



Matthew Stark poolside during his first international swim meet in Berlin.

## Matthew's big swim sparks celebration

**T**ony Stark is Iron Man; Eatons Hill's Matthew Stark is an aqua man.

The teenager recently brought home two medals from his first overseas swim meet, the German International Disability Swimming Championship.

The 16-year-old won a bronze medal in the final of the junior men's 200m individual medley (IM) and a silver medal in the 400m individual medley in Berlin.

That was despite Stark having never previously entered a 400m IM race.

"Even though I have never competed in that event before, my coach (Brendan Keogh) thought I had a really good chance

of swimming a fast time.

"Our preparation leading up to the race was brilliant and I felt in really good shape. My coach and I were both stoked with my time, as it was quite a lot better than he had hoped for."

In fact, Stark's time of 5:05.33 beat the previous Australian S10 class record for the event, set by Rick Pendleton in 2001, by more than 26 seconds.

"I just couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the time I had swum up on the board. I was unbelievably happy, and so was my coach," Stark said.

The Genesis Aquatics swimmer "seriously could not have been happier" with his Berlin trip, after recording personal best times in seven of his eight events.

"Considering this was my first international meet... the overall experience was truly phenomenal," he said.

Keogh said Stark swam "extremely well" in Berlin and praised his work ethic.

"Matt is a committed, hard trainer and a tough racer. He doesn't shy away from a challenge and this is a big part of why he has improved so much," Keogh said.

While Stark has his sights on competing at the 2020 Paralympic Games, his immediate goal is to improve his stroke.

"My goals will remain the same... aiming for fast times and great technique," he said.