

2019 President's Report for AGM
Kath Hammond

It has been my absolute privilege to hold the position of President of Vic Synchro for the 2019 season. It was an exciting year of synchronised skating for our club with many new initiatives and the ongoing development of the sport for the Club and the future of Victorian synchronised skating going forward.

Firstly, let me thank the 2019 committee members who have worked tirelessly to ensure all aspects of running the club were achieved quietly and efficiently. It was a challenging year with regards to monthly meetings with my not residing in Melbourne, so many thanks to my committee for dealing with this inconvenience with such grace. I also wish to thank the coaches, Amber and Michele, for their ongoing commitment to driving the sport forward and working towards returning Victoria to the premier position it once held within the national synchronised skating ranks. Our skaters see their coaches once or twice each week for great training sessions, but don't see the unpaid hours of daily planning and organising our coaches do that goes into getting the teams onto the ice at competition. It is their drive, persistence and passion that ensures that we have ice to train on, team members to train with, great music/choreography/synchro skills, gorgeous costumes, positive team morale and a structured plan for moving forward that benefits all participants. Thank you, Michele and Amber. Without you both, we would not have had such an amazing 2019 season. Thanks also to our amazing team managers who serve our club and teams so diligently for the pure love of the sport and its skaters. Thank you to those who have stood up to take on this role in 2020. In particular, I would like to thank Shiralee Poed, Eclipse team manager, for the amazingly high bar she has set for all future team managers to aspire toward! We have been very lucky to have you involved so deeply and taking care of all around you with such love. We will miss you immensely Shiralee and wish you much success, good health and happiness for the next part of your personal and professional journey. To all our skaters and parents, I say thank you for all you have contributed to Vic Synchro in 2019. Although this is a relatively new club, you are involved in continuing the legacy of Victoria's successful synchronised history that began in the 1980's, and you are helping to get Victorian Synchronised Skating teams back onto the winner's podium where they belong!

Many achievements were enjoyed in 2019. This season saw a renewed focus on bringing the club together as a whole, as well as building stronger relationships amongst team members and supporters. We initiated our first Program Camp in May, 2019, which was very successful and was embraced by the skaters to really kick-start the competitive year. Our Novice Team, Harmony, was rebuilt with a group of amazing skaters and families who supported them. We were able to get Harmony to Nationals in the Basic Novice division - our first Novice entry in three years. Our numbers in this division were very healthy with 19 skaters involved. The skaters developed a wonderful level of team spirit and I know our coaches and club appreciated the enthusiasm and support of the parents involved. With this in mind, we must also acknowledge the support of the rink and Program Manager Huhu Chen in promoting the Novice level Synchro program. Thanks to all of you and I wish Harmony continued success and that you all enjoy the exciting challenges that will come with the 2020 season. Eclipse continued their competitive journey in the Junior division in 2019. Moving up to Junior had been a goal for the team and in achieving this goal Eclipse became the first Victorian Junior team to compete in almost 20 years! This division change required the team to have two programs, one short program and one free program, which can be a challenging task. Our coaches gave Eclipse the opportunity to develop a new style of skating by using short program music that required a delicate and highly artistic touch. Our skaters responded with enthusiasm and great beauty. Thank you Eclipse skaters and supporters for giving the team the strength it needed to take this enormous step forward this season. On Edge bounced back in 2019 after a difficult season to have one of their best national performances ever, bringing home a medal for Victoria. The Jersey Boys program was well-skated and such a joyful experience for all who watched it. Congratulations, On Edge, on your success!

As we move forward into 2020, we must embrace opportunities to continue to develop our sport. The recent ANZAS adult competition gave On Edge a great reason to get straight back to training, as was a good opportunity for newer members to get some performance experience. I am happy to report that the consistency in training time for Harmony in 2020 has resulted in a high retention rate from last year. According to the coaches, the team is training well and really putting effort into their basic skating skills. With several skaters ageing out of novice, the coaches intend to retain the Novice Basic competitive team and also try to build a new mixed age team to enable more opportunities for skaters of all ages and test levels to get involved in our sport. At this stage the Novice and Mixed Age teams are training together for 45mins per week. We must all work to increase this time to at least one hour per week as the current time is not enough to prepare Nationals level teams. Eclipse has a big change for 2020 which is to move into the Senior division. This decision has been made with the intention of attracting quality skaters without the age restrictions that come with Junior. I would also encourage inviting international skaters up to the 25% allowable rule to extend the opportunities for the team to reach the 12 skater minimum to compete.

Focus areas for 2020 onwards include recruitment of skaters for all teams. As an under-represented discipline within Skate Victoria, we as committee, managers, coaches, skaters and parents are totally responsible for promoting the value of synchronised skating amongst the general skating population and minimising any ridiculous negative attitudes being perpetuated about our amazing sport. Only our word-of-mouth promotion and

enlightening others about the amazing benefits of synchro will bring new people to our sport. Talk about synchro everywhere and with everyone! There are a lot of people out there who need this sport and can contribute to our success, but they just don't know how amazing it is. Tell them about the skating skills they will develop, goals they will set and be supported to achieve, the support of a team who cares about each individual, the opportunities for national and international competition, team skills they will develop that will help them in their personal lives, time management skills, as well as lifelong friendships they will enjoy. The success of our club and the future of Vic Synchro is squarely in our hands. Another area for us to focus on is fund-raising. This is an area in which our parent body can really assist. More club funds mean more training opportunities for our skaters which leads to greater achievements and successes. One idea would be for each team's parent group (obviously not adult) develop one fundraiser every 2-3 months for their team throughout the season, get approval from the committee and then run it for the club. That way each team would only be responsible for a small number of fundraising events per year. If these fundraisers are spaced throughout the year it will increase the number of different types of events we host as well as more money to spend on developing teams and it would reduce the fundraising load on the committee members who are already very busy with other administrative tasks that keep our club ticking along marvellously.

Upcoming events involving our club include the One Team Movement synchro camp to be held here in Melbourne and an International Skating Union synchro development camp in Finland that we hope can be attended by our two coaches and four of our skaters. This year will also bring the inaugural VSIC Skater Showcase, designed to provide an opportunity for our club members to have some fun on the ice and mix with (as yet) non-synchro skaters in a friendly on-ice environment.

Thank you, Vic Synchro for the support you have shown to me in 2019. I have enjoyed my role as President in 2019 as well as visiting Melbourne at various times throughout the year and getting to know you all better. Vic Synchro is a vibrant club that is serving the synchro community in Victoria with distinction. I wish you all every success and I look forward to walking the journey with you in whatever capacity that may be for the 2020 season and beyond.

Kath Hammond
President
Vic Synchro 2019