

Lane Cove's first Australian representative

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Talented 17 year old butterflyer, Phil Butcher, has made history by becoming Lane Cove Swimming Club's first Australian representative.

Butcher competed in his first National Open Short Course championships in Melbourne last week, narrowly qualifying for the semi-finals.

But, as his custom, Butcher stepped up in the semi's swimming nearly 1.5 seconds faster and finishing 9th overall.

The performance impressed Australian Swimming officials who have selected him to represent Australia at next year's Youth Olympics in Sydney in a team made up of 30 of the country's best 18 and under swimmers.

Butcher was one of 6 Lane Cove swimmers who competed in last week's five day championship meet.

21 year old Tim Antalfy improved on last year's performance qualifying for an two events and coming 11th in the 50 butterfly.

Team-mate, Andrew D'Ambrosio, who has only recently returned to competitive swimming finished in Australia's top 16 in the 200 Individual Medley and the challenging 400 IM. The 19 year old had a big program of 7 events but accepted the challenge and recorded 7 out of 7 personal best times and improved his rankings in all events.

One of the meets most experienced competitors, 28 year old Nathan Besh, also improved his rankings in the 50 Backstroke and 50 Breaststroke. This year he added the 100 Breaststroke to his program.

The team's youngest members – 15 year old Sally Gilbert and 14 year old Shori Hijikata – made impressive debuts on the national open scene. Gilbert swam all the breaststroke events, Hijikata swam the 100 Butterfly recording a personal best time and jumping nearly 20 placings!

Head Coach, John Thompson, said it was another strong performance from the Lane Cove team.

"We had more swimmers qualifying this year and improving their performances on last year."

He added "the swimmers are stepping up in training and the results reflect that fact – they are getting what they deserve."

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