



03 December 2015

### **Harbour Crossing swim continues to inspire**

The upcoming Harbour Crossing swim, taking place on Dec 12 across the Auckland Harbour represents an exciting challenge for many of the eager participants, but for two inspirational individuals, taking the plunge has also helped them to overcome other momentous hurdles in their lives.

35 year old Karim Rostami is an Afghanistani refugee, now based in Mount Roskill and has never been one to shy away from a challenge.

He arrived in New Zealand 16 years ago and has only recently learnt to swim so tackling the Harbour Crossing for the second time is a huge achievement, especially as due to a bout of childhood polio, Karim will be swimming relying predominantly on the use of his arms.

“This year I am looking to improve on my time and hopefully inspire others to build their confidence in the water,” says Karim Rostami.

Another inspirational swimmer who is undertaking the Harbour Crossing for the second time, is Tipalelupe Lala Toatasi Tu`ua, also known as Lala.

The 46 year old from Remuera is keen to raise awareness around the alarming drowning statistics for Pacific Islanders.

“It is shocking to me how many Pacific Islanders die each year from drowning. I have had a couple of close friends and relatives pass away unnecessarily because they didn’t have the necessary tools to save themselves. It was this reason which first drove me to participate in the New Zealand Ocean Swim Series, but now I am continuing it for my son and for my own health as this year I was diagnosed with arthritis in my knee. While the news of my diagnosis was hard to deal with, I know that swimming is one of the best



things I can do to help it so I'm also aiming to participate in the Capital Classic, Christchurch Crown and the King of the Bays ,” says Lala.

New Zealand Ocean Swim Series, Event Organiser, Scott Rice, says; “The Harbour Crossing is one of our most iconic swims and one that many swimmers from around the world have on their bucket list. It’s fantastic when participants use our events as motivation to achieve their own personal goals. I wish both Karim and Lala the best of luck and look forward to cheering them both across the finish line. ”

The Harbour Crossing swim is the second of seven events in this season’s New Zealand Ocean Swim Series. Organisers are expecting over 1500 recreational swimmers to take part.

All participants in the event will be swimming the 2.9km distance from Bayswater to the Auckland Viaduct.

This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> season of the New Zealand Ocean Swim Series and the 12<sup>th</sup> time the Harbour Crossing has run.

This season will mark the debut of two exciting, new events; the Christchurch Crown (which will be replacing the La Grande swim in Akaroa) and the Legend of the Lake (Rotorua). Remaining events will also include fan-favourites; the Capital Classic (Wellington), Sand to Surf (Mt Maunganui) and the King of the Bays (Auckland).

This much loved series caters for swimmers of all skill sets and offers an opportunity for recreational swimmers to take the plunge with some top name swimming elites. Some of the elite swimmers who will be returning to the fray will be last year’s elite series winner’s Nathan Capp and Charlotte Webby.

The charity partner for the New Zealand Ocean Swim Series is Surf Life Saving New Zealand.

For more information or to register for this popular series, visit [www.oceanswim.co.nz](http://www.oceanswim.co.nz)



-Ends-

Please credit photographer Simon Watts

Image caption 1: Participants taking the plunge at the 2014 Harbour Crossing swim

Image caption 2: An ecstatic Lala after he had taken part in the 2014 King of the Bays swim

For high res images and to organise interviews please contact;

**Media Contact**

Scott Rice

Quantum Events Ltd

0274 775 796 | 09 486 0240

scott@quantumevents.co.nz