

# History of Artistic Swimming WA

From 2009 until now.



**IN 2009**, Roslyn Carbon and Brian Miller moved back to Perth from the UK with their Synchronised Swimming enthusiast daughter, Alexandra. Upon their arrival in Perth, they were disheartened to find no clubs or organisations in Western Australia that offered the sport that their daughter Alexandra loved, as 20 years had passed since Western Australia had participated in the sport of Synchronised Swimming, now known as Artistic Swimming. Most parents may have suggested a different sport for their daughter, but not Brian and Roslyn. As professional people who worked in sport, with 10 Olympic Games between them in medical teams, they reached out to what was Synchronised Swimming Australian(SSAI), which was based in Melbourne at the time. SSAI responded with a list of West Australians that had previously approached them. Thus, they contacted Mary Andreotta and Natasha Larter, and together they co-founded SynchroWA in 2009.

Mary Andreotta began her journey as a competitive athlete in Calgary, Canada and after retiring, became a certified Canadian National Judge. Upon moving to Perth in 1984, Mary started the Aquanastics Synchronised Swimming Club that was based in Beatty Park. Aquanastics stopped operating sometime in the 90's. Mary then ventured into event organisation and has many accolades under her belt including organising the World Championship Synchronised Swimming events in Perth in 1991 and 1999, helping with the organisation of the Sydney Olympics 2000, and acted as assistant meet manager at the FINA World Championships in Melbourne 2007. In 2009, when approached by Brian and Roslyn, Mary did not hesitate to join the team in co-found SynchroWA.



Natasha Larter represented the UK in Synchronised Swimming at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. She moved into coaching as made her way over to the USA to coach with the Aquamaids in California with world renowned coach, Chris Carver. In 1994, Larter was made Queensland's State Coaching director and soon after this she moved to Western Australia. When contacted by Brian, Natasha jumped on board as a co-founder of SynchronWA and the head coach of the training program.

To establish the sport, SynchronWA (SWA) initially had two prime objectives, firstly to recruit swimmers and secondly, to establish a club.

A tireless effort was made to advertise the first Come and Try at Claremont pool by

placing fliers in letter boxes and adverts in local newspapers. This event attracted 9 eager young swimmers, including Alex Miller, Natasha's daughter Jade Haynes, Aine and Aoife McCann, Debbie Tsai, Skye Reynolds and Natalia Malinowski, who all ended being integral members of the club's development going forward.

West Coast Splash Synchronised Swimming Club (WCS) was formed in advance of the 2010 Nationals in Sydney, where Natasha coached 5 swimmers, Jade, , Aoife, Debbie, Skye and Grace, who all returned with medals. Between May 2010 and October 2011, club members doubled and WCS took 9 athletes to the 2011 national championships where they all medalled once again.



**Get in synch with swimming sensation**

OLYMPIAN Natasha Larter is on a mission to introduce Perth to synchronised swimming.

Larter and fellow competitor Roberta Galvao will host a "come and try" day at Challenge Stadium this weekend from 1-3pm on Saturday and 10am-noon on Sunday.

The aim is to establish weekly clinics and synchronised swimming clubs around Perth.

Larter started synchronised swimming when she was nine and made the finals in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. She has represented South Africa, England and America in the sport that combines creativity with physical moves. "I always did swimming competitively but I had an older brother who would beat me, so I took up synchronised swimming as it was an all girls sport," Larter said.

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Natasha described SWA and WCS as becoming “a victim of their own success”, as Artistic Swimming in WA grew at an exponential rate. This rapid growth would not have been possible without Natasha’s tireless commitment as a coach. Unpaid, she was at the pool at half-past five in the



mornings out of sheer love of the sport and determination to create her dream of establishing the sport in WA. Natasha set high standards for the club and athletes alike and expected full commitment from everyone involved. Even at grass roots level, Natasha gave up countless weekends to run ‘Come & Try’ events. On Sunday afternoons, she was at Challenge Stadium coaching a master’s class for older women wanting to learn the art of synchronised swimming. It was around 2011, that some of the swimmers were upskilled to become coaches to help with the lighten Natasha’s load.

Natasha put so much of her time and expertise into the growth of our sport in the early years. We sincerely thank her for all her contributions, as without her

selfless commitment we would not be experiencing the success we have today.

2010 saw the first grant sponsorship of \$1,500 from Healthway for the “Big Synch” Event. Headed by Brian and coached by Natasha, they aimed to beat the Victorian

record of having the most people swim a synchronised swimming routine in a pool at once. By attracting 43 participating swimmers to the event, a new record was successfully made! This was beaten again in 2013 with 57 participants! [Big Sync 2013](#) By 2011, West Coast Splash had doubled in size, with two of their athletes selected on the Olympic shadow team.



In 2012, West Coast Splash was the largest club in Australia, running groups at Rockingham, Joondalup, Melville and Claremont. Mary Andreotta had stepped back from coaching swimmers but was still involved at the State level. Mary took on the enormous job of co-ordinating and managing the 2012 National Championships held in Perth. Nineteen athletes from WCS competed at Nationals, that hosted approximately 130 Australian and International Participants. It was WA's largest Artistic Swimming event since 1999! The event was a huge success primarily thanks to the financial sponsorship from the State Government's Department of Sport and Recreation and Healthway with their "Go for 2&5" program.

Natasha leveraged off this National event to grow the sport in WA even more, running an 'Olympic Themed Come & Try' and gained an extra 15 athletes!



2012 continued to be a busy year for head coach Natasha as she took up the

Australian Junior National coach job and coached the athletes to compete at the FINA Oceania Championships in New Caledonia. Later that year Natasha took her WCS club athletes to the Singapore Open and the Hong Kong National Championships, not only to gain some international experience, but for her athletes to learn what the world of artistic swimming looked like. This fuelled the fire for many of her athletes to continue to train with the big dream of the Olympics in mind.



SynchroWA

wanted more though; their vision was to see Artistic Swimming back as a sport in the Commonwealth Games. They tried to take steps towards this by hosting the Sun Smart International Club Championships in 2013 and also the Commonwealth Festival of Swimming in 2015.. With Mary as competition manager, the events ran smoothly with financial support, thanks to the healthy relationship SynchroWA had with its sponsors.

It was in 2014 that our main sponsor, Hancock Prospecting, joined the team. Thanks to this sponsorship, SynchronoWA was able to fund a full-time coach who focused on the overall development of Artistic Swimming in WA. This coach ran the high-performance program for athletes with national team aspirations and also the regional development programs that were so vital to the sports growth. It was in this year that SynchronoWA had one of its very own coaches, Juliana Bujang, appointed as assistant coach for the Australian National Team.

2015, saw the next major expansion of the sport with the addition of another club SupaNova Synchronised Swimming Club (SN) and in 2016 there were four West Australians selected to be on the Australian Olympic team for the 2016 Rio Olympics. WA's successful representation in the Olympic team was repeated in 2020 with four West Australians competing as members of the Australian Artistic Swimming team in Tokyo.

Artistic Swimming has enjoyed an amazing and highly successful journey in WA over

the past 12 years. We are so grateful and thankful to Brian Miller, Roslyn Carbon, Mary Andreotta and Natasha Larter for their enthusiasm and vision to re-establish Artistic Swimming as a sport in WA. As well as the numerous other volunteers who have served on club, state and national boards and committees. Thanks also to the many people who give so much of their time, judging, officiating, coaching and supporting our sport.

In 2021 SynchronoWA changed its name to Artistic Swimming WA (ASWA). We now have 10 centres offering Artistic Swimming as a sport throughout WA. The organisation employs an enthusiastic team including a Sports Officer, Regional Development Officer and two High Performance coaches. We run several programs that offer multiple inclusive pathways into our sport. These are ASWA's participation program AquaStART, SynchronoStART for Schools, our High-Performance program, as well as programs to support inclusivity including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) groups, Superfins and Seniors in Sync. We look forward to the years ahead!

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