

How swimming changed Matilda's life

By

[Nathan Taylor](#)

-

September 4, 2019, 9:52



Glenmore Park swimmer Matilda Mobbs at Nepean Aquatic Centre on Monday. Photo: Megan Dunn

Glenmore Park's Matilda Mobbs is one determined 10-year-old. Born with Spina Bifida and despite frequent hospital visits, she has achieved great results in competitive swimming and is proving her disability isn't a roadblock towards success.

Matilda was born with a form of Spina Bifida that causes the L4-L5 vertebrae to not form properly during pregnancy and the nerves in her Spina to fall through the gap and tether to her back, leaving neurological damage to her legs.

Beginning life in the water as a six-month-old at Eva Bory's Swim School to help strengthen the leg muscles she had, swimming and swim therapy became an important part of Matilda's life.

Swimming didn't put any pressure on her knee and ankle joints due to the support of the water, and Matilda's orthopaedic surgeon believes she walks well because of time spent in the pool.

Matilda has been swimming competitively since she was six and last year joined Nepean Aquatic Centre squads. She has now competed in multi-class and State meets for the past 12 months.

To date, Matilda has won four gold, five silver and seven bronze medals at various competitions including the Multi-Class Championships, Junior Metro Championships, Metro South West Championships, Catholic School Championships and PSSA.



Glenmore Park swimmer Matilda Mobbs at Nepean Aquatic Centre on Monday. Photo: Megan Dunn

Matilda said she enjoys swimming because of the way it makes her feel.

"I like swimming because I don't have to wear my leg braces and I don't feel like I have a disability in the water," she said.

Matilda's mum, Cassandra Mobbs, said the local swimming community has made her daughter feel "accepted".

“Matilda loves Nepean Aquatic Centre Swim Club, she feels like she is accepted. The coaches and kids are so supportive of her swimming,” she said.

Matilda swims with the Multi-class squad with other kids just like her. Her coach, Jackie Barck, recently added her to the discovery squad with some of the club’s strong able-bodied swimmers – who Matilda is determined to keep up with.

Matilda’s determination in and out of the pool is also inspiring others after she was recently named an ambassador for Westmead Children’s Hospital’s National ‘Curing Homesickness’ campaign.

“Matilda knows what it’s like to want to go home when you are stuck in hospital. She wanted to help other kids get to come home. The hospital has done so much for our family and we were honoured she was asked to help,” Ms Mobbs said.