



2021 Annual and Financial Report

Annual Report

United remains a successful and high performing swimming club, catering to the needs of both competitive and non-competitive swimmers - with the purpose of seeking to create an environment that empowers every United swimmer to achieve their goals in the water and in life.

All of the key requirements for success continue to be in place to support our swimmers - a strong mix of coaching talent with good ideas and the necessary enthusiasm and drive for the future; strong membership/squad numbers including ongoing improvements to squad structure during the year; an engaged United community; a dedicated and hard working committee who put in long volunteer hours for the club; long-term secure lane space arrangements in central Auckland and strong performance levels at both regional and national level.

The challenges of Covid have continued to impact us, however it was pleasing that we were able to hold Junior and Senior Camps 2021 as well as compete at the NZ Junior Festival, NZ Opens, DIV II and NAGS 2021. Covid continues to be particularly frustrating for our swimmers and coaches, however the resilience and drive still remains and gives us confidence that United will continue to progress and succeed in the future.

Strategic Plan Refresh

In April 2020, we completed the Club's strategic plan refresh, based around the results of our parent and swimmer survey. Since this time, in addition to the day-to-day governance of the club, the Committee has been focused on implementing our strategic plan under the following banners:

Attract & develop the best coaches

United is blessed to have such dedicated, enthusiastic and talented coaches. Igor, Jamie, Max, Marco and Brett – you are the foundation of our club and we thank you for all your hard work and for your resilience during these Covid times.

Our coaching team provides United with an enviable combination of stability, experience, new ideas and youthful enthusiasm. We continue to work towards a high-level quality programme and you will likely have noticed continuous improvements, including regular individual swimmer goal setting.

As we strive to create exciting jobs for our passionate coaches, the Committee has offered more support to our coaches with the appointment of a coach liaison portfolio (thank you, Katie Allan). This has enabled us an improved platform for feedback, requests, ideas and communication and has also enabled us to focus on new

initiatives, as well as development needs for our coaches, six monthly performance reviews and clear job descriptions.

It was sad to see Coach Jen leave us early in the financial year, and then Coach Simone in August. We advertised and made informal enquiries of potential candidates in the hope of attracting a new part-time coach but unfortunately there were no suitable applicants in a tight market. We acknowledge our existing coach's flexibility to assist, as well as both Jen and Larissa's commitment to our Club, with willingness to cover a few sessions when we needed them. As we emerge from Covid restrictions we will review our ongoing coaching requirements and consider how we may add to our coaching talent in the coming months.

Build an engaged community

Our swimmers spend a decent portion of their week training, travelling and competing and the support of parents and whānau is a key part of their success. United is focussed on building an engaged swimming community that can connect and work positively together and also enjoy time together relaxing and socialising.

We hope you agree that our communication platforms are vastly improved and thank Philip Wong (Committee – Communications portfolio) for his efforts in developing regular newsletters, photography and social media (Facebook and Instagram). Further, we have undertaken a very solid phase 1 implementation of our new website and thank Simone Lusby for the huge effort required to get this to 'go live' status.

Group induction meetings for our new members are now part of our programme, and we have a new swimmer on-boarding process being developed for the future. We also implemented a membership database and attendance APP during the financial year.

I am sure you will agree that Claire Gibson (Committee – Community engagement portfolio) has planned and delivered, in conjunction with the rest of the Committee, some memorable family functions for our community. We recall the Christmas picnic at Melville Park, Club Champs/sausage sizzle and Prizegiving events which were well supported and a lot of fun! Unfortunately, Covid meant the postponement of our main social event for the year but we plan for 'Beats by Bingo' to be back in 2022.

Our club marketing plan and fundraising efforts are evolving.

Uniforms are another key part of our community feel. Thank you, Henriette, for your initiatives in developing our new "United we swim" T-shirts, white vintage caps and ongoing management of this area.

Ensure governance & sustainability

Financial Report

Our financial report, reflecting on financial results for the year ended 31 March 2021, has been prepared by Leigh Mills our Club Treasurer - as follows:

United Swimming Club continues to be in a sound financial position to meet the ongoing objectives of the club. During 2021 we have experienced challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and have been fortunate enough to continue to provide our members with pool facilities and coaching. We are thankful to our swimmers, coaches and facility providers for working through the challenges with us and allowing us the flexibility to continue operating to the best of our ability at all alert levels.

We aim to keep the training fees at a reasonable level. The current training fees do not cover all of the club's operating costs. Therefore, we still rely on grants and other fundraising to cover a portion of the cost. We

received a grant of \$1,000 from Aktive during the year. In addition, through the support of Marris family we fundraised \$600 from wine sale proceeds and received a donation of \$500 from the Robb family. We are grateful for the support we receive from our community and continue to seek new grants and fundraising opportunities; noting in the next financial year we were successful in securing a grant from the Lion Foundation for \$8,000.

The Club repaid the loan from the Benson Family during the financial year and we thank the Bensons for their support.

Other

During the next term, our Committee will be turning our attention to a number of governance matters including ensuring our constitution is fit for purpose, risk management strategy, health and safety updates, and succession plans. We welcome input from our club community who have the skills or are interested to join us in delivering these projects.

We are always keen to hear expressions of interest/nominations for others to serve and take on different roles within the Committee and encourage anyone considering volunteering either at Committee or a support level to have a chat to a member of the existing Committee to gain a better understanding of what is needed. We work as a team and would welcome some new skills!

Retain long-term facilities

Our lane space arrangements with Epsom Aquatic Centre (EGGS) and Olympic Pools are very important to United and we continue to enjoy positive working relationships with both of these parties. We were very appreciative of Olympic Pools allowing us to take lane space on a Saturday morning, to enhance our squad restructure.

We continue to look out for additional lane space opportunities, but unfortunately these are very limited in central Auckland.

Deliver programmes that develop full potential

At the start of the year we reviewed our squad structure and squad pathways as we saw a gap in what we were able to offer swimmers as they progress through their training years. In support of Sport NZ and their promotion of 'Balance is Better' (creating quality experiences for all young people to keep them active and in the game), we have aimed to provide more flexibility and opportunity for swimmers at all competitive levels, as well as maintaining the quality of coaching for those enjoying swimming but not wishing to pursue competing towards high performance level. This also supported our coaches' ability to ensure each squad meets the specific needs of the swimmers within that squad.

It was challenging to create these extra squads and pathways within the limits of our lane space and coaching capacity (as noted above we continue to work on these) but all changes were effectively implemented mid-year including our newly created Senior Development & Training (SDT) and Junior Development & Training (JDT) squads. SDT and JDT swimmers can now opt between competitive and non-competitive membership, they continue to have high caliber coaches, and flexibility of training schedules including Saturday morning at Olympic Pools.

As part of the squad structure and squad pathways project, squad criteria and transitions were also reviewed. All updates are available on our website.

This year has been a busy one in terms of schedule changes and the need for very regular communication. We acknowledge and thank the support and contribution of our wonderful squad managers past and present including Lisa Sargison, Jacqui Comber, Alicia Boyes, Edita Pitout, Maria Henderson, Renee Knight, Jen Ng, Claire Morgan, Rebecca Johri and Simone Lusby. Our squad managers are mostly volunteer parents who play a vital role in co-ordinating each squad and supporting the coach. Next year we plan to provide more formal descriptions of roles and responsibilities of squad managers, this work will sit alongside descriptions for expectations of swimmer and parent/support people contributions and behaviour.

United is committed to supporting our coaches to provide quality programmes for all swimmers. In our plans going forward we will work with our coaches to find ways to enhance our swim programmes to support a more holistic approach with consideration of nutrition, mental skills, potential for specialist clinics. Swimmer goal setting has been a focus for our coaches this year and we are also encouraging coaches to share high level training overviews, where possible, for the preparation period for key competitions.

The swim calendar and targeted meets are a key part of preparation for major competitions. Swim meets and targeted meets are considered carefully by all coaches. We acknowledge the skill and experience that Henriette Smeets brings to the whole administration and meet handicapper role.

Other Highlights from 2021

Swimmers

We must acknowledge what a challenging couple of years this has been for swimmers. Congratulations to all for persevering, training through very difficult circumstances and where possible, achieving your goals. Despite the challenges, there have certainly been some amazing highlights on the competitive front including our very strong showing NZ Junior Festival (Top big club when including the kick events) and our memorable NAGS experience where we were oh so close to being the top NZ club! These results are only possible when every member of the team contributes with their best results and enthusiastic support and team spirit. Congratulations to the swimmers and coaches!

Membership

Our membership numbers continue to be relatively stable and are close to our optimal level.

We welcome all enquiries from any new swimmers wanting to join United and will accommodate them whenever possible.

In addition, we are always on the look-out for enthusiastic younger primary school swimmers with strong swimming ability who are keen to begin a competitive swimming journey with United. Feel free to offer them a free assessment.

Parents and Volunteers

A big thank you to all parents who volunteer their time working at swim meets, managing at away meets and camps and in gaining qualifications for timekeeping, IOT, Admin Office and beyond. This is a critical part of United playing its part in the Auckland swimming community – particularly in officiating at swim meets where we have relatively low overall experience compared to many other clubs.

We would be delighted to see this improve and encourage you to put your hand up to obtain these qualifications. It is a key requirement of registering your swimmer for competitive swimming - as one of the largest clubs in Auckland, we have a responsibility to be able to provide qualified officials to support both our own swimmers as well as the broader swimming community.

Camps

Away camps in 2021 (Cambridge for Juniors and New Plymouth for our seniors) were real highlights of the year. We thank Henriette and other members of the organising committee as well as all camp managers who gave up their time to make these camps a success. Camps in 2022 will be in Auckland, however we are hopeful of going much further afield in future years. In addition to receiving quality swim training, the overall experience and the benefits of camaraderie and independence are always invaluable for our swimmers.

Club Champs and Prizegiving

We have reinstated United's Club Champs annual competition and annual prizegiving in order to provide some lively fun competition (eg skins!) and then, in turn, to recognise our successes. Both formats worked very well and we plan to continue this into the future.

The Year Ahead

The Coaches and Committee are looking forward to another exciting year ahead as we further develop our swimming programmes, attract and welcome new swimmers to the Club, compete, celebrate our individual and team successes and move forward with our strategic plan. We know that Covid is not over and we will continue to be challenged by it. But we plan to work with it and overcome its impact on our swimmers.

On behalf of the Committee, we thank you for your support and look forward to working together with our club community towards common goals in the future.

United we swim!

Kerry Lusby
Club President