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Residential Pools under \$50,000: Paul Fuller, Acacia Pool & Landscapes

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Best Refurbished Pool: Paul Fuller, Acacia Pool & Landscapes



Residential Pools \$50,000 to \$150,000:  
Neil Runciman, Frontier Pools



Best Environmental Swimming Pool  
Setting: Neil Runciman

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#### Double Gold:

**Residential Pools under \$50,000:** Paul Fuller, Acacia Pool & Landscapes, Tauranga.

#### Golds:

Larry Ogden, Paul Bailey, Ron F Dixon, Martin Dunn, Alvin Crosby.

#### Double Gold:

**Residential Pools \$50,000 to \$150,000:** Neil Runciman, Frontier Pools, Auckland.

#### Golds:

Carlos Morgan, Paul Fuller, Neil Runciman

#### Double Gold:

**Best Environmental Swimming Pool Setting:** Neil Runciman, Frontier Pools, Auckland.

#### Golds:

Neil Runciman, Carlos Morgan, Alvin Crosby

#### Double Gold:

**Best Refurbished Pool:** Paul Fuller, Acacia Pool & Landscapes, Tauranga.

#### Gold:

Kerry Richmond

#### Honourable Mention:

John Patterson, Narellan Pools, Hamilton

For a full report on the competition results, go to [www.poolguild.org.nz](http://www.poolguild.org.nz)

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# SPLASH!

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**Paralympics**

## Cowdrey becomes best ever

As part of Australia's sensational performance at the London Paralympics, S9 swimmer Matthew Cowdrey picked up five gold medals to become the nation's greatest ever Paralympian with a current career tally of 13 gold (from a total of 23 medals).

This places him well in front of Australia's previous best Tim Sullivan who had accumulated 10 golds in his career.

The Australian Paralympians tore through the water and smashed records in a powerful display. Following the lower medal count than expected in the Olympic pool, the Paralympic results have buoyed Australia's national swimming pride.

If it was possible to outshine Cowdrey, then only one person could do it – Jacqueline Freney. She became the queen of the games, picking up eight medals – all gold.

Not only was she the best in the pool, but also the best performing athlete in any discipline, ahead of two other swimmers – Cowdrey with eight (five gold) and Jessica Long from the US also with eight (five gold). Ellie Cole finished seventh overall with six medals (four gold).

Australia, with 37 swimming medals (including 18 golds), finished second behind China in the pool with 58 medals (including 24 golds), and ahead of the Ukraine, Russia, Brazil and Great Britain. New Zealand, with 12 medals (including five gold), came eighth.

Overall Australia had 85 medals (32 gold, 23 silver and 30 bronze). Curiously, this placed us fifth behind Ukraine, who had one less medal in total and an equal number of golds – but one more silver. China came first, followed by the USA and Great Britain. New Zealand finished 21st with 17 (six gold, seven silver and four bronze).



**Matt Cowdrey collecting yet another gold medal at an international meet last year**

### Australian pool medallists:

- Jacqueline Freney (8 gold)
- Matthew Cowdrey (5 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze)
- Ellie Cole (4 gold, 2 bronze)
- Brenden Hall (2 gold, 1 bronze)
- Blake Cochrane (2 gold)
- Katherine Downie (2 gold)
- Matthew Levy (1 gold, 1 silver, 3 bronze)
- Maddison Elliott (1 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze)
- Andrew Pasterfield (1 gold, 3 bronze)
- Michael Anderson (1 gold, 1 bronze)
- Michael Auprince (1 gold, 1 bronze)
- Matthew Haanappel (1 gold, 1 bronze)
- Prue Watt (1 gold, 1 bronze)
- Annabelle Williams (1 gold)
- Taylor Corry (2 silver)
- Rick Pendleton (2 bronze)
- Daniel Fox (1 silver)
- Timothy Antalffy (1 bronze)

### New Zealand pool medallists:

- Sophie Pascoe (3 gold, 3 silver)
- Mary Fisher (1 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze)
- Cameron Leslie (1 gold)
- Daniel Sharp (1 silver)

**Waterparks**

## Jamberoo extension moving ahead



The first stage of Jamberoo Action Park's long-awaited expansion plans have commenced, with preliminary site works for the Kangaroo Island Development now underway.

Dax Eddy, General Manager of Jamberoo Action Park, says the new development will result in the most exciting, high-thrill, water-based rides ever built in New South Wales.

The \$11.6 million project includes new rides, a 1700 space carpark and upgrades to Jamberoo Road to allow faster access into the park.

"In Stage One, we will build Australia's largest interactive water play area," says Eddy. Stage One will also include a Tornado waterslide – a raft-based ride that loops and twists before dropping into a huge funnel and shooting out into a splash pool.

Eddy says the Stage One expansion will create as many as 80 local construction jobs with the Talon Construction Group.



Teaching

## Klim gets kids in the swim

Popular Olympian Michael Klim has become the face of learning to swim in a new community announcement launched by Swim Australia and sponsored by insurer Australian Unity.

The Community Service Announcement reminds parents about the importance of swim education for all children, with Klim saying on the video: "The only thing better than seeing your kids have fun in the water is knowing they're safe in the water."

Klim says that having grown up around the pool his entire life, he had often witnessed children's pleasure and satisfaction at being able to swim.

"I've always seen swimming as an amazing skill for a child to acquire," he says. "Swimming is a tool for life, not only keeping children safe by building their confidence in and around water, but also enhancing their physical and mental development."

"Swimming not only gave me the opportunity to represent my country at the highest level but it taught me some invaluable life lessons such as perseverance, camaraderie, dedication and a passion to pursue a goal, and for that I'm very grateful. I would encourage all parents to give their children the opportunity to learn to swim."

The main message to parents in the Community Service Announcement is to enrol your kids in a registered swim school so they can be taught how to swim.



Go to [splashmagazine.com.au](http://splashmagazine.com.au) to view the video.



Michael Klim gives instruction to a young protogeee

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## In Brief

**Suters Architects**, winners of the SPLASH! Environmental Project of the Year for the Noble Park Aquatic Centre (see page 38), has received more good news, picking up an award from the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design for the Punt Road Oval project; and being short-listed by the World Architecture Festival Awards for the Noble Park Aquatic Centre. Winners will be announced in October.

**Swimplex Aquatics** has also been recognised, picking up an MBA award for building excellence. The Coffs Harbour-based company won the award for Best Commercial Project (Sporting Facilities) between \$3 million and \$5 million, for their redevelopment of the Coffs Harbour War Memorial Olympic Pool.

**A public swimming pool** is in on the "wish list" for Melbourne's Docklands precinct as part of Melbourne City Council's 10-year plan. The precinct currently lacks means for the residents to directly engage with it, hampering the development of community attachment. A possible location is by the waterfront at Victoria Harbour.

**Merlin Entertainments** is investing \$4 million in improvements for Underwater World at Mooloolaba, Queensland. The developments include a new \$3.5 million ocean tank and tunnel with four new themed zones, a state of the art water filtration system and the introduction of a more extensive marine conservation program. Merlin is looking to roll out more developments in the future.

### Fountains

## El Alamein gushing again

The world renowned 1960s El Alamein fountain has been restored and is back spraying late night revellers in Sydney's Kings Cross.

It was reopened in a special ceremony attended by the families of the fountain's architect, the late Robert Woodward, and the original fountain manufacturer, the late Eric Williams, and was switched on by the (now re-elected) Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore.

The dandelion-shaped fountain commemorates the Battles of El Alamein in Egypt during World War II. It is famous for its striking circular spray and has been the backdrop for countless photographs and videos.

The extensive heritage maintenance project will also benefit the residents of the area.

"Kings Cross is one of the most densely populated communities in Australia – not just a late-night entertainment area," says Moore. "Five years ago the City of Sydney began consulting with fountain architect Bob Woodward on a restoration project, and following his death in 2010, the work was carried out with the help and guidance of family members."

The El Alamein Memorial Fountain design was so popular that Woodward was commissioned to create versions for the Perak Turf Club in Malaysia, and three sites in the United States, including one larger



version which stands at the entrance to the Tupperware headquarters in Florida. A stylised illustration of the fountain is used as Tupperware's logo.

The 2012 El Alamein Memorial Fountain works included:

- The replacement of its 211 brass and bronze wands by Denis Williams;
- Waterproofing and restoration of the weirs;
- Repairs to the red sandstone surrounding the fountain by HBS Group;
- The replacement of thousands of mosaic tiles by RU Tiling; and
- Maintenance works to the tanks, pumps and filtration systems to ensure maximum water efficiency.

Denis Williams, son of the original fountain's manufacturer Eric Williams, was responsible for crafting the 211 brass and bronze wands on the fountain just as his father had done 51 years ago.

### Water quality

## Champions need to mind their pees in pools

Elite athletes should know better than to urinate in the swimming pool, but not apparently gold medalists Ryan Lochte and Michael Phelps. Both those champions admitted at the London Games that they do it; and according to them, so do many others.

Lochte went as far as saying on radio to Ryan Seacrest that going is "automatic" when he enters the water.

Meanwhile Phelps, with a poor understanding of pool water chemistry, said that it was a

normal thing to do, and that the "chlorine kills it so it's not bad".

"Peeing in the pool creates chloramines," says Tom Lachocki, CEO of the US National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF).

"Chloramines increase respiratory issues like asthma. Lots of swimmers suffer from asthma. When competitive athletes pee in the pool, we're grossing and they're wheezing. Sounds like a lose/lose no matter what kind of pool you're in.

"Bottom line – toilets are the better way 'to go'."

As well as the negative health affects, Lachocki says that urinating in a pool is just plain bad manners.

"It brings new meaning to watching our Ps and Qs."

Results of a recent survey from the Water Quality and Health Council found one in five Americans admit to peeing in public pools.

SPLASH! would like to believe this is just an American problem – but that may just be wishful thinking.



## White sand for blue water

Darwin's Sky City casino overcame a cloudy water issue by shipping in 400 tonnes of pristine white sand from Queensland. Originally the artificial beach used local sand sourced in the Northern Territory, but the silt gave the water an unattractive appearance. The new sand does not have the same problem, and the water is now as sparkling as the guests expect.

### Inflatables

## Interim Waterborne Inflatables Standard published

The interim standard for constant airflow inflatables in swimming pools (as discussed in the August issue of SPLASH!) has been published.

Australian Standard AS 3533.4.5(Int)-2012 Amusement rides and devices – Specific requirements – Waterborne inflatables, is now available for download from SAI Global. For a link, go to [splashmagazine.com.au](http://splashmagazine.com.au)

The Interim Standard specifies safety requirements and test methods related to materials, safety, performance, operation and management of constant airflow inflatable devices when used as

amusement devices on controlled water. It also specifies information to be supplied with the equipment.

The interim standard will exist for perhaps 18 months, during which time the industry and public can provide feedback and add input before the final standard is published.

The next edition of the Interim Standard is intended to also include sealed inflatable devices other than aquatic toys, e.g. blow up rings, inflated seahorses, rings intended for use on water slides and flotation aids for water familiarisation.



## Global news

**In Hallandale Beach, Florida,** a lifeguard was fired for saving a drowning man. Tomas Lopez responded to an urgent appeal from a beachgoer, and left the section of the beach he is paid to patrol to rescue a man in an "unprotected" area of the beach. The company that fired him cited liability issues. The area where the man was drowning had signs letting people know they swam at their own risk. The incident has generated much discussion in the US – much of it supportive of Lopez.

**Meanwhile,** a 15-year-old British tourist turned the tables in Dubai, when he saved a Wild Wadi Waterpark lifeguard. The lifeguard had been fasting following a dental procedure, fainted and fell into a water slide chute. She lay face down in the water and the boy, who has first aid experience, kept her face out of the water until more lifeguards arrived to administer CPR.

**An entrapment incident** occurred in a shallow children's pool at a swim club in Nashville, reports US magazine Pool & Spa News. A three-year old girl sat on the suction outlet and suffered internal injuries. Although the drain fitting was VGB-approved and not covered by the recent CPSC drain-cover recall, the magazine reports that the cover had become dislodged following the rusting of non-compliant screws.



## Tenders of the month

### Great Lakes Council

Requests for quotations are sought in respect of the preparation of both tender & contract documents for the facility management of the Great Lakes Aquatic & Leisure Centre.

Request for quotation documents may be obtained at no charge via [www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au) and are available until close of tender.

Costs for downloading the documentation is free; hardcopies are available for \$400 from Stuart Small. Requests for additional information may be made via the online forum.

Enquiries should be directed to John Dougherty on (02) 6591 7251 between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

**Closing date:** Closing date of requests for quotation will be 2pm on Tuesday, 2 October 2012.

### Kane Constructions

Request for Quotation

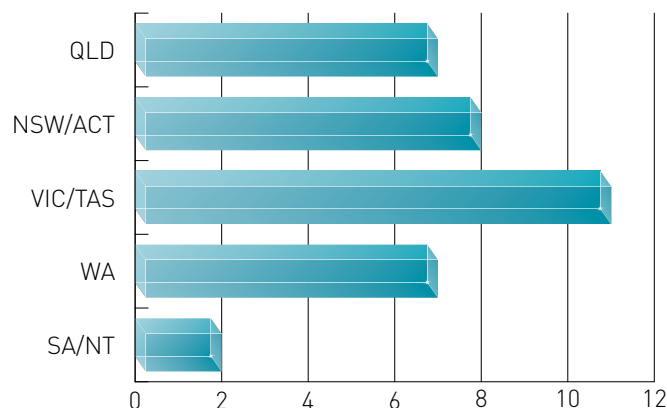
**Subcontractors quoting for:** Ringwood District Aquatic Centre

**Closing Date:** 4/10/2012

**Please send quotes to:**

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Fax: (03) 9428 9673,  
Email: [estimatingvic@kane.com.au](mailto:estimatingvic@kane.com.au)

## National aquatic tenders



New construction, management and maintenance tenders and EOIs for aquatic centres and commercial swimming pools for June and July 2012. Please note, these are numbers of jobs put out to tender; not the number of tender submissions returned.

### Lifeguarding

## Inspirational lifeguard moves onto the court

Sixteen years ago, when Gabriel Thionkol was only six years old, he escaped war in Sudan with his family. Where he ended up was little better. He lived in a Kenyan refugee camp for 11 years – and during that time he lost both his mother and his father.

But finally things did improve. At 17 he was welcomed to Australia and moved to Lismore with his siblings. He finished school at Lismore High and in 2009 was nominated for a Kids in Community Award, and council staff supported him to get the job as a lifeguard at Goonellabah

Sports and Aquatic Centre (GSAC).

He quickly became a highly popular member of staff, and now he is moving onto an even more positive stage of his life: furthering his dream to play professional basketball.

At well over two metres tall there's no doubt he looks like a basketball player – but it is skill and sheer determination that won him a place at the Australian College of Basketball in Melbourne where he will train with basketball greats such as Phil Smyth and Andrew Gaze, and travel to competitions in Asia and the USA where talent scouts search for new players.

"I'm really, really happy and I can't wait to follow my skill and follow my dream and train hard to make it to the next level – to play NBL," says Thionkol.

"I'm going to keep pushing forever. If I get knocked down I just have to keep getting up. It's not going to be easy to study and train so I have to listen and focus and keep fighting. It's just magical, an opportunity like this. This is what I've wanted, what I've been missing, what I've been looking for, and I thank God I found it. It is really beautiful."

GSAC Manager Graham Walker said Gabriel has inspired everyone at GSAC as well as his own family, as Gabriel's story reminds them to be thankful for life in Australia.

"He's worked so hard for this and given his background and the struggles he's been through with his family and where he's come from it's quite amazing he's persevered to this level," Graham said. "He always has a positive attitude and never gives up."

"He's just such a lovely guy and a really family-focused person – his main priority has been looking after his sister and brother and being the bread winner for them. Now he's got them well set up he's got a bit of freedom. As he said himself, it's his time now. I couldn't be happier for him."



Gabriel Thionkol



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Waterparks

# Flowrider park opens in Bangkok

A new aquatic entertainment venue opened in Bangkok in September. Flow House is a fully integrated urban beach club featuring a double Flow-Rider, plunge pool, changing rooms, and a licensed bar and restaurant.

Flowboarding is a hybrid boardsport which has been evolving since the 1980s. It combines the progression, manoeuvres and skills from the core action sports of skateboarding, surfing and snowboarding and to a lesser extent, wakeboarding and skimboarding.



Waterparks

# First sods turned on Sydney site

Construction is now underway for Wet'n'Wild Sydney, with the New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell turning the first sod of the \$115 million development in September.

Wet'n'Wild Sydney is being built by Village Roadshow Limited on a 25-hectare site at Prospect and is scheduled to open by summer 2013. When completed, it will boast 42 slides and attractions including a combination of a loop and mat racer, a double Skycoaster and a beach.

Village Roadshow says the waterpark is expected to attract 900,000 visitors per year, create more than 300 equivalent full time jobs during its construction and operation, generate more than \$500 million in economic activity for the local economy and anchor a powerful clustering effect for associated tourism-related employment and businesses.

It is also expected to include environmental features including state-of-the-art water efficient design, filtration and recycling technology to maximise water re-use on site, including use of recycled water to meet 90 per cent of the park's toilet, landscaping and hard surface wash-down requirements.

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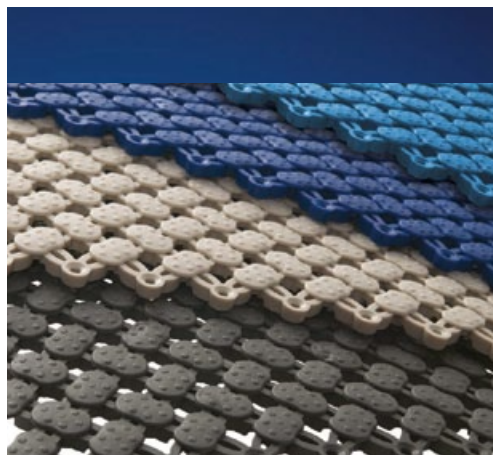
- Aqua Lock is easy and inexpensive to clean, simply by mopping over or hosing down.
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Waterparks

## Sea World still number one with families

Sea World Resort & Water Park still holds the title of number one family resort in Australia after taking out the 2012 award for Best Family Resort in the 4.5 star category in the Holidays With Kids Magazine Awards.

A huge 600,000 votes were received from reader surveys as well as 53,000 from an on-line members' survey, with some of Australia's top hotels and resorts featuring as finalists.

Sea World Resort General Manager Bikash Randhawa says that Sea World Resort won the award for the third year in a row as a result of the multitude of family orientated facilities on offer, including the very popular SpongeBob SplashBash Aquatic Playground, a waterpark, a newly renovated Kids' Club and a number of family friendly dining options.



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# Jumping through management contract hoops

It's becoming harder for small businesses to impress councils at tender time

The world of council aquatic centre management is rapidly changing: it is becoming much more competitive to win tenders in an environment where bigger players have a perceived advantage over the smaller, family-run businesses.

SPLASH! spoke with two people who have intimate understanding of the changing landscape: a management consultant and an aquatic strategist.

Martin Sheppard, Managing Director of Smart Connection Company, has been either providing advice to local government or managing the centres himself with local government for more than 20 years.

He says that local government faces challenges as they decide whether to continue to lease or contract out their facilities to local providers or explore what is available from larger national organisations.

The council's key concerns, he says, are:

- Pressure financially to keep the pool open and safe;
- Concern about the risk and safety aspects of the pool;
- How many of the community actually use the pool; and
- The reason for actually having a pool.

"So with those concerns in mind, how can a local operator be better prepared than the larger operator?" Sheppard asks.

## Community Use

"Some rural and community pools have been managed the same way for years and some even by the same fami-

ly, which can be really good for the community," he says. "Sometimes though, councils may believe that those pools would benefit from the management offering more than lap swimming, club and squad sessions and hoping on the hot days that the crowds come along."

Sheppard says the operator and the council need to agree on the priorities for the coming season and how the operator is going to generate greater usage, both with frequency of visits and the number of participants.

"The operator should be striving to develop strong relationships with schools, community organisations and clubs to use the pool during peak and off-peak times."

## Financial Pressure

Following the success of the Melbourne Olympics in 1956, many councils around the country built public swimming pools. Now, they are looking for large investments to bring those old pools up to modern standards and health guidelines: whether it's turnover rates, dosing systems or toddler pools running off separate filtration systems.

"Councils, especially outer-metro and regional councils, do not have the rate base of inner-city councils and therefore do not have the money to invest," he says.

"This challenge to government could create an opportunity for local operators to create a more strategic partnership with taking out a longer term loan to upgrade the capital cost of the pool, in return to gain a longer tenure at the pool."

Apart from the capital expense, the operational costs of the pool is influenced by the number of visitors, so the greater the patronage, the less the pool costs council. This is important as some councils believe the larger organisations may have greater program potential. Similar to the first aspect, this will only become more important over time.

## Risk and safety

As society becomes more litigious and the self-responsibility culture declines, local government is seen as an easy target for claims. So the need for more emphasis on health, safety and risk management will become even more focused.

Sheppard says that local operators must demonstrate how they are addressing the compliance obligations around aspects such as:

- RLSS Guide for Safe Pool Operations;
- State safety/health guidelines such as Practice Note 15;
- Risk management guidelines;
- Other statutory or compliance obligations.

He advises to be proactive – take your demonstrable evidence to the council and provide them with confidence. Although the council should be fully aware of all the requirements, this will have the added benefit of reminding council that other tenderers must also meet these obligations.

One of the perceived advantages of the bigger organisations is their use of well documented systems.

"Systems are essential," says Sheppard. "Having a documented system that staff are trained in and shared with council will go a long way to providing them with confidence."

He says the opportunity is simple: exceed the local council's expectations by:

- Providing a broad range of (wet and dry) programs to the widest community;

- Generate income to offset costs;
- Show how safe the facility is.

### The role of swimming in aquatic tenders

But while councils look stringently at the bottom line, many people in the community ask if that is the best way to approach management of aquatic assets.

One major complaint is that “bottom line fever” has led to a reduction in some of the community aspects that made swimming pools and aquatic centres so appealing in the first place.

Graeme Stephenson is General Manager of Aquatic Strategy at Swimming Australia. He is trying to convince local governments to support local competition swimming programs.

He says that traditionally, there have been a large number of pools managed by swimming coaches and their families, many of whom have a real passion for swimming and put a lot of value into coaching.

“When a big contractor comes on board, they’ll generally put a new person in that role, and while not wanting to take anything away from that person who might be very keen, they may not have the same breadth of experience or connection with the community,” he says.

He also says that while the original coach/manager might have a strong connection with a competition swimming program, the new lease might not obligate the new operator to provide the connection between the learn-to-swim and the competition program to the community.

He cites the example of Cairns, where they have a number of pools and going back 20 years they had a number of independent lessees.

“Many of these guys were coaches and had strong swimming programs – and a number of their swimmers made Australian teams and the coaches themselves were coaching on Australian teams.

“The council combined the venues and put them out on one management contract. The YMCA won the contract and I’m sure they improved the bottom line, but what we have seen is that they’ve gone from four of five strong clubs and to only one or two; and the venues don’t have strong club programs.”

He believes the tender documents should include something about lanes for clubs.

“We encourage councils to provide set lanes so the tenderers know what they have to provide for the swimming club or whoever it might be,” he says. “We don’t want massive occupancy – all we want is to just protect the opportunity for the club to access water space. Maybe even to say the club has these lanes at these times at this cost – and it might be up for negotiation – but the tenderer knows it has to provide something.”

But he admits they are commercial entities who want a return, and sometimes that comes at the expense of swimming club activities.

### A connected and healthy community

“What we’re seeing is that the biggest element of the evaluation criteria is the finance – the bottom line is the main thing. And that’s an issue – because we believe aquatic facilities provide a great role in creating a more connected and healthy community. I think councils should look at how they could get better benefit from their facilities, not just look at their operating costs.

“You see a council try to close a swimming pool and

then watch the community reaction. The community isn’t talking about the cost, but identifying with the benefits to the community.”

The difficulty is how to evaluate that as part of the tender criteria because some of those benefits are intangible.

“For instance, people who might be lonely go down to the pool and connect with others in the community and feel better – how do you measure that? It’s not like a rubbish collection service – that is a simple service provided for a cost. There’s no connection, it all comes down to price. But at an aquatic facility, how do you measure how they connect and support the community?”

Stephenson is balanced in his appraisal of the situation regarding big and small operators.

“There’s an argument that the independent operators know the community better and connect better than a big company. But the opposite side of the argument is that the big operators manage so many facilities that they’re good at putting together policy documents and doing some of these big things better. Some things the small operators do better; some things the big ones do better.”

### Wet versus dry

Stephenson’s role is to engage with all parts of the industry to have a voice for all aspects of competition swimming from the smallest clubs up to the large clubs.

But he also has a role in advocating aquatic facilities design that encourages competition swimming.

“A lot of pools now have bubblers and fountains; and we support that; but we don’t want that to mean we lose the rectangular pools. Leisure is important but we still want to meet the needs of swimming clubs and fitness swimmers.

“We recognise that 30 years ago that’s all there was – rectangular pools! And we know that’s changing but we don’t want the pendulum to swing too far the other way.”

*“We encourage councils to provide set lanes so the tenderers know what they have to provide for the swimming club or whoever it might be.”*

Stephenson says he speaks to a lot of people at multipurpose venues, and there is a trend for an increase in the dry exercise floorspace, while the focus on water space is decreasing.

Last issue, Ross Gage commented that councils should treat swimming pools more like other community assets such as libraries. Stephenson says there is some validity to that.

“In some ways, an aquatic facility is similar to a library. If the council doesn’t provide aquatic facilities then the market won’t. The market doesn’t provide libraries because they don’t make any money. Gyms make money and the market provides them, but we don’t think aquatic centres should necessarily be lumped in with gyms in terms of market thinking.

“The gyms can help support the pool – and a lot of the consultants advocate this – but I think the pendulum has swung too far the other way, and the decision matrix for gyms is dominating planning for new centres.

“They’re forgetting what a pool can provide for the community.” ■



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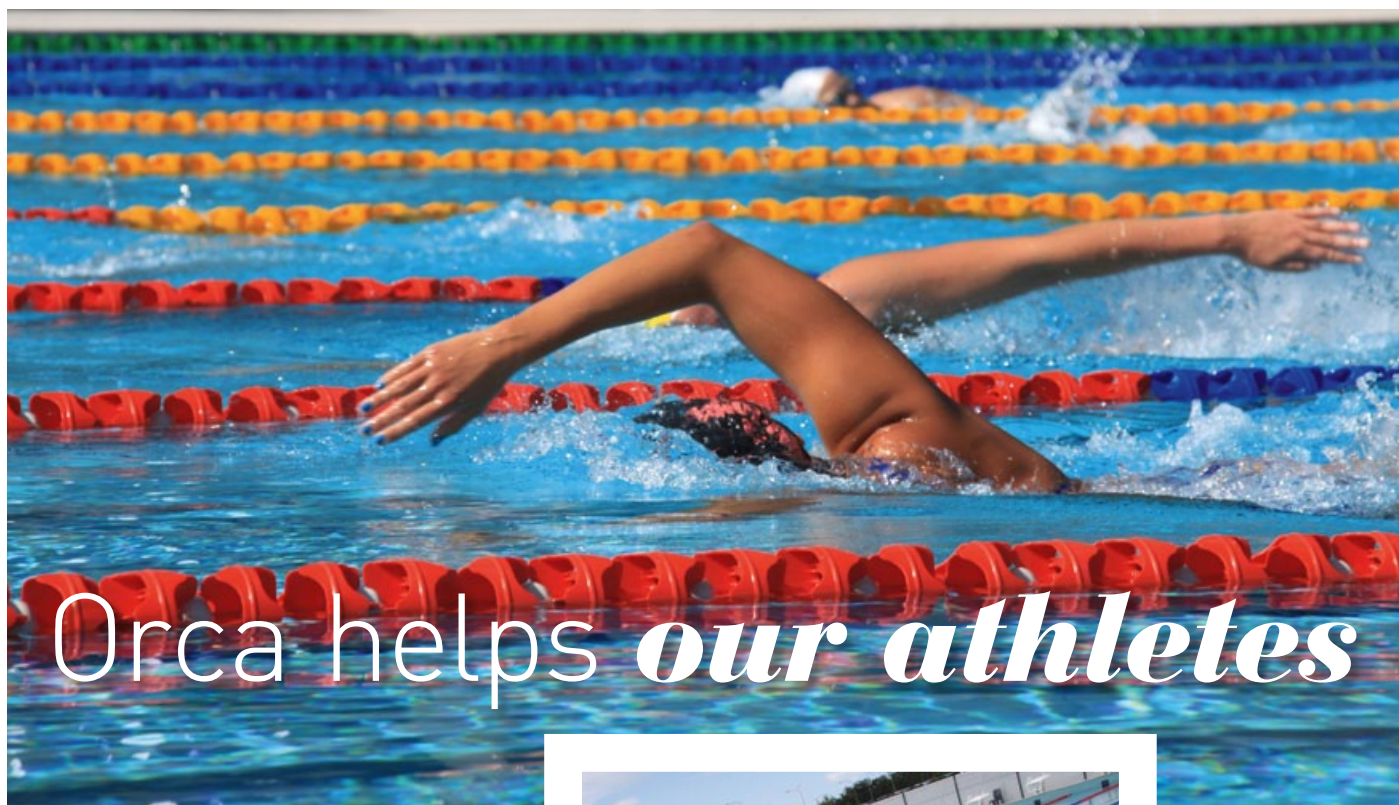
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Professor Brendan Burkett, Assistant Dean of Biomechanics at the University of the Sunshine Coast, certainly knows something about elite competition.

After all, he's won gold, silver and bronze at the Paralympic pool in Atlanta, Barcelona and Sydney – where he carried the flag as team captain in 2000. He recently went to the London Games with the highly successful Australian Paralympic team, co-ordinating the sports science and medicine.

So when he suggests something is a good training idea, you can take it to the bank.

The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) is one of only two Olympic facilities in Australia to have the revolutionary Orca Swim Tracker.

"It's a video camera system that has an underwater and an above-water camera," he says. "That in itself isn't anything new, but it runs on a track with a wireless transmission and wireless remote control.

"Traditionally you have to walk up and down the lane holding the camera, or arrange it on a trolley and get some lucky person to push it up and down, with the cables all over the pool deck."

Burkett and the university staff found the remote control especially beneficial.

"Filming above and below water has been done before," he says. "But the best thing is it's wireless – we need no cables – so it's safer and you don't have these things running in and out of the pool."

The batteries last about four hours which is more than enough for a testing session.

"Also, it's a unique product. It makes the athletes think, 'we haven't seen this before', and it inspires them to try a little harder."

Designed in Colorado, the Orca is in only three countries: the US, Spain and Australia. Following the



**Main:** One of the elite swimming camps held at the USC

**Above:** *The Orca* – remote, cable-free and unique

USC, the Western Australian Institute of Sport also picked one up.

Recently, a Japanese post-doctoral researcher, Koichi Kaneda, came down to USC to use the Orca. He did some testing and used the camera system to collect the data.

Burkett says the system is definitely having a positive effect on the athletes; and the USC Olympic pool gets quality athletes training there – including some under the tutelage of Stephan Widmer, such as Jess Schipper and Libby Trickett.

When SPLASH! spoke to Professor Burkett just prior to the London Paralympics, he was quietly confident about Australia's prospects in the pool.

"Matt Cowdrey is a key athlete and is very professional, and Elly Cole and Jacquie Freney are also contenders."

As those three took 22 medals between them, including 17 gold, it seems he was right on the money. ■

You can see a video taken by the Orca at [splashmagazine.com.au](http://splashmagazine.com.au)





# The most *isolated* pool in the world



Uninterrupted views over the Kimberley coast

Is this the most isolated swimming pool project in the world?

Aqua Technics Commercial was commissioned to install a 20 metre long fibreglass swimming pool on a deserted stretch of the Kimberley north coast in Western Australia for a luxury environmental resort.

The Berkeley River Lodge is one of the Kimberley Region's newest and most remote coastal properties. Visitors come to enjoy the wide open spaces, fresh air and natural experience; and one of the key selling points is its isolation. It is more than 170 kilometres from the nearest town and has no access by land. The only way to get to the resort is by air or water: by sea-plane out of Kununurra or by private vessel.

Not only was the isolation a challenge, but the location on top of a sand dune in an environmentally delicate area involved a great deal of innovative engineering and design.

The owners, Martin and Kim Peirson-Jones, wanted to minimise the impact of the swimming pool installation on the local environment.

Kim Peirson-Jones says they discussed a number of options with Aqua Technics Commercial – and all of them required transport to Wyndham and then a barge trip to the site.

“We also had to discuss how to physically handle the pool with only a 20 tonne excavator to move and place it,” she says.

The best option was a pre-fabricated, fibreglass pool that could be delivered to the site and installed quickly, without requiring major technical resources and materials. This method also required less disruption to the environment.

The plan involved shipping two 10 metre shells that would fold into each other for transport, to be joined on site by a flange moulded into the shells.

A barge brought the shells from the nearest town of Wyndham and at low tide, an excavator crossed sand flats and unloaded the shells. They were then carried individually via a track through the dunes to the installation site, where they were suspended on steel bars over the excavated pool hole.





*"It is more than 170 kilometres from the nearest town and has no access by land. The only way to get to the resort is by air or water."*



A spillway spa was also installed adjacent to the swimming pool, the combination allowing the Berkeley River Lodge to offer guests both exercise and relaxation with uninterrupted views of the surrounding area.

Kim Peirson-Jones says they are very happy with the end result.

"The pool is a focal point of the entire development; something enjoyed by all guests and frequently commented upon," she says. ■

## Details

**Project:** Berkeley River Lodge, Kimberley, WA

**Builder:** Aqua Technics Commercial

**Contact:** Neville Fenton (08) 9282 9006  
or nevillef@atcommercial.com.au



Top: The lodge's isolation is also its appeal

Above: Luxury is a key component of the resort

Left: The pool was shipped in two halves and assembled on site



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**FMG takes a Euro tour**

**F**MG Engineering, an Adelaide-based consulting engineering company, services South Australia, Queensland and Victoria. It is planning to expand its aquatic design division, and took up the invitation to tour Europe with Spanish manufacturer Fluidra, parent of AstralPool.

AstralPool Managing Director Peter Wallace says the study tour involved a number of influential consulting engineers and commercial builders who travelled to Spain to see the facilities that Astral Pool has been involved in fitting out; how they have been integrated into resorts, and how they could be incorporated into Australian resorts and hotels.

As part of the tour, FMG Engineering's Structural Development Manager, Neil Davey and Director John Goldfinch visited a number of European facilities, with Davey saying he gained a glimpse into the future of aquatic design.

"Gone are the days of the rectangular pool with an area for laps and an area for recreational swimming," Davey says. "The new-age pool is a multi-faceted, multi-purpose aquatic facility with something for all the family – with therapeutic air beds for mum and dad, shower streams, and large custom-made stainless steel spas that can be incorporated into feature pools. We also saw custom-built splash pad recreational areas for children with waterplay toys and slides."

**Top: The multi-level aquatic interior of the Andorra Hermitage Sport Hotel Resort and Spa**

**Right: The resort also has an outdoor section connected under the wall to the indoor space**





# "Water park Developers Dream"

Entitled Waterpark project available in a densely populated California location.

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"One of the centres we visited, the Andorra Hermitage Sport Hotel Resort and Spa, now attracts visitors from all over Europe due to the excellence of its wellness centre and aquatic facilities," he says.

FMG frequently assesses problems in Australian pools built during the 1960s and 1970s and provides maintenance advice on how to prevent leakage and avoid potential associated health risks. FMG Engineering sees a big market in pool renovation in Australasia and can provide the expertise required for pool upgrades.

"The technology used in these older pools is outdated and many commercial pools run at substantial losses due to the expense involved in maintaining them. We estimate the use of modern equipment would reduce running costs by around seventy percent," he says. ■



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### *A dune in the garden*

This ultra-stylised modular furniture has a simple elegance based on the natural form of a sand dune.

It is part of the Swiss E Form range of all-weather outdoor furniture made from lightweight fibrous cement.

The Dune allows a number of additions including a variety of comfortable seats and end-tables. The materials in the construction of the lounge include powdered limestone, and as the colour goes all the way through the material, it is free from chipping discolouration. Also, it can be completely recycled.

Designed and made in Switzerland, it comes with a five-year guarantee from Mosarte.

**Contact:** [www.mosarte.com.au](http://www.mosarte.com.au) or (02) 9436 2008



### *Growing garden boulders*

You'd be forgiven for being pleasantly confused when you stumble upon these artistic creations in the garden. Are they boulders, or some relic of the industrial age, where wild plants have taken root?

They are in fact, the latest planters from designer Kenneth Cobonpue. Part of the Hive collection from Ke-zu.

Over the past year Hive's exploration of planters and potting solutions for hospitality, home and commercial spaces has resulted in numerous designs that are full of mystique, charm and character.

Employing varied and intriguing materials from oxidised metals and cast stonework to leather and fibre reinforced polymers, the latest Hive collection offers a bounty of botanical designs to imbue the outdoor (or indoor) space with a mix of practicality and playfulness.

**Contact:** [www.kezu.com.au](http://www.kezu.com.au) or 1300 724 174.







### *King of the outdoors*

King Furniture is reaching into the outdoor domain with its new Jasper range.

The Jasper Outdoor is inspired by the award-winning indoor Jasper sofa and boasts the same flexibility as its indoor counterpart with a modular design that easily positions into infinite settings to adapt to the space and personal taste, even converting into a luxurious daybed for lazing in the sun.

Available in a range of durable high-density polyethylene rattan and premium King Outdoor fabrics, Jasper Outdoor covers are easy to clean and highly weather resistant. The galvanised, powder coated steel frames also ensure the sofa's longevity and resilience to rust; while the ultra-down filled cushions include multi-layer HR foam, memory foam and the KingCell system to ensure maximum seating comfort.

**Contact:** [www.kingfurniture.com.au](http://www.kingfurniture.com.au)



### *The Mediterranean look*

According to Amber's Kate Lane, the Mediterranean look can be achieved by selecting a light tile for the interior of the pool and a rich amber for the surrounds.

"This will accentuate the colour inside the pool while creating a colour-palette link to its southern European origins," she says. "Natural stone is perfect for this and its textured surface is excellent for a non-slip environment."

She suggests Amber's Riverstone concrete pavers with their lightly textured feel, travertine or sandstone. This image shows Eclipse sandstone.

**Contact:** [www.ambertiles.com.au](http://www.ambertiles.com.au) or 1300 362 241.



### *Stronger, warmer Swimroll with foam filling*

Swimroll – Foam Filled is a new product from Remco providing increased insulation benefits thanks to the PVC foam inside each slat.

The new foam-filled slats also have more buoyancy – which translates into greater additional safety – and they are completely hail-resistant.

The slats come with a five-year warranty and are fully compatible with all Swimroll automated roll-up systems.

Remco says the Swimroll – Foam Filled pool covers are the ideal solution for wet edge or infinity edge pools as their design allows them to roll out perfectly straight every time, without the need for guide systems.

**Contact:** [www.remco.com.au](http://www.remco.com.au) or freecall 1800 652 962.