



## **Halberg Trust Sport Access Gold Award for Upper Hutt's H2Oxtream Aquatics Facility**

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August, Upper Hutt City's H2O Xtream Aquatics facility celebrated the prestigious GOLD Sport Access Award from the Halberg Trust.

The Halberg Sports Access Award officially recognises sports facilities that offer inclusive access for people with disabilities. The Award aims to enhance the lives of New Zealanders with disabilities by better enabling them to participate in sport and recreation.

Sport Wellington's Sport Opportunity Adviser, Marguerite Christophers says this GOLD Award is testament to the outstanding dedication H2Oxtream's staff, and the vision of the Hutt Valley Councils.

"This commitment at the top level has allowed the staff and management team at H2Oxtream to build excellent programs and equipment that has improved access to the pool for all members of the community," says Marguerite.

"The process involves a facility self review identifying strengths and weaknesses and determines what needs to change to enable the facility to become more sustainable and inclusive of disabled people through its services and programs" states Marguerite. "We then work with the facility to remediate any gaps and barriers to inclusion and submit an award application for either bronze, silver or gold status"

Assistant Recreation Services Manager - Aquatic Operations, Kerry Granshaw, has been a driving force behind H2Oxtream's commitment to inclusive access.

"I believe that fundamental water skills are a crucial for everyone – perhaps even more so for people with disabilities as they often experience additional barriers to development and rehabilitation," says Kerry.

"I would strongly encourage other swimming facilities around New Zealand to embrace the National Disability Strategy and actively engage with the Halberg Trust to gain Sports Access Award accreditation," she says.