



Making a feature OF WATER

Christina DiMartino looks at using water as an element of garden design, and finds that not only will a water features soothe consumers, it can also stimulate a pool builder's bottom line.

Few things are as relaxing as hearing the tranquil sound of moving water, and many people who have water features incorporated into their poolscapes even consider the sound therapeutic. Today's modern technology easily delivers these features to both residential and commercial settings.

For builders, designers and contractors, water features can provide something else: a better bottom line from pool and spa packages. And because each project is unique and customised, you can set your own price for these additions. Another benefit to be gained is the reputation you can acquire. Local renown for outstanding waterscape projects can spread quickly, drawing more business to your door.

Nowadays, companies that design and manufacture the components for water features have made life easier for builders. Products can be delivered to your door

with full instructions, and most companies offer unlimited technical and installation support by phone and email. And many will work with contractors in the design aspect, helping achieve beautiful custom-designed landscapes.

Global pacesetter

Crystal Fountains, headquartered in Toronto, Canada, went global in the 1980s and is well known today for its dazzling commercial installations around the world, although the company is also highly favoured by builders of upscale residential poolscape designs. Today, Crystal Fountains has offices in Dubai and Warsaw.

Mike Crnkovic, director of business development for new products and new markets, says the company stakes its reputation on new and exciting fountain designs.

"Fire and water bowls, a new product we launched last year, are popular," says Crnkovic.

"People like these because fire and water combinations have been featured throughout history and in many cultures. They bring a sense of the past, combined with a look of the future. People have asked for this product repeatedly, and builders are listening to their clients' requests."

Crystal Fountains' fire and water bowls are made of either copper or concrete, which come in a variety of colours depending on the overall look the client wants, and they are suited to both backyard and commercial use. The bowl and burner unit is sold together. Adaptable to either natural gas or propane, the units are designed first with safety in mind.

"It is designed with an electronic control system that self-checks several times a second to ensure the flame is on," Crnkovic says. "If the flame is extinguished—in a strong wind, for example—it automatically and immediately shuts down the gas flow. After a



A Rico Rock waterfall



Bradford's Power Shower

few minutes, it automatically turns itself back on. It's fully automated, labour-saving and safe."

In 2000, Crystal Fountains introduced its residential fountain line with nozzles made to be installed on the side of a pool or flush on the deck so they can be walked on safely.

Made from bronze, the commercial grade fountain nozzles provide a vertical spray or sheet of water into swimming pools or spas. The water movement can be computer controlled to coordinate with lighting and music resulting in an amusement park effect.

"Anything that can be done in a major amusement park, hotel or casino, can be done with a backyard fountain," says Crnkovic. "We



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are seeing homeowners spending as much money on their backyards as some commercial companies do. We sell the same product to home builders that we provide to major projects, so they're always assured of having the best possible result and long lasting quality."

Among the company's most popular fountains is the Crystal Falls. The jet is available for deck or wall mount applications and can pivot to produce a variation of spread and height. Single jets can act as an accent while a grouping creates a strong focal point. By adding an optional

want in their landscape design.

RicoRock in Orlando, Florida is one company that overcomes the challenges involved in rock waterfalls. Bruce Riley, managing director, says the company's products are moulded from natural rock formations.

"Our styles include limestone, sandstone, granite and quartz looks," he says. "Panels and boulders are available in all styles. The products are made from fibre-reinforced concrete [GFRC or FRC]. This type of lightweight casting is less than one-inch thick,

the prices of its products to about half of what they were previously. The company, Riley says, has grown, and volume now enables it to pass better savings on to customers. The company ships across the US and Canada and to about ten foreign countries mostly in the Caribbean.



The Runnel Waterfall by Bradford



Savi Oasis sheer descent

The company's two lines include standard waterfall kits that can be installed in one day, and cast rock products for customised jobs. Some of its rock formations are as much as 20 feet high.

"They are light and transportable, about one-fourth the weight of natural rock, but they are strong enough to sit or stand on," says Riley. "The most popular are the waterfall kits that include four to 12 pieces

that are mortared together on site, and can fit any shape pool and be installed in any situation. The formations don't have seepage problems or form calcium deposits, which are a big problem with most waterfalls. The biggest advantage to builders, however, is predictability. Homeowners know exactly what they're going to get before the job is started."

RicoRock's products come lightly coloured, and dealers and builders usually add colour to coordinate with their projects. The company manufactures in both Florida and Texas. Riley says transportation typically adds only 10 to 15 percent to the cost, and the company subsidises shipping costs on international orders. The products come with a

fibre-optic light, the water features creates a luminous evening effect.

The Fyrefly jet easily flush mounts in the deck and comes in three versions; unlit, fibre-optic and RGB LED. Fine fingers of water are projected outwards from the brass faceplate in either a broom or linear spray pattern. Crystal Fountains suggests installing a group of Fyrefly jets to create a playful arching effect. Holes can be angled at 20 or 40 degrees for different arch heights.

Fibre reinforced concrete – the sensible way to build a rock waterfall

People love bringing nature into their backyards, and rock waterfalls are a sure way to do it. But few people have an abundant supply of the right size and shape rocks lying around in their backyards. The sheer weight of natural rock makes it extremely expensive to transport, and even then it's not always available in the colours that homeowners



Antique style water features in a pool designed by A Total Concept

but has a high tensile strength. It weighs about eight-pounds per square foot. You can create a hole in FRC with a hammer, but it will not shatter like most cast concrete. And FRC can be cut with any concrete cutting tool."

RicoRock recently expanded its Blue Ridge series with new colour patterns and larger rock formations—but it also lowered

five-year warranty.

"At the builder's end, the price to their customers typically ranges from \$900 to \$4000," says Riley. "There is no limit to what a builder can charge, depending on how elaborate a project is."

Boulder Formations in Clearwater, Florida, puts its own spin on FRC waterfall designs. Marla Sawyer, co-owner with her

husband and partner, John, says custom designed natural scenes are easily achieved through the unique architecture and engineering of the company's entire line of GFRC Cast Rock Systems.

"The unique features of these products allow for easy expandability by combining different components into a customised natural scene, while maintaining the simplicity of a modular system that is perfect for both residential and commercial applications," says Sawyer.

"All Boulder Formation components can



Sheer descent adding movement to a design by A Total Concept

be used individually or combined together allowing for the most basic designs to the most elaborate custom creations."

The company offers several complete modular waterfall systems that consist of boulders and plumbing fixtures. Pumps are pre-plumbed and ready to be installed. Contractors simply stack the rocks in the proper order, making sure each sleeve lines up with the sleeve in the rock below. Once the rocks are properly secured, you simply drop the plumbing down through the sleeves, cover the plumbing top with the cover rock and turn on the waterfall.

The company also offers grotto designs, and systems that can function as water slides.

Sawyer agrees that pool builders should



Fire and water bowls are striking and popular

find the systems uncomplicated and easy to put together, but the company makes itself available to assist in installation. She also agrees that builders can pump up their bottom lines considerably by offering waterfalls.

"Wholesale prices on these waterfall systems range from \$USD600 to \$USD2400," she says. "Builders tack on their mark-up, which typically includes their overhead and some creative expenses. There really is no limit to how much they can make from offering these systems to their customers."

A more modern approach

Progressive trends in waterfall design include sheet flow, rainforest, curtain and arch applications. These elegant waterfall designs have gained acclaim around the world in applications ranging from backyard spas to major commercial settings in recent years.

Savi Pool and Spa is the waterfall division of Next Step Products LLC, a leading manufacturer of LED underwater and illuminated water features company headquartered in Orlando, Florida. Richard Heiner, owner of Mondo Light, a marketing and consulting firm specialising in pools and spas, is the marketing representative for Savi Pool and Spa. The company's line of Oasis waterfalls come in five primary designs, but each can be expanded upon for customised projects.

"Sound, movement and lighting add a lot to a pool," says Heiner. "From the homeowner perspective, they're adding the focal point to their landscape design. Sheet flow falls have been around for a while, but as pools have become more exotic in design, builders have added a raised wall in order for the water to fall more effectively. This adds a visual dimension that far excels that of standard, flat surface pools."

Savi Pool and Spa goes to great effort to insure that contractors and designers who buy their products have everything they need to bring their projects to completion, and

they offer technical support to help installers through every step.

"The systems come with guides that show how many gallons per hour per foot of water the unit needs to move; with every additional foot you need more water," Heiner says.

"The more simple installations do not require more pumps. The existing pool pump easily redirects water to the fall. When the systems get larger or more complex, it requires additional pumps. The guides also indicate the height that the system should be mounted for the best visual effect because sheet flow waterfalls naturally narrow as they fall. All Savi Pool and Spa waterfalls come with standard back feed. There's not a lot of education needed for these units. It's just a matter of reading the literature and contacting our technical team with any questions that may arise."

The company also offers a radius order form on its website so builders can match a specific curve in their design. With an underwater light manufacturer as its parent company, adding colourful LED lighting options is made simple and convenient.



Fire and water - Crystal's Grand Effect



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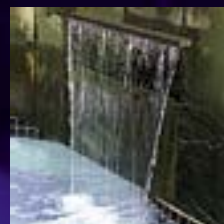
OASIS ARCH FALL



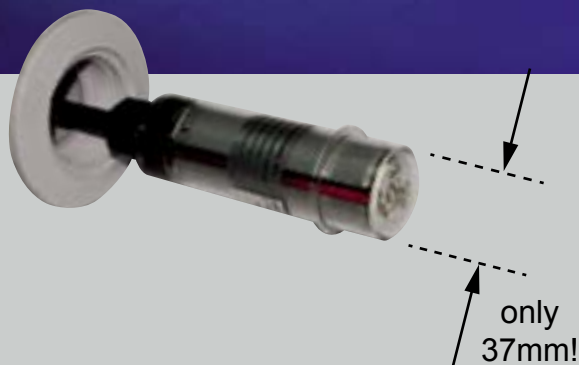
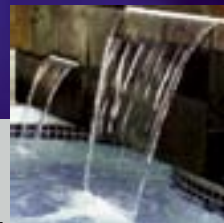
OASIS RAINFOREST FALL



OASIS CURTAIN FALL



OASIS ORIGINAL FALL



Waterfalls are available in 30cm, 45cm, 61cm, 91cm and 122cm widths. Custom radius cuts and widths of 152cm, 183cm, 214cm and 244cm are also available.

Fiber optic lighting is included with the Oasis Lighted Nova Fall. Fibre optic sideglow cable for perimeter lighting is also available

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Heiner says it's unanimously agreed that builders can gain great financial benefits by adding water features to their design packages.

"Builders know their areas, and they are cognisant of income levels in the regions where they build," he says. "They have to feel out their clients to determine if they are the kind of people who want their backyards to be more of a showpiece, and want the added ambience of moving water. The components for a basic waterfall unit can be purchased today for under \$100, and range to well over \$1000. But if you're building a \$50,000 pool, you can easily add as much as five percent, or even more, to your total package."

Dress up the tub

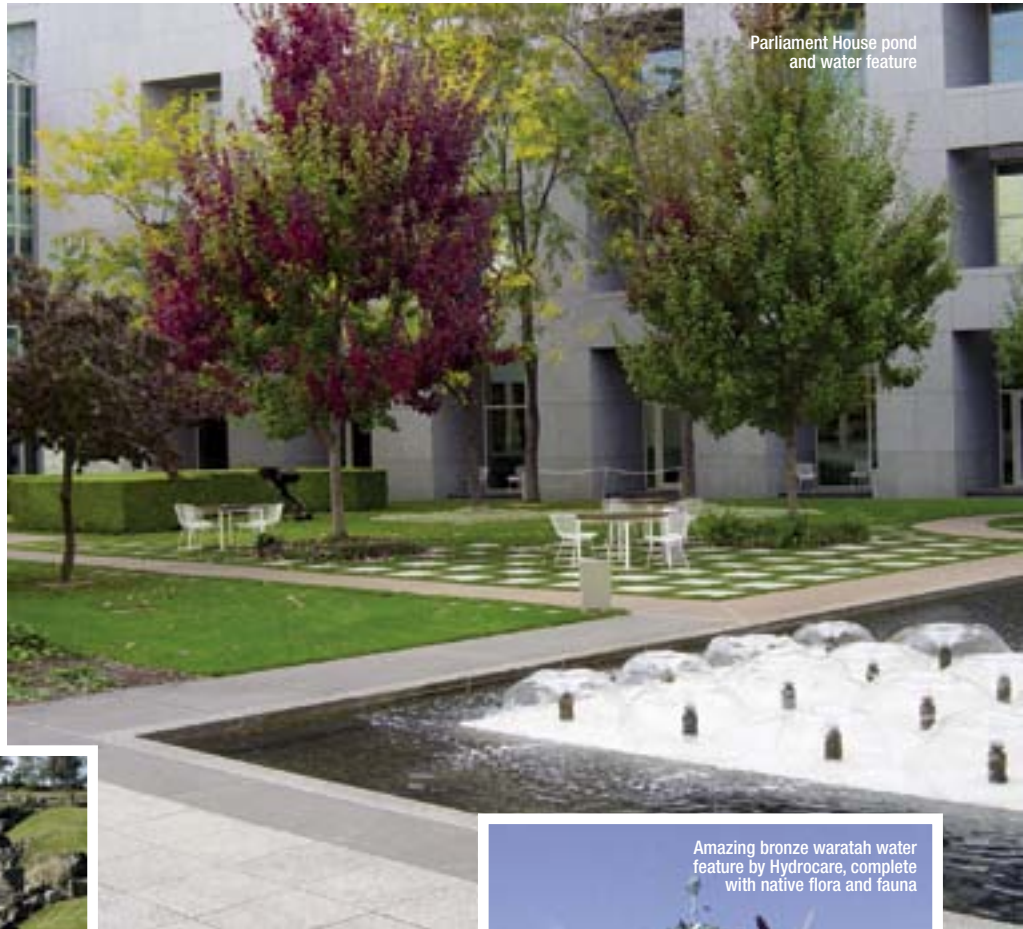
Water features aren't reserved just for swimming pools. At Bradford Products in Wilmington, North Carolina, the contrary is true. The company is a leading manufacturer of stainless steel aquatic vessels and complementary water features. Its line includes a vast assortment of pools, spas, swim spas and hydrotherapy units, as well as a wide range of waterfalls and fountains that it sells and ships around the world.

"People come to us with concepts and

"We suggest that builders and contractors know what they want the feature to do that they are offering their clients; splash, trickle over the edge, spurt up, cascade or other treatments, and how much force they

hot tub, skirting and coping materials and water feature equipment. The unit fits easily into the frame of the vessel.

A hot trend in water features currently is adding sound, according to Greenman.



Parliament House pond and water feature



Resmed's kilometre-long Ideas Stream – several pumps piggy backed the water up the weirs to give the realistic impression of a flowing creek

rough ideas and we turn them into reality," says Paul Greenman, director of business development. "This affords clients something that no one else has because they are not mass produced, but are individually designed and finely handcrafted in stainless steel as opposed to plastic or fibreglass."

The company's water features are designed using the latest 3D modelling software to ensure accuracy throughout the design process.

"We generate our shop drawings directly from the model and can export the solid model for use in analysis programs," says Greenman. "Our design and engineering departments collaborate daily for ongoing product development."

A lot of Bradford water features are designed for hot tubs, spas and smaller pools, but it is not limited in the product size it can create.

want in the water action," says Greenman. "We have specifications, and we will walk them through everything they need to know.

Builders typically know about the landscape details and challenges they present before they come to us, of course. We will then design and build the system, provide the engineering, shop drawings, plumbing and electrical schematics. Equipment specs such as pumps, heaters, chemical sanitisers and everything else they need to know to operate the feature is also provided."

Greenman adds that any experienced builder should be able to enter the water feature category without too much additional knowledge. They need to know, or learn, how to introduce the interconnecting plumbing and build on a pad, for example.

Bradford Products' designer deck spas come with a kit form that allows the builder to install a coping skirt around the spa and on the top lip. The company supplies the



Amazing bronze waratah water feature by Hydrocare, complete with native flora and fauna

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T-Jet now supplied with 25mm coupling and updated to a 40mm outlet, also includes 40mm SE701 Eyeball Return. (Available in all colours)



SE814F

T-Jet now supplied with faucet coupling, also includes SE801 threaded 40mm eyeball. (Available in all colours)

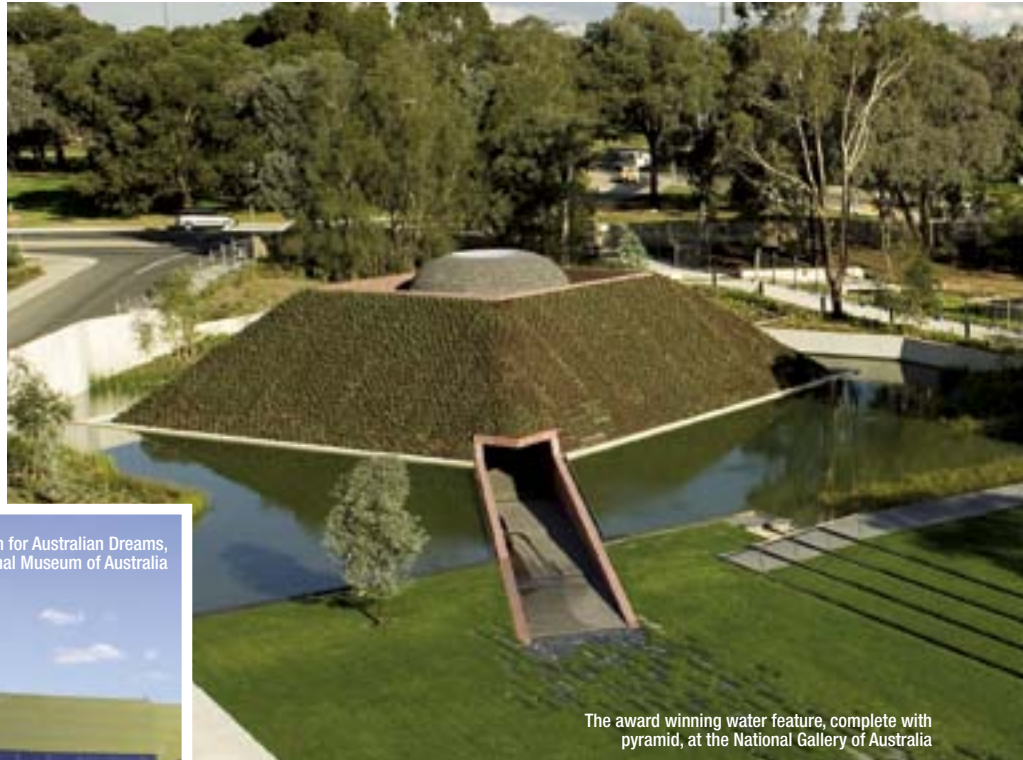
Water features: a step-up for builders

Crnkovic reminds builders that they are selling the effect of a water feature, and that they shouldn't sell themselves short.

"Selling a pool today has become somewhat of an auction," he says. "The homeowner will talk to friends and neighbours, check on the Internet and their telephone book. They may get 10 bids on the project, and every builder is out there trying to underbid the competition. We want our water features to prevent builders from getting pulled into that auction by offering something that no one else has. The lowest bid might be \$15,000, but you go in and say, look, I can offer you this dynamic feature that your kids can play in and that will add a dynamic look to your yard, and it's only going to cost you another \$4000. This is the builder mentality that is most successful in the water feature arena.

Hydrocare has several high profile water features to their name – some that surpass what most people would describe simply as a water feature, to be part architectural monument, part man-made waterway. These include such amazing works as the

12 years, and during this time some of the projects that provided the greatest challenges also brought with them the most satisfaction – while also offering the opportunity to reach milestones for improved performance and credibility.



The award winning water feature, complete with pyramid, at the National Gallery of Australia



Garden for Australian Dreams, National Museum of Australia

Garden of Australian Dreams at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, the front water feature at the National Portrait Gallery, more than 20 water features in the Federal Parliament House and The Ideas Stream, one kilometre of creeks,

"High profile works often include high risk liability, and attention to detail is mandatory.

"Well designed and located water features provide aesthetic enjoyment for everyone. The dancing waters have done so many years – just look at the Romans and the Trevi Fountain. Today's budgets may not stretch to a Trevi project – nonetheless, designers have a duty to provide healthy water features.

"Hydrocare has successfully used UV in large water features – the latest being the National Gallery of Australia (NGA). This 1.2 million litre Billabong uses hydrogen peroxide with UV. The NGA required a natural looking water body that included aquatic plants. The water for the feature was pumped from Lake Burley Griffin and was pretreated to kill blue green algae. We put together a portable plant to treat the water using UV, chlorine and hydrogen peroxide. Multimedia filtration removed the dead blue green algae.

"Water Features in most cities are restricted from using mains water – in Canberra water is trucked in from ground springs in Yass. This presents maintenance and treatment problems but keeps the fountains operating for public enjoyment."

"It's up to the pool builder to get out of the auction by joining with a water feature company that can lead you to bigger and economically better ways. In hard economic times, your business can make an extra 20 percent with these products."

Public water features a great addition to pool business

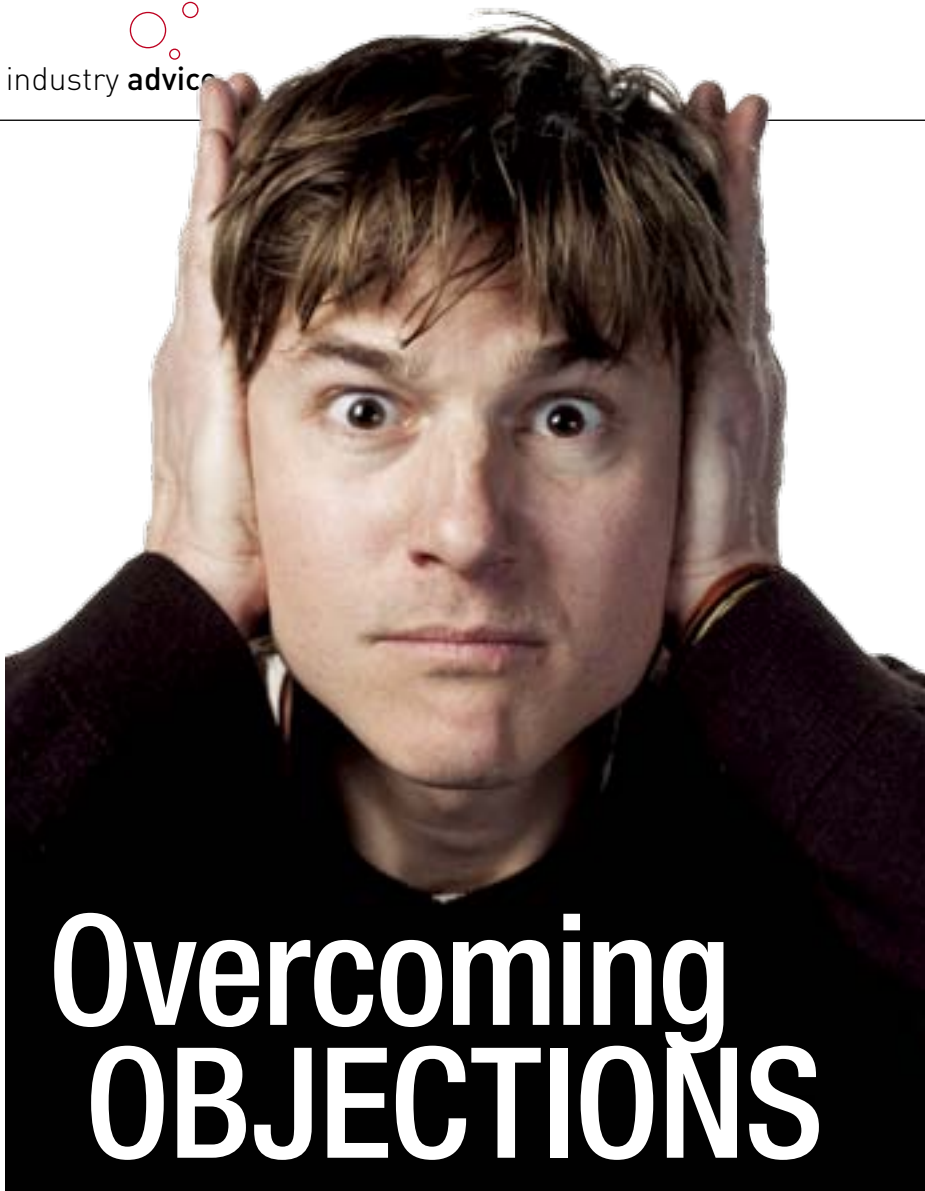
Robert Saville of Sydney's Hydrocare Pool Services says that public water features and fountains are a great addition to his commercial waterpark and pool water treatment business. In fact, Hydrocare has gained such a reputation that last year, water features outstripped the water treatment side of the business.

ponds and weirs at Resmed Campus; as well as high end domestic jobs.

He says that while the work is rewarding, care needs to be taken with many aspects of the construction, and also water treatment.

"Water features have long been a specialist field with designs that create hydraulic and treatment challenges," says Saville. "Fountains and ponds fall under secondary water contact guidelines and need to be treated. Public water features provide the greatest risk. Untreated water bodies are difficult to maintain and are a health hazard. Water features can range from several thousand to 1.5 million litre capacities – good water treatment is essential."

He says that he's been involved with major water feature projects over the past



Overcoming OBJECTIONS

Marco Longley, author of *The Ultimate Hot Tub and Pool Sales Book*, offers the third instalment on selling spas and pools.

As a sales professional, dealing with objections is a part of our business that will never go away. Overcoming objections is a very necessary and valuable component of the sales process. You have two choices when it comes to addressing objections: either fully understand what they are, what they really mean and learn to overcome them or get out of sales because you won't be selling for long if you can't overcome objections.

Every sales professional knows virtually all sales are won or lost at the objections stage.

How well you overcome objections is directly related to how successful you were in building a strong rapport with your prospect and the effort you have put in to learning how to understand and overcome them.

Having built a strong rapport, you will be far more successful in overcoming objections as you have already had a mutual exchange of thoughts and ideas with your prospect. In the absence of strong rapport,

you will be seen as a pushy salesperson only interested in selling a product.

Objections often result when your prospect has these thoughts:

- No perceived value in spa ownership;
- No trust in you, your store or your products;
- No perceived urgency in purchasing the spa;
- Perception of the superiority of a competitor's offering;
- A lack of funds to purchase your offering;
- "It's safer to do nothing" perception or a fear of making any commitment.

Always keep these concerns in the back of your mind when you hear your prospects' objections. These concerns are often expressed as "We need to think about it."

Opportunity is knocking – are you listening?

Think of your prospects' objections as questions and not really objections. They are a way for them to justify their investment in you and your products. Rarely does

anyone make a purchase of a "high-ticket" item without asking questions first, especially internal questions such as, "Am I making the right choice?" or "Am I getting good value for my money?" Recall a time you were considering making a "high-ticket" investment or purchase. Did you just listen to the sales presentation and purchase outright or did you ask questions and express areas of concern that needed to be addressed before you made the purchase?

How you handle yourself in addressing objections crucial. What practice exercises do you go through to improve your objection handling skills? Do you make a conscious effort to learn how to overcome objections or do you just hope and pray they will magically go away and never come up again? Since your prospects are interested in buying, you need to make sure that your tone and your demeanour reflect the positive attributes of their objections when they bring them up. Do not become discouraged or defensive about your presentation, product or your company. Your prospects are interested in buying from you; they are standing in front of you. They simply need more clarification or understanding to move forward with their purchase.

The secret in overcoming objections lies in understanding exactly what they want to know more about and why. Objections come in many forms – you must decipher exactly what it is that they are really asking or saying and what it is they are truly concerned about and why. You need to understand the objection to overcome it. You must understand whether or not their objection is just a question or is it really an objection which could be a serious road block preventing you from moving forward with the sale.

More often than not, the real objection is usually price-related and your prospects' ability to justify the investment in their minds. How do I know that? If your spas were half price, you would likely be sold out and there would be a line-up of people around the block wanting your products. Does that make sense? If we eliminate the price objection, you will almost always have a sale. It is up you, the sales professional, to clear all the fluff and smoke away and get to the real objection. If you are unsuccessful in finding and overcoming the true objection, you will be left wondering what happened and why you lost the sale.

Overcome the true objection, and you should have a sale.

Rules for overcoming objections

Overcoming objections is a simple four-step process.

1. Acknowledge the objection;
2. Isolate, identify and rephrase the objection;
3. Overcome the objection;
4. Ask for the sale again.

Acknowledge the Objection

To have any chance of overcoming your prospects objections, you must first have put the effort into building a strong rapport throughout your presentation. In responding to any objection, always acknowledge your prospects concerns with an affirmation so they feel acknowledged for their objections.

Top objection acknowledgments statements:

- "Mr. Customer, I am really glad you brought that up."
- "Mr. Customer, that is a great question."
- "Mr. Customer, you have obviously been listening very closely and I appreciate that."
- "Mr. Customer, I often hear the same intelligent concerns that you are voicing right now."
- "Mr. Customer, good point. You mean that's the only reason you're not buying?"

Isolate, Identify and Rephrase the Objection

When you take the time to listen and rephrase the objection, your prospect knows that you are paying attention to them. Rephrasing clarifies the objection to avoid any misunderstandings. It also gives you a moment to gather your thoughts. By rephrasing to better identify their real issues, you can lighten their concerns, or probe for more information.

Top 10 objection isolation, identification and rephrase statements:

- "Mr. Customer, would you mind explaining why you feel that way?"
- "Mr. Customer, don't you really mean..."
- "Mr. Customer, so you're telling me..."
- "Mr. Customer, do I understand you to mean that..."
- "Mr. Customer that is a very interesting point. Do you mind helping me understand why you feel that way?"

Overcome the objection

You should now have a much better understanding of their objection and why it is important to them. In order to address and overcome their objection, you may have to backtrack or repeat parts of your presentation to more fully explain a feature or a policy to their satisfaction or understanding. In addressing ANY objection, you need to confirm your reply to their objection has been not only received, but understood. Don't overcome an objection and leave it hanging out there; confirm it hit the mark.

Top confirmations you have successfully addressed their objection:

- "Now that solves the problem, doesn't it?"
- "When you think of it that way, how do you feel about this spa/pool now?"
- "I guess we've made that clear now, haven't we?"
- "Does that make sense now?"
- "Are you comfortable that we have addressed that to your satisfaction?"

Ask for the sale again


After overcoming the objection and receiving their confirmation that you have successfully addressed it to their satisfaction, ask for the

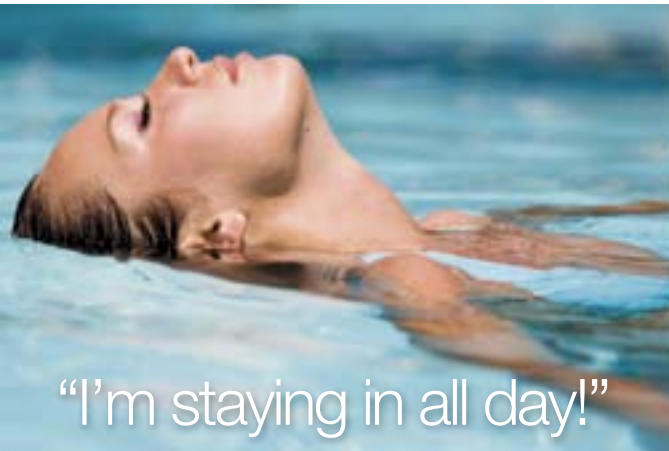
sale again. If more objections arise, continue to address them using the steps outlined above. You must have their agreement that all their questions and concerns have been addressed or they will not move forward to their purchase.

After you read each of the following objections or comments, take a moment and practice how you would address them; write down your reply and then read it aloud. How does it sound to you? How would that sound if you were the prospect hearing it? The combination of reading, writing and speaking your reply will set it in your memory far more effectively than just thinking about your reply. Practice the 4 step process and use the objection acknowledgement statements you have learned to start your rebuttal. If you can't come up with at least one if not several responses to each of these standard industry objections, you are losing sales and in return you and your company are losing MONEY.

How will you feel if you get one of these standard objections on your next presentation and didn't practice addressing it?

Common sales objections

- We need to think about it.
- I want to shop around.
- I have to bring my wife back before I can make a decision.
- I like the competitor's model better.
- Is that your best price?
- Your price is too high.
- That's more than I wanted to spend.
- If you take off \$2000 I'll buy it.
- They have hot tubs at the box store for \$5000.
- I want 100 jets in the spa. 



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Four wheels are BETTER THAN TWO

for transporting the big boys, plus a load

With a one-tonne carrying capacity and ample accommodation for five hefty lads, Deisel editor Paul Matthei found plenty to like about Volkswagen's 4Motion dual cab Transporter.

I've not been a fan of the front-wheel-drive configuration in light commercials; particularly in those rated to carry a one-tonne payload in addition to towing a trailer with an aggregate mass of up to two tonnes. In my simplified view, the physics are all wrong. No matter how gutsy an engine may be, trying to transfer sufficient torque through two front tyres to get up to five tonnes of mass moving forward on a slippery slope can be easily likened to pushing the proverbial poo uphill with a straw.

Sure, the transverse mounting of engine and gearbox directly above the front wheels helps with traction, but with a loaded vehicle

on a steep hill there's often twice as much weight exerted on the back wheels that in terms of aiding forward motion are doing diddly squat!

No, it's a far better scenario for a load carrying vehicle to have the rear wheels driving – or better still, as is the case with the Transporter 4Motion, all four. This was graphically displayed during a recent test where we pitted a modestly loaded front-wheel-drive Transporter against its 4Motion equivalent and came away convinced the latter was superior in virtually every respect... except fuel economy!

First, it must be pointed out that due to its

3.4 metre long wheelbase and relatively limited ground clearance the dual cab Transporter with 4Motion cannot be considered a true 4x4 in the traditional sense. Rather, it is a competent light commercial capable of traversing muddy worksites where its two-wheel-drive sibling would be stopped dead in its tracks. Further to this, it also exhibits superior on-road performance because the 4Motion system enables a far more balanced and effective distribution of the power and torque produced by the lively 2.0 litre twin-turbo diesel engine.

Being significantly 'undersquare' with bore and stroke dimensions of 81mm and 95mm respectively, it's not surprising the Euro 5 compliant all-alloy four cylinder plant punches well above its weight, dispensing a hefty 400Nm of torque between 1500rpm and 2000rpm and 132kW of power at 4000rpm. These outputs are channelled through either a standard six-speed manual



Space inside and out

arms, coil springs and anti-roll bar at the back. Stopping is powerfully managed by monstrous 340mm front discs and 294mm rears transferring torque to 17-inch steel rims shod with 235/55R 17 tyres. Steering is via power assisted rack and pinion giving a kerb-to-kerb turning circle of 13.2 metres.

Forward motion

We tested two versions of the dual cab Transporter back to back – a DSG equipped two-wheel-drive and a manual 4Motion

manual shifter offers a gear for every situation from off-road crawling to freeway cruising, with 100km/h achieved at just 1500rpm in top slot. Similarly, the seven-speed DSG unit impressed with its smooth, precise shifts always executed at the right time.

Standard safety features include driver and front passenger airbags, hill hold, daytime running lights, anti-lock brakes, electronic stability program and height adjustable front seat belts with pre-tensioners. These are complemented by



Transporter interior is neat and functional. Seven-speed DSG transmission provides smooth, quick changes which are easily appreciated in city driving

“It is a competent light commercial capable of traversing muddy worksites where its two-wheel-drive sibling would be stopped dead in its tracks.”

or optional seven-speed DSG (direct shift gearbox) which is unique to Volkswagen.

The DSG differs from conventional automated manual transmissions in that it features a dual clutch arrangement where each clutch operates independently of the other. This means that while one clutch is engaged for either first, third, fifth or seventh gears, the other is in stand-by mode ready to select second, fourth or sixth as needs dictate. In this way, according to Volkswagen, lightning quick gear changes in less than 400th of a second are achieved.

Further down the line, 4Motion transfers torque to each wheel according to its level of grip as determined by the standard anti-slip regulator (ASR). In addition, the vehicle can be optioned with an electrically actuated driver-controlled diff lock at the rear.

Suspension is fully independent with McPherson struts, coil springs and gas filled dampers at the front along with semi trailing

loaded with the same 700kg palletised payload positioned just ahead of the rear axle. While both have a gross mass rating of 3000kg, the 4Motion version weighs 100kg more than its front-wheel-drive brother and therefore has a payload capacity of 1000 kg compared to its sibling's 1100 kg.


While there was not much difference between the two when driving unladen on a dry road, the balance quickly swung in favour of the 4Motion unit once the load went on. Despite the fact it was manual, lifting off on a steep grade proved significantly easier with all wheels driving whereas the two-wheel-drive unit seemed to momentarily struggle for traction until the anti-slip regulator kicked in to help haul it off the line.

Once underway, both units felt solid and secure with excellent road manners although the 4Motion always exhibited a more stable and surefooted composure in adverse conditions. The six-speed dash mounted

standard creature comforts like 'climatic' air conditioning, electric front windows and mirrors as well as a rear fog lamp and front mudflaps.

Fuel consumption figures quoted by Volkswagen were consistent with the results we achieved with the loaded vehicles: The DSG unit returned 9.8 km/litre (27.7mpg) while the 4Motion manual managed 9.5 km/litre, or 26.9mpg.

At the end of the day, whether a Transporter purchaser needs to tick the 4Motion box or not will depend entirely on the vehicle's intended application. For example, if it's to be used mostly on road and modestly loaded, then the slightly better fuel consumption of the DSG unit would be an advantage. However, heavy loads and slippery conditions would render the more expensive 4Motion version a wise choice.

Like most things, it comes down to the simple cliché of horses for courses. 

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Commercial

Image shows a relaxing spot by one of the many cooling pools at the Radisson Fiji. This pool was built by Australian industry legend Victor De Fontenay, who died in Fiji last year. Photo by Jack Maher.

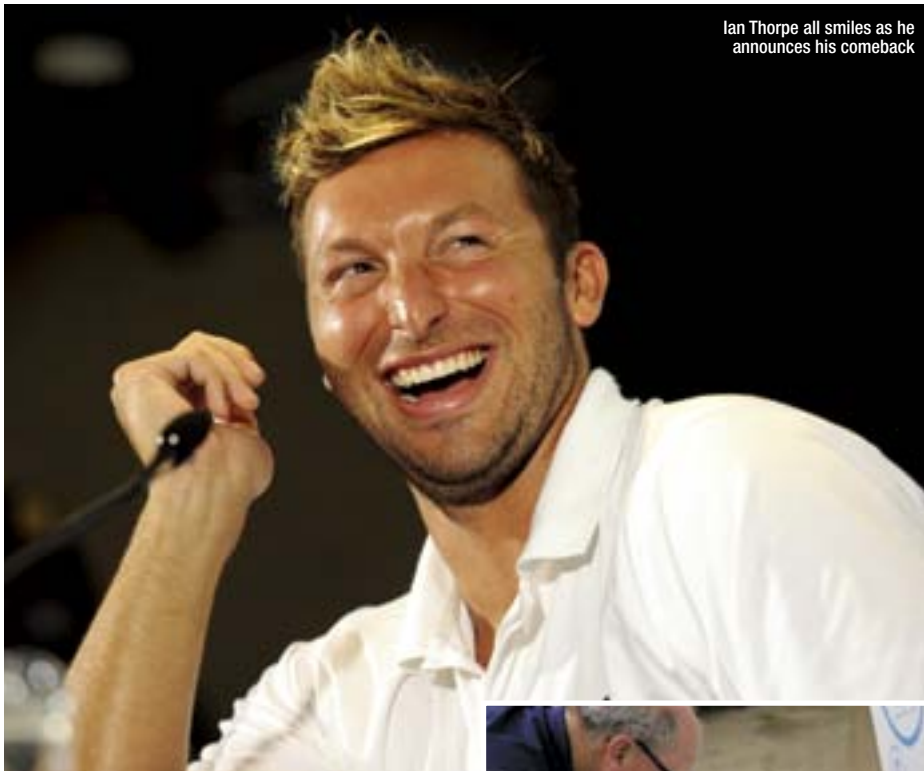
In **SPLASH! Commercial** we focus on big and small commercial swimming pools including resort pools and spas, water parks, competition pools and municipal projects. We examine issues of importance to commercial pool builders, designers, management and staff, while taking a look at some of the latest aquatic happenings around the region and the world.

COMMERCIAL NEWS AND FEATURES

THORPIE SPLASHES BACK INTO CONTENTION	66	TURKISH HOTEL VOTED WORLD'S BEST SPA	72
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Thorpedo powers back into contention

AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST OLYMPIAN IS BACK IN THE POOL, AND EVERYONE'S GETTING EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT OF MORE GOLD.



Ian Thorpe all smiles as he announces his comeback

"I reckon he looks pretty good – he's swimming very well," he says. "He's a great athlete, and he's made to be in the water. He should be able to get himself ready for the Olympics no trouble at all. Anyone, if they're determined, could get themselves ready in a year."

Nugent says Thorpe is a technically minded person who is very keen to get feedback from the coaches. His speed through the water is still his strength, but he needs some assistance with his turns and underwater work.

Thorpe was all smiles at the training session, seeming to relish the limelight – although he has asked for privacy for the rest of his build-up to the trials to be held in March 2012.

He admits he looked easy in the water, but pointed out it takes a lot of work to look so smooth.

THE rumours had been circulating for months – people had seen him training here, there and everywhere. Finally, they were confirmed with Australia's biggest name in swimming, five gold medaller Ian Thorpe, saying he will come back to the pool with the aim of competing at London 2012.

He was all smiles at his buzzing media conference, and the next day SPLASH! went down to his eponymously named pool in Ultimo to witness his training session.

The former king of the pool glided effortlessly up and down the water like a shark cruising in an aquarium. Then he flicked the switch, and the water pulsated as he surged through it, showing his raw power. There was little doubt – he was back.

Swimming Australia National Head Coach Leigh Nugent said he was excited that Thorpe had decided to resurrect his career. And who wouldn't be – one of the most popular athletes Australia has ever known, and a great role model for Nugent's younger swimmers.



With coach Leigh Nugent after a brisk training session



Back in the limelight – although appearing chuffed at the media attention, Thorpe has asked for privacy during the rest of his Olympic build-up

"He can only do good things for the team," says Nugent. "Having Geoff [Heugill] in the team was great. Ian will take it to another level."

Nugent is pleased with his progress, and thinks he'll be ready for London come 2012.

"There's a lot of training and a lot of things going on behind that smoothness," he says.

He looks lighter than tabloid photos from a few years ago, but says he still needs to lose about another 5kg.

The 28-year-old Thorpe intends to concentrate on the 100m freestyle and the 200m freestyle, and will be competing without his trademark suit.

He will train outside Australia to avoid media attention, including spending some time at Abu Dhabi. ☺

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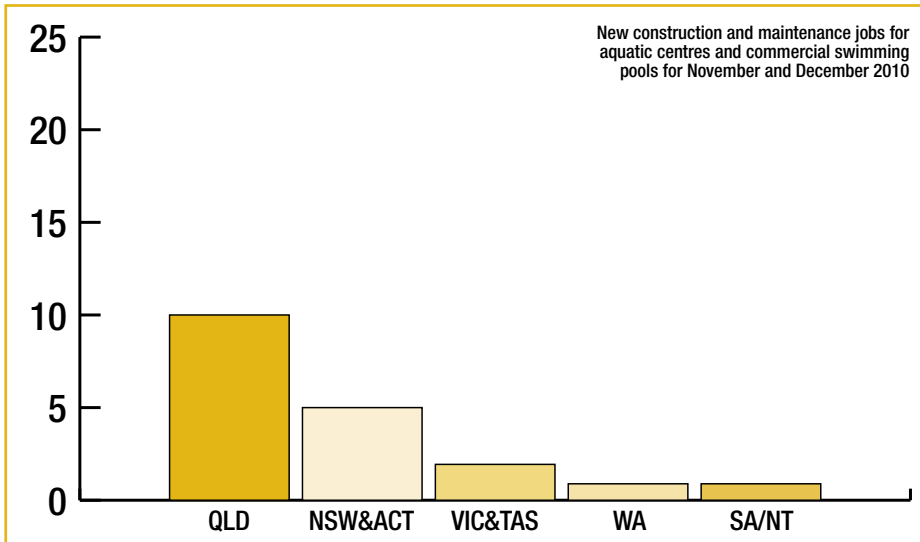
Latest commercial tenders

CORDELL Information has released data showing new tenders for public swimming pools and aquatic centres for November and December, 2010.

The figures show both construction and maintenance jobs for aquatic centres and commercial swimming pools.

Only new business opportunities have been included, not jobs that have been previously advertised.

The figures show tender numbers at 20 in total compared with 41 for the previous period. Queensland (10) and New South Wales (5) had the most tenders. ☺



Tender of the month

Project: Construction of the Cootamundra Aquatic Centre - Stage 1
Closing Date: March 3, 2011
Tender To: Cootamundra Shire Council

Tenders are invited and will be received up until 3:00pm, Thursday 3rd March, 2011 for the construction of the Cootamundra Aquatic Centre - Stage 1.

Specification documents and a CD may be obtained by contacting Janelle Chapman (02) 6940 2100 or e-mail jchapman@cootamundra.nsw.gov.au.

For further information or to discuss any aspect of Councils requirements please contact Councils Manager of Facilities and Services Mr Greg Ewings on (02) 6940 2100.

For more information on Cordell Information's commercial tender reports, call 1800 674 120.

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BER builds school for outback kids

A NORTHERN TERRITORY SCHOOL HAS PROVED A BENEFICIARY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION (BER) FUND.

A \$1 million grant from the BER fund has helped build a six-lane 25-metre pool at Alice Springs' Yipirinya School. The school also raised \$400,000 towards the project.

The school has an indigenous population of 200 pupils, and prior to the pool being built there had been the dual problems of a 60 per cent truancy level, and skin and ear infections also across 60 per cent of the student population.

Building swimming pools in schools with high indigenous populations has shown to im-

prove attendance and reduce the incidence of ear, eye and skin infections.

Already improvements have been seen on both counts. The school has started AusSwim courses, and also opens the pool up for free swimming at lunch-time. Swimming lessons are scheduled every afternoon for classes from Transition through to Secondary. The pool is manned by certified life guards, who also work at the school as a tutor and a teacher's assistant. ☺

Uni pool goes ahead despite rain

THE University of the Sunshine Coast's new swimming pool managed to go ahead thanks to a timely concrete pour, despite Queensland being inundated with floodwaters.

The site had filled with water during the earlier rains but after months of pumping, the hole was finally dry enough for the pour. The pool should only have its completion delayed by one month.

The Olympic-standard 10-lane, 50-metre swimming pool will be used for activities ranging

from rehabilitation and teaching children how to swim, to fine-tuning the techniques of Olympic and Paralympic swimmers, as well as recreational swimming.

The \$2.1 million facility is funded by Queensland Government, the University, community donations and through in-kind support during construction. The Queensland Government provided \$900,000 for the pool project to get more Queenslanders active through sport and recreation.

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Risk control for inflatable water balls

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY QUEENSLAND HAS PREPARED SOME INFORMATION ON THE PROPER USE OF "HUMAN HAMSTER BALLS".



INFLATABLE water balls are where patrons are enclosed inside the balls which are sealed and inflated through the zip-like mechanism after the patron enters. These devices can also be known as "water walkers", "hamster balls" and other names.

Currently, there is no applicable Australian Standard that specifically covers the design of these devices. AS 3533.4.1-2005: Land-borne inflatable devices does not apply to inflatable water balls as they are used over the water.

Following are some of the identified risks to patrons associated with the use of inflatable water balls. Patrons could:

- Be suffocated or drowned in deep water (especially a young child) if the ball bursts or deflates suddenly without adequate supervision;
- Suffer from heat-related stress when using the ball in warm weather conditions for an extended period;
- Experience loss of oxygen if remaining in the ball for an extended period;
- Sustain body injuries as a result of collision with other patrons or the side wall of the pool.

Where these balls are used, suitable control measures should be in place to prevent injuries, including the risk of asphyxiation and heat stress. Such measures should include:

- Only using balls that have been



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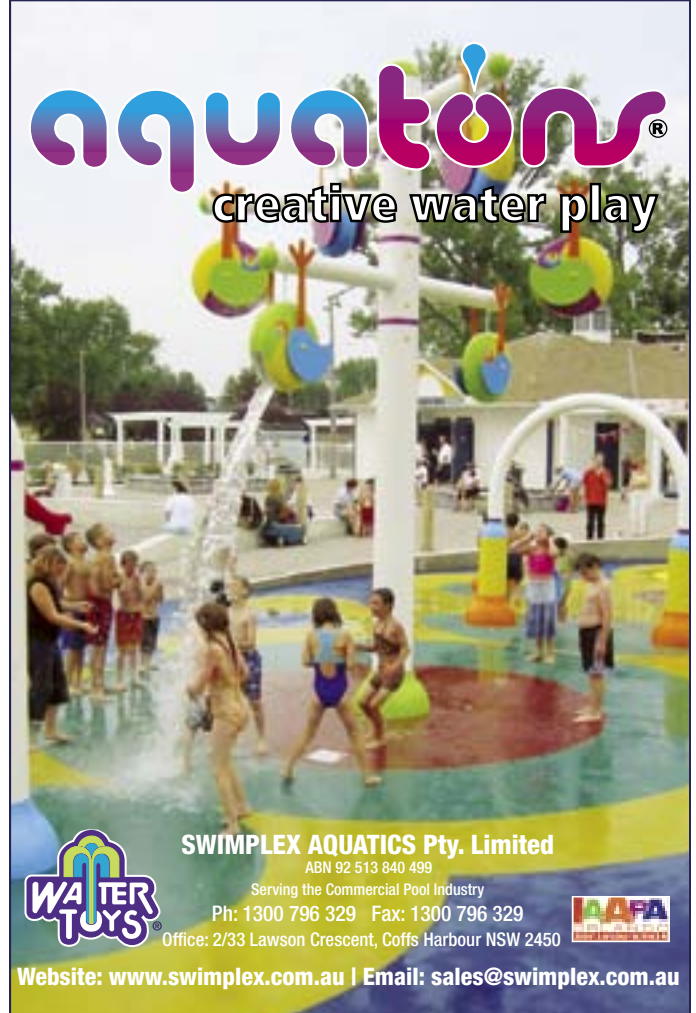
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manufactured from heavy duty material that is durable and resistant to degradation from ultraviolet light;

- Installing emergency stop buttons on or near the winch to immediately disengage the rotating parts;
- Obtaining information from the manufacturer or supplier on the safe use of the balls;
- Only using the balls in shallow pools (eg. no more than 400 mm deep);
- Visually checking the balls before each use to ensure they are not damaged;
- Checking the pool and its vicinity to ensure there are no sharp objects that could possibly damage the ball and cause sudden deflation or cause injury to the patron inside;
- Positioning attendant(s) to provide rapid assistance to a patron should a ball deflate suddenly;
- Providing a system of emergency escape for a patron. The system should not rely solely on one attendant (i.e. in case the attendant is unable to provide immediate assistance);
- Providing patrons with adequate infor-

mation and instructions (such as the restriction of the patron's age and physical size; dress code; activity or behaviour controls and health requirements);

- Adequately training the operators and providing them with safe operating instructions;
- Only allowing the balls to be used in suitable weather conditions;
- Strictly limiting the duration of use and releasing patrons quickly, to protect them from heat and reduced oxygen effects;
- Maintaining the balls in a clean and hygienic condition;
- Ensuring any cleaning agents used do not damage the balls or are hazardous to workers or patrons.

A competent person should be engaged to carry out periodical inspections of water balls at least annually, or as prescribed by the manufacturer, to ensure there is no significant degradation of the material, especially at the seams.

A record of service and maintenance checks should be kept in a logbook.

For more go to www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

Swimming Australia launches disability DVD

The Swimming for People with Disability DVD is designed to showcase the benefits and opportunities in the sport for people with disability and to encourage participation.

The development of the Swimming for People with Disability DVD is a result of Swimming Australia's partnership with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) made possible through Sports Connect.

Paralympic and Commonwealth Games multiple gold medallist Matthew Cowdrey stars in the DVD and is excited about its potential to promote the sport even further. "Being involved in swimming has helped make me who I am today and this resource will help spread the word about the potential for people of all abilities to participate and achieve their personal best," says Cowdrey.

To view the DVD go to www.splash-magazine.com.au for a link to an online version.

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MARDAN PALACE HOTEL WINS ACCOLADE AT THE WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS



The Ottoman domed roofs of the gleaming luxury complex

AT the 17th World Travel Awards in London, the Turkish five-star Mardan Palace Hotel was awarded the titles of both the World's Leading Luxury Hotel 2010 and the World's Leading Hotel Spa 2010.

As winner of the tourism industry's "Oscar" for the leading luxury hotel with the best spa in the world, the fascinating fairytale hotel near Antalya comprising 180,000m² with impressive sauna and wellness facilities. It won the award by overcoming top-class international opposition from more than 160 countries.

Klafs provided advice to the architects responsible during the implementation planning. Adrian Egger, Managing Director Spa Division Klafs says he is especially proud of the award, since both the concept of the spa and the equipping was done by Klafs. ☺

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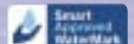
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Water pours into the SAC

MILESTONE REACHED FOR ADELAIDE'S NEWEST AQUATIC CENTRE

SOUTH Australia's State Aquatic Centre in Oaklands Park, Adelaide has reached a milestone – getting 10 million litres of water flowing into one of the Centre's two Olympic-standard swimming pools.

When completed, the centre will have a FINA-compliant 50 metre competition pool, dive and water polo pool, and the aquatic recreational facilities, which feature two water slides, including a South Australian-first "Space Bowl".

Alex Candetti, chairman of Candetti Construction, the Adelaide-based company building the state-of-the-art complex, says that once completed, the facility will be the most advanced aquatic centre of its type in the Southern Hemisphere.

"As the Design and Construct contractor appointed by the SA Government, Candetti is absolutely delighted to be delivering such a world-class facility for the people of South Australia and the wider community," he says.

"Today is a significant milestone for everyone involved in the project, and we look forward to many others in coming months."

The new State Aquatic Centre is co-funded by the SA Government, the Federal Government and the City of Marion. Other key features of the facility – which also incorporates a new GP Plus



SA Minister for Infrastructure, Pat Conlon, turns on the taps to SAC's Olympic-standard 55-metre dive and water polo pool

Health Care Centre – include:

- Modular pool technology that requires the pool to be filled only once upon completion, instead of filling for testing during construction, saving approximately 10 million litres of water;

- Stormwater storage capacity for retention and re-use of 75 kilolitres of water. This provides about one million litres of stormwater annually for re-use.

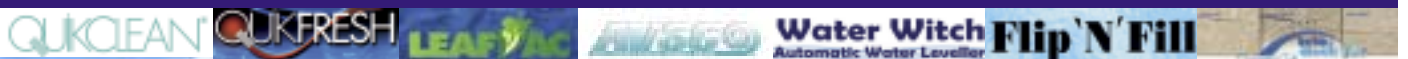
- Plus 44 solar panels for the provision of hot water across the entire project; five-star Green Star designed GP Plus Health Care and Community Mental Health Centres, and; provision for future co-generation within the facility. ☺

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online

The screenshot shows the homepage of the SPLASH! magazine website. At the top left is the SPLASH! logo. To its right is a banner for Pentair Water's IntelliFlo VF High Performance Pump. Below the logo is a navigation menu with categories: HOME, RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AQUATICS, HOT PRODUCTS, EXPOS, INDUSTRY NEWS, and ARCHIVED MAGAZINES. A secondary menu includes: ABOUT, BLUE PAGES, ADVERTISING, SUBSCRIPTIONS, CONTACT, ADVERTISING, INDUSTRY NEWS, ENVIRONMENTAL, ADVERTISING, SUBSCRIPTIONS, EVENTS. The main content area features a large image of a person swimming in a pool with the headline "Serene swimming -". To the right is a "BLUE PAGES TRADE DIRECTORY" section with a "Click here to search" button and a magnifying glass icon. Below this is a "HOT PRODUCTS" section with the headline "Win a copy of Parenting Freak Ability -" and a sub-headline "FAST TRACK TO ABILITY". Further down is an "INDUSTRY NEWS" section with the headline "Queensland clouds may have silver lining -" and a sub-headline "The tragic devastation that tore through Queensland during summer may have some positive outcomes for the industry as well as the obvious negative ones, according to David Close, CEO of SPASA Queensland...". Another news item is "SPLASH! launches new website -" with a sub-headline "Australia's swimming pool, spa and accessories magazine has updated its website and online communications to distribute news in a more timely and engaging fashion. 'We're really excited to launch the new website and website,' says...". On the right side, there is a large advertisement for ClevoQuip with the headline "The logic is crystal clear." and a sub-headline "Due to rapidly increasing customer demand, Australian Plunge Pools is calling for the services of quality pool installers throughout Australia...". Below this is another advertisement for ClevoQuip with the headline "Supreme cover gets the Mark -" and a sub-headline "Supreme heating's Heatbeaver DuraHeat solar pool covers have been awarded with the Smart Approved WaterMark - Australia's water saving labelling program for products and...".

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Coffs Harbour could get world first surf theme park

A new generation locally-developed surfing wave ride could be the centrepiece of a new theme park on the New South Wales mid-north coast.

The theme park concept is being championed by Geoff Leaver of Coffs Harbour-based commercial pool builder and water play equipment manufacturer, Swimplex Aquatics.

At present it is only at the stage of a submission to the Land and Property Management Authority. In the submission, Leaver proposes the theme park be built at the Coffs Harbour Showground site, which the authority is considering redeveloping.

The park main attraction would be the Latitude surfing ride – billed as the world’s first standing wave real surf simulator. Unlike other surfing rides, the surfer actually moves along the face of a wave in a realistic simulation of an actual breaking wave.

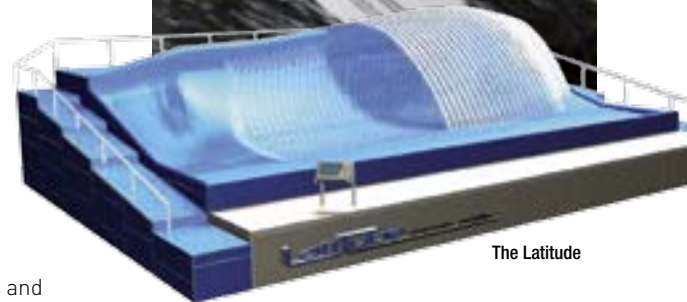
The Latitude has been eight years in development by the local inventor, and three years by Swimplex Aquatics as his licensee. Leaver believes Coffs Harbour would be the logical location to launch it.

Another important element of the plan is the relocation of Scott Dillon’s Legends of Surf Museum which is currently situated at Sapphire Beach – in the path of a new highway bypass. Octogenarian Dillon is a larrikin legend, having been a key part of the surfing revolution in the 1960s and 70s. His museum is a popular attraction, but could benefit from a more central location.

The park would also feature multiple waterslide rides, a lazy river complete with wave action section for inflatable tube riding, a large children’s lagoon pool with multiple slides and water activity features, a surf school, bumper boat pool (to boost winter patronage to the park), a bandstand for entertainment sessions and special events, a café with alfresco seating, a licensed bar, as well as snack outlets, and surf and souvenir shops.



Scott Dillon in his (not so) younger days



The Latitude

Leaver says the surf themed park would be a good fit for Coffs, with its well-entrenched surfing culture and reputation as a breeding ground for recognised champions. It would not be a large, Gold Coast-style park, but a “pocket park” primarily aimed at Coffs residents and visitors. Nonetheless, it could help drive tourism dollars to the area.

Swimplex’s research indicates that surfing tours have become very popular amongst back-packers. Leaver says the surf-themed park would make Coffs Harbour a natural

“The Latitude has been eight years in development by the local inventor, and three years by Swimplex Aquatics as his licensee. Leaver believes Coffs Harbour would be the logical location to launch it.”

destination and stopover and could open up budget accommodation possibilities in other areas of the showground.

Swimplex Aquatics recently undertook the \$5 million redevelopment of the Coffs Harbour Memorial Pool. Leaver had originally proposed incorporating some waterpark facilities during the Memorial Pool upgrade, but has since planned for a more substantial separate location.

Coffs Harbour hasn’t had a water park since the Aquajet was dismantled to make way for an Aldi supermarket. The Aquajet was possibly Australia’s first water park. 🌊



The Suf'n'Slide proposal



Taking shots of children at swimming meets

With some help from the Australian Sports Commission, we look at the vexed issue of photographing at sporting meets – which is especially relevant for public swimming pools.

It's a question that elicits responses from either end of the spectrum – photographing children at pools. At one end – people are concerned about the welfare of the kids and potential legal implications. At the other extreme, people decry what sort of world do we live in when you can't even take a shot of your child at a swim meet?

Here we reproduce some information from the Australian Sports Commission which canvasses this topic in relation to sports in general, and may provide some direction in regard to these questions.

Images of children

Taking images of children in sport requires consideration.

Most people taking photos of children at sporting events are doing so for acceptable reasons and are using appropriate methods. For example, a parent videoing their child or a professional photographer taking photos for a club.

However, the greater ease of taking and modifying images (via small cameras and mobile phones) has raised concerns about the potential risks of child abuse. This is posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the inappropriate use of photographs posted on sports club websites and in publications.

Despite the best intentions of sporting organisations, photography can be misused. The following information helps clubs understand how to acquire and display images of children and young people on web sites and in other publications.

The Law

In Australia, generally speaking, there is no law restricting photography of people (including children) in public spaces as long as the images are not considered as:

- Indecent (such as 'up skirt' photographs taken covertly in change rooms, toilets or other invasions of privacy);
- Being used for voyeurism or made for the purpose of observing and visually recording the other person's genital or anal region;
- Protected by a court order (e.g. child custody or witness protection);
- Defamatory;
- Being for commercial purposes (person's likeness is used to entice people to buy or it appears they are endorsing a product). This may require a Model Release/Consent Form to be signed.

Consensual photos of a child (including your own child) also contravene Criminal Codes and censorship laws if the child is photographed in a provocative or sexual manner.

Where a sporting event is held on a club's private property, privately owned land, a school or council owned facilities, the owners of private property or venues are able to restrict or ban photography (e.g. some council owned facilities will not allow mobile phones or cameras in change rooms or toilets).

Where a sporting event is held on private property not owned by the organisers, there needs to be a discussion with the owners to determine a mutually agreed photographing policy. There is nothing, however, to prevent a person from photographing outside the property boundary unless it is taken for indecent purposes, as previously discussed.

If a person is taking photographs inappropriately (e.g. breaching the restrictions or ban in place for that private property or venue), then venue management can request the person to stop. If the person refuses, the police or security may be called to escort them off the property (without threatening violence, detention, or confiscation of the camera or film).

Sporting organisations may want to consider implementing one or more of the following strategies to provide all involved with a greater knowledge and an assurance that the taking and displaying of images is appropriate:

Acquiring images

- Clearly outline what is considered appropriate behaviour in obtaining photographs and what is considered appropriate image content using a camera, mobile phone or video and publicise this information throughout the organisation;
- Do not allow photographers (professional photographers, spectators, fans, coaches or members of the media) unsupervised or individual access to children;
- Ensure the coach informs the team/athlete and parent(s) if the coach wants to video



the athlete(s) as a tool to analyse and improve performance;

- Obtain the consent of parent/guardian and their agreement to be present before approving photo/video sessions outside the event venue or at the home of a child. Where possible, have the photo taken at the event venue;
- Provide details of who to contact within the club or organisation if concerns or complaints of inappropriate photographic behaviour or content are raised. Ensure that the contact person understands the application of relevant legislation and policies;
- Provide members of the media and professional photographers with an identification pass to be worn for the duration of major/large events.

Displaying images

It is not so much the taking of images that may be of concern, but how the image will be used. If your organisation is acquiring an image of a child for display (eg. on your website):

- Consider using models or illustrations for promotional /advertising purposes;
- Obtain permission from the child's parent/

“Most people taking photos of children at sporting events are doing so for acceptable reasons.”

guardian prior to taking the images of a child or young person. Ensure that all concerned are aware of the way in which the image is to be used and how long the image will be displayed;

- If an image is used avoid naming the child. If this is not possible avoid using both a first name and surname;
- Avoid displaying personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers if images are being posted on websites or distributed in publications;
- Do not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc as this information has the potential to be used as grooming tools by paedophiles or other persons;
- Only use appropriate images of the child, relevant to the sport or activity, and ensure that the athlete/child is suitably clothed. Images of athletes participating in sports or activities that involve minimal clothing (e.g. swimming and gymnastics) or un-

sual body positions/poses could potentially be misused. The age of the child is another factor to consider when deciding if the image is appropriate;

- Reduce the ability for direct copying of pictures from a website to another source (i.e. disable the 'right mouse click' function);
- Clearly outline in a written contract to photographers who are contracted or paid to take photos, who will retain the images taken, include arrangements made for negatives, digital file and proofs and outline any restrictions for use and sale;
- Provide details of who to contact and what to do if concerns or complaints of inappropriate image use are raised.

Please note that this information is not intended to be, nor should it be relied upon as a substitute for legal or other professional advice. Organisations and individuals should seek legal advice in relation to these issues in your state or territory.

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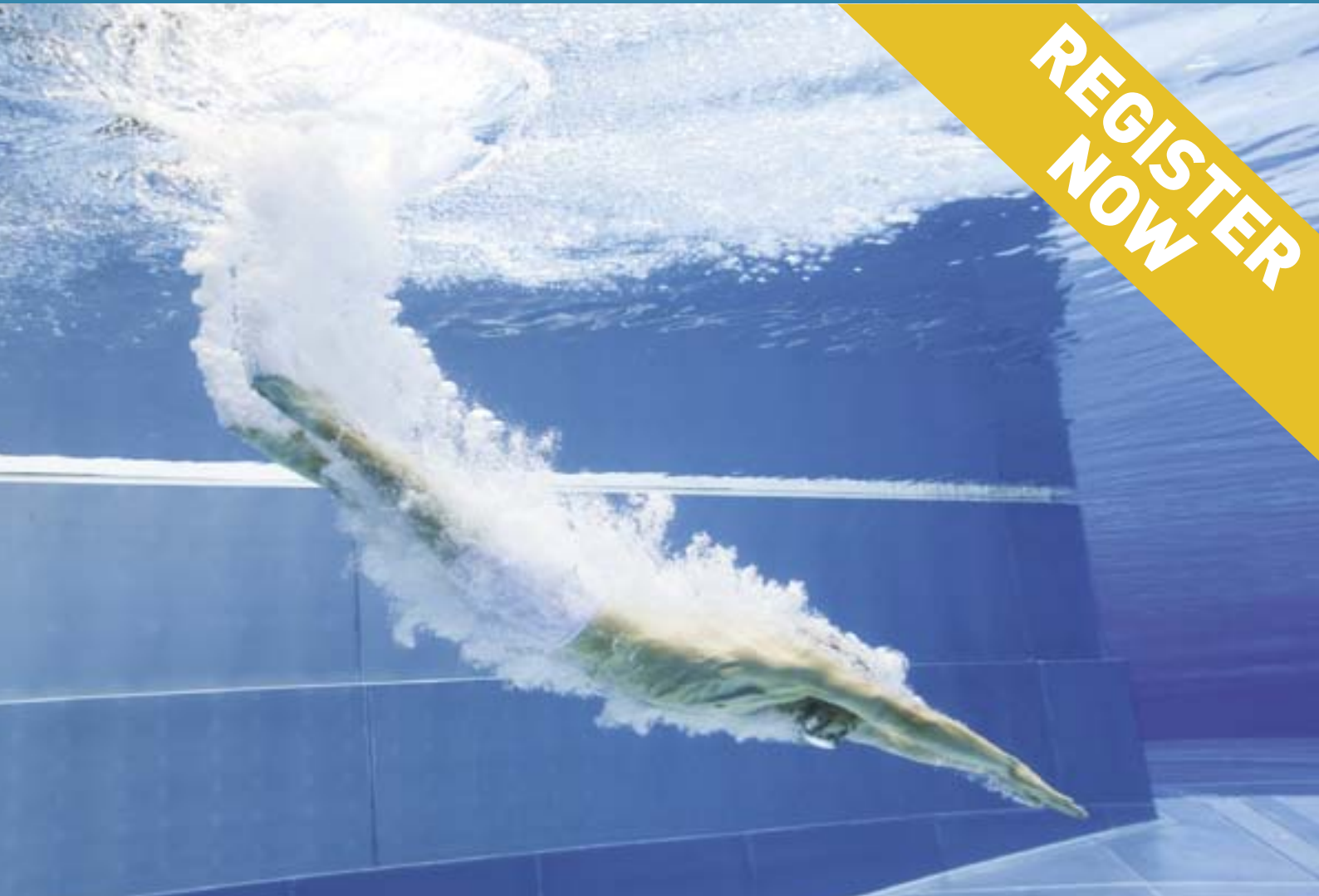
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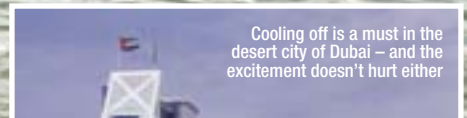
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The triple bowls of the Tantrum Alley



Cooling off is a must in the desert city of Dubai – and the excitement doesn't hurt either

Dubai multiplies the fun with triple tornadoes

Riding down a swirling vortex of water is a great thrill. How much more fun is it when there's three of them – one after the other!

Dubai's Wild Wadi waterpark has launched a world first – a triple tornado thrill water ride.

The ride is one whole minute of spinning, dropping, gut wrenching excitement. A normal tornado ride would be highly popular amongst kids and youthful adults – and the

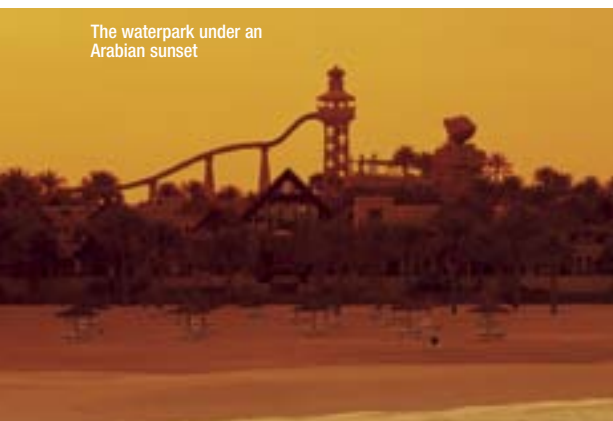
Tantrum Alley is the same as one of those rides – only three times more of everything.

The Tantrum Alley uses 75,000 litres of water, and it took Wild Wadi six months to construct the ride using hundreds of workers.

Another new ride is the Burj Surj, which consists of two large sections of downhill waterslides and two looming bowls. Guests are seated on a four-person tube, travelling downhill to the bowls, where they are hurtled into a spiralling spin and then dropped into the slide, ending with a screaming splash in the pool.

There is an Australian connection: Aussie Shani Ireland who is resident in Dubai won competition to name the ride. She chose the name as the view from the top of the ride includes the Burj Khalifa and the ride certainly has an enormous water surge. ☺

The waterpark under an Arabian sunset



Making waves in Victoria

Martin Sheppard, Managing Director of Smart Connection Company, looks at Skills Victoria's commitment to new funding for the leisure industry and how it will affect the Victorian aquatic industry.

The announcement by the Victorian Government that it is investing \$316 million on its Securing Jobs for Your Future policy is the most fundamental reform of the Victorian Government training system in decades.

Developed off the back of the world financial crisis, it shows Victoria's commitment to drive growth in the state and is designed to ensure that Victoria has the skilled workforce to meet the needs of the local economy and secure the state's future prosperity.

With increased funding for both businesses and individuals in the areas of training and business improvement, this opens up a number of benefits and opportunities for people working in the aquatic and leisure industry in Victoria. These include funding and recognition programs specifically targeting business improvements such as the Skills for Growth program and the Victorian Skills Pledge as well as individual training programs that are part of the Government's training guarantee policy.

Benefits for businesses

So, how will small and medium sized aquatic businesses benefit from this funding?

Businesses can benefit from the various programs and policies in a number of ways, as the Government is focused on providing support to small to medium sized businesses, which are defined as those below 200 employees.

The support the Victorian state government will provide is both for the planning of the business in terms of its training needs in order to grow and the incentives to train and/or employ people to help the business become more sustainable.

This works through two key programs, namely:

1. Skills for Growth Program

A Victorian government initiative dedicated to working with small and medium-sized businesses to help plan their business future and explore training and education opportunities to develop the skills of the businesses staff.

The program's aims are to assist organisations in:

- Identifying their business objectives and priorities;
- Assessing the skill needs of the business and their employees;
- Establishing a customised workforce training and development plan in line with the identified strategic business goals;
- Placing staff into accredited training.

According to Skills Victoria, the Government is committed to this program and believes that it will lead to increased productivity, business growth and training solutions that meet the needs of businesses.

For the aquatics industry, it means businesses will have appropriately trained staff to help tackle new challenges and will be better able to adapt in a highly competitive and evolving market.

The Government has accredited and appointed a number of specialist service providers who can assist SMEs and will help place staff into training needed for that business. Specialists will also follow-up with a visit to your business to review how it is progressing.

The Skills for Growth program helps to ensure that your business has qualified staff with a focus on growing the business. This is done through a review of the following business objectives, skills assessment and training recommendations:

- Listing strategic business priorities, identifying barriers to business performance and opportunities for improvement;
- Providing workforce planning advice, a



New fitness courses to start in March

Fitness industry workers wanting to upgrade their qualifications quickly can do so with two new courses. Smart Connection Training has launched new five-week condensed training courses in Cert III and Cert IV in Fitness. The courses are aimed at people who either want to break into the fitness industry and need to get qualified quickly, or those who are already in the industry but need to upgrade their qualification in a short time frame.

The first of the new five-week courses begins on 11 March 2011. Smart Connection Training offers a range of sport, leisure, recreation, fitness and management courses from school based to diploma level. It specialises in tailoring training courses to meet the needs of the individual through a combination of both on-line and face-to-face training. For more information on Smart Connection Training and its new course schedule for 2011, got to www.smartconnection.com.au, Peter Evans on (03) 8696 7500 or got to splash-magazine.com.au for a QuickLink.

Workforce Action Plan and forecasting future skill needs;

- Onsite assessment focusing on workforce planning, training needs and skills development;
- Analysing skills needs for the entire business and auditing of training needs;
- Assessing individual eligibility for the Victorian Training Guarantee;
- Identifying appropriate vocational training choices and delivering the workforce training plan;
- Providing referrals to relevant training programs;
- Identifying preferred options for training;
- Establishing customised delivery requirements for business if required;
- Facilitating placement/purchase of the agreed training (including coordinating with training providers);
- On-site follow-up with your business (approximately six months

“Training Guarantee Funding is ideal for people who work in swimming clubs or volunteers, as they will now have access to funding in order to up-skill or prepare themselves for an industry change.”

following the completion of a training plan);

- Identifying business outcomes and improvements;
- Updating and reviewing action and training plans;
- Providing further skills needs assessments where appropriate.

The Victorian Government has approved and appointed more than 30 agencies that can work on their behalf in conducting the Skills for Growth assessments. One such organisation is SkillsHub – Victoria’s sports and culture industry peak body for training and skill development. SkillsHub is very aware of the skills and challenges that face the aquatics industry, including the shortage of qualified swim teachers and the casual nature of the employment, which will be a great advantage to aquatic businesses.

To register for the Skills for Growth program and select SkillsHub as your service provider, aquatics companies should visit www.skillshub.com.au or call SkillsHub on (03) 9614 5566 for more information about the program and how it can help your business.

Training Guarantee Funding

In January of this year the Government rules for eligibility for training funding changed and this has allowed far more people who work or volunteer in the industry to be eligible for funding to complete training.

Under the new policy, all eligible Victorians are guaranteed a funded place for recognised training, to lift their skill levels as part of the government’s commitment to developing the workforce. This will make the training system more responsive to the needs of individuals and businesses in the aquatics industry.

In simple terms, this means that all eligible individuals, whether employed in the industry or not, can have access to the funding. This is ideal for people who work in swimming clubs or volunteers, as they will now have access to funding in order to up-skill or prepare themselves for an industry change. It will also mean that in situations where parents of children learning to swim at clubs or swim centres want to be more qualified or want to assist in the training for the pool, can do so. This in turn, will open up a whole new employment chain for operators of swimming pools that suffer from a shortage of qualified swim teachers and staff.

This government initiative is one of the most exciting for the industry, because not only will employers benefit but individuals too

– a win-win for the industry. And with more qualified people in the industry, it means the quality of service that is provided to the community will only improve. Hopefully it will also encourage individuals to appreciate that the aquatics industry can provide a career and is not just a casual or short term employment option.

Case study

Apart from the operational benefits to a business, this funding programme also offers financial benefits, with some employers gaining a return on their training investment of thousands of dollars.

In 2010, a Victorian swim school had five staff members enrol on a Certificate IV in Community Recreation training course (with an AustSwim Teachers Certificate embedded in the course). Not only did the swim school get five newly qualified staff members, it also benefited financially as the Federal Government paid them \$4000 for each person to receive training from an accredited RTO who charged them only \$1000 per person. This meant they were left with \$3000 each or \$15,000 to reinvest into their business.

The great aspect of the Government’s Training Guarantee is that it means that after each of these people completed the Certificate IV qualification, they can then also receive funding to continue their skill acquisition with funding for a Diploma Level qualification.

This is where a training pathway is encouraged by the Victorian Government. Smart Connection is working in conjunction with Skills Victoria, Service Skills Australia, SkillsHub and a number of industry peak bodies to explain how the training opportunities will work for both businesses and individuals in the aquatics and leisure industry.



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New Products

The latest ideas to make residential and commercial pools, spas and landscapes more enjoyable, stylish, efficient and easier to maintain, including luxurious accessories, technological advances and new concepts from Australasian and international manufacturers, suppliers and service providers.

DREAMING OF AN UNDERWATER PARADISE

This is something truly unique and completely amazing. The images here provide only a rough idea of how exciting this new concept is – to really experience it, you should go to the website via a QuickLink at www.splashmagazine.com.au.

Designer Paul-Bertram Petereit has taken the concept of themed swimming pools to a whole new level – and completely into the third dimension with moving fish and dolphins swimming with you.

His underwater trompe l'oeil create stunning underwater worlds where swimmers immerse themselves in fantastic dreamscapes, or realistic representations of snorkelling paradises reminiscent of the Red Sea or the Barrier Reef.

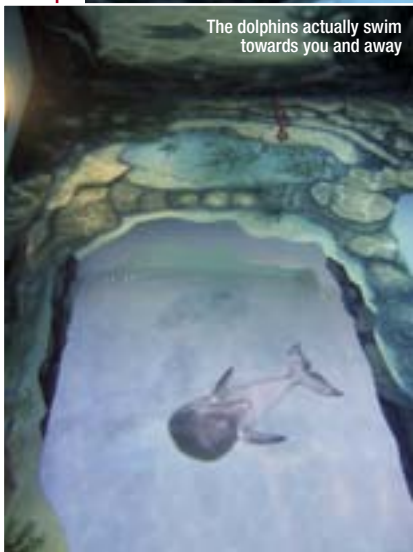
Petereit uses an innovative combination of painted illusion and interactive video projection to integrate the moving underwater landscapes into the swimming pool.

The idea was born on a glass-bottom boat trip in Florida, where Petereit saw the amazing diversity of sea life, some 50 metres deep in crystal clear water.

To discover more about the process and be guided through a virtual tour of an amazing underwater world, go to www.aquatic-dream-worlds.com or go to www.splashmagazine.com.au for a QuickLink.



The underwater worlds can extend above the surface



The dolphins actually swim towards you and away



Amazingly realistic dreamworlds



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Perfect outdoor drinking with Plumm

PLUMM are a new Australian player on the wine drinking scene, and have just announced the arrival of the most stylish and surprising range of glasses for the summer – the Plumm Outdoors range.

The range features a variety of shapes and sizes perfect for entertaining. You can choose from White for crisp, fresh white wines; Red for full bodied red wine; Sparkling for anything with bubbles; or the versatile all-purpose modern stemless glasses for wine, mixed drinks cocktails or anything you can think of.

The big news is that these stylish glasses are unbreakable, which is ideal for outdoors – especially by the pool.

They're made from durable polycarbonate, are dishwasher safe and ideal for poolside drinks; a float on a boat; perfect for a picnic; beautiful on the beach and comfortable at home relaxing with friends.

The Plumm Outdoors range is a triumph of edgy Australian design coupled with function and versatility.

For more information go to www.plumm.com or call national distributor Mezzanine on 1300 555 821.



Perfect for the great outdoors, red, white or sparkling

AUSTRALIAN PLUNGE POOLS LOOKING FOR INSTALLERS

Due to rapidly increasing customer demand, Australian Plunge Pools is calling for the services of qualified pool installers throughout Australia.

Australian Plunge Pools (APP) supplies DIY concrete swimming pools which can be transported anywhere in Australia. The pools are manufactured on the Gold Coast and sent to customers complete, ready to install and fill.

The pools are available in three diameters with variable water depth, and the unique range of pools can be ready for swimming in one day. The fully tiled concrete shells can be installed in or out of the ground.

APP believes this great product takes the hassle out of pool planning, construction and installation.

If you are a pool builder/installer and would like to be included in APP's database of qualified installers, simply email your details. APP has pools awaiting installation now.

For more information contact Cameron on 0413 278 443, email info@australianplungepools.com.au or visit www.australianplungepools.com.au.



Robots for home pools

MAYTRONICS Australia has released the Supreme family of Dolphin residential robotic pool cleaners.

The Supreme range offers solutions for a wide range of situations. Models include the ultimate M5 model, complete with dual motor drive, fully optioned remote control and additional triple active brushing; the M4 wall climber with cartridges and top access hatches for easy cleaning; or the M3 entry level model.

Maytronics have priced the units to represent value for the end user, with them retailing from \$1190 to \$2600 inc GST.

To get more information or if you'd like to become a Supreme Dolphin dealer, email infoau@maytronics.com or call 1300 MYDOLPHIN.



Supreme M5 model with a combined brush



LOUNGING TAKES ON A NEW DIMENSION

Portuguese spa manufacturer, Portcrl, has come up with the Lounge Concept Spa – designed to be as much a part of the home's decor as a place to completely relax in soothing water.

According to Portcrl, the Lounge Concept Spa is a modern looking straight-lined spa that offers the best comfort and relaxation hydromassage technology can afford.

The spa can be customised according to individual preference for varying colours, thanks to their Coril technology. This enables the spa to perfectly match its surroundings.

The spa is built with high quality materials and Portcrl promises outstanding durability. It can be installed inside or out, and either built into the room or supplied with side panels.

It also comes with accessories such as colour coordinated cushions and LED lights. This comfortable spa has three to five seats, two of them lounged, with each seat offering hydromassage jets.

For more information go to www.portcrl.com or email portcrl@portcrl.com.

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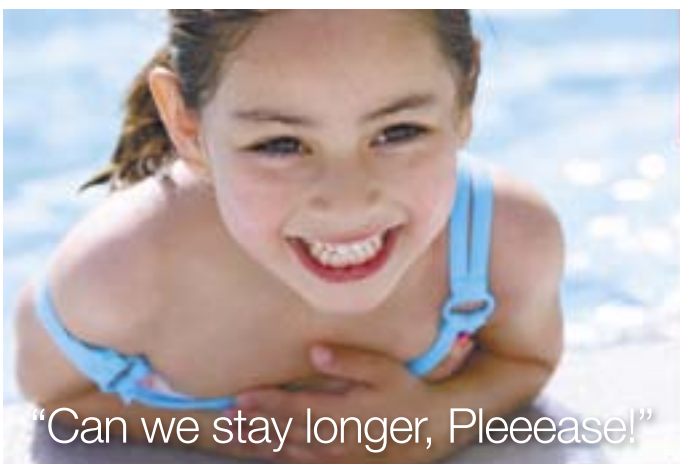
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TWIN RACING WITH TURBOLANCE

Polin is expanding its Racer Series with a new, sophisticated ride, Racer Twin Turbolance.

The Racer Twin Turbolance consists of two double-tubes configured side by side along a circular path. The ride's path is actually two slides in one. The double tubes accommodate two riders in each for a total of four, making it a high capacity ride.



The path takes exciting twists and turns before reaching an enclosure that suddenly plummets riders down a nearly vertical drop at speeds of up to 52 kilometres per hour. The double-tubes diverge at this point into two different Turbolance rides, whereby the riders are propelled vertically uphill – before gravity takes control again, bringing them over a bump and ending into a splash pool or a dry-out.

For more information contact sohret.pakis@polin.com.tr or visit www.polin.com.tr.



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Palintest launches Pooltest 9

PALINTEST has released the new **Pooltest 9 Premier**. The instrument builds on the success of its best-selling predecessor with several new features, including a waterproof USB connection and a test for Iron LR.



As with the existing Pooltest 9, the new Premier model uses photometric analysis to provide accurate readings for key water testing parameters – vital in maintaining clean and safe swimming pool water. It has pre-programmed tests for Free and Total Chlorine levels (Standard and Extended ranges available), Bromine, pH, Alkalinity, Calcium Hardness, Cyanuric Acid, Copper, Ozone and the new addition of Iron LR. The instrument also offers the Water Balance test, using either the Langelier or Palintest Index.

The Pooltest 9 Premier adds the ability to store and selectively recall up to 100 test results from its on-board memory. There is also a waterproof USB port for PC connection, with no additional software required to access and download results.

The original Pooltest 9 is the world's best-selling pool photometer, providing excellent accuracy with an easy to use interface and testing method. The new Premier builds on these features with useful new functionality and improvements.

For more information go to www.palintest.com.

KIWI LOOKING FOR AUSSIE DISTRIBUTOR FOR LEAK-PROOF LIGHT

Well known New Zealand industry member, Norman Tyree, has designed a new LED light that he says will solve the problem of water migrating into underwater light fittings through the cable and gland.

He has developed a way to attach a cable to a new sealed beam, creating what he says is an idiot-proof light for builders to connect.

He is currently seeking an Australian distributor.

For further information email kiwipool@vodafone.net.nz or go to www.poolquartz.co.nz.



Sider looking for Aussie distributors

SIDER Oxydro is looking for distributors in Australia. They manufacture the Sider roll-on cement replaster coating for plaster swimming pools; which is also designed to coat and waterproof waterfalls, fountains and concrete ponds.

It is available in several integral colours, as well as premixed with coloured quartz.

For more information, visit www.sider-oxydro.com/pools_decks.htm.



PLATYPUS LAUNCHED WITH EIGHT MODELS

Phoenix Pool Equipment has introduced its Platypus range of Robotic pool cleaners. The comprehensive range includes eight different models ranging from the basic 10 metre pool, Dannielle, to the 60-metre length pool model, the Platypus Maxi.

For more information call Phoenix on 0447 247 007 or email phoenixpool@bigpond.com.



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MAGIC WITH UNDERWATER GLUE

Under Water Magic is a newly developed extremely strong one-component adhesive and sealant, which is set for a wide variety of tasks in indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

It contains no isocyanate, oxime, solvents or acetic acid, and hardens by humidity with practically no shrinking. After curing Under Water Magic can be sanded and recoated.

Under Water Magic cures bubble free, is usable even on difficult surfaces. It is versatile, easy to process, environmentally friendly; as well as being UV-, weather-, salt- and chlorine-resistant.

Under Water Magic can be used for joint-sealing and bonding of tiles and everything inside and around a pool such as:

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AquaChek's new salt test kit

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Hach Company, the manufacturer of AquaChek pool and spa test strips, has introduced a convenient duo pack to make maintenance of salt systems fast, easy and accurate.

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TAPE-DOWN SAFETY FLOORING

Flooring manufacturer Altro has launched Altro XpressLay – a revolutionary new safety flooring which can be installed without the use of adhesive.

While not suitable for use around the poolside, it is suitable for change rooms and cafeterias, as well as retail stores.

It is the first ever safety floor which can be installed using tape rather than traditional contact adhesive, making it extremely quick and easy to fit. It can be laid over existing problem surfaces such as vinyl tiles or flaky painted floors, helping to save the time, cost and disruption associated with removing the existing subfloor.

With no hard-to-remove adhesive required, XpressLay is ideal for retailers where regular refurbishments are necessary, or in installations where 'making good' might prove difficult.

The unique profiled underside means that Altro XpressLay can be used on fresh concrete subfloors up to 97 per cent relative humidity, meaning there is no need to wait for a new sub floor to reach 75 per cent relative humidity, nor is there any need to apply a surface damp-proof membrane.

It has a slip resistance rating of R10.

For more information, contact Altro on 1800 673 441 or info@asf.com.au.



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