

## Our Story

Christopher and Melanie Wright have been involved in Swimming for over 30 years, from the early days of learning to swim themselves, to the heights of the competitive pinnacle, the Olympic games. Their competitive swimming careers each spanned a decade, and both continue to be heavily involved in the world of swimming since hanging up their cap and goggles.



### *Christopher Wright*

Chris began competitive swimming at age 7 in his hometown of Cairns, before moving to Southeast Queensland to pursue the elite level. He made his debut on the Australian team in 2008 and during his career, competed at the 2012 London Olympic Games as well as multiple World Championships and Commonwealth Games. He has won 22 international medals and ranked as high as 6<sup>th</sup> in the overall world rankings. Chris also broke numerous Australian records and still holds the Australian 200m Butterfly short course record to this day.

On retiring from elite sport in 2016, Chris turned his attention to coaching. He started out at the St. Hilda's School on the Gold Coast, building the program rapidly and quickly earning the attention of the school for his progress. He was subsequently offered the head coaching role at the school. Around the same time, Australia's premier elite Olympic coach, Michael Bohl moved to the Gold Coast with his brood of Olympic athletes. Recognising Chris' talent for coaching and interpersonal skills, he offered Chris a role as his assistant at the Griffith University program; an offer too good to refuse. Chris worked under Michael for 4 years, coaching the likes of Emma McKeon, Emily Seebohm and Thomas Fraser-Holmes to international success while heading up the age group program. Chris built this program from scratch, starting without a single swimmer, growing rapidly to become a competitive team at the national level. Chris has now coached young swimmers to 8 national medals including 4 gold, as well as placing an athlete on an international junior team, and being selected as an Australian team coach.

It was through his coaching of junior athletes, coinciding with the birth of his first child, that Chris discovered a passion for developing the skills and foundations of young swimmers and the world of learn to swim. At this time, Chris began working with Laurie Lawrence, the unofficial learn to swim guru, water safety champion and legendary Olympic coach. He was fortunate to be mentored and educated in learn to swim and junior athlete development on

a weekly basis over a period of 4 years. He is a qualified learn to swim teacher and holds a silver level coaching license. Through his work with Laurie, Chris realised his passion to pursue a career in learn to swim.

Chris began working at FAA in 2021 as the head coach and has thoroughly enjoyed working with the squad level swimmers toward achieving their swimming goals. He has worked hard to establish a competitive swim team “Flinders Phoenix” which continues to grow and allows swimmers to compete at a local through to national level. The newly established race nights have become a highlight, with a primary focus on racing hard and having fun.

With his background in both competitive swimming and learn to swim, Chris is both excited and confident at the prospect of taking over directorship of FAA. He intends to continue as the head coach of the swimming squads, while also taking on the primary management role of the aquatic education program.



#### Notable achievements:

- World Cup: 4 Gold, 11 Silver, 7 Bronze
- Australian records
  - 1:51.11 - 200m Butterfly short course (25m) – still current
- 6<sup>th</sup> Fastest time in 2012 100m Butterfly 51.67 (World Ranking)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place - World Short Course (25m) Championships, Dubai – 200m Butterfly
- 10 x Australian Championship Titles

#### Qualifications:

- Bachelor of Environmental Design – Majoring in Architectural Studies
- Swimming Australia Advanced Coach
- ASCTA Silver Coaching
- ASCTA Learn to Swim – Babies and Toddlers
- Worldwide swim school aquatic education training
- Strength and Conditioning Level 1 + Certificate 3 in Fitness

### *Melanie Wright*

Melanie, a Sunshine Coast local, grew up in Buderim and began swimming at the age of 14. Late to the sport, she made significant progress in a short time and by the age of 19, made her first Australian swimming team. Swimming under her maiden name of Schlanger, Melanie went on to compete at several World Championships, Commonwealth Games and Olympics. During her career spanning across 10 years, she became Olympic, World and

Commonwealth champion as well as a two-time world record breaker. She has 21 international medals including 5 from the Olympics, 2 of these being Gold.

Melanie moved on from competitive swimming in 2016, in order to study a Doctor of Medicine, which she completed in 2020. Since her time away from elite competitive swimming, Melanie has remained heavily involved in sport. During her 4 years studying medicine, Melanie was involved in coaching and mentoring of young up-and-coming swimmers. She has hosted swimming clinics for charity and has regularly attended swimming clubs to give talks on all aspects of elite swimming, always with her international medals to be shared around offering inspiration.

At the beginning of 2021, both Melanie and Chris moved with their children back to her hometown on the Sunshine Coast, a place they had always intended to return and raise their family. At this time, Melanie commenced work as a medical doctor at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital where she continues to pursue her pathway toward specialist training.

While continuing towards her specialist training, Melanie intends to be actively involved as a co-director of FAA. Melanie's role will largely remain administrative, however, she thoroughly enjoys engaging with swimmers and will be available to assist with both squad and learn to swim classes.



#### Notable achievements:

- Order of Australia Medal, OAM
- International medals
  - Olympics: 2 Gold, 2 Silver, 1 Bronze
  - World Championships: 2 Gold, 1 Bronze
  - Commonwealth Games: 1 Gold
  - Pan Pacific Championships: 1 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze
  - World Cup: 5 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze
- World records
  - 4x100 Freestyle, Short Course, 2007
  - 4x100 Freestyle, Long Course, 2014

#### Qualifications:

- Doctor of Medicine + Bachelor of Medical Science + Bachelor of Biomedical Science
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Swim Australia Learn to Swim Qualification
- Worldwide swim school aquatic education training
- Certificate III and IV in Fitness