

*Disability and Drowning  
Personal Experience,  
Research and Practicalities*

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*Royal Life Saving Society Australia  
World Conference on Drowning Prevention  
Vietnam May 2011*

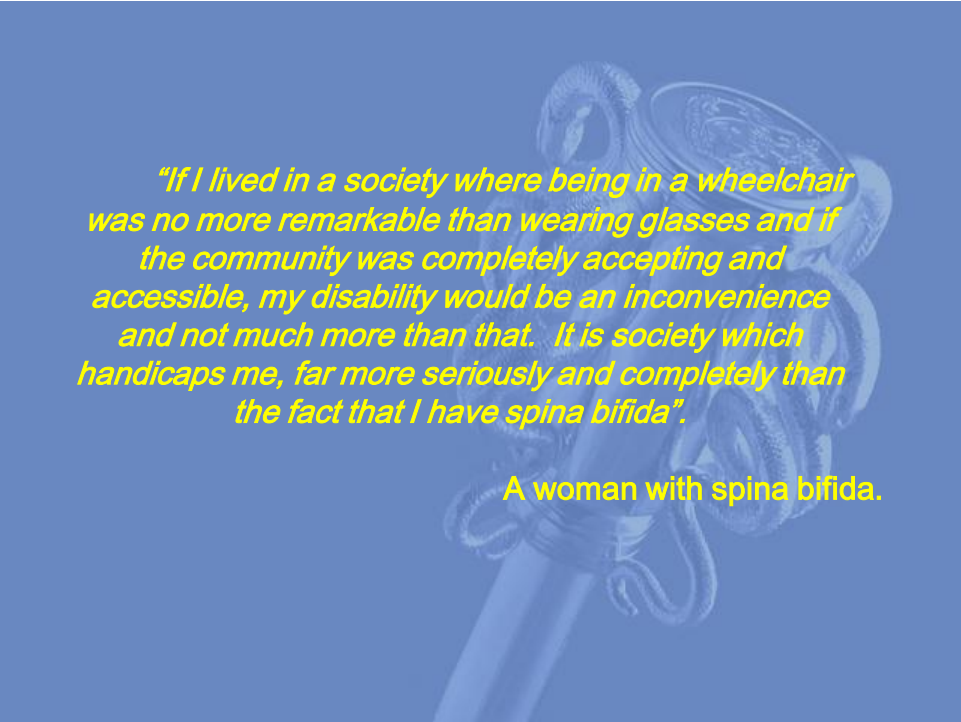


## Children with Disabilities

- 1 in 100 children has epilepsy
- 1 in 300 has a congenital heart lesion
- 1 in 500 has cerebral palsy
- 1 in 3000 boys has muscular dystrophy

## Children with Disabilities – Quality of Life

- Medical Model of Disability
  - Social Conception of Disability



*"If I lived in a society where being in a wheelchair was no more remarkable than wearing glasses and if the community was completely accepting and accessible, my disability would be an inconvenience and not much more than that. It is society which handicaps me, far more seriously and completely than the fact that I have spina bifida".*

A woman with spina bifida.



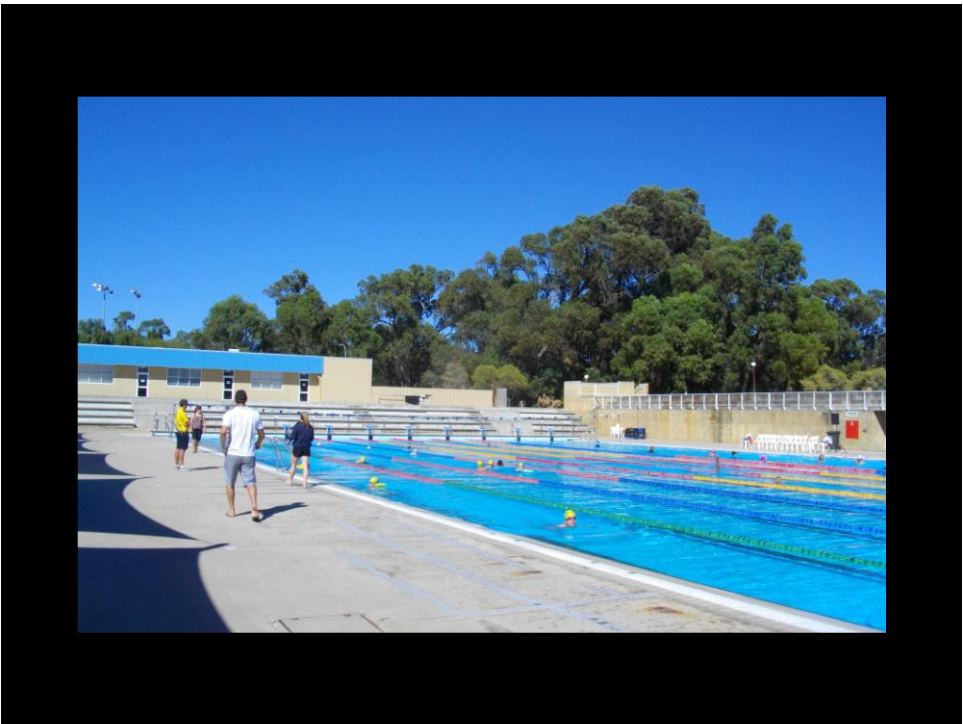
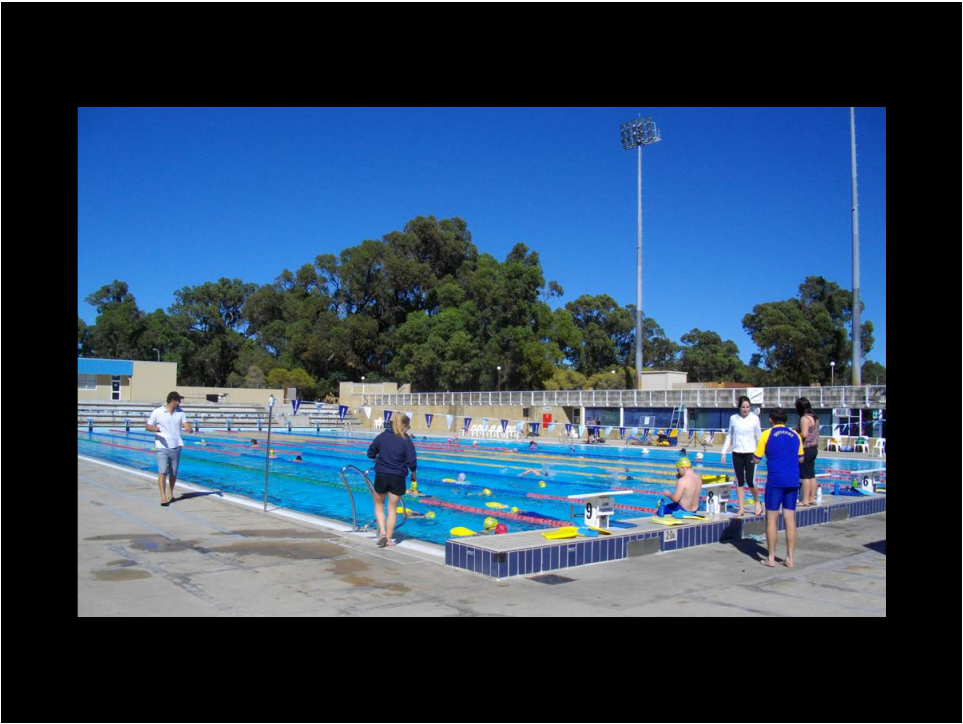
## Water Involvement – Children with Disabilities

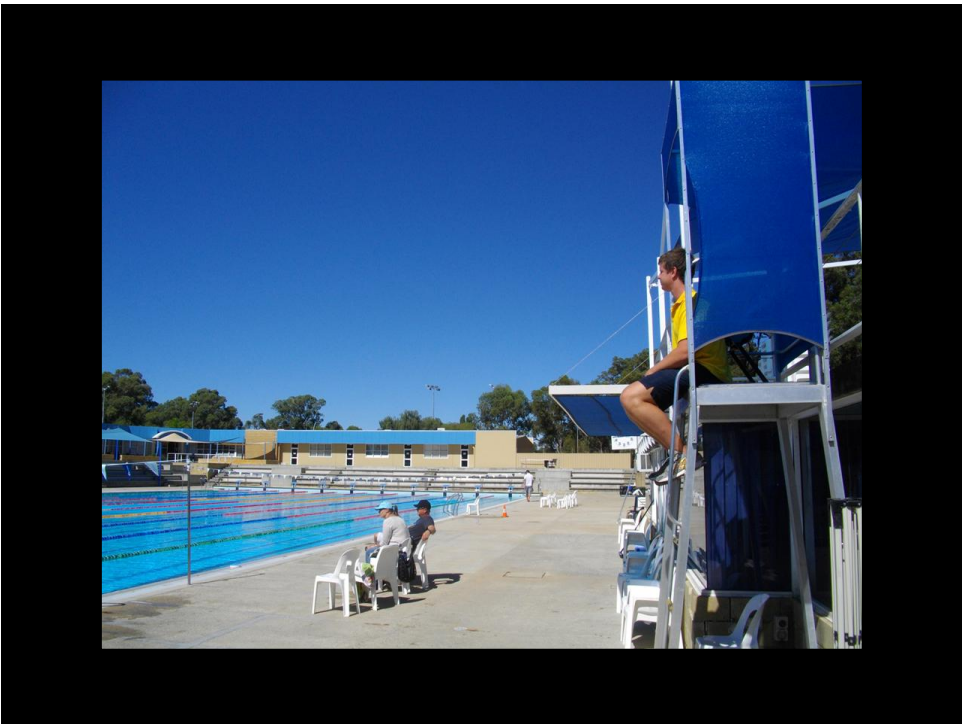
- Hydrotherapy
- Convalescence and Rehabilitation
- Adapted Aquatics

## Practicalities

- Buoyancy and the body
- Clinical consequences of disability
- Safety







## Epilepsy and Adapted Aquatics

- Brisbane Drowning Study
  - 5% of deaths – epilepsy related
- No deaths or morbidity due to epilepsy in supervised swimming
- Seizure Triggers

## Disability and Drowning

- Swimming – a catalyst for social interaction
- Competition – stroke development, distance events, travel
- Enrichment of life – also for the able-bodied



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