

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, 28 February 2012



## Brooke calls MATEs to make a splash

**Brooke Hanson** is the first to admit she had a great support team around her when she won Olympic gold and silver for Australia in Athens in 2004.

There were times in her glittering swimming career when she couldn't do things all by herself; she had to rely on "her support team" to give her a helping hand and at times relying on her mates to take her to the pool.

That's why the eight-time FINA World Short Course champion had no hesitation in helping launch AUSTSWIM's exciting new initiative – **Making Aquatics A Terrific Experience** or MATE – which will now play a major role in helping all Australians enjoy the water.

MATE will assist people with a medical condition or who suffer with a disability to enjoy all the pleasures that pools around the country can offer.

"It's a very exciting program indeed and it is aimed at making life easier, when people with a disability visit an aquatic facility," said Brooke, an AUSTSWIM ambassador who was on hand at her home pool, the Aqualink Aquatic Centre at Nunawading recently to officially launch the program.

"Our catch cry is simple – make access to aquatics easier for all our MATEs - with AUSTSWIM supported seminars aimed at providing training for people who can help their MATEs get to the pool.

"The seminars are designed for family members, carers, personal attendants, disability leaders, team leaders, personal trainers and lifeguards.

"They will be supplied with information, the skills and the confidence to allow a person under their care to enjoy the water.

"As youngsters we were lucky enough to get so much pleasure from the water, activities that we still enjoy today.

"So it is good to see AUSTSWIM provide this guidance that will encourage and facilitate physical activity in an aquatic environment for people who do not always have the opportunities that so many of us take for granted when we walk through the front door of the pool."

Introducing the key instigators of the AUSTSWIM MATE seminar:



Left to Right: - Olympic medalist and AUSTSWIM ambassador; Brooke Hanson, Director of the Water Exercise Training Service (WETS): Jennifer Schembri-Portelli, Maria Burn and AUSTSWIM CEO: Gordon Mallett

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## **NSW LAUNCH**

The Hon. **David Bradbury MP**, the Federal Member for Lindsay will launch the NSW MATE program on Wednesday the 7th March, 2012.

**Where:** Ripples Leisure Centre (Charles Hackett Drive, St. Mary's NSW)

**Time:** 2-3pm

**RSVP:** Jared Wilson [jwilson@austswim.com.au](mailto:jwilson@austswim.com.au)

## **WHAT IS THE MATE SEMINAR?**

An innovative and interactive community seminar aimed at optimising health and wellness opportunities for people with medical conditions and/or disabilities.

The MATE seminar provides participants with the information, skills and confidence to take a person with a medical condition and/or disability to the pool for recreation activities.

The MATE seminar is not about swimming strokes; it is a guide to encouraging and facilitating physical activity in an aquatic environment for people who do not always have the opportunity to participate in aquatic activity.

## **Opportunities for all to enjoy the water**

Just under one in five (18.5%) Australians had a disability in 2009, according to new figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This represents approximately 4.0 million people.

- The main disabling conditions reported in 2009 were back problems (15.6% of all persons with a disability) and arthritis (14.8%).
- Just over half (52%) of people aged 60 years and over had a disability.
- Most of these (63%) did not need any assistance to manage health conditions or cope with everyday activities.
- For those who did, the most commonly reported needs were help with property maintenance, household chores and mobility.
- There were 2.6 million carers in Australia who provided some assistance to others who needed help because of disability or old age. Around 55% of all carers were women.

## **Who can attend?**

### **Family members**

- Parents
- Partners
- Friends
- Siblings
- Cousins

### **Support Person or Carer**

- Carer
- Personal Attendant
- Disability Leader
- Allied Health Professional
- Team Leader
- Personal Trainer
- Lifeguards

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## **The MATE seminar offers:**

- Comprehensive notes
- Real life scenarios depicting examples of frustrations to success!
- Simulation exercises – what your body does in the water
- Aquatic activities to use in an inclusive setting
- Networking opportunities with like minded people

## **Why is aquatic activity beneficial?**

- Promotes sense of well being
- Maximises body function and independence
- Improves mood and increases self-esteem
- Endorses water safety principles
- Provides fitness opportunities for you and your MATE

## **How to Enrol:**

The MATE seminar is held on a regular basis in metropolitan and regional areas.

For more information visit [www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au) or contact your AUSTSWIM Business Centre in your State or Territory on 1300 885 666

Alternatively, if you would like to host a MATE seminar for your facility, swim school or organisation please contact your local AUSTSWIM Business Centre to find out how.

## **ABOUT AUSTSWIM:**

AUSTSWIM, the Australasian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety is Australia's national organisation for the teaching of swimming and water safety.

AUSTSWIM has developed quality aquatic education programs for those wishing to enter the aquatic industry as a teacher of swimming and water safety™.

The AUSTSWIM accreditation is the industry standard for swimming and water safety teachers™ and is delivered and recognised in each state and territory of Australia and many countries overseas.

AUSTSWIM is now excited to introduce Making Aquatics a Terrific Experience (MATE), an innovative and interactive community seminar aimed at optimising health and wellness opportunities for people with medical conditions and/or disabilities.

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**For further information please contact:**

**Gordon Mallett, AUSTSWIM CEO**

**Phone: 03 9562 7900**

**Email: [ceo@austswim.com.au](mailto:ceo@austswim.com.au)**

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