

# SPOTLIGHT ON ANDREW PRICE

SWIMMING POOL COORDINATOR,  
SHIRE OF ASHBURTON



Welsh-Australian Andrew has been working on pool decks for over 22 years in Perth, Melbourne and some of the hottest places in the world, from Marble Bar to Onslow. What keeps him there isn't just the sunshine. It's a genuine passion for the fitness and recreation industry. It's the opportunities to give back to the community. It's providing people with a great place where they can take time out for their physical and mental health, relax or just cool off on a hot day.

“ In aquatics facilities all over Australia, there are so many amazing community programs and facilities making a real difference to people's lives... We get to do some great work. ”

## Give us your BBQ pitch. What do you do?

I oversee the operations of public swimming pools in the Pilbara towns of Onslow, Paraburdoo and Tom Price for the Shire of Ashburton. Being an area bigger than some small countries, it's over 400 kilometres between towns, so an important part of my job is checking in with the aquatics team and providing relief staff cover when required. I'm also responsible for making sure our facilities maintain the Department of Health hygiene standards and customer expectations, keeping our communities fully engaged and supported through our programs, swim schools and special events.

## Did you always plan to work in this industry?

Having studied Land Surveying after finishing school, I soon realised it wasn't for me and took a year out to do some volunteering work with a local Conservation Group. That opened the door to studying Environmental Management at Durham College of Agriculture.

## So, how did you get into pool management in Australia?

In 1996, after 6 months exploring India, I decided to visit my sister in Australia on a one-year working visa. To fund my travels, I worked many different jobs in some unique places and met some amazing people. In Perth, I took a job as a labourer at a swimming pool redevelopment, where the centre's Duty Manager saw me working hard on the jackhammer and offered me a job as a casual lifeguard, on the proviso that I took the required first aid, bronze medallion and pool lifeguard courses. Working on the pool deck sounded much more appealing than sweating over a jackhammer, so I did the training and later went on to complete the pool operations course to become a Pool Manager.

## How would you describe yourself?

I really enjoy mentoring and supporting staff and like to lead by example, getting out there on the pool deck and working alongside my team whenever possible. I also love giving back to our community by delivering great customer service at the pool and volunteering as a St John WA Ambulance Officer.

## What do you love most about the industry?

The aquatics facilities all over Australia are world-class and there are so many amazing community programs making a real difference to people's lives. One of my favourite roles is delivering lifesaving skills in water survival and emergency pre-hospital care as a Royal Life Saving WA Community Trainer. The lifestyle the aquatics industry offers is also one of the biggest perks.

## What's the best part of your job?

Being active in the community, meeting and working with a wide range of people. Our diverse team is made up of all ages and backgrounds, and our patrons include everyone from young families bringing baby for the first swim to the 'grey nomads' popping in for a dip on their way through town. The pool is a great meeting point for the community and no two days are ever the same.

## What's your best advice for anyone starting out?

It's a great industry for students to earn while studying and for long-term career development too. There are public pools in almost every town in Australia, so there's always work available whether it's lifeguard duties, swim teaching, or pool management. Pop into your local facility and have a chat with the manager on duty, or someone your own age working poolside.

## And what's next for you?

I'm very happy in my current role, especially in the great community of Onslow. Our swimming pools are seasonal, so we work extra hours through the summer when the pools are busy and through the cooler months of June, July and August – the off-season – we focus on centre maintenance, recruitment, training, taking holidays and pursuing other interests. I've just signed up for Karratha's first 'Backyard Ultra Event'.

WANT TO EXPLORE MORE?  
HEAD TO [FUTURENOW.ORG.AU](http://FUTURENOW.ORG.AU)

FutureNow.