

# INSPIRE

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019

Can  
Too





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Face Your Fears is this theme for this publication. Our CEO, Peter Mclean shares his own fear which he overcame with Can Too.



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Mentor Paul Taylor shares how with Can Too he went from struggling to swim 100 metres to realising that anything is possible.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

What content would you like to see? Please contact us at: [info@cantoo.org.au](mailto:info@cantoo.org.au) if you have a story you'd like to share, an idea for a section, why you love your pod or if you can recommend a fellow Can Tooer for demonstrating Can Too spirit.

*If you would like to display Inspire magazine at your workplace, please contact us at: [info@cantoo.org.au](mailto:info@cantoo.org.au)*

# WELCOME TO INSPIRE MAGAZINE

Welcome to the last edition of *Inspire* for the year. The theme for this Spring 2019 edition is Face Your Fears, which is fitting as we're currently immersed in the learn to ocean swim program. As for many ocean swimming is associated with feelings of trepidation.

We empower our community members to overcome such fears by teaching them the skills to ocean swim delivered by qualified, experienced Coaches with the support of caring Team Captains, Mentors, Champions, and certified Water Safety Crew, within the group exercise environment of the pods (training groups).

Can Too Champion, Kieran Gallagher shares on page 22 how he overcame and used his fear of drowning, which he felt as a five-year-old, to help other Can Tooers transform their lives. To show them that they can make the impossible possible.

One Can Tooer Kieran supported to conquer an ocean swim, which changed his entire world forever, was Grant Campbell. Grant went from thinking at the start 'I can't do it' to recently reaching the pinnacle of the sport – swimming the English Channel.

Read on page 8 how Grant's team of Can Tooers, the 'Too Cans' trained for and conquered the 'Everest of marathon swimming'.

The Too Cans also supported the first Can Too marathon swim pod for the 10km Mana Island Fiji marathon swim. Find out on page 16 how the Pod showed true Can Too spirit to support each other and those in need by performing an unexpected boat rescue, during one training session.

One of the Pod members was Lara Solomon who went from being fearful of putting her face in the water to completing monthly 5km ocean swims in an effort to raise \$120k to fund an ovarian cancer researcher, to honour her mum who died from the disease.

Lara also battled her own thyroid cancer this year, she demonstrated Can Too determination to 'just keep swimming' to recently compete in the Mana Island 10km marathon swim.

A potent example of a mentor and participant's relationship to overcoming fear together is explored by Robin Nicholls and Kate Cooper in the You Can Two section on page 10.

Can Too Mentor Paul Taylor also shares his Can Too journey which started with struggling to swim 100m.

'Coach Gary Emmerton is kindly explaining what's going wrong and how, together, we're going to fix it. Since then I've gone on to complete an Ironman, a 5km open water swim and a 10km pool swim. The fear of the unknown won't stop me again,' wrote Paul on page 26.

I'm pleased to see this summer swim program reach record numbers of 500+ Can Too ocean swimmers and to see a new Campbelltown Pod led by Craig and Mitch



Dwyer in loving memory of Can Tooer Natalie Dwyer.

I'm also happy to announce a new Can Too goal swim, the [Noosa Summer Swim on 1 February](#), where I hope Can Tooers from Sydney as well as Queensland can enjoy smashing this goal.

Our Autumn swim program will train for the Balmoral 1km, 2km and 5km swim goals, which will also include our first Port Macquarie swim Pod.

I was reminded recently about why we do what we do when I heard cancer researcher Dr Vivian Kahl share how she is working on improving the prediction, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Dr Kahl is working on a new technique known as Telomere Fiber-FISH (TFF) to measure telomere lengths and what affects them, particularly in cancer cells with the aim to provide a screening platform for new cancer therapies.

She is inspired every day to seek a better way to treat cancer by her father, who died of bone sarcoma when she was 10 years old.

This was a potent reminder that facing our fears, such as my own fear of running a marathon which was only made possible through Can Too, is nothing to the prospect of facing a cancer diagnosis.

Thank you to everyone in our community for an outstanding year of making positive impacts on your own health and wellbeing and supporting each other in the community to do so, as well as helping cancer researchers to achieve their goals to make the world a better place.

I look forward to continuing to ride the waves of success of Can Too with you next year. Wishing you a safe and Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

See you around in orange,

**Peter McLean**  
Chief Executive Officer, Can Too Foundation

# CAN TOO TRAINING PROGRAMS



**LONDON MARATHON**  
11 DEC 2019 – 26 APR 2020



**BALMORAL 1KM & 2KM SWIMS**  
28 JAN – 5 APR 2020



**BALMORAL 5KM SWIM**  
24 FEB – 5 APR 2020



**RUNWEST FUN RUN**  
29 JAN – 29 MAR 2020



**SMH HALF MARATHON**  
12 FEB – 17 MAY 2020



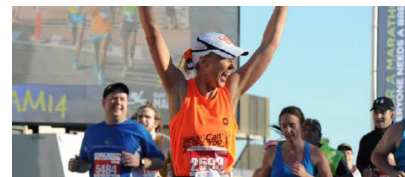
**HAWKE'S BAY HALF MARATHON**  
12 FEB – 16 MAY 2020



**NOOSA HALF MARATHON**  
12 FEB – 23 MAY 2020



**COOLY CLASSIC OCEAN SWIM**  
19 FEB – 26 APR 2020



**GOLD COAST MARATHON**  
19 FEB - 5 JUL 2020



**GLOW WORM TUNNEL TRAIL RUN**  
10 MAR - 15 JUN 2020



**GOLD COAST HALF MARATHON**  
1 APR - 5 JUL 2020



**WIN!**

**WIN BROOKS SHOES IN EVERY RUN PROGRAM**



**HONOLULU MARATHON**  
29 JUL - 13 DEC 2020



**BLACKMORES SYDNEY RUNNING FESTIVAL 2020**

# CAN TOO ADVENTURE CHALLENGES



**TREK KAKDU**  
W/ EDITH HURT  
7 - 14 Jun 2020



**TREK ICELAND**  
W/ ANGIE STEVENSON  
24 - 29 Aug 2020



**VIEW THE FULL TRIP CALENDAR HERE**

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 HALL OF FAMERS

Our very special thanks go to the following community members. This list of fundraising legends includes people who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame, or reached a new fundraising milestone, during 2019\*. Thank you to everybody who goes above and beyond to help continue funding cancer research and prevention. \*The report was drawn on 13 November 2019.



## \$5,000

Alison Coleman  
Alix Russell  
Amanda Pearce  
Amanda Player  
Andrew Glover  
Anna Whiteside  
Anna Wild  
Annie Pattinson  
Benjamin Moyle  
Bronwyn Gibbs  
Catherine Williams  
Catriona Martin  
Ceri Gibson  
Christine Napier  
Christy Moses  
Claire Elliott  
Claire Moulsher  
Colin Bates  
Daniel Duemmer  
Dawn Piebenga  
Deborah Hair  
Deborah Hatter  
Declan Byrne  
Dianne Lawrence  
Dick Herman  
Eilish Cleaver  
Emma Bowen  
Gemma Whitley  
Geraldine Murphy  
Ghazaleh Moosavi  
Grant Cameron  
Hannah Cook  
Hayley Kowal  
Jacqui O'Donnell  
James Hayes  
Janene Rox  
Jenny Norman

Jessica Chan  
Joanna Byers  
Joanna Penney  
Jodi Vallak  
Johanna Hall  
Julia Lukas  
Julie Fakira  
Justin Gasper  
Katie Pellew  
Kelly Bloore  
Kerrin Bleicher  
Kirsty Conlon  
Laura Manuel  
Laura Robb  
Lauren Simpson  
Lena Hammond  
Liz Blyth  
Liz Donohoe  
Lucy Tustin  
Maddie Finnigan  
Mal Higgs  
Maria Alonzo  
Marlene Van Vuuren  
Matthew Hall  
Megan Pearson  
Megan Taslaman  
Meggy Beukelaar  
Mel Ware  
Meredyth Bull  
Mia O'Brien  
Michael Cerny  
Nea Saunders  
Nic Morris  
Nicki Dean  
Patrick Marzano  
Paula Woodward  
Rebecca Lloyd  
Samantha Croxall

Sarah Barratt  
Sarah Cohn  
Sarah Crosby  
Sarah Ingham  
Sarah Kaleta  
Stacey Keightley  
Stephanie Smith  
Stephen Harris  
Steven Evans  
Stuart Geach  
Susan Mullard  
Susannah Miall  
Tess Evans  
Tim Buskens  
Vanessa Wadih  
Venetia Cole  
Wendy Chen  
Werner Hettasch  
**\$10,000**  
Annabel Finkelstein  
Anne Moller  
Ashleigh Mills  
Avril Holden  
Barbara Rabbitts  
Brigid Ferguson  
Emma Ferris  
Greer Banyer  
Hannah Lewis-Dalby  
Jamie Powell  
Jenifer Jagielski  
John Stoel  
Julia Macdonald  
Karen Jones-Gudmunson  
Karlie Neale  
Kathryn Mitchell  
Kristine Asimus  
Leigh Elliott

Lucie Strudwick  
Mandy Bussey  
Marianne Jaques  
Merrienne Sinclair  
Michelle Inns  
Millie Tyson  
Monique Ferguson  
Nichola Byrne  
Nisha Sachdev  
Patty Ho  
Peter Shearman  
Ros Elmslie  
Samantha Guthrie  
Sophie Hicks Lloyd  
Susan Campbell  
Taylor Denny  
Zoe Jennings  
**\$15,000**  
Amanda Groves  
Angela Williams  
Brett Mason  
Danielle De Laine  
David Hanson  
Grant Campbell  
Julie Hill  
Katrina Chau  
Kieran Gallagher  
Lee-Anne Carson  
Michael Finkelstein  
Nicole Jolliffe  
Peter Yeomans  
Rachael Dez  
Rachel Spencer  
Renuka Fernando  
Stephanie Bolt  
Theresa O'Halloran  
Virginia Lane  
Zoe Taylor

**\$20,000**  
Karen Ingram  
Kath O'Reilly  
Katrina Smith  
Kim Cook  
Lara Solomon  
Louise Mackinlay  
Margie McMahon  
Melanie Junghans  
Natasha O'Brien  
Thomas Bodger  
Victoria Kvisle  
**\$25,000**  
Craig Dwyer  
Gill Shearman  
Helen Kowal  
James Casey  
Kris Charody  
Monthly Swimmers  
Niall Faber  
Simon Buckingham  
**\$30,000**  
Edith Hurt  
**\$40,000**  
Cathy Duloy  
**\$45,000**  
Lorenzo Poletto  
**\$50,000**  
Gina Teague  
Laurie Ingleton  
Oscar Trimboli  
**\$55,000**  
Ben Stammer  
Lizzie Crowhurst  
Mark Ellis  
**\$65,000**  
Dani Lombard



## I LOVE MY 10KM MANA ISLAND FIJI POD - SUPPORTED IN MEMORY OF MARK ELLIS

**To see a school of Can Tooers band together to battle their way through a marathon 10km swim program, is to witness grit, camaraderie and dedication to their goal and each other. As demonstrated when the pod unexpectedly rescued fishermen from a sinking boat, during their open water training session.**

Team Captain, Lizzie Crowhurst said this rescue mission, where the Can Tooers swam over to rescue three fishermen after their boat capsized and sank at Balmoral Beach, showed 'what camaraderie there is, in this wonderful pod'.

Fisherman, Kevin Tu, said that within 20 seconds of jumping out of the sinking boat the swimmers came to his rescue.

*"We had people like [Can Too Champion] Kieran Gallagher plus many others come to our rescue. We were quickly saved and pulled towards the beach,"* said Kevin,

*"I don't dare to think what could have happened if no one was around to help us ... luckily the people who saved us were able to retrieve most of the items [wallets, bags and phones] back for us."*

Lizzie recognised Can Tooer Dianne Telford, at her pod's awards night post Fiji swim for being front and centre at the rescue.

Dianne was also nominated for awards - for stepping up from swimming a 1km race at Balmoral in April to a 10km event in October and for being so orange that she lived in Orange and travelled to Sydney for the swim squads. Once she even drove through a snow drift to start the journey.

Avid marathon swimmers, The 'Too Cans' (see story next page) funded Can Too's first marathon swim pod as they knew plenty of Can Tooers such as Dianne who were ready to take the plunge into long-distance swimming.

The leadership team: TC Lizzie, Champion Kim Cook 'Cookie' and Mentors, Katie Price and Grant Campbell sourced amazing guest speakers for the pod, including the first wheelchair athlete to swim the English Channel, John Maclean and an Invictus Games swimming competitor and breast cancer survivor, Captain Ruth Hunt.

Can Too Alumni, Anna Lewis, who won the 10km relay team race at Fiji with 'the immortal', Can Too Board Director, Simon Buckingham and 15-year-old Hayden, explained that the other guest speakers such as a dietician, helped prepare them for the long-haul swim.

"Taking on a 10km swim involves lots of preparation such as learning how much food to eat and water to drink and how to do this whilst swimming," explained Anna.

Anna's nutrition of choice was a jam sandwich kept in two snap lock plastic bags, down her bikini bottoms and for Ros Elmslie it was a row of biscuits, wrapped in plastic in her cossie.

Ros' mental trick to keep going was to round up the number of kms that she'd swum.

Her Can Too friend Robin Nicholls explained if Ros swum approximately 12km - the estimated distance of the Mana Island course, she would jokingly round that up to 30km.

Can Tooer, Kim Samuel shared that such strategies are needed to combat the mental game of long-distance swimming.

"You must be honest with yourself about your weaknesses and find ways to work around them," said Kim.

For Kim who returned to ocean swimming after having a 13-year break it's not stopping for a drink, only 100 metres offshore, just before the last lap of the 10km swim. She explained that stopping there when you've already swum 7.5km is too tempting to not finish. To commit to the distance, she swims about 500 meters



**The Pod blew their fundraising commitment of \$27,913 out of the water to raise over \$62,000 for Can Too to fund Australian cancer research and prevention.**

past the drink station pontoon to have a gel.

*"My mental game is not great when I stop so I had to find a strategy to overcome that and stop thinking about finishing at the beach, so I take a lot of fluid in in the first two laps so I don't have to stop for a drink in the third lap and battle through."*

For Anna Lewis her strategy to battle the uncomfortableness of burning bum cheeks and chaffing is to 'suck it up, it's part of it, swim faster', she laughs.

***Many of the swimmers chose the challenge of this swim to honour their comrade, the Late Mark Ellis, including Sam Guthrie and Kim Samuel.***

Sam Guthrie, has also had to overcome challenges to keep swimming, she is a breast cancer survivor. Team Captain Lizzie nominated Sam in her Pod Awards as the 'person most likely to swim the English Channel, because Mark Ellis said she could'.

Sam said that she was always supported by Mark in ocean swimming, and loves how supportive all the pod members are of each other.

"I really love this pod! The enormity of the challenge ahead of us means that we have banded together to

ensure we each reach our goal. I have made friends for life in this pod." said Sam.

*"I met Mark on my first Can Too swim at Lake Macquarie, and over the years we enjoyed many swims, both near and far... he faced every challenge life threw at him head on and was determined to make a difference to people's lives,"* wrote Kim.

Can Too Coach, Peter Reiter, switched roles to be a participant in the longest swim of his life at Mana Island, inspired by Mark, who he had coached.

The ex-US National level swimmer also won one of Lizzie's awards for converting from a pool to an ocean swimmer and who demonstrated butterfly whilst waiting for the 'rest of us to catch up in the pool', wrote Lizzie.

Peter said it was great to experience the camaraderie of the pod and to just enjoy swimming rather than always high-performance coaching and training on his own.

Two days after her 10km swim Dianne Telford demonstrated the pod's spirit as she with Can Too Founder Annie Crawford and Hannah Lewis-Dalby, completed a 5km swim, to support their fellow Can Tooer, Keir Garrett to swim, who couldn't complete the swim on the 10km day.

"The smiles say it all, Keir achieved her goal," wrote Dianne.

The Pod's Coach Christina Echols said that the swimmers improved in leaps and bounds through the program and that 'seeing them achieve the goal of completing the 10km swim in Fiji is all a coach could ever ask for'.

Team Captain Lizzie also felt very proud watching the Can Too Mighty Manathoners in action.

***"As it turns out, the course was actually in excess of 12km but the guys put their heads down and just kept swimming."***

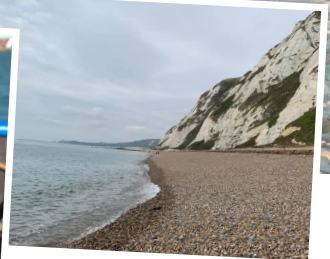
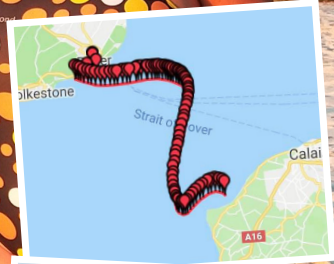


**Please share why you love your pod on our [Can Too Run and Swim Facebook page!](#)**



# HOW TO REACH THE PINNACLE OF OCEAN SWIMMING?

JUST KEEP SWIMMING



**Five Can Tooers achieved their 'Everest summit moment' of marathon ocean swimming – to swim the English Channel – as well as raising more than \$32,242 for cancer research and prevention.**

On 19 September, the Can Too team known as the 'Too Cans' swam the S-shaped international crossing in a relay.

The team, made up of Kim Cook, Elizabeth Crowhurst, Grant Campbell, John Cadden and Glenda Hunter-Brittain, finished with an official time of 14 hrs 34 mins. To be recognised by the Channel Swimming Association, they couldn't be assisted by any kind of artificial aid, could only use goggles, one cap, a nose clip, earplugs and one costume each and enter the sea from the shore of departure and finish on dry land at the other side.

According to Grant, the swim initially started as a joke but became quite real in icy waters and 34km later. The training started six months prior to the event and wasn't a laughing matter either.

*"We did extra-long swims in the dark, in very cold water, up to an hour of swimming three times a day to replicate the requirements of the event as closely as possible,"* said Grant.

***"Swimming the English Channel with my friends was an amazing, very special experience. In a way, even better than being a solo swimmer because of the camaraderie that developed."***

Glenda explained that to prepare for the event the crew completed the Rottneest Ocean Swim (19.7km), Palm to Shelly Beach (26km), Bondi to Watson Bay (10km+), swam in Manly Dam in 12-degree water at night and clocked up many, many laps in the pool.

*"I was the lucky person who swam the final leg to land in France,"* said Glenda.

*"I arrived at a beautiful sandy section, stood up and walked up the beach ... there were up to 100 people on the shore clapping, cheering and calling out congratulations."*

*The French were pleased to hear that we were from Australia. I received hugs, smiles, handshakes and good wishes. An amazing way to finish what was a challenging and epic day with my fantastic Can Too team."*

The Too Cans were inspired by the tenacity and courage of their former teammate – the late Mark Ellis.

**Mark's wife Lizzie wrote her husband's name on her arms for the epic swim.**

*"I swam for my husband who should have swum with us but who left us with memories of his courage on 23 February 2019. You were in our hearts."*

*Lizzie said the swim was colder, tougher and longer than they all expected, but felt lucky to get the window of opportunity they did due to adverse weather conditions.*

*"After swimming for 40 minutes after the earliest start time we were given, we were told to swim hard because there was a front coming. And it did arrive! Because of that weather, nobody swam for two weeks after,"* said Lizzie.

Arriving in Dover less than 48 hours before the race start meant jet lag was a factor. Kim said that starting at 01:43am meant that they swam on next to zero sleep.

*"Successfully landing in France after 14hrs 34mins was even sweeter knowing the conditions were tough and challenging, but we made it,"* said Kim.

After swimming together every Saturday in 2019, Kim's favourite moment was enjoying a glass of champagne with the team and supporters upon their return to Dover.

*"To our amazing supporters, those who have swum with us, towel carried, driven, coached, donated and sent well wishes over the last nine months and more, THANK YOU"*

You can support them at:  
<https://www.cantoo.org.au/fundraisers/English-Channel-Swimmers>





## JAMES IS FIGHTING CANCER FROM FIRST PLACE ON THE PODIUM

**Can Too Beyond participant James Casey won the most prestigious paddleboarding race in the world in July – the 2019 Molokai 2 Oahu (M2O) Paddleboard World Championships, in Hawaii, in a time of 4:03:20. He was driven to not just win but to help his father and others who are battling cancer.**

Whilst reaching his pinnacle in the sport he raised over \$26,000 for the Can Too Foundation. James chose to support cancer research through Can Too to honour his dad, Roger Casey, who is battling a brain tumour.

James set his goal to win the 52km race, between the islands of Molokai and Oahu, six years ago. He was inspired to take on the iconic race by his father who completed the event two years before him.

*"I never thought of M2O as option then dad showed me how fun it could be, six years later I've won the most prestigious race in the world,"* said James.

To train for the event James chases the wind so he can train in conditions which replicate those of the channels in between the Hawaiian Islands. He spends up to two months a year training in Hawaii and at home he paddles from Manly to Palm Beach, from Avalon to Collaroy, up the Hawkesbury River or Middle Harbour, depending on which way the wind is blowing. Being a meteorologist, his knowledge of forecasting wind, temperature and wave heights comes in handy.

**To qualify for the M2O James competed in a race from Maui to Molokai then in subsequent years of the M2O he came fifth, fourth and third last year, where his father was crew on his support boat.**

Unfortunately, Roger couldn't travel over for the race this year due to undergoing chemotherapy treatment and suffering paralysis on one side of his body.

As soon as he crossed the finish line where his sister, brother-in-law and grandparents were there to congratulate him, James rang his dad via Facetime to share the good news.

*"Dad was a bit teary as was I."*

The Sydney Paddle Surfing Club Coach described the race day as a mix of heaven and hell.

*"It was really windy so the first 3.5 hours was bliss, then the wind goes into your face so the last half an hour was hell, luckily enough I had a lead by then."*

James said that he was channelling his dad out there.

*"When Michael Booth [a competitor] got ahead of me and was losing momentum then I got one big bump, it was like the ocean was sending me the swell I needed to get back into the race. I felt dad and everyone's support who donated."*

James said that raising the funds for cancer research was good therapy. He credits the paddling community for their support including people from all over the world, his family and friends and people he didn't even know who donated.

*"As everyone's affected by cancer they can relate to it, it's close to everyone's heart so people have given generously and sent messages of support. People have even been coming up to me in the street and giving me cash and telling me of similar cancer battles with their friends and family, it's been good for me dealing with dad's diagnosis."*

James also wants to thank his support team including his sister.

*"It's a whole team, it takes more than one person to complete this race, I couldn't have done it without all my supporters such as my girlfriend, family, and everyone for donating, I'm overwhelmed with the support."*

*To set your own challenge and support cancer research visit: [www.cantoo.org.au/can-too-beyond](http://www.cantoo.org.au/can-too-beyond)*

# YOU CAN TWO

KATE & ROBIN

*Little did Kate Cooper know that when she signed up to learn how to ocean swim with Can Too, she would meet someone who shared her love of breaking the rules. Robin Nicholls encouraged Kate to swear and sing to help her build her confidence in the water which helped her discover that she is an ocean swimmer.*





## ROBIN

I met Kate at Manly Beach the second week of the swim program, she was having a bit of trouble, so I swam with her. She had dropped off the back, was slow, stopping a lot and really battling to stay afloat.

She's now swimming three to four mornings a week and I can't keep up with her. She's loving it, it's just part of who she is now. It's awesome to see how far she's come. And Kate's going to be a Can Too Mentor this year which is really cool.

At first, when she was freaking out, something that helped settle her was shouting swear words whilst her head was underwater.

There was another girl that would sing, that was her version of blowing bubbles, so I thought of extending that to Kate with swearing.

***Other times when she was struggling, we'd just stop and float and I'd say 'tell me four things you can see ... three things you can hear ... two things you can touch'. We avoided the last one: 'what's one thing you can taste?' because it's just going to be seawater.***

This 30-second chat would distract and calm her down then she'd get swimming again. I got this idea from an article about a sports psychologist who was working with big wave surfers to help them stay calm, when in a potentially dangerous situation of being underwater for a minute.

If Kate's autobiography is published, the title will be 'Determination' as she doesn't give up.

## KATE

When I first joined Can Too I planned to swim breaststroke, then I learnt at the first session you can't do that as it's not safe in ocean swimming.

When I was 12 we moved to the country, so I had not been in the ocean since, besides bobbing around with a cocktail in hand on holiday. So swimming more than 50m freestyle was a challenge.

My Pod Mentor, Trish Dwight swam with me the first week, where she gently coaxed me through the beach session that day and encouraged me to keep going. Having her swim beside me kept me in the water! Otherwise I think I may have run back to the sand!

But when I had to actually swim away from the beach that's when the terror set in when I realised I was way out of my depth. Trish and Annie Crawford swam with me, they were great.

***The next week Robin swam with me. He said 'what's going on', 'I'm terrified', I said. 'Swearing helps, do you swear?' 'Yes I swear, are you allowed to do that?' 'Of course,'. So there were a few expletives let out which really helped.***

He would also ask me what I could see, we'd stop and I'd say 'I can see birds, then he'd ask me what can you hear?

This calmed me down, I wasn't panicking or thinking about my fear as I was focusing on other stuff. He also said 'pick a song', so I'd have a song in my head which helped too.

Robin swam with me every week. He'd say 'we're gonna do this, you're fine, you're doing good', so I'd say 'I'm fine, let's go'. Just those words of encouragement were enough to keep me going.

But I cried for the first few weeks but it's OK as it's hidden in your goggles. I would freak out because I had a bad experience in open water. In 2011, where on a snorkelling trip overseas, one of the women drowned, which was awful. I didn't realise how much that had affected me until I started the swim program.

So I went and saw a psychotherapist for two sessions. She was amazing. She said 'you're fine it's just your brain trying to keep you safe'. She gave me some techniques to deal with anxiety.

***Can Too completely changed my health it's now the best its ever been. After I finished my first swim program, I got sick and went to the doctor, to find out that I had asthma. So that was part of the anxiety about not having enough air. So my asthma was treated because of Can Too and then I just kept swimming, I completed the 2.5km swim program and my next goal is a 5km swim.***

I also crewed for some of the Can Tooers doing the Bondi to Watsons Bay Roughwater swim. I was on the boat beside Robin as he was swimming. It was great to cheer him on and see the swimmers working hard for themselves and for Can Too.

I love fundraising with like-minded people and to swim with others who are getting out of their comfort zone to learn to ocean swim which is such a bonding experience. I feel like I've found my tribe.

My message to anyone thinking of doing Can Too's swim program is to just jump in. It's been life-changing for me, I just love it. If you're scared but you want to stretch yourself you have so much support from the Coaches, Water Safety, Mentors, Team Captains and everybody in your pod. You'll have fun, laugh, cry and have a ball.

***They both now share a love of ocean swimming. For Robin being unable to now keep up with Kate in the water is, rather than a sore point, his favourite part of being a Can Too Mentor.***



# I DIVED INTO SWIMMING TO HELP OTHERS

LARA SOLOMON

**First learn to ocean swim, tick, next complete a 5km ocean swim every month to beat ovarian cancer. These seem like lofty goals but Lara Solomon doesn't challenge herself by just floating along, she dives in headfirst.**

When Lara first joined the Can Too Learn to Ocean Swim program, in honour of her mum who died of ovarian cancer in 2015, she wasn't a swimmer.

She went from being fearful of putting her face in the water to completing 5km ocean swims, such as swimming from Manly to Freshwater Beach return to the Bower break then back to Manly.

Fellow Can Tooser Ros Elmslie said that Lara is so determined that nothing will stop her.

*"When she started the swim program she would get out of the pool mid-session and she could fill the ocean with her tears.*

*"If you'd asked me during her first swim program, two years ago, if she'd still be swimming now I never would have believed it. Lara's got such perseverance, she's amazing, she's now so confident in the water and a really good swimmer,"* said Ros.

When Lara started the swim program at Monte College she was in Lane 6.

*"Lane 6 is the worst lane - or the best lane - depending on how you look at it! It's for the people who need the most help,"* explained Lara. *"I really struggled mentally with the breathing."*



*"My first Can Too Coach Paul Storman was just fabulous. One day we didn't quite understand what he was talking about so he just stripped down to speedos, jumped in and showed us."*

Lara would practice swimming at Balmoral in water up to her chest.

*"It would take me what felt like an hour to go about 100m."*

After feeling the high of completing her first Can Too goal swim, the 1km URM Little Big Swim at Palm Beach in 2017, she then signed up for the 2.5km North Bondi Classic, where Can Too Founder, Annie Crawford swam with her. Annie promised she would assume the last place, as Lara didn't want to finish last.

The surf lifesaving boat then picked Lara and Annie up, about 400 metres from the beach, even though they wanted to complete the swim, and gave them a lift closer to the shore so they could finish the race.

*"After that, I decided I've got to do a better job."*

She was inspired by her Can Too Mentor, Robin Nicholls who set himself the challenge of swimming a kilometre a day for a month, so she joined in.

**Can Tooer Monique Ferguson then challenged Lara to swim a kilometre every day for 14 days to receive a \$14 sponsorship, and if she didn't complete the challenge she'd have to give the money back.**

*"I said 'hell no I'm not giving you the money back,'" said Lara.*

Lara completed the 14-day challenge and just kept swimming, she swam 1km every day for 101 days consecutively.

*"Sometimes I swam with friends, sometimes on my own, I just found somewhere every day to swim. It wasn't easy or convenient and after 30 days it felt like my arms were going to fall off, but I kept going."*

Her swim achievements include the 2018 Can Too goal races – the Macquarie Big Swim from Palm to Whale Beach and the 5km Balmoral Swim for Cancer. She also committed to swimming 365km in 365 days, which she completed by swimming 15km some weeks.

When she started, she was swimming a hundred metres in 3'30 now her time is 2'10. Lara credits the support of Can Too for helping her achieve her swimming goals.

*"Can Too is great for the support, I remember Ros Elmslie swam with me and she would say 'just another five strokes' and now we've both done the 10km Fiji Swim program.*

*"People saying things like 'you'll be okay, don't worry' made a massive difference. I don't think I would've kept going early on if it hadn't been for people like Ros, Robin and Monique. I've made so many amazing friends with Can Too."*

**But Lara was driven to succeed at swimming, not for herself, but to raise money for those with ovarian cancer.**

*"Mum hoped that in 10 years there would be a fix for ovarian cancer so that if people did get it, it wasn't a life sentence."*

The UK expatriate devised a Can Too Beyond program – '12 Swims 4 Mum' – 12 x 5km swims in 2019 to raise \$120k to fund an ovarian cancer researcher.

*"With ovarian cancer most of the time it doesn't get diagnosed till really late so people don't survive. You don't have the poster women that you do for breast cancer. You've got Can Too Ambassador Heather Hawkins, who was diagnosed at stage one, which is exceptionally rare.*

*"I think that it's important to get rid of all cancer but this one is important to me. It doesn't get much money or publicity, as there are not many people around to tell the tale."*

Whilst undergoing her 12 Swims 4 Mum, Lara was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in March, which put her swimming on hold.

*"I was one of those really lucky people that didn't have to have chemo or radiotherapy, the treatment was so simple compared with what mum went through.*

*"When someone gets ill and dies you really realise what's important to you so that's why I'm doing the 12 Swims for Mum and that's what is pushing me on to get it done even though it's been a hard year.*



## Ovarian cancer statistics in Australia:

**46%**

*Chance of surviving at least 5 years (2011-15)*

**1510\***

*Estimated number of new cases of ovarian cancer diagnosed in 2019*

*\* The data is compiled by Cancer Institute NSW.*



## CONGRATULATIONS TO CAN TOO'S TALL POPPIES

### Can Too-funded cancer researchers' Dr Angelica Merlot and A/Prof Jyotsna Batra are both Tall Poppies this year.

Both women won 2019 Young Tall Poppy Science Awards, Dr Merlot won the NSW Award and A/Prof Batra (pictured above) the Queensland Award.

The cancer researchers both received funding from the Can Too Foundation, Dr Merlot did so in 2018 and Prostate Cancer Researcher Dr Batra received funding in consecutive years 2014 – 2017.

The prestigious annual Awards, presented by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science, recognise the achievements of Australia's outstanding young scientific researchers. Over 350 nominations for the Awards were received, the most to date, from across Australia.

Professor Maria Kavallaris, Chair of AIPS, said the chosen Tall Poppy Award winners are helping to promote a scientifically literate society which can inspire a new generation of passionate researchers.

*"A more scientifically engaged society is something every scientist should aspire to and the reason that Tall Poppy winners are so important,"* said Professor Kavallaris.

**As Award winners, Dr Merlot and A/Prof Batra will participate in education and community outreach programs, as role models to inspire school students and the broader community about the possibilities of science, including visits to schools, educational seminars, workshops, public talks and other activities.**

### 'Wonder Woman' aka Dr Merlot

Dr Merlot was named 'Wonder Woman' by Marie Claire Magazine in a feature last year, for her work in cancer research which involves investigating how the human body works in normal and disease conditions.

She leads a team of four at the Children's Cancer Institute, a partner of the Can Too Foundation, and said that she was 'very grateful' to receive the award.

*"This award gives me another great opportunity to engage with the public about cancer research and continue to encourage more young Australians to explore a career in science. These young scientists will go on to make Australia's future brighter with their discoveries."*

She also won the Harvey Norman NSW Young Woman of the Year Award in March.

Dr Merlot was chosen by the Can Too Foundation for her work which has the potential to lead to more effective treatments for those affected by cancer.

The Scientia Fellow at UNSW Medicine has dedicated her career to the deadliest of cancers, pancreatic cancer, known as a 'silent killer' because it's so aggressive. It has an eight per cent five-year survival rate.

**Dr Merlot said that like many Australians, she has lost family members to cancer.**

*"It's their stories and struggles that encouraged me to get into cancer research,"* said Dr Merlot.

Dr Merlot was recognised for her work to better understand the mechanisms by which pancreatic cancer cells grow and adapt to their environment, why current treatments become ineffective, developing nanoparticles to improve drug delivery.

\* <https://prostate-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/statistics>

**A Tall Poppy and Cure Cancer Researcher of the Year – A/Prof Jyotsna Batra**

Can Too Researcher, Associate Professor Jyotsna Batra, (pictured left) was recognised as an outstanding early career researcher with a Tall Poppy Award this year as well as a Cure Cancer Researcher of the Year award in 2018, for her research of prostate cancer.

It's estimated that 19,508 new cases of prostate cancer in men will be diagnosed in 2019, making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer amongst males in Australia, and the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia overall.\*

A/Prof Batra from QUT's Translational Research Institute focuses on understanding the genetic basis of prostate cancer to identify better diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers and new therapeutic targets.

Despite the prevalence of prostate cancer, currently, it's not possible to predict at diagnosis whether a patient has slow-growing or more aggressive cancer. This means that some patients receive unnecessary treatment that will adversely impact on their quality of life without benefit.

A/Prof Batra says that thanks to Can Too, her laboratory is working to solve this problem.

*"Thanks to funding from organisations such as Can Too, I am able to progress on my research in prostate cancer genetics,"* says A/Prof Batra.

"We are focused on detecting and validating genetic markers, aiming to develop personalised diagnostic and therapeutic tools for cancer patients."

A/Prof Batra also gives multiple talks each year to the public to raise awareness about cancer research including to Can Too pods (training groups). She has been interviewed by SBS radio (in multiple languages) and ABC News, and had articles published in the Cancer Council Queensland newsletter.

A/Prof Batra is also well versed in being a role model to inspire students to engage in science and technology. She hosts student laboratory visits, volunteering at the Brisbane Science Festival and speaking as a Flying Scientist with space enthusiasts at the 50th Moon Anniversary Event, Charleville, on the topic 'DNA turning alien'.

**PITTWATER SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS**  
**OCEAN SWIM SERIES**  
 400m • 800m • 1.5km • 2.5km • 3km

**WIN**  
 a trip to go in the  
**Byron Bay Ocean Swim**

Airfares for two and luxury three day beachside accommodation!  
**To enter** compete in three of the 1.5km or longer events and go in the lucky draw.

SUPPORTED BY  
 northern beaches council

Entries: [www.oceanswims.com](http://www.oceanswims.com)

**NEWPORT SLSC  
SUNDAY JAN 5**

400m Swim 9:00am  
 800m Swim 9:15am  
 2km Swim 10:00am  
 Entry  
 One Event \$30  
 Two Events \$45

**BILGOLA SLSC  
SUNDAY JAN 12**

500m Swim 9:00am  
 1.5km Swim 10:00am  
 Entry  
 Early-Bird entry \$35  
 On-the-day \$45

**MONA VALE SLSC  
SUNDAY JAN 19**

*Mona Vale start*  
 1km Swim 9am  
*Warriewood start*  
 2.6 km Swim 10.30am  
 Online entry \$30  
 On-the-day \$40

**THE BIG SWIM  
SUNDAY JAN 26**

*Palm to Whale Beach*  
 2.7km Swim 10:00am  
 Entry \$50  
 1km Swim 8:30am  
 Entry \$40  
 Both Swims \$60  
 16 years & under \$30

**AVALON SLSC  
MARCH 29**

*Newport to Avalon*  
 2.5km Swim 8:00am  
 Entry \$40  
*Avalon Beach*  
 800m Swim 9:30am  
 1.5km Swim 10:30am  
 Entry \$30.00



**2019**  
**FIJI GROUP**

## UPCOMING ADVENTURE TRIPS

Trek the El Camino Trail  
w/ Annie Crawford AM  
17 - 25 May 2020

Trek Kakadu, Northern Territory  
w/ Edith Hurt  
7 - 14 Jun 2020

Trek Iceland  
w/ Angie Stevenson  
24 - 29 August 2020

Challenge Mongolia  
w/ Annie Crawford  
21 Jun - 2 July 2021





25

Can Too marathon ocean swimmers

250km

officially swum during training

55

training sessions supporting each other

\$64,828

raised for cancer research and prevention.





# COACH SPOTLIGHT

## MATT RENSHAW

**TRAINS CAN TOOERS AT:** Monte College Pool and Manly Beach

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MY PROFESSIONAL SWIMMING CAREER:**

- Winning two Commonwealth Games gold medals
- Being part of the famous 'Mean Machine' swimming team.
- Being appointed as captain of the Australian Swimming team.

**WHAT LED ME ON MY JOURNEY TO BE A SWIM**

**COACH:** I always liked the idea of giving back to a sport that has given me so much. The joy of enabling others to enjoy the aquatic environment. And helping people understand how to swim in the ocean.

**FAVOURITE BEACH:** Freshwater – as a past active member, a former nipper and club member having represented the club winning medals at state and national surf championships means a lot to me. It also has a great body wave.

**DAY JOB:** Teaching children and adults to swim for over 10 years.

**LIVES:** Ashbury in Sydney

**WHY SWIMMING?** It's great for your health and wellbeing. It's fantastic on your body, improves flexibility and you can do it with your mates.

**WHY CAN TOO?** I love the concept of staying healthy and raising money for cancer research. Great people, and I have been friends of the Founder, Annie Crawford and Board Director, Simon Buckingham for some years. They are inspirational leaders. I have also been touched by cancer losing my father at a young age.

**FAVOURITE CAN TOO MOMENT:** Learning

new coaching techniques from World Champion Paralympic Coach Jon Bell and seeing people conquer their fears after swimming up to 2.8km+ from Palm to Whale beach every January.

**MOST REWARDING COACHING EXPERIENCES:**

Helping people overcome obstacles and learning to be a stronger swimmer. Ensuring people are safer in and around the water and particularly in the ocean.

**MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE:** "If you can't go back you must go forward and if failure is not an option you will succeed."

**I'M LISTENING TO:** Aussie rock.

**FAVOURITE BOOK:** *Who moved my Cheese? An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life*, by Spencer Johnson.

**WHAT I EAT PRE-OCEAN SWIM RACE:** something light.

**GO TO MEAL POST-RACE:** just about anything.

**PERFECT WEEKEND:** down the beach, having a body surf or board ride with mates and family followed by coffee.

**HOW TO FACE YOUR FEARS TO CONQUER AN OCEAN SWIM:**

- Get down to your local Can Too swimming pod and make sure you follow the program that has been set.
- Make it to the Saturday morning surf sessions and talk with the Mentors and Coaches who are there to help.
- There are no shortcuts.
- Better to face your fears now than to wait until race day.

WELCOME TO OUR  
NEW CAN TOO  
TEAM MEMBER



**We sadly farewelled long-time Can Too team member Sharon Head recently, who moved to a new role at the Garvan Research Foundation. It's not 'goodbye' though, it's more 'see you again in orange', as Sharon is still a treasured part of the Can Too leadership team and heart of the 'Inner West is Best' Pod.**

*"Can Too has given me the confidence to achieve goals I never thought possible both in my career and personal*

*life. It really has changed my life," said Sharon.*

We are also pleased to announce our new Program Officer, Social Science graduate, Celeste Buckingham.

"My background is in disability care and advocacy. I have always had a passion for the not-for-profit sector, and that is what led me to Can Too.

"Like many others involved in Can Too, I have seen close family and friends suffer with cancer which has led me to be passionate about contributing to an organisation that fundraises to find a cure."

**Can Too**

Super Earlybird Ends  
**SUNDAY 5  
JANUARY**

**HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO LEARN TO OCEAN SWIM  
WHILE SUPPORTING AN AMAZING CAUSE?**

**Can Too offers ocean swim training across NSW & QLD:**

- **Balmoral Swim for Cancer (NSW)**  
28 January - 5 April 2020  
Training for 1km & 2km or 5km swims
- **Cooly Classic Ocean Swim (QLD)**  
19 February - 26 April 2020  
Training for 1km & 2km swims

Training is led by qualified and experienced coaches teaching you important ocean swim skills, with caring Team Captains and Mentors guiding fundraising.

All ocean sessions are staffed with additional water safety crew, giving you a safe, supportive environment for you to face your fears.

**FIND YOUR CLOSEST TRAINING GROUP AT:  
[www.cantoo.org.au/swim](http://www.cantoo.org.au/swim)**

**CHECK OUT  
THE VIDEO  
FROM LAST  
YEAR**

## STOP IN THE NAME OF CAN TOO

Can Tooers meet their fundraising commitments in all sorts of ways, from running barbecues to hosting movie nights to making candles, but Bernard Sloane does something a little different.

Bernard, or known more formally as Senior Sergeant Bernard Sloane, has served in the NSW Police Force for 25 years and puts his hand up for extra shifts and donates this extra salary to meet his fundraising goals.

On average, it takes him three 12-hour shifts of traffic duty or being on patrol at sporting events to meet his goals, and with over \$5,000 and counting raised for the Foundation, it's been worth it in his mind.

Bernard's next mission is to raise another \$2,000 by taking part in a Can Too adventure challenge with partner Bruce Corby. They'll be trekking the heart of southern Iceland's geothermal region from Laugavegur to Skógar.

"We wouldn't have thought of going to Iceland then saw that we can with Can Too," said Bernard.

"My favourite Can Too moment was completing my first half marathon program. It was a milestone for me as I hadn't run for 18 years. I trusted the program even though I didn't trust myself, and I got over the line."

## THANK YOU TO OUR BLACKMORES RUNNERS

Thank you to the 311 Can Tooers who trained for this year's Blackmores Sydney Running Festival, raising over \$303,858 to help us beat cancer. This investment will fund nearly three cancer researchers in 2020.

Over 14 weeks into Spring, Can Tooers came together across 15 locations in NSW, from Sutherland Shire to the Hills District, the Northern Beaches, and Port Macquarie, as well as two corporate groups, Probuild and McCabe Curwood, supporting their staff training for the event.

By taking part in a goal-specific fitness program you have reduced your own risk of lifestyle-related diseases including one-third of cancers.

You can also go on Can Tooer, Bruno Giunta's journey to see how he became a Blackmores Half Marathoner by checking out this [video!](#)

Register your interest for Blackmores 2020 at: [www.cantoo.org.au/blackmores](http://www.cantoo.org.au/blackmores)



YOU CAN SEE SOME OF THE RACE DAY ACTION IN THE BELOW VIDEO

## TURKEY SAN CHOY BOW

If you've been a bit low with your veggie intake, this is one healthy and tasty way to get them in! Turkey mince is very lean and a great source of protein, but this recipe would also work with chicken or beef mince.

### INGREDIENTS

- 250g organic turkey mince
- Iceberg lettuce
- 2 – 3 tablespoons of sesame oil
- 3cm piece of ginger
- 3cm piece of lemongrass
- ½ teaspoon of Chinese five spice
- 1 zucchini
- 1 carrot
- ½ red capsicum
- 1 brown onion
- 1 clove of garlic
- 4 – 6 button mushrooms
- 4 kale leaves
- 4 asparagus spears

VIEW  
RECIPE ON  
WEBSITE

### METHOD

1. Carefully peel off the 6 – 8 lettuce leaves so they remain fully intact. Wash thoroughly and put to one side to drain.
2. Finely dice the onion, garlic, ginger and lemongrass and set aside.
3. Finely dice the remaining vegetables (zucchini, carrot, capsicum, mushrooms and asparagus) and set aside in a separate bowl.
4. In a saucepan, heat the sesame oil over high heat and then sauté the onion, ginger and lemongrass until fragrant.
5. Add in the turkey mince and Chinese five spice, stir occasionally until the turkey is cooked through.
6. Add in the diced vegetables and cook for 2 – 3 minutes until vegetables appear cooked (I like mine a bit crunchy!)
7. Shred the kale and arrange over the top of the vegetables and turkey mixture.
8. Turn the heat off, cover with a lid and allow the kale to steam/soften for 1 – 2 minutes before stirring through.
9. Portion the mixture into lettuce cups, wrap up and enjoy!



**MY LETTER TO THE  
YOUNGER ME**

**KIERAN GALLAGHER  
AND MIREK CRANEY**



Macquarie Group  
Foundation

**Cure**  
CANCER  
AUSTRALIA  
FOUNDATION

**Dear KG,**

Be brave, don't be fearful of the water. Trust in yourself. Mum and dad didn't mean to scare you, they just thought that you remembered how to swim when they put you in the pool as a 5-year-old.

The more you let that fear overwhelm you, the more unmanageable it is. Be persistent and you'll learn that when adversity hits you to get back up straight away.

You will use this fear to help others transform their lives, show them that they can make the impossible possible because, you get what it's like to be scared and overwhelmed.

Just keep swimming. It's really good for you and your soul. Trust me - you will go from finding swimming arduous to it liberating yourself and others.

Be confident to swim in the deep water, you will never know how awesome life can be from sitting on the shoreline and making assumptions. You'll become a leader with Can Too and love seeing remarkable people do something they couldn't before. You'll even become secretary of the Whale Beach Surf Club.

Teamwork makes the dream work. You will team up with 'a goofy dude', Mirek Craney, and witness how he fills people with joy. When you're with him you will just laugh and laugh. You'll complement each other in helping others learn to ocean swim and in doing this you will see them gain so much more.

He will give energy to people and you will gravitate



to those who are more challenged. You'll try to understand what their motivations are for wanting to learn to ocean swim, such as the woman who was scared of fish, the person with stage 4 cancer and the doctor who had lost his confidence.

When the doctor feels frantic and anxious, you'll tell him: 'we can get through this together'. You'll then see how euphoric he feels when he completes his goal to swim the Little Big Swim at Palm Beach.

Every year you'll return because you'll want to meet that one person where conquering an ocean swim changes their entire world forever, such as Grant Campbell who went from thinking 'I can't do it' to swimming the English Channel in a team relay.

Remember to start with a smile and everything else will sort itself out and breathe deeply.

**Have a good life you animal.  
Kieran**

**Dear Mirek,**

I'm very proud of you. I'm writing to you at a very painful time. You'll watch your partner Alice Crawford battle cancer and learn, from supporting her. She'll undergo operations and treatments for five years, you'll be a good carer and hang around when times get tough.

You'll be strong for her. She makes you strong by demonstrating such positivity and optimism.

Thankfully, your angels Can Too Founder Annie Crawford



and Board Director Simon Buckingham will help you find the best treatments allowing Alice to bond with her three daughters Charlie, Bella and Christie and her grandchild Rosie before she leaves.

You'll become a Can Too 'Champion' where you support others less confident or are scared and anxious to achieve extraordinary goals.

You'll see people conquer the 1km Palm Beach Little Big Swim, the 1km or 2km North Bondi Classic Swims and the 2.7km Palm to Whale Beach Swim and beyond.

Sharing your skills and love of the surf to help others will be very rewarding. Along with KG and others you'll keep Can Tooers safe, keep them laughing to allay their fears and remind them when to duck the waves.

You'll find lifelong friends with Can Too. You'll love the camaraderie which helps you when you're touched by the 'black dog', guiding you to help others when they're dealing with depression and anxiety.

It's a blessing to be a Can Tooer and your body will be forever grateful. You didn't think you could do it as you've got Type 1 diabetes and chronic asthma, but you'll be convinced to run as well as swim.

The rewards are quantum compared to the effort you put in, and it's a big effort, such as completing a 17km trail run up Mount Tootie, Bilpin. Fellow Can Tooer Robin Nicholls will push you up the hill, saying 'you can do it' and you'll say 'no I'm going to die - laughing.' But when you finish the race you'll feel fantastic.

You've seen cancer take away your precious partner, your dear father and so many of your beloved friends. Be thankful for your struggles - there's always a lesson to be learnt. Remember that nothing will change your situation more than changing your attitude.

Gratitude will take you far in life. Be grateful for who you are, your blessings and achievements.

**Big hugs,  
Mirek**

# YOU CAN TOO BE A STRONGER RUNNER WITH PILATES

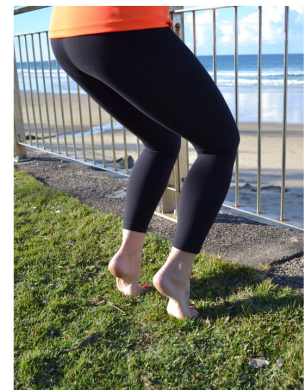
BY CAN TOO COACH  
MARIA HOBBS



**Practising Pilates is great for conditioning your body for running as the discipline strengthens your core, glutes and hips, which are crucial for running economy and injury prevention.**

Before starting each exercise:

- ensure your ankles, hips and knees are aligned
- focus on engaging your pelvic floor muscles until you feel your deep abdominal muscles activate, then concentrate on your core and pelvic area
- start with 10 repetitions each side.



## CALF RAISES

This exercise will work on the stability of your knees, feet and ankles, as well as strengthening your calf muscles, building lower leg strength and endurance needed to run well.

1. Use a wall, back of chair or bar for balance.
2. Keep slight softness in your knees.
3. Raise and lower your heels for a count of three each way for 10 repetitions.

**You can progress by bending your knees whilst you raise and lower your heels, see right image:**

4. Focus on your core and engage your pelvic floor to maintain stability





## CLAMS

Focuses on the stability of your hips and glutes, especially gluteus medius which is the outer part of your glute, this muscle can assist in stabilising your pelvis:

1. Lie on your side with your bottom arm under your head
2. Use your top hand as support by placing on the mat in front of you
3. Bend both knees and bring your heels in line with the back of your pelvis
4. Keeping your feet glued together, slowly open your top knee
5. Keep lifting up from your lower waist area so you don't slump into the floor
6. Open and close your knee 10 times



## TOE TAPS

Activates deep abdominal muscles

1. Lie flat on your back with arms palms face up by your side
2. Bend your knees and lift both feet off the floor so your shins are parallel to the mat, semi point your toes
3. Gently press your lower back into the mat, for the duration of this exercise ensure it doesn't arch off
4. Slowly lower your right foot and leg to tap the floor, keep the 90-degree bend in your knees throughout
5. Swap and repeat on left side
6. Keep going for 60 seconds.

**To progress, lower both toes to the floor at the same time, remember the movement is slow and controlled with a gentle 'tap' on the mat.**



## LYING PRONE LEG LIFTS

Activates deep glute muscles

1. face down, place hands one on top of the other
2. Rest forehead onto back of hands
3. Bend knees to 90 degrees
4. Ensure core is engaged and not pushing into mat
5. Lift right thigh off mat, by contracting through your right glute
6. Repeat 10 times then swap to left side



## BIRD DOG/QUADRUPED ARM AND LEG LIFTS

Strengthens the lower back muscles and uses your own body weight as resistance.

1. Kneel on the mat or floor
2. Ensure hands are directly underneath your shoulders
3. Knees directly beneath hips
4. Keep your spine neutral and straight, it's important to focus your awareness on keeping your torso straight and level
5. Extend your left arm up, long and forward at the same time
6. Extend your right leg up, long and backwards
7. Both limbs should now be parallel to the floor
8. Hold for one breath and release
9. Repeat on opposite side for 10 repetitions



**I CAN TOO  
CONQUER THE  
FEAR OF THE  
UNKNOWN**

**BY CAN TOO MENTOR,  
PAUL TAYLOR**

**A little-known fact for you: as soon as babies are born, a reflex tells them to hold their breath underwater. It surprised me, especially as I was choking my way up and down the pool at Cook & Philip in Sydney's CBD, gulping in a pint of the chlorinated cocktail.**

This is my second session in the water, and I've made two whole laps – 100 metres – before gasping in the shallow end and preparing to do it again. In fourteen weeks, laughable at this point, I'm going to swim two kilometres in open water. Coach Gary Emmerton patiently, kindly explains what's going wrong, and how together, we're going to fix it. Basically, I don't know how to breathe, and it's because I'm not a strong swimmer.

I also don't know how to ocean swim because I've made a lot of excuses why I shouldn't bother. From adolescent arrogance that I'm 'good enough' in the water to complete a lap, to the easy wins in adulthood that catching a few waves in the ocean from a standing start was fun on its own, so why do anything differently? I grew up in the country, and it took a decade of living in Sydney to really see that the city is surrounded by water. I was severely missing out.

I hated swimming lessons as a kid, and I needed to acknowledge that memory and break the myth I'd made that I was not an ocean swimmer. Running made sense, and I'd completed five or six half marathon programs and a full marathon with Can Too, as both a participant and Mentor. I'd become reasonably good at it too and was only getting better.

Running had taken me out of my comfort zone in my first Can Too program in 2009. Logic said that if you're tired when you run, you walk, or you stop. Swimming, you can't stop because there's nowhere to stop! How do you stand or take a break in the water? That sent me into a panic. So, I don't know how to swim because I was scared of failing, and I wouldn't be in control.

**I need to come back to why I'd signed up to do something physically and emotionally demanding when there was the option of doing something more familiar instead. In 2014, my girlfriend and I were in a long-distance relationship – we were figuring out if or when I'd go to join her in London, or if she'd move back.**

Can Too was always a beacon – the community turned my life around once before and a lot of runners had transitioned to ocean swimming. It had taken me about four half marathon programs before I finally stepped up to a full marathon, and wished I'd done it sooner. I was in for the Learn to Ocean Swim program. It was either be in a rut at home, being uncomfortably comfortable, or doing something new and scary.

The ocean at least tasted a bit better than the pool, though the pool had safety – there was always an edge to grab on to. Thinking about how to tackle the waves made me anxious, and not having a solid surface directly below my toes in deeper water was overwhelming. Can Too coaches know how to ease participants in, and rather than seeing the swim as one huge problem I needed to reframe it as a series of small challenges.



*Paul Taylor with his wife Lala Day 5km into their 10km pool swim challenge. Lara was his girlfriend living overseas as mentioned in the story so it all worked out in the end!*

Get under the waves, touch the sand, get a feel for the water, then it's one arm over the other. Repeat, repeat. Focussing on the process cut the anxiety.

I had people on my side. Team Captain, Pia Singer was perpetually confident, and her 'let's get in and do it!' attitude was infectious. Pia, along with the cool and calm crew of volunteers and water safety pros, became my biggest champions, and Pia and I quickly became friends – another Can Too bonus. Observing the ocean, the patterns of where water formed rips, and how to take a break in the water showed me that my fears were unfounded. There was now control where I'd only seen chaos.

Race day was thrilling and daunting! My mind had been a sponge over the previous three months, and I was prepared. Moments before the race, Pia convinced the race marshall that she was going to join the 30-34 men's group, and we dived into the water together. The race passed in a blur, but I remember catching a wave onto the beach, seeing Pia beside me, grabbing her hand and running to a triumphant finish.

Can Too swim showed me – again – that anything is possible. I found joy where I'd only experienced terror and failure. I'm still in awe of the mentors who are calm, confident and supportive with people feeling panicky in the water, and that's something I want to give back.

My Can Too swim was five years ago. Since then I've gone on to complete an Ironman, a 5km open water swim and a 10km pool swim. The fear of the unknown won't stop me again.

**Can Too**

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