 4-5. However, "B" Grade were later premiers of the Bendigo Water Polo Cup. The "D" Grade team were eliminated in the 1st semi final by Brunswick, 2-3. Des Webb and Peter Bennett were joint winners of the Best Player in Mens "A" Grade and Doug McKenzie won the Best Player in Mens "B" Grade. Noel Searle won Mens C Grade and Frank Fagan and Brian Lovelock were awarded Best Players in Mens "D" Grade. Victorian representation was afforded to Peter Bennett (Captain/Coach), Harry Quittner, Ron Wootton, Bill McCabe, Des Webb and Robert MacLaren, who was unable to make the trip. Victoria won the Premiership for the 2nd consecutive year. Ken Bailey, Bill McCabe and Graham Jones were all members of the Victorian Colts team. Jack and Tony Harrison joined the Club. The Club sent a water polo team to Perth to compete against the Western Australia State Water Polo Team with two matches being played. Doug McKenzie was voted the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player for Mens "B" Grade and Ken Bailey received the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player for Junior Men. The Club returned to the St. Kilda Baths.

**1954-1955 - Membership 429\***. 5 teams were entered in the Water Polo Competition with "A" Grade remaining premiers defeating Richmond 9-8 after three periods of extra time. The premiership team comprised Peter Bennett, Harry Quittner, Robert MacLaren, Ron Wootton, Bill McCabe, John Wilson, Jim Farrell and Ken Bailey. Old Wesley were victorious in obtaining the "E" Grade Premiership, with J. Mountford being voted the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player for this grade. "B" Grade were runners up for the fourth consecutive year losing to Richmond 5-8. The "C" Grade team were eliminated in the Preliminary Final by Kew, 2-3, and the "D" Grade Team was also eliminated in the Preliminary Final 2-3 by Northcote. The "E" Grade team finished 6th. Peter Bennett (Coach), Bill McCabe, Jim Farrell, Rob McLaren, John Wilson and Ron Wootton were all selected in the Victorian State Senior Mens Water Polo Team, winning the Australian Championship for the third consecutive time. Peter Bennett was the recipient of the Best Player in Mens "A" Grade, Doug McKenzie was awarded the Best Player in Mens "B" Grade, John McCormack won the Best Player in Mens "C" Grade, Frank Lohning won Mens "D" Grade and Jack Harrison was awarded the Best Player in Mens "E" Grade.

Peter Bennett was awarded Life Membership of the Club for outstanding service and sporting achievements. Some of Peter's water polo achievements are as follows:

- Joined the Club in 1937;
- Victorian Representative 1948,49,50,52,53,54,55,56,57,58;
- Victorian State Team Captain 1952,53,54,55,56,57,58;
- Victorian State Team Coach 1954,55,56,57,58,60,61,62;
- Australian Olympic Representative 1952,56;
- Australian Olympic Team Captain 1952;
- Australian Olympic Team Coach 1956;
- Australian Representative 1950,51;

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- Played 46 International Games;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Junior Captain 1942,43,44;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Captain 1958;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Vice President 1960;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Best A Grade Player 1954,55,56,59;
- Melbourne Swimming Club Senior Water Polo Coach 1947,48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55,56, 57,58 59,60,61,62,63;
- Member Mens A Grade Premiership Team 1953,54,55,56,57,58,60,63.

**1955-1956 - Membership 406\*.** 5 teams were again entered in the Water Polo Competition with all teams playing in the finals. The "A" Grade were Premiers defeating Brighton, our fourth "A" Grade consecutive premiership and losing only one match for the season. The team comprised State Representatives Peter Bennett (Coach), Ken Bailey, Jim Farrell, Bill McCabe, John Wilson and Ron Wootton and other members Des Webb, Harry Quitner and Robert McLaren. "B" Grade were beaten by Preston in the 1st semi final and "C" Grade, after suffering 1 loss for the season, were beaten in the preliminary final. "D" Grade were also defeated in the preliminary final with "E" Grade defeated in the Grand Final by Northcote. Peter Bennett was appointed Captain/Coach of the Victorian Water Polo team who successfully defended the Australian Championship in Melbourne as well as winning the Best Player Award in Mens "A" Grade, for the third successive year. Robert McLaren won Mens "B" Grade Best Player, Doug McKenzie won Mens "C" Grade, Ken Wood won Mens "D" Grade and Frank Fagen won Mens "E" Grade. Peter Bennett, Bill McCabe and Jim Farrell were selected in Australian Olympic Water Polo team to compete in Melbourne with Bill Uren again appointed General Manager of the Australian Olympic Team. Ron Wootton was appointed Coach for the 1st time of the Victorian Colts team and Ken Bailey was Manager of the Victorian Water Polo Team. Sir Frank Beaurepaire died of a heart attack on May 29, 1956, 6 months before the staging of the Melbourne Olympic Games, an event he had worked so hard to make eventuate. At the conclusion of the Olympic Games, Yugoslav champion water polo player, Ivo Stakula sought political asylum and defected to Australia and joined the Melbourne Club. Stakula was born in 1923 and represented Yugoslavia 73 times from 1939 to 1956. He played in the 1948, 1952 and 1956 Olympics, winning 2 Olympic Silver medals and a Gold Medal at the 1954 World Cup. He was regarded as one of the best water players in the world at that time. Later, other great aquatic sportsman also came here to take residence in Australia and included Juno Ats, Alex Zaborsky, Imray Takas, Nick Ambrous and Marty Njegus, who were all champion swimmers or water polo players, and all joined this Club.

**1956-1957 - Membership 306.** After much work done by club members, the Club re-occupied the South Pacific Baths with new renovated club rooms. 6 teams were entered in the V.A.W.P.A Summer Competition, 2 of which competed in "D" Grade. "A" Grade won the premiership for the fifth successive time defeating Brighton 6-2. This star studded team comprised the following members:

- Peter Bennett - Olympic and State Representative;
- Jim Farrell - Olympic and State Representative;
- Bill McCabe - Olympic and State Representative;
- John Wilson - State Representative;
- Ron Wootton - State Representative;
- Tim Ive - State Representative;
- Ivo Stakula - Former Yugoslav Olympic Representative;

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Juno Ats        - Former Hungarian Olympic Representative; and  
Des Webb       - Former State Representative.

Bruce M. Jackson took on the role of Water Polo Secretary, a job he would maintain and excel at until 1968. Many have said if it was not for the efforts of this man, water polo in the Club would not have survived. 2 teams were entered in "D" Grade with the "D1" team successful in winning the premiership defeating Pascoe Vale 6-4. The "D2" team finished a creditable 5th. "C" Grade was narrowly defeated in the Grand Final 3-4 by Navy, "B" Grade finished 5th and "E" Grade finished 8th. Peter Bennett (Coach), Bill McCabe, Jim Farrell, Tim Ive, Ron Wootton and John Wilson were all selected in the Victorian Senior Mens Team, with Bill Bennett appointed Manager of this team. Ivo Stakula, in his first year with the Club won the Best Player in "A" Grade. Keith Tobrady won the Best Player in Mens "B" Grade, Doug Jennings was awarded the Best Player in Mens "C" Grade, Noel Searle won Mens "D" Grade and John Grant won the Best Player award in Mens "E" Grade. Bill Uren was awarded a C.B.E. for recognition of his services to the Australian Olympic Movement and his capacity of General Manager for 2 Olympiads.

**1957-1958 - Membership 316.** The "A" Grade swimming interclub team finished very disappointingly recording only 2 wins. However, in the Victorian Swimming Championships, the Club finished equal 2nd on the points table, the highest position for a number of years. 6 teams again entered in the V.A.W.P.A Summer Competition with 2 teams competing in "D" Grade. "A" Grade won the premiership for the sixth successive time defeating Richmond 5-4. The winning team comprised Peter Bennett, Jim Farrell, Bill McCabe, John Wilson, Imray Tackas, Tim Ive, Nick Ambraus and Ivo Stakula. "B" Grade were also premiers defeating Northcote 4 goals to 2; the team comprised Des Webb (Captain), Mick Myers, Courtney MacPherson, Alex Zaborsky, Graham Bennett, Keith Tobrady, Jack Harrison and Ron Wilson. The other 4 teams failed to make the finals, with "C" Grade finishing 6th.

The Melbourne Club played a leading role in Victorian Water Polo gaining 10 office bearer and executive member positions of the V.A.W.P.A., 5 representatives in the Victorian State team which won the Australian Championship and 66 registered players comprising the 6 teams in the V.A.W.P.A. Summer Competition. Victorian representatives included Peter Bennett (Captain/Coach), Jim Farrell, Bill McCabe, Imray Tackas and John Wilson. Victoria were again Premiers of the Australian Championships. Nick Ambraus was awarded the Best Player in Mens "A" Grade, Des Webb won Mens "B" Grade, Doug Jennings won Mens "C" Grade, John Hunter won Mens "D" Grade, Bill Bennett won Mens "E" Grade and Frank Smith won Mens "F" Grade Best Player. Tony Harrison was awarded the Junior Club Swimming Champion after winning the 100 yards Freestyle, 200 yards Freestyle, 100 yards Backstroke and 200 yards Medley. Graham Stalker joined the Club and was successful in winning the Under 12 50 yds Back/Breast/Butterfly Handicap.

**1958-1959 - Membership 280.** The Club again competed in the "A" Grade section of the interclub swimming competition, however, only 3 wins were recorded and they finished 5th. The "A" Grade Water Polo team lost the premiership after remaining champions for 6 years, however they were victorious in the Association Cup defeating Hungaria. Members from our "A" Grade water polo team were winners of the Mr and Mrs H.B. Ive Cup - a relay race consisting of 7 X 55 yards. Tony Harrison was the winner of the V.A.W.P.A. 55 yard sprint and was also Club Champion in the Open Butterfly. John Wilson was Club Champion in the Open Breaststroke. Jim Farrell (Vice Captain), Tim Ive, Bill McCabe, John Wilson and Russ Carson (Manager) were



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selected in the Victorian Water Polo team which came second at the Australian Championships held in Perth. Ian Hall was selected in the Victorian Colts team which was again coached by Ron Wootton.

Of the 6 teams entered in the Water Polo Competition, 5 teams played in the finals with 2 teams being defeated in the Grand Final including "D" Grade's 10-11 loss to Kew and "E" Grade's 3-6 loss to Richmond. "A" Grade were eliminated in the 1st Semi Final by Kew 2-3, "B" Grade were defeated in the Preliminary Final by Sandringham 5-8, "C" Grade were defeated in the 1st Semi Final by Old Scotch 7-8, and the "D2" team finished 7th. Ken Wood and Keith Tobrady played their first season in "A" Grade. In an endeavour to provide a Club activity during the "off" season, 2 basketball teams competed at the Albert Park Basketball Centre on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Peter Bennett was awarded the Best Player in Mens "A" Grade for the 4th time, the only time in the history of the Club this has been achieved. Michael Myers won the Best Player in Mens "B" Grade, Doug Jennings again won the Mens "C" Grade Best Player, John Hunter won Mens "D" Grade, Bill Bennett won Mens "E" Grade and Frank Smith won Mens "F" Grade Best Player award.

Tragedy struck the Club when champion water polo player, Ivo Stakula, aged 35 and in only his third season with the Club, died of a heart attack whilst playing water polo at the Richmond Pool. In memory of this man, perhaps one of the greatest players to ever play water polo, the Club Best Player award in Mens A Grade was named in his honour.

**1959-1960 - Membership 293.** Melbourne pulled off the trifecta - water polo premiers in "A" Grade, "B" Grade and "C" Grade - a feat only witnessed twice before - in 1931 and 1933 also by Melbourne. "A" Grade defeated Hungaria 3-2 and comprised Bill McCabe (Captain), Jim Farrell (Vice Captain), Tim Ive, Marty Njegus, who was the 110 yrd freestyle world record holder in 1955, John Wilson, Ken Wood and Ron Wootton with Peter Bennett coach. "B" Grade defeated Kew 5-4 and comprised Tony Botic, Ian Hall, Jack Harrison (Captain), Courtney MacPherson, Graham Steinfort, Keith Tobrady and Ron Wilson. "C" Grade defeated Brighton 8-3 and comprised Bill Bennett (captain/coach), Graham Bennett, Bill Cubbins, Tony Harrison, Rod MacFarlane, Michael Myers, Bob McQuade and Des Webb. We were also premiers in the Association Cup for the second year running defeating Hungaria 4-3. In addition, we retained the H.B. Ive Trophy for the 7 X 55 yards Water Polo Team Relay; an extremely successful season for water polo.

The other 3 teams also made the finals with the 2nd "C" Grade team defeated by Brighton 9-10 in the 1st semi final, "D" Grade defeated by Sandringham 6-9 in the 1st Semi Final and "E" Grade were beaten by Richmond in the Grand Final 3-11. Representation in the Victorian Water Polo Team included Jim Farrell (Vice Captain), Ron Wootton, Tim Ive, Bill McCabe and Marty Njegus with injury during a Club match robbing John Wilson of a place in this team. The team was again Premiers of the Australian Championships. Doug Jennings was voted the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens "C" Grade. John Wilson was successful in taking out the Best Player for "A" Grade - the Ivo Stakula Memorial Trophy. Keith Tobrady won Mens "B" Grade, Doug Jennings won Mens "C" Grade Best Player for the 4th successive year, John Hunter won Mens "D" Grade for the 3rd successive year and John Wootton was awarded the Best Player in Mens "E" Grade. Ken Wood was awarded the Most Improved Player in "A" Grade.

The Club's swimming team finished 4th in the "A" Grade Spring Pennant. 29 Club members, comprising 4 teams, flew to Sydney for an "end of season" trip and played many water polo

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matches against local teams winning all but 1 match. Club headquarters at St. Kilda baths were damaged by severe storms. Renovations and repairs to club rooms were estimated to cost 15,000 pound. Club members John Nicholas, Peter Parrott and Russ Carson (Manager) were selected to represent Australia in ice hockey at the 1960 Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley. Club President A.V. Jennings donated a Victory Dinner at the Hotel Australia for all club members on 6th April. The Club basketball teams proved to be a success: one team being defeated in the Grand Final by 3 points and the other team finishing just outside the "four".

**1960-1961 - Membership 286.** Tragedy struck the club with the recording of the death of Horrie Bennett; doyen of Australian Swimming and Water Polo. Horrie was for many years President of the V.A.S.A. and V.A.W.P.A., Executive Member of F.I.N.A, Club Captain from 1906 to 1923, Vice President from 1913 to 1924, Melbourne Swimming Club Life Member and Manager of the Australian Olympic Team at Antwerp in 1920. In 1959, Horrie was elected the first Life Member of the Amateur Swimming Union of Australia. His loss will be sadly missed by all people in the aquatic fraternity, particularly members of this Club for which he had done so much work and dedicated so much time towards. A Memorial Trophy was introduced in Honour of H.A. Bennett and was competed for annually on a handicap basis by our club water polo teams in a competition to be staged every Sunday morning at the Club headquarters. In addition, the V.A.W.P.A. named the "A" Grade Premiership Trophy in honour of this great man.

Five teams were entered in the Water Polo Competition with 2 teams in "A" Grade and a Melbourne team took part in finals in each of the 4 grades. However, nil premierships were won for the first time in many years. The "A1" Grade Team finished on top of the ladder with 1 defeat and played in the Grand Final, but were defeated 1-3 by Kew. This is not a bad effort considering the strategy for the season was to blood younger players in the "A" Grade Team, with only 4 players there from last year. The "A2" team finished 6th. The "B" Grade team, after finishing on top of the ladder, were eliminated by Richmond 4-9 in the Preliminary Final. The "C" Grade team were beaten in the preliminary final 6-7 by Brighton and the "D" Grade team were beaten in the Grand Final by Surrey Park 4-6. The Under 18 team finished 4th in the Junior Competition. This is the first year that a junior team has been formed aiming at developing new young players. Nevertheless, the club was successful in winning the Bendigo Cup, our only "win" for the year. Jim Farrell (Vice Captain), Tim Ive and Ken Wood were members of the Victorian State team that remained undefeated in winning the Australian Championships. This team was coached by Peter Bennett and managed by Ron Wootton.

Tony Harrison won the Open Club Swimming Championship, and together with John Wootton, was selected in the Victorian Schoolboy Water Polo Team. Ken Wood, in his second season in "A" Grade, took out the Ivo Stakula Memorial Trophy for the Best and Fairest Trophy, with Alex Zaborsky winning "B" Grade, Doug Jennings winning "C" Grade for the 4th successive time and John Hunter winning "D" Grade. 2 teams continued to play in the basketball competition. Doug Jennings was also awarded the V.A.W.P.A. Best Player in Mens "C" Grade for the 2nd consecutive year. 2 teams were entered in the Swimming Inter club Pennant competition. The "A" Grade team did not perform up to expectations and are looking to relegation to "B" Grade next year. The "D" Grade team finished a very creditable 3rd.