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Media Statement

WORLD CHAMPION PERTH MUM SWIMMING TO ROTTO FOR DIABETES RESEARCH

World champion duathlete and Perth mum Katherine Ryan – who didn't officially learn to swim until the age of 27 – is about to take on her first solo Rottnest Channel Swim to raise funds for WA diabetes research.

Mrs Ryan has overcome a near drowning at the age of 9 and two more terrifying childhood water experiences to now work as a water aerobics instructor and personal trainer at Beatty Park Leisure Centre, as well as taking out the 45-49 year old age category of the ITU Duathlon World Championship in Canada in 2017.

The 49-year-old mother-of-four will on February 23 set off on her first solo Rottnest Swim from Cottesloe Beach – a place she avoided for many years after being dumped by a massive wave there as a 12-year-old.

"It's a little daunting still but over the past 15 years I've built up my confidence as a swimmer and have finished the Rottnest Swim in a group and as a duo before so the time's come to do it on my own now," said Mrs Ryan.

She's raising funds for local diabetes research, inspired by how medical advances in type 1 diabetes are helping people live better.

"I have friends who have three family members who live with type 1 diabetes – two of the kids and their mum – and they have told me so much about how research has made such a difference through insulin pumps and other technology," she explained.

"That's in contrast to my sister's best friend who passed away at 38 due to complications from type 1 diabetes some years back now.

"These experiences I've come to know about have inspired me to raise funds for Diabetes Research WA and support medical research and local scientists."

The Rottnest Channel Swim is a 19.7km open water swim from Cottesloe Beach to Rottnest Island.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said it was heartening that so many people were becoming aware of the benefits of research – and the ongoing need for it.

"Diabetes management has come such a long way thanks to mind-blowing medical research breakthroughs but there is a need for further advances so we can cure or prevent diabetes developing in all cases," she said.

To donate to Mrs Ryan's fundraiser head to EverydayHero or Diabetes Research WA.

(<https://rotnestchannelswim19.everydayhero.com/au/katherine-s-solo-swim-for-diabetes>)

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