



Perth City Swimming Club rising star Raife Sillescu, of North Lake. Picture: Marcus Whisson

Silence is golden

SWIM CHAMP SETS SIGHTS ON OLYMPIC MEDAL

Felicity Bond

RAIFE Sillescu has been in the fast lane for years, but this month the swimming sensation took it to another level when he was announced Swimming WA's Junior Swimmer of the Year.

The award is given to a swimmer, 13 years or under, who has performed well at State or National level over the past year.

"The 13-year-old Murdoch College student has done exactly that, winning a haul of medals at each swimming meet, breaking state records and competing in his first national competition this year.

"In January, I competed in the 14-year-old section at the Swim WA State Open and Age Long Course Championships, winning six gold medals and one silver, and achieved three national qualifying times and broke two state records," he said.

"The state champion said he had his first swimming lesson at the age of five when his family moved to Australia from the UK.

"The only reason my parents got me lessons was because we were emigrating from the UK to Australia and they knew that my sister and I would need to be good swimmers if we wanted to enjoy the

beaches in Perth and keep safe," he said.

In the pool up to eight times a week, Raife is now focusing on the Swim WA State Open and Age Championships in July.

"My ultimate goal is to win a medal at an Olympic Games," he said.

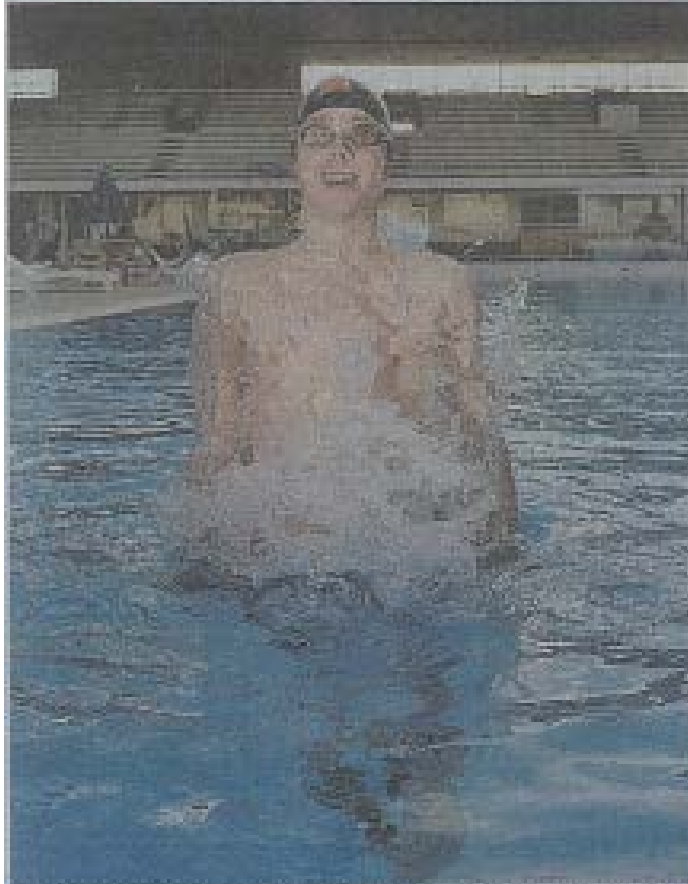
"I know that this will take a lot of commitment, but you have to have a dream so that you can keep crawling out of bed at 4.30am, especially in the winter when it's dark and cold."

Read more about Raife on page 6

RAIFE SILLENCE

- Started swimming at the age of 5
- Won first state title at the age of 9
- Named 2013 WA Junior Swimmer of the Year
- Competed in first national competition in 2013 and broke two state records
- Competed in the 13-year-old section at the Swim WA State Open and Age Long Course Championships, winning six gold and one silver.
- In January 2013 broke a 30-year-old state record in the 800m freestyle.

MELVILLE



Perth City Swimming Club member Raife Sillence.
Picture: Marcus Whisson d401437

More than meets eye to young swimmer

MURDOCH College swimming sensation Raife Sillence is Swimming WA's Junior Swimmer of the year, but there is more to the schoolboy than meets the eye.

The 13-year-old made headlines in 2000 for a completely different story, when his proud parents Steve and Allison Sillence gave birth to him 19 years after Steve's sperm was frozen.

Mrs Sillence said both her children, Raife and Scarlett (10) were conceived during IVF treatment after Steve's sperm was flown from Australia to England in a military style operation.

"We married in 1992 and after 10 years we gave birth to two healthy children who are doing extremely well," Mrs Sillence said.

Both the Sillence children won scholarships to Murdoch College at the age of 9, and now at the age of 13 Raife is in Year 10.