



How the robots work

Dan Kwaczynski from Maytronics Australia says that while residential pool cleaning robots are relatively new to Australia, they are now taking the market by storm.

"They are a proven technology and used extensively in Europe and with a growing share in US as well," he says. "Prior to 2011, there was really only one major brand in the Australian residential market and now there are more than four."

Kwaczynski says that because there are many different types of robots, with many different features and benefits, it's important to first consider the core functionality of the robots, and then consider product features.

Core Functionality

A robot is quite a simple concept, but to achieve this simplicity is extremely technical. In its purest form, pool robots work like this:

1. Power Supply – mains power is converted to low voltage using a transformer or switch mode power supply. This ensures the power is safe in the water (like pool lights).
2. Cable – a cable connects the low voltage supply to the robot. Swivels

3. Cleaner motor – inside the cleaner is a motor unit. This provides power to the impellor for water flow, using sensors and logic to manoeuvre the robot and also to provide power to the drive mechanism.
4. Drive mechanism – this is connected to the motor and is usually a tracked system connected to brushes that depress (and with friction clean at the same time). Occasionally the drive may be via hard wheels (these provide no scrubbing).
5. Filter arrangement – filtration on cleaners is inbuilt inside each robot. The micron of the filter will vary from quite coarse (sprint net arrangements 100 micron) down to cartridges (approximately 20 micron). Pool debris is normally in the range from 0 – 200 micron so even at 100 micron a large amount of debris is captured. The movement of water through the robot and out via the impellor mechanism can be up to 250 litres per minute – a significant flow rate.

Robot cleaning technology – what's the fuss all about?

Kwaczynski says that robots are not the

cheapest cleaners on the market. Why then are sales growing so fast, especially in the economic context where times are tough and customers are holding onto their hard earned cash?

"The simple answer is value for money," he says. "Customers will pay more for a product if they see the value in it. A robot offers so much more to customers for a very good price."

Kwaczynski says robots have a superior cleaning ability compared to other cleaners. This is for a number of reasons, including their systematic approach, scrubbing ability, independent filtration, strong sucking power and wall-climbing ability.

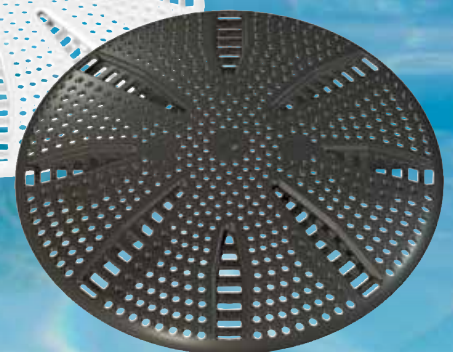
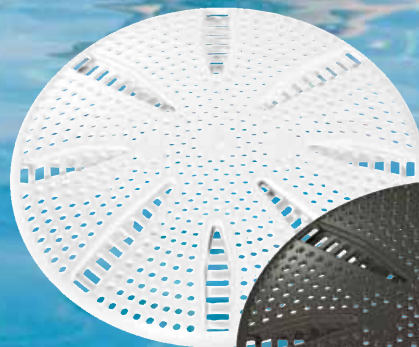
Cleaning benefits

- Systematic – many robot cleaners have in-built electronics with sensors, logic and controls to enable them to navigate the pool. The better ones actually map the pool each time they are installed. This means they provide superior coverage and they don't get stuck.
- Brushing and scrubbing – robots are designed not simply to suck debris from a pool, but they actually scrub the surface

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AstralPool's robots, from left: Pandora Pilot, Typhoon Pro, Typhoon Max, Pandora Smart

as well. Some even have extra brushes designed to work independently at high speed.

- Independent filtration – robots have their own independent filtering system on board. This removes debris from the water and filters as it goes. Comparisons show this to be at a very high level compared to pressure cleaners.
- Strong suction power – robots have an extremely strong suction power ranging up to 250 litres per minute – that's as much as a 1.5hp pump in most applications.
- Wall climbing and waterline scrubbing – the enormous suction creates an additional benefit – it enables the robot to climb walls, benches and ledges and once at the surface they can be programmed to scrub the waterline as well.

Kwaczynski also says they are user friendly. "Simply place in the water and press 'on'.

No more hoses, floats and bumps or booster pumps. And because Robots have superior cleaning abilities, they are really only needed to be used once or twice a week for the majority of residential pools, and for only about three hours per cycle.

"The great thing is that end users' pools can look like pools again – not like hydraulic factories with pipes and hoses in all directions."

Kwaczynski agrees with Goh that there are many environmental benefits to robotic pool cleaners. They can save power, water and chemicals. He says that independent studies by electrical companies have shown that annual savings can be up to \$300 per annum, even after the running cost of a robot is taken into account.

Environment Benefits

- Save power – robots operate and filter inside the pool. They are completely

independent of the pools main filtration system. The great benefit of this is that water does not have to be pumped 20 metres through 40mm or 50mm pipe, bends, elbows, etc just to be filtered. The water is filtered in the pool. Note – pool filtration is still needed – just not to anywhere near the level required when using other cleaners.

- Save water – because robots filter in the water, they remove the debris from the system. This in turn means that the main pool filter unit does not become clogged as quickly, which results in fewer backwashes. Estimates are that backwashing is reduced by up to 50 per cent when using robots compared to all other cleaning methods.
- Save chemicals. In Australia, the vast majority of pools have suction cleaners that are permanently in the pool and connected. In this circumstance, the skimmer is completely ineffective – the result is that all debris landing on the surface must slowly go through the water, making the water cloudier but also requiring chemicals to control it. When a robot is used, the pool's skimmer starts working again. Also, by removing the debris rather than storing it in the pool's main filter, the chemical load is reduced.

Benefits for builders

Kwaczynski says that while there are many reasons why a pool owner would like to choose a robotic pool cleaner, why should a builder bother?

He answers that there are a several reasons why a pool builder would want to increase their new pool package price to include a robot. These include the fact that:

- No extra plumbing or booster pump is required;

- There are no set up issues, no customer call-backs on stuck cleaners;
- It provides end users with great value for money;
- Many end users embrace and tell their friends about their robot. When they see their robot in action, they love it and remember their great builder who recommended it.

Maytronics distributes the Dolphin range of robotic pool cleaners. There is more on them later in this article.

Robots for everyone

AstralPool is one of the players who've recently entered the robot market in a big way, following their acquisition of Aqua Products and Aquatron by parent company Fluidra. AstralPool now manufactures and sells the Pandora brand of robotic pool cleaner for residential pools and the Typhoon brand for the commercial market.

Callum Ross from AstralPool says that the take-up in Australia has been fantastic.

"Everyone is looking for an easier, more efficient, effective and reliable solution for cleaning the pool," says Ross. "No one has the time to spend vacuuming their pools manually and would rather be spending the time with their family enjoying the pool."

He says that AstralPool are approaching the market in many different ways.

"Through our work with commercial pool builders, aquatic centres and local pools, the commercial range of cleaners is proving to be a much loved product that saves their staff time and money while providing a clean pool for their customers," he says.

"With our residential builders and local retail pool shops, the Pandora Pilot and Smart have provided the solution that people

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The Viva in action



The Bravo from Metco

have wanted for years. A simple and effective cleaner that saves them operating costs and provides a clean pool with little or no effort involved."

He says that with advancements in technology, robotic cleaners are now available to suit any swimming pool application.

"The advantage of having a robotic cleaner is that it runs independently from the filtration system, allowing the pool owner to utilise energy efficient pumps. By not having to run a suction cleaner you do not have to increase the speed of your pump hence saving on electricity costs."

AstralPool have four robotic cleaners available: Pandora Pilot and Pandora Smart for residential pools; and Typhoon Max and Typhoon Pro for commercial pools.

The AstralPool Pandora Pilot and Smart robotic cleaners automatically detect, scan and map out the pool providing an efficient scrubbing, cleaning and vacuuming solution.

For more information on the AstralPool range of cleaners call (03) 9554 2200.

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Metco's Classic

into Australia, supplying the commercial and residential market with automatic robotic pool cleaners including Ultramax, Ultramax Jr, Magnum, Magnum Jr, Bravo, Handivac, Viva, Bravo, Classic and Neptuneo.

Roger Moore from Metco says that most quality robotic pool cleaners are similar in the way that they work. They require no installation, no supervision and minimal maintenance. You simply drop them into the pool and turn them on. They will turn themselves off automatically when the cleaning cycle is finished.

"The cleaners have their own pump, motor and filtration system all on board," he says. "There are many advantages to robotic cleaners over old technology suction cleaners, including less power required to clean the pool, as most robots run on 120W as opposed to running a pool pump using 2000W."

As well, Moore says it only takes between one-and-a-half to three hours to clean a 100m2 pool.

He says that Metco's Aquatron cleaners do have specific advantages.

"For example, our Bravo and Viva pool cleaners come with the unique Aquacontrol Technology which allows you to directly manage the robot and customise its functions to ensure your pool is always cleaned as efficiently as possible.

"You can program the cleaner to either climb the walls of your pool frequently, occasionally or not at all. The life of your cleaner is extended by programming the cleaner to do floor-only most of the time, and cleaning the walls only when required. This saves time, power and unnecessary wear on the cleaner."

"Our Viva has the added bonus of being

able to adjust the cleaning level by selecting the suction strength of the on-board pump, as well as being able to select the shape of your pool. This is particularly handy for L-shaped pools and kidney-shaped pools."

Maintenance is an important issue with robots, and Moore points out that Metco has 30 years experience and expertise, along with a full range of spare parts and fully qualified technicians.

For more information on Metco's range of cleaners call (08) 8297 2011.

Handy robots

Zodiac has released two new pool robots specifically for the residential market.

The V1 feature vortex vacuum technology which offers powerful and constant cyclonic suction throughout the cleaning cycle. Zodiac says that by altering the position of the pump motor and the hydraulic flow, the vortex effect creates a powerful whirlpool inside the internal filter – keeping debris in suspension and avoiding filter clogs.

The robot combines Zodiac's Intelligent Steering System (ISS) technology with Wide Trax Tires and a "clever" back wheel

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to offer increased mobility and highly fluid movements.

The V1 also includes a front handle and rear water outlet for easier maintenance, as well as a flexible hose that optimises the cleaner's movements.

Weighing less than 6kg when dry, Zodiac says the compact V1 is 30 per cent lighter than most pool cleaners and can reach even the most difficult areas. The rigid filter compartment is easy to remove – simply click out to empty debris.

Zodiac says the V1 is easy to install, clean, store and use, and is suited for most domestic in-ground pool surfaces, sizes and floors.

The second robot is a new premium robotic pool cleaner – the Polaris 9300 Sport.

Zodiac says the Polaris 9300 Sport is the most technologically advanced robotic pool

cleaner for in-ground pools. It is already making waves in the US, and is now available in Australia.

With an ergonomic design, the new 150W Polaris 9300 features a number of benefits. Zodiac says its patented Vortex Vacuum Technology enables revolutionary vacuum flow for unparalleled debris collection – saying it can capture more than four times the debris load of other robotic cleaners.

It also boasts a large capacity internal filter canister that only takes a matter of minutes to clean. Additionally, it has powerful rear water propulsion system and PosiTrax tyres fitted as standard. It suits all in-ground pools, and can clean all shapes and all surfaces up to 6m x 15m within 90 minutes on average.

For more information on the Polaris and V1 call Zodiac on 1800 688 552.

The admirable Admiral robots

Two of the key features of Waterco's Admiral range of robotic cleaners is the oversized filter bag and the light weight. The largest of Waterco's Admiral range of robotic cleaners weighs less than 5kg dry and under 20kg wet. Bryan Goh says this makes the Admiral range of robotic cleaners the lightest in their class.

"The Admiral range is an integral part of the EnviroPro suite of products. It's been engineered with ease of use plus water, energy and chemical conservation top of mind," says Goh.

"By micro filtering and circulating the pool water, these robotic cleaners will reduce pool maintenance, plus save pool owners water and chemicals."

The Admiral has a range of distinctive features including direct drive motors, quick drainage system and intelligent navigation. The robotic cleaners operate independently from a pool's filter and pump; they also feature internal motors and vacuum in water, dirt and debris through the built-in pump, then filter the water through the internal filtration system.

Goh also says that the Admiral cleans a wider path than many other robotic pool cleaners.

"This is due to a number of factors: the powerful pump, the strategic location of the vacuum intake ports, and the advanced geometry of its 'underbelly', which allows debris to be vacuumed not only from under the cleaner, but also from its sides. The in-built navigation system prevents the cleaner getting caught



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on any obstacles and the intelligent programming sends the cleaner in a different direction every time, thus improving pool coverage.”

In addition, the Admiral and Admiral Ultra feature all terrain traction plus gel-pro brushes, which are powered by a direct drive motor. The result is increased torque and efficiency, and the motor allows for better traction and superior cleaning capabilities.

Goh says the water-cooled pump motors represent the latest in green technology, with the Admiral operating on only 80W and the Admiral Ultra on just 120W.

For more information on the Admiral range call (02) 9898 8686.

Dolphin Supreme water flow

Maytronic’s Dan Kwaczynski says that one of the benefits of their Dolphin cleaner is the placement of the impellor at the centre on the top.

“This means that there is equal pressure downward as there is water flowing out. Remember Newton’s third law – that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This means that the robot is pushed onto the surface – whether that surface be horizontal or,

“..there is equal pressure downward as there is water flowing out... this means that the robot is pushed onto the surface – whether that surface be horizontal or, in the cases of walls – vertical. This is the key reason the robot is able to climb so effectively.”

in the cases of walls – vertical. This is the key reason the robot is able to climb so effectively.

He says some of the features to consider when choosing a robot include the following:

- Dual drive for greater manoeuvrability
- Wall climbing or floor-only
- Scrubbing ability – the number of brushes and speed of brushes
- Cleaning ability – suction rates and filter porosity affect cleaning ability
- Filtration options – bag, cartridge, spring net
- Drive method – wheel or tracked
- Swivel on cable – prevents cable entanglement
- Easy-to-change brushes – quick dealer changeover
- Remote control – for manual control
- Setting changes – cleaning mode, delay

start, cycle time changes – to customise for the end user’s specific pool

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For more information on Maytronics Dolphin cleaners, call (07) 3373 8467.

More information

FOR information on robotic pool cleaner suppliers and all their contact details and brands, go to the splashmagazine.com.au and a click on the Blue Pages directory link.

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Expert witnesses in dispute resolution

The NSW Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) offers some advice on engaging – or being – an expert witness in all types of matters, notably in disputes over residential construction.

In some complex matters, parties may want to engage an expert to provide a report or give evidence in support of their case. For those who are considering using an expert, the following information outlines the role of an expert during CTTT proceedings.

Before engaging an expert

Before engaging an expert you need to be clear on the issues you want the expert to address. You also need to think about whether the cost associated with engaging an expert is worth the expense having regard to the value of the dispute.

“An expert witness is not an advocate for the party. Experts must be neutral and independent.”

You will also need to consider whether you need the expert to appear as a witness in proceedings or provide an expert report to verify certain facts. Experts who appear as a witness to give evidence at a hearing can do so in person or, in some circumstances, by telephone.

Cost of engaging an expert

The cost of engaging an expert will vary depending on the nature of the dispute,

the type of expert needed and the skills and knowledge of the expert. The expert's costs are usually paid by the party who has engaged the expert. Expert reports can be quite expensive as they are time consuming to prepare. Before requesting an expert report you may want to ask the expert to give you an estimated cost of preparing the report. There may also be additional costs if you want your expert to comment on other expert reports filed by

other parties and appear as a witness at your hearing.

The costs of retaining an expert may in some cases be recoverable from the other party if you are successful before the Tribunal, but not in all cases.

Finding an expert

If you are unsure where to find an expert in the relevant field, contact the professional or trade association, for example the Institute of Building Consultants or SPASA, and ask them to provide a list of their members.

Alternatively you could approach people in the field and ask them for references, or approach teaching institutes or university affiliated organisations. Before engaging the expert, make sure your expert is highly qualified in the field or discipline required.

What is an 'expert'?

An 'expert' is any professional person who has specialised knowledge, skills or qualifications and the ability to provide their expert opinion.

An expert is generally engaged by a party to proceedings to provide expert evidence in support of their case. The expert may provide a written report for use as evidence in the proceedings and may appear as a witness at a hearing. There are different types of experts that may be used during CTTT proceedings.

For example, an architect may be engaged as an expert witness in a home building dispute, or a mechanic may be engaged to provide a report for a motor vehicle dispute.

Note: An expert witness is not an advocate for the party. Experts must be neutral and independent.

When is an expert used?

Experts may be used whenever evidence is necessary to establish a matter which is the subject of specialist knowledge.

Experts are often called upon in matters of a technical nature, most commonly in home building or motor vehicle disputes. However, experts may be used in any type of application.

A report from a qualified expert will usually address the particular facts of a case that are within their area of expertise, and most importantly, give an opinion about matters such as the cause of the event, the need for repair, the method of repair and cost to repair.

The Tribunal will consider the expert's qualifications, skills and experience, the manner in which the report is prepared and evidence presented in deciding what weight to place on the evidence.

“An 'expert' is any professional person who has specialised knowledge, skills or qualifications and the ability to provide their expert opinion.”

Expert conclaves

In home building disputes, the CTTT may direct a meeting be held between parties' experts, known as an 'expert conclave'.

The experts meet on-site with a Tribunal Member to discuss the issues on which they have prepared their reports with a view to narrowing points of difference between them.

The points of agreement and difference are then identified in writing and filed with the CTTT before the hearing, usually in the form of a Scott Schedule.

Conflict of interest

Experts are engaged to provide an independent and impartial source of expert advice to the CTTT. A conflict of interest may arise when an expert may be influenced, or could be seen to be influenced, by a personal interest in carrying out the assigned work, such as where the expert has:

- A financial interest in or with the party in dispute
- Accepted a gift or benefit that may be seen to influence the impartiality of their expert opinion
- A personal, philosophical, religious, moral or political belief or attitude that could influence the impartiality of their expert opinion
- A personal (non-professional) relationship with a party, or relative or associate of a party
- Used the influence of their position as an independent expert to seek employment opportunities for themselves, friends, family or associates

Any matter which gives rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest should be disclosed to the Tribunal promptly.

Expert report requirements

When an expert is engaged to prepare a report to be used as evidence in a hearing, the report structure should include:

- A table of contents
- The expert's formal qualifications and relevant experience
- The field of expertise in which they are giving evidence
- Verification that the expert has read the Chairperson's Direction 'Expert Witness Code of Conduct'

- A statement of what issues they were asked to report on
- The facts, matters and assumptions on which the opinions in the report are based (a letter of instruction may be annexed)
- Reasons for each opinion expressed
- A disclaimer if any particular question or issue falls outside their field of expertise
- Any literature or materials used in support of the opinions
- Any examinations, tests or other investigations on which he or she has relied
- Any examinations, tests or other investigations, who carried them out, and their qualifications
- A statement regarding reservations about a fact or opinion

Note: Any issue or question falling outside the expert's field of expertise should be clearly identified in the report.

Use of the report

You will need to provide a copy of the expert's report and any other supporting documents to the Tribunal and the other party. The CTTT will set a timetable for doing this.

It is likely that the other party will also provide a report from an expert whose opinion may differ from that of the expert engaged by you.

If your expert gives oral evidence, he or she may be cross-examined by the other party. If your expert does not attend the hearing, you can still rely upon your expert report. It is possible, however, some difficulties may arise if your expert is not present to answer any questions.

The Tribunal Member will decide which expert opinion carries more weight and is preferred.

For more information including a fact sheet on conclaves and the Expert Witness Code of Conduct, go to www.cttt.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 135 399. 📞

“In home building disputes, the CTTT may direct a meeting be held between parties' experts, known as an expert conclave.”

Teaching older babies to swim

Allowing baby to crawl in different depths of water will teach them the difference between deep and shallow

In the third instalment on teaching babies to swim, Emma Lawrence looks at children from the age of 8 months to one year.

The learn-to-swim journey should be a positive experience for both parent and child. Great swimming instructors impart knowledge to parents so that they can interact happily, confidently and safely with their baby in the aquatic environment. It is Laurie Lawrence's firm belief that the parent is the best learn-to-swim teacher during the pre-school years.

Parents have a huge responsibility in teaching their child positive attitudes towards water and water safety. By 10 months of age a baby will consistently look to their parents to determine their reactions to new situations. This social referencing means that the parent can determine how relaxed, confident or even apprehensive a baby can feel while learning to swim. Therefore it is very important during your baby's first introductions to the water that you remain calm and communicate with loving words, eye contact and facial expressions.

When teaching swimming to babies, or in fact children of any age, it is important that parents and instructors follow progressive

teaching and learning techniques. When building swimming skills it is very important that the baby is given an opportunity to master the prerequisite skill before moving to the next stage. All children are different and therefore progressions must be based on individual readiness. Frequent loving exposure to the water is the key to fast tracking your baby's swimming progress.

Great learn-to-swim programs should build progressively through the foundation

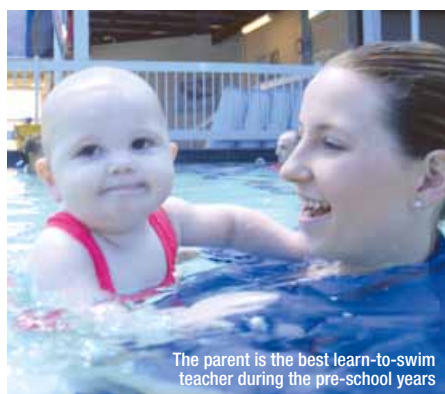
skills of water familiarisation, breath control, submersion, floating and finally propulsion. The Laurie Lawrence baby swim techniques to build breath control, submersion and floating skills have been outlined during the previous articles featured in SPLASH!

During this instalment we will further progress and analyse the types of propulsive skills that can be introduced with the 8- to 12-month-old baby.

Baby's milestones

A baby's growth and development will have a tremendous impact on the learn-to-swim lesson. This impact becomes particularly profound during the 8- to 12-month age group because it is during this stage that the baby will become purposefully mobile. Common milestones include efficient crawling, the ability to pull up on furniture, baby taking first steps and the comprehension to follow simple instructions.

This increased independence on land can be translated to the learn-to-swim les-



The parent is the best learn-to-swim teacher during the pre-school years

son. For example, the baby can now decide whether to strike out on their own and swim to a parent and they are physically capable of pulling themselves up on a shallow ledge or level pool deck.

The idea at this stage is to foster the baby's independence as much as possible – while under strict adult supervision within arm's reach. By encouraging independence in the water from a very early age, we are trying to teach children their own capabilities and limitations. Our aim is to develop a love and a respect for the water. While a 12-month-old baby does not initially understand the concept of respect, they will certainly develop a love of the water. As they grow with age, they eventually learn their capabilities and gain that vital respect for the water.

When we talk about encouraging independence in babies we are suggesting that parents give their baby an opportunity to do simple things for themselves under strict supervision. For example, allowing baby to crawl in different depths of water will teach them the difference between deep and shallow. Encouraging baby to pull themselves up on your t-shirt, instead of you picking them up, will teach them that if they go underwater they need to recover themselves. Importantly, training your baby to swim on your trigger words will lead to your child looking to you to determine whether or not the environment is safe to enter. These simple activates are very often overlooked by parents and instructors during the swimming and water safety lesson.

Propulsion

Once baby is happy and confident with independent floating activates where they can recover themselves by pulling up on a parents t-shirt, side of the pool or level deck, we can progress to developing propulsive skills. If the baby has learnt through a progressive learn-to-swim process they will have great breath control and will be capable of staying underwater for longer periods of time. The rolling and crawling actions that the baby has perfected on land can now be replicated in the water so that baby learns to move through both the horizontal swimming plane and the vertical turning plane. While these initial propulsive movements are very primitive, often resembling a dolphin-like wriggle or crawling action, they are sufficient to move the baby short distances through the water to a supervising adult. This ability to move through the water and change direction is actually the first stage in baby developing water safety skills.



“Increased independence on land can be translated to the learn-to-swim lesson.”

When introducing the water safety skill of turning we must ensure that that baby has good breath control for up to five seconds during their horizontal swimming activities. In turning, the baby faces away from their parent, is released underwater, makes a 180-degree turn back to the parent and is encouraged to pull up on a t-shirt.

Turning requires a vertical submersion and can easily force water up the baby's nose if they have not mastered good breath control. For this reason we do not attempt turning skills until the baby shows readiness. The teaching progression starts with a full assisted turn performed by the parent. Good technique should follow a verbal trigger “turn to mum, ready go,” followed by a kinaesthetic lift, a vertical submersion, fast underwater spin, catch baby under the arms and celebrate success.

Turning activities should not be performed if the baby shows any signs of discomfort or resistance. If the baby is happy the parent-teacher can practice assisted turning in both the left and right hand directions. If the parent is in tune with their baby they will soon recognise that their child displays a natural turning side to either the left or right. Once parents observe this side, it is a simple matter to progress baby to half unassisted turn and build towards a full unassisted turn to an adult. If the baby can perform a full unassisted turn underwater by 12 months of age, they are well on the way to developing exceptional swimming skills under your supervision.

The types of turning skills that the baby can master will also be determined by their growth and development on land. Again we

return to building swimming skills and following progressive swimming teaching techniques. We start with turning to an adult, build towards turning to a shallow ledge, progress to turning to a level deck and graduate with turning to a pool wall where a toddler can climb out. It is the ability to perform these types of swimming skills that may one day save a child's life. It is extremely important that parents understand no child is safe in or around water unless being strictly supervised.

A child's ability to perform water safety skills should never negate adult supervision.

As a teacher or parent we should have realistic goals of what babies are capable of achieving in the water. A baby's capabilities will largely be determined by exposure to the water. For this reason children with home pools or more regular attendance in learn-to-swim lessons will clearly excel. In teaching babies to swim early, Laurie is not trying to create Olympic champions but rather instil in parents and children a love of and respect for the water. He encourages all parents to teach their children to swim for fun, fitness, health and safety.

Always remember Laurie's message:

Kids Alive – Do the Five:

- Fence the pool
- Shut the gate
- Teach your kids to swim – it's great
- Supervise – watch your mate
- And learn how to resuscitate

For more information on baby swimming go to www.babyswim.info or download Laurie's extremely useful new BabySwim Ap for the iPhone.



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Water is the sweetest tea in Texas

Turning water saving into a water feature



The water collected from one of the roofs flows in a highly visible ribbon into a pond

Texas has a lot in common with Australia. It is a broad land with a very similar population, which is spread thinly across often dry rural lands and aggregated in a few big cities.

And like Australia, it has a big thirst.

So in the same way that Australians always look for ways to minimise water use and maximise water gathering, so do Texans.

This home and pool, dubbed the Cascading Creek House by designers Bercy Chen Studio, is intriguing not so much because it saves water, but for the stylish way it does it.

The water collected for use in the swimming pool, amongst other uses, is in itself an artistic feature of flowing liquid which

can be appreciated rather than hidden away.

The designers say the project was conceived less as a house and more as an outgrowth of the limestone aquifers of the Central Texas geography.

The roof is configured to create a natural basin for the collection of rainwater, not unlike the vernal pools found in the outcroppings of

“When entering from the street, you look down on the water-collecting roofs of the house.”



The collection pond is a feature in itself



The pool and home seem to rise from the Texan landscape



“The water, electricity and heat harvested on the roof tie into an extensive climate conditioning system.”

offers a critical alternative to the massive suburban homes in Texas.

When entering from the street, you look down on the water-collecting roofs of the house, while the residence presents itself generously towards the wilderness below, embracing nature without overwhelming it.

There is an extended living space oriented towards the creek below and protected from the torrents of water draining from the street above during sudden downpours characteristic of the area.

Each wing of the house terminates with the roof cantilevered from a single column that frees up the exterior walls to be fully glazed, flooding the tall and open volume of the living room with daylight and offering generous views of the pool deck and the wooded silhouettes of the Texas Hill Country beyond.

Bercy Chen Studio LP is an architecture and urban planning firm with design/build capabilities based in Austin, Texas founded in 2001 by partners Thomas Bercy and Calvin Chen, both graduates of the University of Texas at Austin.

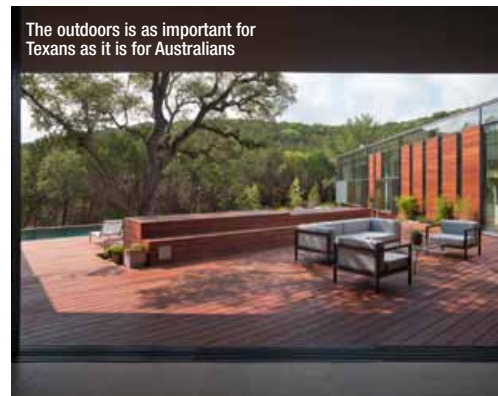
For more information go to bcarc.com.

the Texas Hill Country. These basins harness additional natural flows through the use of photovoltaic and solar hot-water panels.

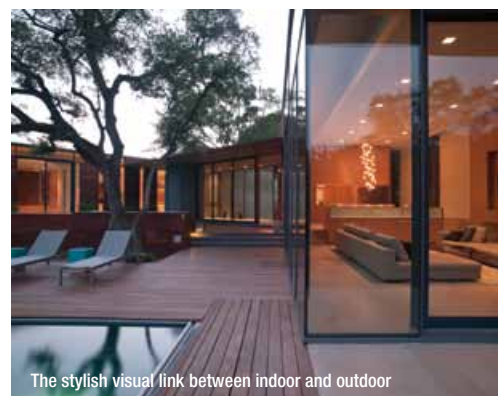
The water, electricity and heat harvested on the roof tie into an extensive climate conditioning system which utilises water source heat pumps and radiant loops to supply both the heating and cooling for the residence.

The climate system is connected to geothermal ground loops as well as pools and water features thereby establishing a system of heat exchange which minimises reliance on electricity or gas.

The design also subtly addresses the social issues of Texan suburbia. The surprisingly low profile of the house in relation to the street



The outdoors is as important for Texans as it is for Australians



The stylish visual link between indoor and outdoor

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SPLASH! is the leading trade magazine for – and dedicated voice of - the Australian pool and spa industry, and is distributed both nationally and internationally.

Published bi-monthly, the magazine provides detailed coverage of the latest industry news, case studies, projects and the broad range of issues affecting the residential and commercial pool and spa market.

Dedicated to delivering the most comprehensive editorial and technical content, *SPLASH!* is essential reading for anyone involved in, or associated with, Australia's "wet" industry.

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Three words that will change your business

Steve Smit, business coach with Reality Consulting, offers advice to make your business more profitable.

Imagine you are in the top 50 of your industry Australia-wide from a field of 1600, and you get introduced to the owner of the number one performing business in your industry.

You arrange for private lunch, a chance to speak one-on-one with a keynote speaker at industry functions, someone who runs a team of seven to your team of one (just you). He is the real big dog on the block. This is your chance to find out what they do that makes him number one.

You're sitting at the table in anticipation, waiting for some pearls of wisdom to come forth to help you get bigger and better. And then he arrives. You ask and he talks.

After an hour you work out two critically important things. First, he is on his way to a heart attack and an early grave by working ridiculous hours each week; and second (because you know the industry's pricing structure) you know that...every month you are making 34 per cent more net profit than him.

That's right. One person outperforming seven, a difference of 938 per cent profit per employee. A true story.

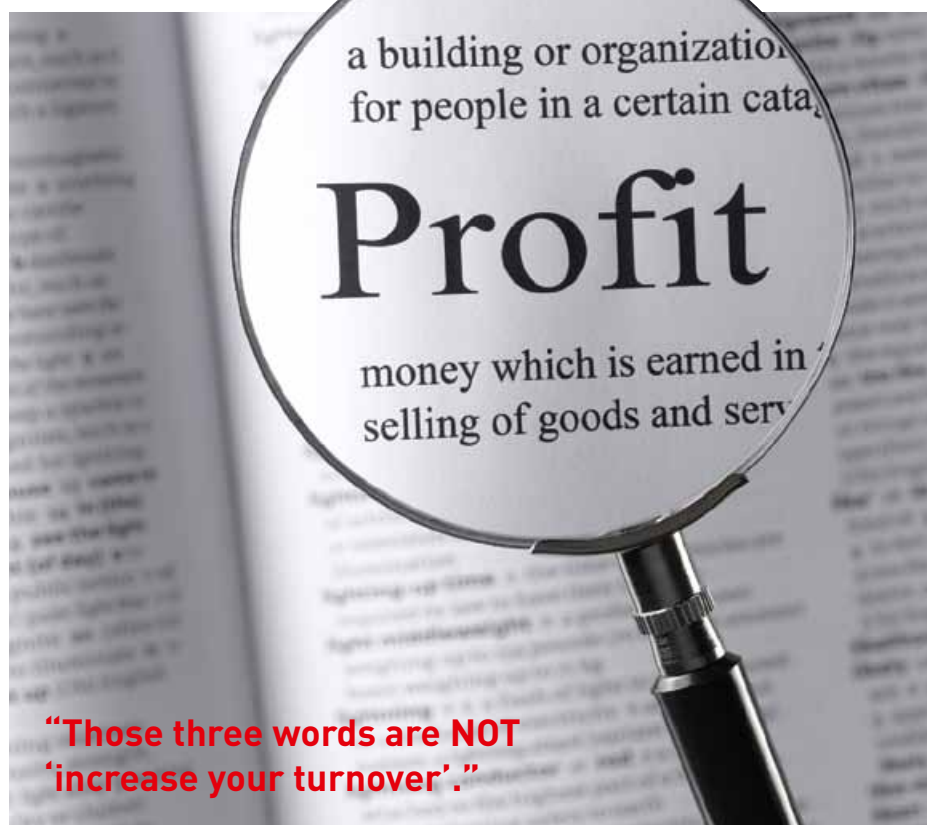
The three words that will change your business: Focus On Profit.

It's what's behind the veil that matters

It's easy to sit in awe of your competitors and try to do the numbers of how much they are doing in sales.

But big numbers are irrelevant.

They are only part of the game and when you constantly focus on turnover you are leaving out the key parts of the equation. You can't survive or flourish unless your business is making a healthy profit.



“Those three words are NOT ‘increase your turnover’.”

Remember this one most important phrase: “It's not what you make that matters, it is what you keep.”

What you can't see can hurt you (BIG TIME!)

The problem for most businesses is that they don't increase the visibility of profit in their business.

To have a proper profit focus in your business you should stop waiting till the end of the year to find out if you have made any money or not. You should be looking at your figures weekly or at most monthly. Get your bookkeeper or accountant to do this (if it's too much trouble for them, get someone else.)

If you are doing quotes, build your overheads into your quotations so you know on each quote how much money you are REALLY making.

Other profit-focused strategies

Measure your profitability per employee per

month (as I did above). This gets you focused on getting the maximum bang for your buck out of your team.


Check your profitability per customer. It most probably wouldn't surprise you to know that those “problem” customers who expect the world and want to pay peanuts are costing you money. Focus on “A” grade customers.

Reward your salespeople based upon your most profitable lines not necessarily on highest sales figures.

And obviously keep a tight control on your expenses; don't spend on things that aren't going to make you a profit.

It may seem obvious, it may seem basic, but don't fall into the trap of NOT looking at the bottom line at least once a month.

Get moving; print your profit and loss report and check it - today!

For a free copy of Steve Smit's *Business Accelerator Pack* go to www.realityconsulting.com.au or email stevesmit@realityconsulting.com.au. 

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12 trends for 2012

Sue Hirst discusses the trends that will define business in the “new normal”

I recently read an insightful paper written by Paul Diamond of Vistage and distributed by The Executive Connection, an international leadership organisation.

Here's a summary of this priceless advice for those who want to capitalise on current trends: “Business as usual” is undergoing a transformation due to changing consumer tastes and economic pressures. Companies have to find new ways to appeal to consumers scarred by the economic crisis. Consumers spend less and save more; many are jobless, many lack trust in businesses, and many expect government to provide a high level of service.

Business operations are under other pressures, including constrained credit, economic uncertainty, threat of increased inflation, excessive consolidation in many industries, the rapid pace of innovation, rising commodity prices and a constant pressure to do things better, faster and cheaper.

The good news is that business is reorganising and finding its way forward. To help ensure the future of business, here are 12 trends that range from new consumer attitudes and emerging disruptive technologies to the latest marketing and business practices.

Think of these trends as opportunities you can seize to give customers more of what they want.

Consumer trends

Trend 1: Short Termism

The financial crisis made people less trusting of large organisations. People buy based on immediate requirements. They understand that innovation outdates expensive technology. They have learned a “wait and see” attitude.

Trend 2: Brand Aid

Companies are building brand loyalty by helping consumers navigate today's complexities. e.g. American Express created

openforum.com to help business owners find success.

Trend 3: Conscious Consumerism

With less money to spend people will look to swap aesthetics for durability; heritage for sustainability. Business will need to target products more towards attitudinal and needs segments.

Trend 4: Simplification

Consumers suffer “choice fatigue” and will seek edited choice in future. Multi-use products such as a single device that can perform many tasks will reduce luggage and cost.

Trend 5: Mobile Purchasing

Mobile phones are becoming virtual credit cards and mobile processing terminals. Customers can swipe their phone to purchase and business can buy a small card reader that hooks to your hand-held device.

Trend 6: Emotional Branding

Brands with strong emotional content will command the highest prices. Busi-

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nesses who develop a strong relationship and understanding of customers will win. The most common failure of a brand to resonate emotionally is when customers perceive indifference.

Trend 7: Reputation Management

You'll have to keep your online reputation in good standing if you want to be trusted or have influence online.

To do this you need to:

- Know what's being said about you online
- Participate in social media so you can reply
- Ask those who like you to recommend you on online sites
- Don't do anything online you wouldn't want people to find out about – because they will!

Trend 8: Behavioural Segmentation

Segmenting customers by demographics will become antiquated. You can create profiles by what customers do on your website so you can predict what offers and content they may respond to and increase your sales conversion.

Business operation trends

Trend 9: Green: the Second Act

A carbon footprint will be on the business balance sheet in future. Carbon auditing will be performed on companies so they can prove their carbon credentials. You should

get a lifecycle impact audit done on products. Start reducing environmental impact and advertise what you're doing to give yourself a competitive advantage in future.

Trend 10: Collective Intelligence

Distil the wisdom of the crowd; quickly, cost effectively and get solutions for business issues. Crowdsourcing and Freelancers on Demand are a couple of examples. You can broadcast a request for help online and offer a prize as payment for people's time.

Trend 11: Evolution of Traditional Sales Models

Sales models are being disrupted by robust websites, social media and online reviews. It's about "pull" marketing rather than "push" selling. Some elements required to "pull in" customers are:

- A robust website detailing information about your offerings
- Easy purchase of products or services online
- Real (and honest) reviews posted on third-party sites by customers
- Targeted ads pointing to your website
- A website optimised for search terms

New initiation points for big purchases occur in places like LinkedIn groups and industry-focused user groups. When people look for solutions they get recommendations

from peers, read online reviews and view videos, then they go to a company's website.

To create trust in the marketplace, take the following steps:


- Capture your fan base on video and put it on your website
- Build credentials by publishing articles, blogging and speaking

Affiliate your business with thought leaders. Sponsor their talks, publish their white papers, and invite them onto your board of directors or advisors. Get certifications and credentials in your industry.

Trend 12: Constant Business Pressure

It's all about 'better, faster and cheaper'. Operating during the recession has required tight controls and creative business models going forward. It's vital to have better cash-flow control and manage the balance sheet.

To offset slower growth in traditional business lines, companies should look for opportunities in industries and sectors that have revenue growth potential.

Adapted from an article by Paul Diamond for The Executive Connection (TEC), a peer-to-peer mentoring organisation for Australia's chief executives. For more information, visit www.tec.com.au. For more information on CAD Partners CFO On-Call call 1300 36 24 36 or go to www.CFOonCall.com.au. 

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SPLASH! is recognised as the must attend event for retailers, pool builders, contractors, architects, landscapers, manufacturers, engineers and service technicians to stay ahead of market directions as the wet industry continues to expand and take on new dimensions and international trends.



It is a tough ask to improve upon Australia's 'best trade show'. It was a huge accolade for SPLASH! 2010 to be awarded the best trade show in Australia by the Exhibition & Event Association of Australia, how to improve the event presents a whole new set of challenges. On the other hand, if something is not broken and working well, what is there to fix?

SPLASH! 2012 will build upon the success of past events. Available exhibit space remains

the same, with a number of new companies involved in 2012, and we are looking at expanding the seminar program, building the profile of the prestigious SPLASH! Environmental Awards and once again hosting the extremely popular Andrew Simons Memorial Golf Day.

Since the last show SPLASH! has expanded into Asia, holding an exhibition in Singapore and it is expected more Asian buyers will attend SPLASH! this year.

The Networking

Join SPASA Queensland at the welcome reception by the pool on Wednesday, 25 July 2012



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- Clevaquip
- Compu Pool Products
- Continental Water Systems P/L
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- Designerite Pty Ltd
- East Standard Pty Ltd
- Easycare Products
- Elite Pool Covers
- Emaux Water Technologie
- Energy Smart Water Asia Pacific P/L
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- Fastlane Pools
- **Focus Products Pty Ltd**
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- Globe Pool Service
- Guangdong PHNIX Eco-Energy Solution Ltd.
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- Hi Tech Pacific A'Asia
- Hot Water Heat Pumps
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- Jaymac International
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The Seminars

Various educational seminars will be held over the two day duration of the show. These seminars have been designed to attract all participants in the wet industry. For those people residing in States that have the CPD system in place, these seminars will provide vital points towards accreditation requirements.



NSPF presents Alex Antoniou, Director of Educational Programs offering the following SPLASH! sessions:



National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF®) Instructor School

Become an instructor and be able to deliver training to help aquatic professionals reach the new Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) national competency based qualifications for Swimming Pool and Spa Technicians. The NSPF® Instructor class is designed to verify ability and mentor candidates to successfully conduct aquatic training courses offered by the NSPF®, including the Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification course designed for commercial pool operators. This intimate training course has no more than five students per instructor and helps prepare instructors to deliver aquatic educational products, including pool operator training and management training.

The class focuses on teaching methodology and practice, visual aids construction and utilization, course administration, and NSPF® requirements. As an NSPF® Instructor you become an education leader for the pool and spa industry to ensure that minimum standards are being met for public health and safety at public pool facilities. Additionally, you become an advocate for the leading world-wide educational course.

Course Dates and Times:

July 23 & 24 from 7:30 am – 5:00 pm each day, and July 25 from 7:30 am – 12:30 pm

Course Fee: \$695 (AUD)

Course Prerequisite: Completion of the online Pool Operator Primer course (included in the course fee). Materials are sent to instructor candidates one-month before course start date with instructions on how to prepare for the instructor training school.

Certified Pool/Spa Operator (CPO®) Certification

The CPO® certification program will train you how to operate and service commercial swimming pools and spas. The two-day class that covers 14-16 hours of information from the NSPF® Pool & Spa Operator™ Handbook and local standards and codes

taught by a certified NSPF® Instructor. Topics covered include, pool calculations, disinfection, water balance, pool and spa water problems, water circulation and filtration, and much more. This dynamic setting offers direct interaction with an instructor and fellow students. You must achieve a minimum score of 75% on the final open book exam to earn CPO® certification. The certification is valid for 5 years.

Course Dates and Times:

July 23 & 24 from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm each day

Course Fee: \$395 (AUD)

Course Prerequisites: None

Seminar Presentations:

Managing Recreational Water Illnesses

Recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can be greatly reduced, if not completely prevented, by appropriate management of the disinfecting and circulatory systems. The microorganisms that cause infectious RWIs are well known and the conditions that permit outbreaks are also well known. It is also understood by nearly all that these same infectious agents are readily killed by >1 ppm free chlorine. Yet the outbreaks continue to occur. Mandatory training for facility management and operators is needed but a one-size-fits-all approach may not work. The published reports clearly show that some types of facilities are more likely to have certain kinds of infectious outbreaks. These differences are due to the nature of the microbes themselves, the behaviors of the bathers, and lapses in disinfection that occur during second or third shift supervision.

By closely examining the pattern of known outbreaks it is possible to develop a management system that is tailored to the type of RWIs that are likely to occur in one's own aquatic facility. A customized and comprehensive risk management system is the best way to minimize both infectious and chemically-induced RWIs.

Pool & Spa Water Chemistry

The most important line of defense to prevent the spread of recreational water illness and to protect the facility from damaging effects of water is to maintain proper water chemistry. This presentation will review the options to maintain water in a sanitary state with descriptions of the many disinfectant options available. In addition, the principles behind water balance will be presented to better prevent corrosion of surfaces or equipment or the formation of scale.

To take advantage of early bird rates register now at

www.splashexpo.com.au or call

AUST 1300 789 845 or NZ 0800 451 590

Wednesday 25th July & Thursday 26th July 2012



The SPLASH! Environmental Awards



The SPLASH! Environmental Awards are the first and only dedicated environmental awards for the swimming pool and spa industry in the world.

The awards are held every two years, with the winners announced at SPLASH! on the Gold Coast.

There will be two major awards:
1. The SPLASH! Environmental Project of the Year
2. The SPLASH! Environmental Product of the Year

These awards will be chosen from the winners of the category awards:

A. Residential Pool (Indoor and Outdoor)

B. Commercial Pool or Aquatic Centre (Indoor and Outdoor)
C. Pool Shop
D. Product Categories
D1. Energy Saving Award
D2. Water Saving Award
D3. Mechanical Product
D4. Sanitisation Award
D5. Spa Award

The winners will be announced at a gala evening at the Gold Coast Convention Centre on Thursday July 26, 2012, and together with the finalists and sponsors, will be featured in SPLASH! magazine, on www.splashmagazine.com.au and in a consumer PR campaign.

Attractive sponsorship packages are available.

For more information and entry details please contact the SPLASH! team on +61 2 9660 2113 or visit www.splashmagazine.com.au

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Waterco's pre-filter **MultiCyclone** technology not only allows you to save thousands of litres of water per year, it also reduces your filter maintenance. Or for the ultimate convenience and maximum water savings, the **MultiCyclone Plus** is an easy to use, highly efficient centrifugal filter and cartridge filter all in one.



The **Hydrostorm ECO** pump uses up to 70% less electricity than a regular pump, you can also switch to off peak electricity tariffs at night due to its quiet operation, saving you even more on your energy bills.



The **Micron ECO** allows you to enjoy the convenience of backwashing your pool, whilst using 30% less water. Its hydraulic efficiency facilitates the use of energy saving pumps.



The **Opal XL** cartridge filter eliminates backwashing, saving you water. Its oversized filter cartridge, minimises filter maintenance.



Admiral robotic pool cleaners, ensures your pool will be sparkling and effortlessly clean using less power than required to illuminate one halogen pool light.



The **Zane Solar Gulfpanel** and the **Electroheat** heat pump not only enable you to save on your energy bills, you can extend your swim season conveniently and cost effectively.



The **BriteStream Multicoloured LED** lights not only look great, but they operate on a mere 15% of the electrical power required for the halogen equivalents.





SPLASH!

Commercial

The SpongeBob Splash-Bash at SeaWorld features spectacular special effects including a nightly light, sound and water show

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.

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The mums who raise the swimmers

In preparation for their London 2012 marketing assault, Olympic sponsor and consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble (P&G) has got behind the women behind the stars of the Australian pool.

P&G has an incredibly diverse range of consumer brands including Gillette, Pantene, Oral-B, Metamucil, Vicks, Head & Shoulders, Ambi Pur and Fairy. The company is a sponsor of the entire Australian Olympic Team and has now linked three swimmers and their mothers with particular brands, setting them up as brand ambassadors.

Eamon Sullivan is ambassador for Gillette, Emily Seebohm for Pantene and Sophie Edington for Oral-B.

Maile Carnegie, Managing Director of Procter & Gamble Australia and New Zealand says that at a first glance, P&G and its brands seem to have little to do with the Olympic Games.

"Except that every Olympic athlete has



Left to right, Mum, Annabel Edington with daughter Sophie Edington, Eamon Sullivan with mother Pam and Emily Seebohm and mother Karen

a mum and mums are with their children every step of the way, nurturing and encouraging them, and helping them realise their dreams," she says. "And while we are not in the business of sports, P&G is in the business of helping mums. We help her care for her family every step of the way."

To recognise the lengths mums go to in raising Olympic hopefuls, P&G surveyed the mums of its sponsored athletes and found

that collectively they had on average so far:

- 5000 early morning starts
- Washed 150,000 dishes
- Travelled 250,000 kilometres or 6.5 times around the world
- Done 11,000 extra loads of washing
- Completed 10,000 supermarket trips

P&G are global sponsors for the next five Olympic Games from London 2012 through the 2020 Games.

Fundraisers diving in for national Swimathon

On Sunday 11 March 2012, more than 100 YMCA pools in Australia will host a Swimathon – the YMCA's first national fundraising event.

The YMCA Swimathon is open to everybody, regardless of their swimming ability, and the "Y" is appealing for as many Australians as possible to participate.

The money raised will directly benefit the local communities as the YMCA programs will be expanded to assist more people

in need and new programs will also be implemented.

The aim is to raise more than \$1million for more than 100 different communities from Darwin to Hobart, Brisbane to Perth.

The YMCA is hoping to see more than 30,000 people participate, most of them under 12, and potentially set a record with the Guinness Book of Records.

Visit www.ymcaswimathon.org.au to register or sign up at your local YMCA. Registra-

tion is free and will be open until the day of the Swimathon. Each participant is required to commit to a distance they wish to swim as well as a fundraising target depending on their age.

The event has the support of current World 100m Freestyle Swimming Champion, James Magnussen, as an official event ambassador.

"There are many disadvantaged families doing it tough across the country – YMCA is trying to make a difference and I'm happy to help," says Magnussen.

YMCA CEO Ron Mell says the YMCA Swimathon would have a local focus to encourage maximum participation from around the country.

"As the event is free to register, we've set achievable minimum fundraising levels reflective of appropriate age groups, ranging from a \$10 target for under fives, to a \$50 target for those aged 18 and above, plus options for juniors between the ages of five and 18, seniors, and even families," he says.

"The Swimathon is also a great way to get families, friends and the wider community to come together and do something healthy and active."

For more information visit www.ymcaswimathon.org.au



Volunteers – don't panic

There have been media reports recently suggesting volunteers could have increased liability under new Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

Safe Work Australia Chair, Tom Phillips is concerned inaccurate and alarmist claims made about the new WHS laws could seriously discourage volunteers and potential volunteers from undertaking volunteer work.

The new WHS laws will not apply to every volunteering activity or organisation. They apply if a volunteer organisation employs staff as well as volunteers to carry out work for the organisation.

"This isn't new – this was the case even in the old state schemes and it makes sense," says Phillips. "In three states and territories – Queensland, the Northern Territory and the ACT – occupational health and safety legislation (OHS) already specifically apply to volunteers. This hasn't changed. In all the other jurisdictions, the protections afforded by OHS legislation also apply to volunteers at workplaces."

"The new WHS laws do not, for example apply to the local sports club run entirely by volunteers or to any community group which does not have any employees," he says.

For those volunteer organisations and volunteers which are covered, there is an overall duty on volunteers to take care in the workplace. However, the duty to ensure a safe workplace remains the primary duty of the employer or "person conducting a business or undertaking" – not the volunteer. Importantly, there is unlikely to be a prosecution of a volunteer except in the most serious and exceptional of circumstances.

Volunteering Australia CEO, Cary Pedicini says that Volunteering Australia supports the national harmonisation of OHS laws.

"The harmonisation will mean a higher level of protection for volunteers applied consistently no matter where they volunteer" he says. "That is a good thing for volunteers. We will continue to work with Safe Work Australia to address any concerns that arise as we have done for the past twelve months."

Further information on volunteers and the new WHS laws, including FAQs and fact sheets, is available from www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au or get a QuickLink from splashmagazine.com.au.



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Waugh of words over pool stoush

One of the difficulties of teaching kids to swim – or in any endeavour where you're working with children – is managing the expectations of parents. The Sunday Telegraph reported in December that former Federal Opposition Leader Mark Latham had a confrontation with the swim teacher at Camden Pool in Sydney.

For someone with a reputation for confrontation, he could hardly have done worse from a PR perspective than "intimidate" the instructor of his children, who just happened to be Bev Waugh, the mother of international cricketer Mark Waugh and former Australian captain Steve Waugh.

According to the report, he was unhappy his children were not learning enough in the free government subsidised class. The Sunday Telegraph described his behaviour as "bullying and intimidation." He responded in The Spectator by saying he was calm, and that Waugh admitted the courses were oversubscribed.

The incident has sparked a media battle between Latham and Sunday Telegraph editor Neil Breen. The Sunday Telegraph said Latham had been reported to the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Latham in turn reported the Sunday Telegraph to the Press Council for invasion of privacy and unbalanced reporting. He defended himself in The Spectator, saying the report made him look like an ogre who attacked little old ladies.

The Sunday Telegraph reported Waugh as saying she "wished she had been brave enough to stand up to him at the time."

Responding in Crikey, Breen stands by the story, saying that the fact that the mother of his journalist Jennifer Sexton worked at the Camden Pool is irrelevant. Latham, however, says it is a conflict of interest that should have been acknowledged.

Singapore to get new international pool

An aquatic centre capable of handling up to 6000 is part of a new project in the Asian centre.

The Singapore Sports Hub will be a fully integrated sports, entertainment and lifestyle facility located on a 35ha site in Kallang. It will include:

- A new 55,000-capacity National Stadium with a retractable roof and comfort cooling for spectators;
- A 3000-capacity indoor aquatic centre complete with leisure facilities, expandable to 6000-capacity for specific events that meets world tournament standards;
- A 3000-capacity multi-purpose indoor arena which will be scalable, modular and flexible in layout;
- A water sports centre to enhance sports offerings in the Kallang Basin;
- 41,000 m² of commercial space for leisure, shopping and dining activities;
- A sports resource centre comprising a library, a museum and an exhibition centre;



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