

## Beginner finds her fins for ocean swim

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cole classic



REBECCA COGLAN is still frightened by the ocean. But this morning she will be lining up as one of the record 4000 swimmers in *The Sydney Morning Herald Cole Classic* for her first attempt at the two-kilometre course.

"I'm terrified of the ocean, absolutely terrified," said the 59-year-old retired secretary. "I was brought up in the country and was used to swimming in country pools.

"Even though my husband and two sons are mad surf lifesavers, I wouldn't even go into the surf. So this swim is a big thing for me, to swim in the ocean with all those little creatures under me."

So why is she doing it? To conquer her personal demons, to raise \$3000 for Cure Cancer Australia and to honour the memory of her brother-in-law Robert Harris, who died of liver cancer in 2007.

Her son Cameron - a member of Manly surf club and a trainer for the Can Too fundraising swim team - persuaded her to try ocean swimming as a form of therapy after Harris died.

"I couldn't even swim 50 metres then," Coghlan said. But she joined Can Too last summer and trained twice a week for the 1 km novice race in the 2008 Cole Classic. On the day, conditions were terrible. "I had a panic attack," she recalled. So she entered a couple of "little" ocean swims later in the season then rejoined the Can Too squad this summer determined to master the two-kilometre distance.

About 200 Can Too swimmers have entered today's race at Manly Beach (1 km at 9 am, 2 km at 10 am), to raise money for charity.



Photo: Jacky Ghossein