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Howard Gumbley, Hilton Brown Swimming Ltd

Hilton Brown Eliminates Condensation Problems

Hilton Brown Swimming began teaching New Zealanders to swim in 1973 and has been growing ever since. After several years of planning and design, they opened their first purpose-built indoor pool teaching facility in Albany in 2000. The indoor pool was heated to 32°C for the comfort of young swimmers and teachers alike. Three to four years later, they realised that the condensation caused by heating the pool in a confined environment was not only uncomfortable for the spectators and clients, it was responsible for a hefty maintenance bill and considerable deterioration of the building itself.

Everything on the interior of the building was continually damp, benches were wet and water would drip on the heads of spectators, especially on cold days. Anything metal or mechanical was particularly at risk; door locks were jamming, automatic doors were struggling and rust was relentless even on galvanised metal that became damp from the condensation. The concrete walls readily absorbed the excess water becoming discoloured and dark (seen in the before photo). Paint deteriorated rapidly while mould and odours were another prevalent problem caused by inadequate ventilation and condensation control.

Condensation Concerns

Damage prevention for the building is not the only driving factor for a good indoor pool ventilation system. Chemicals used to disinfect water in commercial pools are not only corrosive to the building but they also may potentially create a health issues for pool users and staff. Ventilation is essential for removal of excess chemicals and other air impurities that escape from the pool water as into the air.

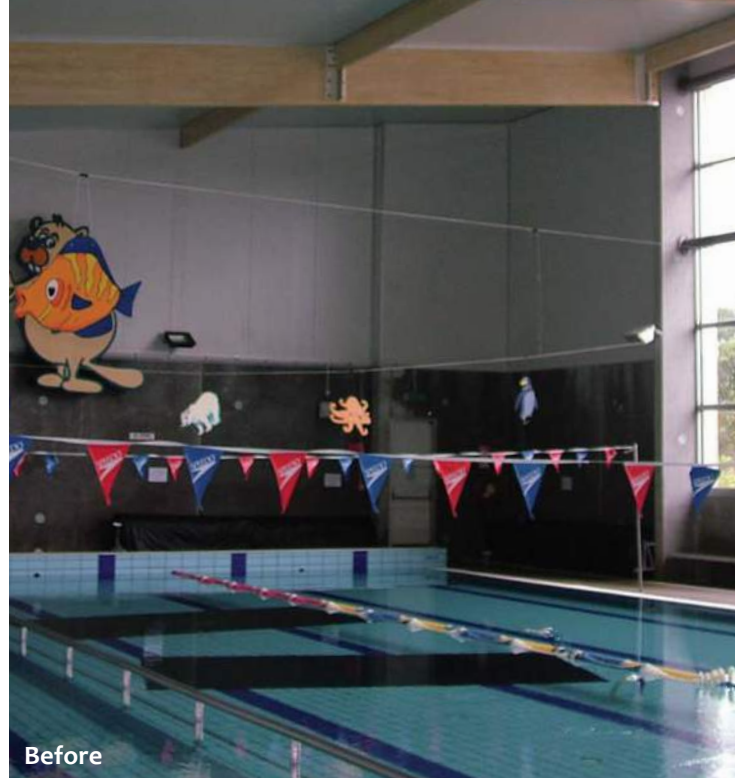
In 2004 Hilton Brown sought options for a ventilation system to solve their problems. They selected a Vent-Air system from Hot Water Heat Pumps Ltd. Howard Gumbley from Hilton Brown particularly liked the fact that Hot Water Heat Pumps Ltd checked his budget first then worked around it to provide options that could be discussed further. Howard also says, "It is crucial to have companies whose word you can trust involved in the design at a very early stage. Often it is not the cost of the project, it's the cost of the mistakes that are really important."

The Vent-Air Difference

The Vent-Air system was custom designed to introduce warm fresh air into the building without causing drafts. At the same time, it expels the humid stale air lowering humidity and therefore condensation.

The installation was seamless and was completed with no disruption to the swim school's normal operation. This was important to Hilton Brown as downtime is the most expensive cost for a swim school. Clients and staff have benefitted from the Vent-Air system and now enjoy a warmer, drier, healthier environment. Once the Vent-Air system was installed maintenance costs also dropped. The decision to retrofit the Vent-Air system was about the cost-benefit relationship as otherwise the building would have been up for significant repairs. As Howard says "the cost of doing nothing is huge".

It has now been over ten years since the Vent-Air system was first installed at the Albany swim school. The life expectancy of the building has increased considerably since then. Hilton Brown are very happy with their decision to use Hot Water Heat Pumps Ltd and the Vent-Air system. They are now looking to build a new pool and are currently consulting with Hot Water Heat Pumps Ltd for pool heating, ventilation, heat recovery and condensation control at the new site.



Before



After

SHOWCASE AT A GLANCE

Air Heating and Condensation Control System
Hot Water Heat Pumps

Equipment

Vent-Air system comprising of a supply and return air handlers with heat recovery option

Air Distribution system under ceiling duct