

Bev Nuske of Kanmantoo, below, was recently taught to swim by Barb Pearce of Mt Barker.



Never too late to get in the swim

By Kiri Olney

Bev Nuske is proof that it's never too late to learn.

About 18 months ago at the age of 58 the Kanmantoo woman decided it was time to learn to swim.

As a customer service officer at Mt Barker State Swim she was required to take part in aquatic emergency rescues.

While the pool was shallow enough for her to stand, Mrs Nuske thought it would be a beneficial skill to acquire.

"I couldn't float and I would go to the bottom of the pool, so management here asked me if I would like to take lessons," she said.

"... I knew how to save people, but it was just my buoyancy and putting my face in the water."

For her teacher Mrs Nuske looked no further than 73-year-old Barb Pearce.

The Mt Barker swimming instructor has been teaching people to swim for about 40 years and still swims competitively, recently returning from the National Masters Swimming Championships in Perth with three silver and two bronze medals.

She also competes in open water swims.

Progression

Mrs Pearce gradually taught her colleague to swim over a period of between nine and 12 months.

"It was a slow progression," Mrs Pearce said.

"... We got in the pool and started kicking, face in the water, a little bit of breast stroke, back stroke."

Mrs Nuske said she never learnt to swim as a child due to her mother's

fear of water. Yet water is no longer a fear for Mrs Nuske who is now able to swim up to 50m and can enjoy taking a dip in her son's pool in Cairns.

"Now if I end up in the deep water where I can't stand up I don't panic," she said.

"I know that Barb has taught me how to get myself back into the shallow end."

Mrs Pearce, who began her swimming instructing career in South Africa, said she was "very proud" of Mrs Nuske's achievements.

"It takes a lot of courage for older people to get in the water and be prepared to learn, especially when little ones go so fast," she said.

She said she loved swimming and believed it was "life saving".

"I've always loved swimming, it's always been part of my life."