



Swim school makes splash at awards

Swim instructor Petra Cruickshank and swimmer Samantha Brown with Sally McKittrick, Swim School Co-ordinator at Genesis Aquatic Centre, which has won a Swim Australia award.

Keeping children in the water after they learn how to swim has led to a local aquatics centre winning a national award.

Genesis Aquatic Centre at Bray Park won the SwimSPORT Award at the Swim Australia Awards held on the Gold Coast on 10 May.

The award is presented to the swim school or aquatic centre that leads the way in reducing the gap between children learning to swim and kids' participation in swimming as a sport.

Genesis Aquatic Centre has been involved in the creation of a Junior Dolphins program, and also in a pilot Sporting Schools program.

The centre's swim school co-ordinator Sally McKittrick said the SwimSPORT Award recognises "the centre that converts children from the Learn To Swim program across to the squad program the most successfully".

However, Ms McKittrick admits that can be a "really hard task".

"It's very difficult to get kids to go (on) from Learn To Swim to because parents think once they (children) have learned to swim, that's all they need to do," she said.

"We encourage kids to stay in the sport of swimming... and (recognise) the health benefits of swimming and the opportunities that swimming creates later on.

"We want the kids to be safe in water. Once they are competent in water then what we want them to do is to develop their flexibilities, the health benefits, the fitness - and swimming can do all of that.

"If we keep kids in swimming we'll have fitter, healthier kids."

Genesis Aquatic Centre head coach Brendan Keogh, who is also the head coach of Australia's Paralympics swim team, said the SwimSPORT award is something "everyone at the aquatic centre is very proud of".

"This award highlights the amount of teamwork that exists between the Genesis Aquatics swim teachers and coaches," he said.

Ms McKittrick said key to the success of the swim school was having its swimming instructors "co-operate together and blend together to bring the kids through", by each teaching a number of age and skill levels.

Located at Genesis Christian College, the aquatic centre is also home to a triathlon club.