

A REVOLUTION IN SWIMMING TRAINING: LANE COVE'S PATH TO THE TOP

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Swimming at Lane Cove is about to be revolutionised under Head Coach, John Thompson.

Thompson is establishing a dedicated **sprint program** at the Lane Cove Aquatic Leisure Centre to cater for some of the best up and coming sprinters in Australia, including Youth Olympic Gold Medallist, Phil Butcher, and National Gold Medallist, Tim Antalfy.

The program, under the 2009 Australian Youth Olympic Team Coach will be the North Shore's first dedicated sprint squad program and marks a shift away from the traditional generic swimming training squad structure that develops athletes to be good at all events rather than being excellent at a few.

It will offer 50 and 100m specialists the opportunity to work together and challenge each other in an environment that is solely focussed on the unique needs of developing world class sprinters.

At the same time, Thompson is establishing a dedicated **distance program** to cater for some of the state's best middle and long distance swimmers including State Champions, Shori Hijikata and Mamo Shiitsu and National finalist, Sally Gilbert.

The squad will be under the day-to-day direction of Assistant Coach and former National Open swimmer, Scott Farnell.

It will provide an excellent opportunity for middle and long distance athletes to develop into state and national representative swimmers.

Thompson is excited by the changes "I'm not aware of any other program in Sydney that has developed two very specific high level training squads like this."

"There is much to learn in developing the best swimmers and it is only by specialising that they are truly able to reach that level of ability in their chosen events; equally importantly, specialisation allows the coach to also achieve excellence" said Thompson.

This radical restructure has been developed in consultation with the NSW Institute of Sport.

Thompson concedes there is risk in making change but he's confident that the overhaul will work in the best interest of not only the individual swimmers but his coaching team and the program as a whole.

"I hope, in time, to run the best sprint and distance programs in Australia and to eventually take Lane Cove swimmers to the Olympics."

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