



# Tammy van Wisse

## Marathon Swimmer Profile

**"To motivate, just add water"**

Most people fly around the world, some board a ship, but Tammy van Wisse has seen the world the hard way – by **swimming 1 ½ times around the planet.**

Tammy has swum over **65,000 kilometres** and has set **6 World Records** (5 of them are still current)– testament to her amazing determination, stamina and strength.

Victorian born Tammy initially started swimming to help combat a weight problem. Her formal swimming training began at age 11. She progressed through her teens winning Victorian State Swimming and Victorian Royal Life Saving Titles.

She won the Lorne Pier to Pub swim, in 1986, 1987 and 1989 and established a new record in lifesaving by successfully winning the Royal Lifesaving Victorian Ironwoman title for a record **17 years in a row.**

Her first marathon swim was in 1986 from Beaumaris to Frankston, a distance of twenty kilometres.

Tammy entered the record books in 1996 as the first person to swim the treacherous **Bass Strait**, freestyling 97kms non-stop from Tasmania's King Island to Apollo Bay, Victoria for just under 18 gruelling hours. She is still the only person in the world to have accomplished this feat.

Australia has not been her only conquest – she established other **world record times and wins** for swimming **Loch Ness**, New Zealand's **Cook Strait**, the **English Channel**, Olympic Games Centenary Marathon swim in **Greece and** won the prestigious 48km Manhattan Island Marathon Swim in **New York.**

Tammy's swims are often more than just about establishing world records and in 2006 she set her sights on swimming from New York to New Jersey with the objective of honouring her childhood hero Gertrude Ederle.

Gertrude was a pioneer for **women in sport**, and in 1926 made history by becoming the first woman to swim the English Channel. Tammy undertook the 35km swim following in the footsteps of Ederle, a New Jersey native, with the goal of inspiring another generation of women and girls.

She smashed Ederle's 81-year-old world record and received widespread recognition in the US for her feat, including having a day named after her! Every July 21<sup>st</sup> is now celebrated as "**Tammy van Wisse Day**" in Monmouth County, New Jersey in honour of Tammy's amazing swim.

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2001, Tammy completed one of her longest challenges to date by swimming the **entire length of the Murray River** from the Alps to the ocean – another feat that no one else in the world has achieved.



Starting from Corryong in Victoria's high country, it took Tammy **106 days** (3.5 months) to reach the Murray Mouth in South Australia, a distance of **2438 kilometres**.

As a human water quality tester, Tammy has long been a campaigner for cleaner waterways. Whilst working in her watery office, the Murray River, Tammy's goal was to raise awareness about **environmental issues** confronting the river such as poor environmental flows, salinity and toxic algal blooms.

Tammy still enjoys being able to make a positive contribution and in August 2012, she accepted an invitation from the South Australian Premier to become an official "**River Champion**" for the Fight for Murray campaign.

Outside of swimming, Tammy is a very proud parent and has a daughter Rebecca (8yrs old) with her husband Chris. She loves being a mum and believes this is often more challenging than being a marathon swimmer!!



Tammy is a small business owner of **Swimland** Swim School in Narre Warren, Victoria. She is a strong advocate for water safety & children learning to swim and has been an ambassador for the "**Play it Safe**" by the water campaign and involved in "**Water Safety Week**" for many years.

Tammy stills loves to keep fit and swims a leisurely four kilometres at her local pool three times a week.

## ACHIEVEMENTS & FACTS

- The total distance she has swum is over **65 000kms** (1.5 times round the world)
- Represented Australia in over **18** international marathons
- Has won **17** Victorian Royal Lifesaving Ironwoman titles (without a hint of rust!)
- Has won **over 150** Victorian Royal Lifesaving State medallions
- Tammy has set **6 World Records**. She currently still holds **5 World Records**
- **World record** for being first person to swim Bass Strait, 1996 (97.4km in 17hrs 46min and 84 000 freestyle strokes!) No one has attempted to repeat Tammy's Bass Strait feat to date.
- **World record** (fastest woman) across Cook Strait (North to South), New Zealand, March 1999 (6hrs 49mins)
- **World record** (fastest person) to swim length of Loch Ness, August 1999 (9hrs 6mins)
- **World record** (fastest person) to swim length of the Murray River – 106 days – 2438kms (over 2 million freestyle strokes!)
- **World record** (first/fastest person) to swim Gippsland Lakes, Bairnsdale to Lakes Entrance, June 2004 (9hrs 57mins)
- **Former World record** (fastest person) to swim 22 miles from Battery Park, New York to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2006 (5hrs 06mins). She broke the longest standing record in the marathon swimming history books set by Gertrude Ederle in 1925 by over 2 hours. As a result of this swim, every 21<sup>st</sup> July is now celebrated in Monmouth County, New Jersey as "Tammy van Wisse" day!  
Tammy held this record for 5 years.
- **Australian record** for the fastest person to swim 50 laps of Bondi, 1998 (40kms in 9hrs 7mins)
- **Winner** of Olympic Games Centenary Marathon Swim Race in Greece, 1996 (7hrs 13mins)
- **Winner** of Manhattan Island 48km Marathon Swim Race, 1997 (7hrs 15mins)
- **Winner** of Manhattan Island 48km Marathon Swim Race (Relay) 2001

- **Winner** of inaugural 30km Melbourne Big Swim Race, 1998 (7hrs 18mins)
- **Fastest person** across the English Channel in 1993 (8hrs 38mins)
- **First ever brother/sister** combination (with her younger brother John) to swim the English Channel together, 1994
- As part of her objective to promote Victoria's Port Phillip Bay as an environmentally friendly recreational asset, Tammy has swum –

**Across the bay**; Portarlington to Frankston, 1993 (40km)

**Length**; Rosebud to Sth Melbourne, 1994 (58.5km)

**Circumference**; Portsea to Sorrento, 1995 (144km)

**This profile was update 1 August 2016**

**For more information visit Tammy's website**

**[www.tammyvanwisse.com](http://www.tammyvanwisse.com)**