



North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc
www.nss.org.nz

30 August 2011

The Chairman
Swimming New Zealand
PO Box 38346
Wellington Mail Centre
LOWER HUTT 5045

By email: c/- Mike@swimmingnz.org.nz

Attention: Mr Murray Coulter

Dear Murray

RE: SWIMMING NEW ZEALAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of the North Shore Swimming Club (“**NSS**”) has asked me to write to you, expressing our serious concerns over recent actions taken by the Auckland Swimming Association (“**ASA**”), some of which also involve a number of other regional associations.

I want to refer specifically to:

- The recent memoranda from the ASA and others requesting the wholesale resignation of the Swimming New Zealand Board;
- The undesirable public profile that various media utterances by some in the regions has engendered; and
- Certain governance related remits proposed by the ASA which are to be considered at the upcoming Swimming New Zealand Annual General Meeting (“**AGM**”).

We ask that this letter be tabled at the AGM.

I want to stress that NSS has no vested interest in any particular future governance outcome for swimming, nor do we wish to perpetuate the state of disharmony that pervades our sport. That is divisive and unhelpful. However, we feel obligated to record our dissatisfaction with the very public actions that have been taken by some in the regions – actions that have been undertaken without consultation with the clubs (or at least not with ours) and therefore without any proper mandate. This is somewhat

ironic, as we would have thought that those living in glasshouses would have been reluctant to throw stones!

In that regard, the recent Auckland AGM would have been the proper forum for the ASA to receive a mandate from its constituent clubs as to the various matters it wished to have canvassed at the national level. None was proposed, nor sought, despite our prior written request for any such matter to be raised in advance so that a proper mandate could be obtained.

As the leading swim club in the country for many years, both in terms of membership and results on the national and international stages (noting also that the current national High Performance Programme had its genesis at NSS), we are a key stakeholder in the future of swimming in this country. We run, and will continue to run, an international standard, high quality programme, both in terms of activities in the pool and from a governance perspective. Importantly, we are self-funded and will remain in a sound and sustainable financial position, irrespective of whatever changes in governance, or SPARC funding that may ensue. Most importantly, despite the current ructions, we will continue to produce well-credentialed swimmers, as we have done for over a century. Despite the views of those who purport to represent us, the grass roots functioning of swimming is in very good heart and we can assure you, your Board, SPARC and the regional associations, that the next group of national champions are completely motivated and waiting in the wings.

It is because of our passion for the sport that we are not prepared to stand idly by and let the misguided actions of the few prejudice the futures of the many.

Against that background, it irks us when our regional association takes actions without consultation with (at least one of) its key stakeholders - especially when those actions are, in our opinion, naïve and ill-considered. I need to make it clear at the outset that our Board acknowledges that changes in the way that swimming is administered and governed are necessary. In that regard, we support the appointment by SPARC of two vastly experienced independent directors to the SNZ Board. We also agree with SPARC that a wholesale review of the structure of swimming governance is necessary if our sport is to progress from its amateur roots into the modern age.

We note, with dismay in that regard, that those in the regions who appear to have a vested interest in the retention of what we believe is an archaic regional structure, would seek to prevent the governance debate from even occurring, in the apparent belief that the current regional structure is some sort of swimming Nirvana. The NSS Board considers that change is both necessary and inevitable, although we have an open mind as to what the "finished product" will look like. All that we ask is that due process, including open and honest consultation, be followed and that the current SPARC-led initiatives be allowed to follow due process before any precipitate actions are taken.

Given all the above, we would urge the regions to:

- Withdraw their threat to call a Special General Meeting;
- Desist from making public comment that can only serve to undermine public and SPARC confidence in our sport; and
- Withdraw the remits to the Swimming New Zealand AGM, which in our opinion would serve to undermine a transition to the more progressive governance of our sport.

I trust this letter makes our club's position clear. We are more than happy to discuss this further or provide any clarification that may be necessary.

We also look forward to further discussions with the national body as these various initiatives unfold.

Yours sincerely



Dr P H Mitchell

PRESIDENT (On behalf of the Board)

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