



State Surf titles 2008

A Life Long Life Saving Skill

Despite treacherous seas local identity Chris Shapland CEO of Shapland Swim Schools managed to make the best of the challenging conditions to win two gold and one bronze medal at the Queensland State Masters Surf Lifesaving titles held at Kurrawa on the Gold Coast.

Chris, who turned 60 this year is a living example of how being able to swim is a life long life saving skill. "The conditions were really testing with solid 2-2.5m waves breaking on the inside bank and up to 3m waves breaking on the outside bank, so in the rescue tube I decided to take a different course than the rest of the field. I knew that if put in a big swim across the inside gutter and then crawled along the bottom for a long as I could to go under the big waves once I hit the sand bank, I could probably go straight out to sea rather than run down the beach, as did the rest of the field, to the south to counter the Northerly sweep. The race plan paid off as once I cleared the sand bank I was right in line with my buoy. All that remained was to swim as hard as I could for the buoy. As it turned out I won it by a long way."

Shapland who won his age group in the Australian titles in 2003 was happy with his performance as this is the first season he has competed since winning the national rescue tube title. "I really felt sorry for the board and ski paddlers. As a swimmer you can head for the bottom of the ocean when a big wave breaks on or in front of you, however when you are on a craft you are exposed to the full force of the wave and in some of the craft events only a few competitors made it through the inside break. In the board rescue event I teamed up with Len Wood the person responsible for getting involved in the surf lifesaving movement back in 1967. I was the swimmer in the event and he paddle the board however we both had to lie on the board and paddle it back into the beach and in doing so took the full force of a couple of big waves. Fortunately we were heading for shore and won that event."

Chris told quest newspapers his business commitment would stop him from attending the National titles in Perth this year but was determined to compete in the National next year. "Being able to swim is a skill you can do all your life. Because the forces of gravity are greatly reduced when you swim it is an impact free exercise and it is one of the few sports you can do lying down."

Heated dressing rooms, private classes and parent viewing room.

Chris Shapland

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www.shapswim.com.au



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Chris does have one piece of advice for all parents out in the community which could reduce the incidents of toddler drownings to zero. That is "Never take your eyes of your child when they are around a body of water. This includes, bath tubs, buckets of water, washing machines, paddle pools, and puddles of water and of course rivers, lakes, the ocean and swimming pools."



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