



## Emily Seebohm and Emma McKeon reign supreme at Swimming's Gala Awards Night

**Sunday, 29 October 2017**

Two of Australia's queens of the pool, **Emily Seebohm** and **Emma McKeon** were the big winners at Swimming Australia's Gala Awards Dinner, presented by Hancock Prospecting in Adelaide tonight.

Triple-Olympian Seebohm (Brisbane Grammar) was awarded the **Olympic Program Swimmer of the Year** while McKeon (Griffith University) took home the coveted **Hancock Prospecting Swimmer's Swimmer** and, along with Paralympic golden girl **Lakeisha Patterson**, one of two prestigious **Mrs. Gina Rinehart Patron Awards**.

The **Paralympic Program Swimmer of the Year Award** went to Brisbane's Commonwealth Games gold medallist and Rio Paralympic freestyle star **Rowan Crothers** (Yeronga Park); the **Open Water Program Swimmer of the Year** went to Sunshine Coast Rio Olympian **Chelsea Gubecka** (Kawana Waters); the **Short Course Swimmer of the Year** to world champion and world record holder **Mitch Larkin** (St Peters Western) and the **AIS Discovery of the Year** to **Shayna Jack** from Commercial.

The who's who of Australia's most successful Olympic sport, including Swimming Australia Patron, **Mrs. Gina Rinehart**, Olympic legend **Dawn Fraser**, Swimming Australia President **John Bertrand AO** and the current Australian Dolphins stars walked the blue carpet at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

And it was a night which saw Australia's leading ladies of the pool make the biggest splash.

The **2017 Olympic Program Swimmer of the Year**, Seebohm, put together a stellar year, coming back to her best after overcoming a disappointing Rio campaign and then the revelation of her complications with endometriosis to win her fifth World Championship gold medal at this year's FINA World Championships in Budapest when she successfully defended her 200m backstroke crown and also picked up a silver and two bronze medals in a stand-out meet.

Seebohm showed her true champion qualities to mix it with the best of the best, regularly pushing, arguably the world's No. 1 all-round Swimmer, in Hungary's Katinka Hosszu to the limit over both long and short course.

Her efforts both individually and in Australia's relay teams underline her value as one of the country's finest ever.

Seebohm has been a part of the Australian Dolphins Swim Team for 11 years and is a force to be reckoned with on the world stage and this year's individual gold in the 200m backstroke, bronze in both the 100m backstroke and the 4x100m medley relay plus a silver medal as a heat swimmer in the 4x100m freestyle relay is a testament to the 25-year-old.

And there is no stopping Seebohm - a three-time Olympian who wants to emulate Leisel Jones and make Tokyo her fourth Olympics.

"I have said I want to train up until 2020 and like Leisel go to four Olympics and be recognised as one of Australia's best ever swimmers," said Seebohm, who was last month honoured to receive a nomination for the prestigious Sport Australia Hall of Fame Don Award - for athletes who have led by example and most inspired the nation.

It is the second time Seebohm has won the Olympic Program Swimmer of the Year Award - after sharing the award with two-time individual world champion **Bronte Campbell** in 2015.

And in a great night for her Club Brisbane Grammar, coach **David Lush** also gained due recognition when he was named Olympic Program Coach of the Year.

Alongside Seebohm came **Emma McKeon**, Australia's MVP on the Dolphins team in Budapest, who displayed all the values of a team player, winning six World Championship medals - four silver and two bronze - the most by any Australian woman in a long course world championship - earning her both the **Mrs. Gina Rinehart Patron Award** and the vote from her peers as the **Hancock Prospecting Swimmer's Swimmer**.

McKeon, 23, won silvers in the individual 100m butterfly and 200m freestyle as well as her valuable legs in the 4x100m freestyle and 4x100m Mixed Medley relays and bronze in the 4x200 freestyle and 4x100m medley.

Paralympians Patterson and Crothers have continued to show the strengths of an Australian Para Swim Team regarded amongst the best in the world.

Patterson, the Rio gold medallist and world record holder continues to inspire those around her and Australians who have followed "Lucky's" story.

This year also saw a breakthrough for Yeronga Park's S10 classification Swimmer Rowan Crothers, who was the stand-out performer at the Canadian Open Meet after the postponement of the World Para Championships, with his outstanding freestyle wins and contributions to Australia's relays - improving his 100m long course freestyle time to 51.15 and just two days ago becoming the first Australian to break 50 seconds for Short Course 100m freestyle.

Australia's stand-out marathon swimmer, Chelsea Gubecka was voted the **Open Water Program Swimmer of the Year** for her top 10 effort over the Olympic 10km distance, in Budapest, finishing 9th in a stand-out field of Olympic and World Champions.

Her coach **Michael Sage** was named **Open Water coach of the year**; while Olympian **Rob Van Der Zant** was named **Hancock Prospecting Paralympic Program Coach of the Year** and **Dean Boxall** (St Peters Western) was named **Youth Coach of the Year**.

The **Optus Club of the Year** was awarded to **Bunbury Swimming Club in WA** while the **Optus Local Legend** went to stand out Tasmanian volunteer technical official **Tracey Rowell**.

#### **Swimming Australia Gala Awards Dinner list of winners:**

Olympic Program Swimmer of the Year: Emily Seeböhm (Brisbane Grammar)  
Paralympic Program Swimmer of the Year, Rowan Crothers (Yeronga Park)  
Hancock Prospecting Swimmer's Swimmer of the Year: Emma McKeon (Griffith University).  
Open Water Swimmer of the Year: Chelsea Gubecka (Kawana Waters)  
Short Course Swimmer of the Year: Mitch Larkin (St Peters Western)  
Hancock Prospecting Olympic Program Coach of the Year: David Lush (Brisbane Grammar)  
Hancock Prospecting Paralympic Program Coach of the Year: Rob Van Der Zant  
Open Water Coach of the Year: Michael Sage (Kawana)  
Youth Coach of the Year: Dean Boxall (St Peters Western)  
Mrs. Gina Rinehart Patron Awards: Lakeisha Patterson, Emma McKeon  
Optus Community Award; Josh Beaver (Ivanhoe Neons)  
Optus Club of the Year: Bunbury Swimming Club (WA)  
Optus Local Legend of the Year: Tracey Rowell (Tasmania)  
Roger Smith Technical Official of the Year: Damien van de Berg (Cobram)  
AIS Discovery of the Year: Shayna Jack (Commercial)  
Services to Australian Swim Team: Rhys Mainstone, Richard Eliason, Teigan Van Roosmalen

