**WINTER SWIMMING FACT SHEET**

Swimming in cold water should always be approached with care.

**Swimming in cold water puts additional pressure on the cardio-vascular system.**

∙ If you have any known medical conditions or a family history of cardio-vascular conditions  OR if you have previously experienced difficulties after swimming in cold water refer to your  GP before participating

**When you are cold your thinking and mobility are impaired.**

∙ Always check that you know where and how to exit before entering the water. There will be two exit points as the route will be laps across the lake.

**When you first get into cold water you will experience the cold shock response – initial  gasp, rapid breathing, increase heart rate and blood pressure. During this time it is difficult to coordinate swimming and breathing.**

∙ Always acclimatise to the water temperature before attempting to swim. There will be a safety team member around to make sure you acclimatise and incase you decide it is not for you at this point.

∙ Keep your head above water as you acclimatise.

NOTE: Wetsuits do not remove the cold shock response as they fill with water when you get in.  The benefit kicks in when the layer of water trapped between the skin and the wetsuit warms up. Going in to very cold water (typically less than 10⁰C) can cause numbness and pain, particularly in the extremities, such as the hands and feet. Neoprene socks and gloves can help protect your hands

and feet.

**As you get colder you can experience mental confusion, slurred speech and poor movement coordination.**

∙ Never set time goals for staying in the water. Get out if you are not comfortable.  ∙ Always follow the instructions of the safety team and get out if they ask you to – they have  your best interests at heart. Always get out feeling good do not wait until you are cold/shivering to get out. Do not start a new lap if you are unsure whether to do it or not.

**When you get out of the water you continue to cool for approximately 20 to 30  minutes. Re-warming takes time.**

∙ Be prepared for re-warming: bring dry warm clothes including hat, gloves and thick socks, bring a warm drink – there can be long queues at the café so don’t always heave something easily available

∙ Re-warm gradually – don’t worry if you shiver, shivering is good.

∙ Don’t jump into a hot shower or bath.

∙ Do not attempt to drive or ride a bike until you have re-warmed. If you need to leave  before you have re-warmed bring a non-swimming supporter who can give you a lift.