

# AQUABILITY



Offers individual and group aquatic programs, and training courses for carers and therapists across NSW. Aquability is a program designed by The Spastic Centre that aims to bring pools and people together across New South Wales. It is a service for children and adults with cerebral palsy or similar conditions.

## Programs

Using the skills of trained aquatic physiotherapists, Aquability designs programs for local community groups that promote:

- Reinforcement of land based skills
- Increased gross motor coordination
- Increased range of movement and flexibility
- Increased muscle strength
- Improved balance and posture
- Improved fitness and endurance
- Water confidence
- Water safety
- Water skills based on the Halliwick method
- Achievement of independence in the water
- Basic swimming skills
- Relaxation and enjoyment

## Benefits of Aquatic Activities

- Allows independence of movement not possible on land
- Decreases swelling, improves circulation and reduces pain
- Decreases weight bearing, enabling easier walking and general mobility
- Reduces muscle spasm allowing relaxation
- Improves water confidence, water skills and basic swimming skills
- Encourages fitness

## Services Offered

- **Aquatic physiotherapy** is a treatment carried out in the water by a physiotherapist, where the properties of water are used to achieve specific therapeutic goals. Water is the ideal medium for pleasure and enjoyment, as the buoyancy it offers helps children and adults with a disability to move with greater freedom and to execute movements that are impossible on land.
- **Assessment, program planning and referral** by an aquatic physiotherapist to the most appropriate aquatic activity program.
- **Groups for adults and children:**
  - **Water familiarisation** classes for pre-schoolers. Basic water and safety skills are taught and developmental milestones are promoted by reinforcing land-based skills. A parent/carer is needed to assist children in the water.
  - **Mobility and fitness** classes for school aged children and adults. Reinforcement of water and land based skills, safety strategies and stroke development are an important part of these sessions.
  - **Stroke development** classes (after school) for school aged children.



- **Individual sessions** in six-week blocks for all ages based on special needs. Blocks may be repeated during the year.
- **Saturday morning** programs operate at the Captain Ron Patrick Hydrotherapy pool from 9:00am – 11:00am, for children and adults who cannot access the pool during the week. Each swimmer will have had an aquatic assessment prior to attending. The swimmer will need to be accompanied by their own carer who is responsible for changing them and conducting the aquatic program that has been designed for them. A physiotherapist is in attendance for consultation.
- **Training courses** are available for carers/therapists assisting people with disabilities in the water. This includes training in regional centres of NSW.

**Recreational aqua fitness programs** are run throughout the Sydney area.

## Special Conditions

Prior to use, all service users must have a medical screening form completed by their doctor to certify that they are able to be immersed in a heated pool. Due to the one-to-one nature of the care needed in the water, aquatic activities rely on carer and voluntary support.

## The Captain Ron Patrick Hydrotherapy Pool

The pool was opened in 1982 and was purpose built to cater for people with a disability. Captain Ron Patrick, who was the grandfather of a child with cerebral palsy, funded the building of the pool.

The pool water is maintained at a temperature of 32-33°C. Strict hygiene and safety policies and procedures are followed to ensure an optimum level of health and safety for all users. The pool is tested three times a day for chlorine and pH levels as specified by The NSW Department of Health Standards for Swimming Pools and Spas, and chemicals are adjusted accordingly. An independent contractor conducts monthly tests for bacteria.

**Public access** to the facility only is available for individuals or groups for a fee. Attendance depends on pool availability, which is usually in off-peak times. A medical screening form signed by the doctor and program from an external agency are required.

## Location

The Captain Patrick Hydrotherapy Pool  
5 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086  
Tel: 02 9975 8400

## Further Information

To access Aquability, or for direction on other services that may meet your needs, contact:

### PATHWAYS

The Spastic Centre information, referral, intake and planning unit

**1300 888 378**

Anyone may refer to Pathways

