



2022 Annual and Financial Report

Recap of the year under review

This Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2021 through to 31 March 2022 – a period which we will briefly review in the landscape of being ‘a year of two halves’:

- **First Half:** The United 2021-2022 year started with much promise with pinnacle meets like NZ Opens, DIV II and NAGS taking place; we held our own Club Champs and Prizegiving and attended other swim meets. Overall it was feeling like we were back to ‘normal’ after the disappointment of cancelled events the year before.
- **Second Half:** The second major COVID-19 lockdown hit the second half of calendar 2021 year, and I’m sure many of you will recall the gutting last minute cancellation of NZ Short Course Champs just before the finals session of Day 1. I believe that United made the best of our lot over those lockdown months with regular zoom trainings, on-line quizzes, ocean swims; training and driving out at Fools Pools in Muriwai and at AGGS unheated outdoor pool and dryland in the park. Sadly our fundraising events and club-wide Christmas get-together had to be cancelled. Finally we were back to usual pools but the EGGs pool was only operational for December and then closed for its much needed maintenance, sending our families, swimmers and coaches all over Auckland to get into shape for upcoming meets. We will be able to plan a shorter than usual, and closer to home, senior camp in North Auckland. Unfortunately, despite the extensive training effort to prepare our juniors for their national meet in February 2022, ongoing COVID-19 restrictions resulted in postponement of NZ Juniors until November 2022.

Back in 2020 the Club Committee undertook a review of our strategic plan. Whilst we had been protected from COVID pre-Omicron we had started implementation of this plan with activities like building a new website, reviewing and changing squad structure and reimplementing events like Prizegiving and Club Champs. As new members were elected to the Club Committee in November 2021 and with anticipation of activities getting back to normal, we got back to our long ‘to do’ list.

United continues to monitor its progress against our purpose – *empower every swimmer to achieve their goals in the water and in life*. We (United) have been in operation now for 20 years and have grown substantially from small beginnings through to where we are now as one of NZ’s largest and most successful clubs. This is something all our members should be proud of.

We believe the success that we have enjoyed over the past 20 years has come from a healthy mix of:

- **Our enviable coaching talent**, which is continuing to develop and evolve. Igor, Jamie, Max, Marco and Emily (and Simone earlier in 2021), we would like to thank you for your commitment to our club and for hanging in there; adapting to our changing needs and remaining positive, resilient, enthusiastic and

- forward thinking. Our coaches have been vocal on making suggestions for change, many of which have been implemented. One notable change is the development of our junior programme under the capable coaching of Max and Marco (and more recently Emily). Katie Allan, as part of her coach liaison role, spends time with the coaches on a regular basis to support our continuous improvement journey.
- **High ongoing membership numbers** to ensure financial viability. Despite changes being seen nationally in swimming, our numbers remain stable at around 125 competitive swimmers and 40 non-competitive swimmers. Of course, we are always on the lookout for new swimmers who can slot into our squads! Henriette Smeets continues to oversee new membership and assessments. Kevin Karpik is reviewing other ways to support our financial viability.
 - **Engaged swimmers and families.** The United community can only thrive if everyone gets involved and contributes with a positive and inclusive attitude. We have worked on our communications platforms through chat groups, newsletters and website offerings to help support engagement. Our goal remains to build connection, so we can work positively together and enjoy time together socialising as a community. Karen Mirabelli leads on delivering newsletters each term and Claire Gibson continues to support plans for club social activities.
 - **Dedicated and hardworking volunteers** who give up their time free of charge, putting significant hours into club governance and management committee work and squad management. A big shout out to our committee members, squad managers and those who regularly officiate and manage teams. Rosie Piper is working hard to boost the number in our qualified officials group.
 - **Secure lane space** in our preferred locations around central Auckland. It has been fantastic to have the pool upgraded at EGGS and we value our relationship with the EGGS and Olympic pool management teams. and have appreciated the assistance of Swimtastic, Auckland Girls Grammar School and Fools Pools over the period. Kerry Lusby continues work on developing these relationships.
 - **Strong performances** at pinnacle swim meets (when we were able to compete!) including individual swimmers achieving personal best results. The medal tables, top 10 finishes, individuals meeting their own goals and NZ and Auckland records are permanent reminders of the accomplishments of our swimmers and coaches. Well done to you all!

Financial Report

Our financial report, reflecting on financial results for the year ended 31 March 2022, has been prepared by Jordie Smeets our Club Treasurer. A big thank you to Jordie for taking over the Treasurer role and as an ex-competitive swimmer for United we do appreciate you 'giving back' to the club. The financial report is as follows:

United Swimming Club continues to be in a sound financial position to meet the ongoing objectives of the club.

During the year ended 31 March 2022 we have experienced more challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and have appreciated the members support (our fees being commensurate with the level of training that was provided) so that we could continue to pay our coaches and other expenses. We thank the swimmers, coaches, parents and facility providers for their efforts enabling us to continue our progress.

As a general principle, United aims to keep the training fees at a reasonable level. The impact of the pandemic on our financial income and expenses has meant that the result that we are reporting this year is abnormal. In a 'typical' year, the training fees do not cover all of the club's budgeted operating costs; therefore we rely on grants, subsidies and a reasonable level of fundraising to cover the remainder of our costs and to balance

our books. During the 2021/22 financial year, we received a grant of \$8,000 from Lion Foundation which we were very thankful for, we fundraised \$1,161 and received the COVID subsidies on offer.

The club has reported a surplus of \$24,700 which predominantly relates to clawback of expenses that were provided in past years for expected costs and cost increases, which did not eventuate. The underlying 2022 result, after stripping these out, was a small surplus.

The committee intends to apply the 2022 surplus against upcoming financial headwinds wherever possible: - specifically, the significant lane space cost increase at EGGS (14%+) as well as increasing costs in implementing changes to squad structure (coaching and lane space). We have accepted these increased lane space costs after some negotiation. We agree that they are justified and, as we all know, costs are increasing across the board.

We signalled earlier in the year that a fees increase would be needed in the medium term, and we expect that to occur in 2023.

Our financial statements are enclosed with the AGM pack and I would be happy to answer any queries at the AGM.

The year ahead

We operate in the backdrop of some challenges. Some are big ticket items and we will need the support and feedback of our membership to achieve the best outcomes as we go into 2023:

- **Rising operational costs**, not only for lane space and other operational costs but also costs of travel and accommodation for away meets and away camps. Away meets and camps have always been a key part of our training and competitive programme and play a key role in building teamwork and friendships. We are mindful of these costs but believe they should remain an integral part of our programme.
- **Demand for an additional competitive squad** to meet the needs of our 13 years and over members, including those who may previously moved to alternative activities, or become fitness swimmers.
- **Fundraising** to keep fees charged as low as possible. We budget for an operating loss and look to support this through fundraising and grants. Engaging our community in fundraising has become increasingly difficult but some positive results recently mean we will continue to pursue these activities, along with grant applications.
- **Limited pool space** is not a new issue and one that has challenged us for many years. We continue to pursue leads for new opportunities and are optimistic some are on the horizon in 2023.
- **Changing dynamic** within our membership and families and within squad culture. The committee and coaches are aware of concerns expressed by some over the last year. COVID and its consequences has had a big impact in recent times and it will take time to work out what is here to stay and what may change back. We look forward to working in this area in the future.

The 'future' since the report end period (March 2022) has been exciting with plenty of outstanding results this year so far including Top Club at NAGS and DIV II age group pinnacle swim meets; Top Age Group Club at NZ Short Course and individuals and relay teams achieving Auckland and national New Zealand records as well New Zealand representation. These are huge results for the club and I am sure we are all very proud of these achievements. Our Juniors also had a very successful meet at the NZ Junior festival last weekend.

Over the next year ahead we will need to consider our challenges in detail and propose some structural changes to meet the needs of the club going forward. Our immediate priorities as at the date of this report are:

- We hear the feedback around a gap in our squad structure for 13 year and over swimmers and as part of our ongoing squad progression programme, we will be looking to make some changes to allow improved training opportunities in early 2023.
- We would like to look at ways to enhance our squad culture, swimmer experience and overall community engagement.
- We intend to review the overall governance and management structure of the club, specifically related to workloads and ability of our membership to contribute. Feedback from you all will be a key component.

Thank you's

We acknowledge and thank our wonderful squad managers for their continued support and contribution: including, Jacqui Comber, Edita Pitout, Maria Henderson, Renee Knight, Claire Morgan, Rebecca Johri, Marco Smeets, Simone Lusby, Claire Gibson, Corinne Williams, Josh Aloua, David See and Amber Oram.

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.

To your Committee – it has been a challenging year but I thank you all for your dedication, hard work and passion. Henriette Smeets (Administrator, Uniforms and Handicapper); Claire Gibson (Engagement and events); Jordie Smeets (Treasurer); Katie Allan (Swimmer, squads and coach liaison); Kevin Karpik (sponsorship and grants); Karen Mirabelli (Communications and Health& Safety); Rosie Piper (Officials); Minka Carr.

We remain very thankful for our coaching team and reflect on how lucky we are to have such a fine mix of youth and experience. 2022 has been a golden year for us and we couldn't have done it without you!

And of course our swimmers for providing much entertainment and for making the hard work worthwhile!

Please consider how you can assist the club during the year ahead. As the saying goes 'many hands make light work' and there is a role to play for everyone, whether it be as a meet official or on the committee/a subcommittee or even just being a positive support to the coach and squad manager. Feel free to discuss with any committee member how you would like to help.

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