




# HAMISH MCLEAN

 Auckland

 January 28, 2000

 Achondroplasia

 Para swimming

## Grassroots:

Kia ora tātou, my name is Hamish McLean.

I grew up in a small town in Central Otago which only had a population of about 4,000 people. We had a great sense of community and caring and of course supported the Highlanders. These days I live and work in Auckland but the South will always be home.

One of my favourite childhood memories is spending time with family by the local river jumping off the trees and camping holidays by the beach catching eels.

## My journey as a Para athlete:

I first started to swim as a child because it's crucial for Kiwis to learn how to be safe around the water. As I got older, toward the end of primary school, I began going to the local swim club and it was about having fun with others. I attended small competitions with my club and friends. When I was around 11, I received an invitation to a National Para swimming competition, and I was overjoyed to win four medals!



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# #199

 Watch

<https://youtu.be/w1NZfKDKrcA>

# “

I think it's really important to have a balance with training, school, social and other sports. I found that you need to learn how to manage your life and commitments to be your best at a specific time, like the Paralympics.”

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This competition fuelled my interest in the sport even more, so I continued training and attending regional competitions.

I competed in Para swimming and although it didn't start intensely with training it was fairly time-consuming. I think Mum and Dad encouraged it to keep me fit and safe around water. At my peak, I would train up to 10 times a week in the swimming pool, before and after school, and do 3 or 4 gym sessions a week. Sometimes I found this too much with academic and extra commitments so occasionally it had to be dialled back. Even though it was difficult, there were times when training for the Paralympics or World Championships would be done in amazing places like Spain, Germany, America, Australia. Training was always with friends, and we all had strong goals whether it be at the club level or national level.

There are probably two instances in my swimming career that I am extremely proud of. The first being the Rio 2016 Paralympics in Brazil. I was 16 years old and in the middle of high school and I came 6th in the world – I still can't quite believe I was standing on the same starter blocks as Michael Phelps who was a 23-time world Champion. The second would have to be the 2019 World Championships in London, England. Although not as big as the Paralympics, it is the one I am probably the proudest of. I competed well in the competition and came away with my fastest ever times, all while studying at university at the same time. It was also very special as it was the last major international event that I competed in for New Zealand due to COVID-19.

I think it is extremely important to be determined and committed in anything you do, whether it is sport or school. In sports, determination and commitment is what makes you practice and try your best, even when things are tough. I think this applies to me and swimming. I didn't want to get out of bed at 5am every morning before school, but I did it because I was determined to get better. I think setting goals is a big aspect of determination, without goals you have nothing specific to strive for. This is one of the major Paralympic values I have applied to my sporting career and to other aspects of my life.

## Fun facts:

- **I love pasta or pizza! When training – or whenever!**
- **My favourite book is The Cherub series I read in school. It was about a secret service agency in the UK that gets specially trained children to be spies. I would recommend it to anyone at school!**
- **I love to travel, whether it be in New Zealand or overseas. My favourite thing about travel is experiencing new cultures and meeting new people.**
- **I can name the first 60 elements on the periodic table!**
- **I would love to be able to teleport! You could go anywhere in the world in an instant.**

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*Focus on your own goals and don't compare yourself to others too much. Just do the best you can do and have fun!”*

