



Circular 1/25

To: MSV Club Presidents, Secretaries/ Administrators, and Registrars
From: MSV Board
Date: 31 January 2024
Subject: **MSV clubs to carefully consider membership applications from non-resident foreign nationals.**

At the November 2024 MSV Board meeting the Board considered the issue of foreign nationals applying to become members of MSV Clubs.

Key points

- Current MSA and MSV rules do not restrict membership on the basis of nationality or residence (i.e. foreign nationals who do not reside in Australia may join MSV Clubs)
- All members of MSV Clubs are eligible to win medals, collect points and break National and Branch records at sanctioned meets held in Australia.
 - *Is it reasonable to allow swimmers who have never lived in Australia to break Australian and Victorian records?*
 - *Is it reasonable to include swimmers who have never lived in Australia to form part of MSV Club relay teams?*
- Visitors (i.e. members of international Masters clubs) are eligible to win medals at sanctioned meets held in Australia (in addition to medals awarded to the first three local swimmers).

Background

Over several years some citizens and residents of foreign countries have competed for some MSV Clubs (and Clubs from other branches). In some cases these individuals have never resided in Australia, and have only visited Australia in order to compete in MSA competitions. In several instances these swimmers have won medals at MSA Nationals (displacing other MSA Club members). MSV is aware of some complaints from local members who suggest that these swimmers should compete as Visitors.

Current MSA rules allow all members of MSA Clubs to break National records when competing in Australia, while some restrictions apply at events held outside of Australia (SW 12.6.11M).

MSV Board view

While MSV acknowledges these concerns, the MSV Board has not decided to amend MSV rules to prevent MSV Clubs from granting membership to non-resident foreign nationals at this point. MSV recognises that we have many valid members who are foreign nationals, and some who currently reside outside of Australia. Many of these members have had long standing relationships with MSV Clubs and have supported the purposes of Masters swimming in

Victoria. Accordingly, the Board suggests that MSV Clubs should carefully consider membership applications on a case-by-case basis.

In deciding to grant membership to non-residents, Clubs should have regard to the following:

- Does the applicant have a clear and logical connection to the club?
 - Why has the applicant chosen your Club? Who invited the application? Other than competing at major events, will the applicant engage with any other club activities?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of providing membership (with respect to the Club's purpose and aims) e.g. the Club might be likely to gain more points at Nationals and potentially have stronger relays, however any relay selection would potentially displace a local member.
- Reputation of the Club. While providing membership to non-resident foreign nationals is not prohibited under current MSA rules, this has been a contentious issue across the Association. E.g. will the Club be seen to stack the team just to win trophies?
- Will rejection reduce the swimmer's opportunity to compete (noting that MSA and MSV allow visitors from other Masters association)?