2012 SURVEY OF
TEACHERS OF SWIMMING
AND WATER SAFETY
PUBLIC REPORT

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .......................................................................................................................... 5

Recommendations ............................................................................................................................ 6
  Workforce profile .......................................................................................................................... 6
  Swimming and water safety programs ....................................................................................... 6
  Children’s swimming ability and participation ........................................................................... 7
  Increasing children’s participation in swimming and water safety classes ................................. 7
  Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety training and professional development ..................... 7
  Licencing and certification processes ......................................................................................... 7
  Future career prospects ............................................................................................................. 7

Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 8

Purpose ......................................................................................................................................... 8

Objectives ..................................................................................................................................... 9

Methods ....................................................................................................................................... 9
  Survey recruitment process ....................................................................................................... 9
  Respondents ............................................................................................................................... 10
  Limitations................................................................................................................................. 10
  Comparison of results with 2010 Survey of Swim School Managers ......................................... 10

Discussion ..................................................................................................................................... 11
  Workforce profile ...................................................................................................................... 11
  Swimming and water safety programs ....................................................................................... 12
  Children’s swimming ability and participation ........................................................................... 12
  Increasing children’s participation in swimming and water safety ............................................ 13
  Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety training and professional development ..................... 14
  Licencing and certification processes ......................................................................................... 14
  Future career prospects ............................................................................................................. 15

Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 16

References .................................................................................................................................... 18

Appendix 1: Survey ...................................................................................................................... 19

Appendix 2: Survey Invitation ..................................................................................................... 24

Appendix 3: Postcode Details ...................................................................................................... 25

Appendix 4: Countries of Birth and Languages Spoken at Home .................................................. 26

Appendix 5: Overview of Swim and Survive Level 4 ................................................................... 28

Appendix 6: National Water Safety Education Competency Framework .................................... 30
Executive Summary

AUSTSWIM is Australia’s national organisation for the teaching of swimming and water safety. The AUSTSWIM accreditation is the industry standard for swimming and water safety teachers. A national survey of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety has been undertaken by Royal Life Saving Society-Australia in partnership with AUSTSWIM. The survey explored swimming and water safety skills and knowledge levels of primary school-aged children in Australia from a Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety perspective. The survey was administered in January 2012 consisting of nine sections with 57 detailed questions. Following is a summary of the results after analysis of 5,652 responses.

As the AUSTSWIM database was the primary source of contact details for the survey, the majority of respondents had been accredited through AUSTSWIM training initiatives. Findings show a largely female workforce, many with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. When asked about children’s swimming and water safety skills, Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety agree that the formalised tuition activities and outcomes for children are appropriate. Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety agreed that the skills children should acquire were adequate and reflected the content of Royal Life Saving Society- Australia, Swim and Survive program Level 4 which maps to the National Water Safety Education Competency Framework.

Various swimming and water safety skills such as; swimming distance, swimming strokes, treading water, rescues, survival capability and safe entries were considered sufficient swimming and personal survival skills for children to achieve prior to leaving primary school. There was general agreement that consideration should be given to teaching resuscitation activities to children, with the most popular age being 10-12 years. As parents could benefit from knowing more about the acquisition of swimming and water safety skills and children’s cognitive processes, information should be made available to parents to inform and modify expectations of achievement.

The industry has a predominantly female workforce largely engaged in non-full time employment often in swim facilities close to their residence. Many respondents also undertook other occupations whilst acting as a Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety within the aquatic industry such as lifeguarding (30%), acting as a swim school supervisor (25%) or performing customer service roles (22%).

The aquatics industry attracts school teachers in primary and secondary education as swim teacher training and accreditation may be required for their other employment. This strong affiliation with education is furthered by the continued inclusion of accreditation options in targeted tertiary education courses and through training offered by TAFE sectors. More options for qualifications will advantage the aquatics industry in attracting and maintaining their workforce.

However, non-full time working options create a double-edged sword, whereby while the aquatics industry offers flexible employment, some Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety are confronted by insufficient working hours, managing several workplace duties at aquatic centres, juggling professional employment with casual/part time swim teaching and lack of appreciation of the role that Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety play in children’s water safety and drowning prevention.
The diversity of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety in terms of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations and geographical distribution indicates an opportunity to engage with marginalised groups, lower socio-economic groups and those in remote and regional areas should this sector be more engaged by the aquatics industry.

To increase children’s participation in swimming and water safety programs, greater incorporation into the primary school curriculum is recommended. Whilst there are a range of Department of Education programs on offer, many children continue to miss out on accessing vital skills during the school years, thereby increasing their risk of drowning throughout their lifetime.

In addition, provision of government subsidies and more affordable swimming and water safety programs are necessary. Support from government funding to improve teacher training and further professional development opportunities would be an advantage.

An in-depth review of the feedback provided around the licensing and renewal process is recommended to be undertaken by AUSTSWIM to assist in enhancing the current accreditation renewal process. Consideration of provision of pathways to high quality professional development and training activities with a variety of funding mechanisms is also recommended. Provision of high quality training resources and a variety of educational options towards accreditation and professional development are also recommended. Competency based training in skill sets vary in the aquatics industry so there is a need to evaluate Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety’s skills and develop and adopt continuous improvement programs.

Finally, Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety feel they deserve greater recognition. A range of strategies should be developed to support Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety in ongoing professional development and to support progression throughout their career. Recognition of the importance of the role Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety play in drowning prevention is recommended.

**Recommendations**

**Workforce profile**

- Target people of various ages to encourage participation in the aquatics industry.
- Encourage aquatic facilities to target local populations to encourage more people in gaining Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety accreditation where shortages occur.
- Harness cultural and locational diversity to extend the reach of the learn to swim industry. Recruitment programs, retention strategies, mentoring scholarships, subsidies or other forms of financial support should be considered to increase the number of CALD and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander instructors in a sustainable manner.
- Consideration be given to conducting further research with Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety trained by a variety of other training providers.

**Swimming and water safety programs**

- Conduct research with parents of Australian children to determine barriers to their child’s participation in learn to swim.
• Conduct research with parents of Australian children to determine preferences around learn to swim providers and modes of delivery to boost participation.

**Children’s swimming ability and participation**
• Providers of swimming and water safety education to give consideration to including awards such as Royal Life Saving’s Water Smart (which introduces basic resuscitation awareness to children aged 10 and over) into their programs.
• Conduct further research with parents of children to evaluate perceptions of children’s swimming abilities and contrast against teacher’s beliefs around parental perceptions of ability.
• Produce information for parents both about children’s cognitive processes and how learning occurs in general, as well as the benefits of practicing skills in the water and engaging in less formal learning such as playing games.
• Recommendation: Educate parents as to the merits of the importance of water safety and personal survival skills and how to maximise the benefits of swimming and water safety lessons should be emphasised.

**Increasing children’s participation in swimming and water safety classes**
• Evaluate the relative effectiveness of strategies for increasing children’s participation (particularly children from CALD backgrounds and/or socio-economically disadvantaged families) in learn to swim programs. Strategies may include ensuring swimming and water safety programs are compulsory in the education curriculum and providing subsidies for more affordable programs.
• Increase the number of school teachers (at primary, secondary and tertiary level) who hold swimming and water safety qualifications by including qualifications in swimming and water safety instruction in teaching degrees.

**Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety training and professional development**
• High quality training and professional development activities need to be accessible, affordable and delivered in a timely fashion.
• Encourage the aquatics industry to assist or support employees by funding professional development training for teachers with longer service in the industry as an added incentive to remain in the workforce.

**Licencing and certification processes**
• An in-depth review of the feedback provided around the licencing and renewal process be undertaken by AUSTSWIM to assist in enhancing the current accreditation renewal process.
• Provide high quality training resources and a variety of education options towards achieving accreditation to suit the wide variety of instructors within the workforce.

**Future career prospects**
• That a range of strategies be developed to support Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety in their ongoing development and career progression.
Introduction

Aquatic skills gained in the formative years are essential for safe aquatic participation and underpin drowning prevention strategies. The Australian Water Safety Strategy 2012-2015 \(^1\) emphasises the requirement for children to achieve minimum competencies equivalent to Swim and Survive Level 4 by the completion of primary schooling.

Royal Life Saving and AUSTSWIM \(^2\) conducted an investigation into the issues surrounding swimming and water safety skills and water safety knowledge attainment of primary school children in Australia as assessed by swim school managers. They found that although aquatic programs administered at public and private pools and aquatic facilities were accessible by the general public there were several barriers to participation including; distance to water/swimming facilities, cost of lessons/pool entry and access to qualified instructors and pool space. Responses indicated more efforts were required to engage Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) to increase the diversity of the workforce.

The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety™ accreditation is the aquatics industry standard for Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety™. The courses provided by AUSTSWIM are as follows;

- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety™
- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics™
- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Aquatics for People with a Disability™
- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Towards Competitive Strokes™
- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Adults™

The Australian Government and the aquatics industry recognise AUSTSWIM awards as the aquatics industry standard for Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety. AUSTSWIM qualified Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety and others in the aquatics industry have been approached to better understand tuition issues within the aquatics industry from a teachers’ perspective.

Purpose

To expand on previous research findings, AUSTSWIM and Royal Life Saving Society - Australia (RLSSA) conducted a national survey exploring attitudes of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety delivering programs for swimming and water safety skills in the aquatics industry in Australia. The survey aimed to improve current understanding of the provision of swimming and water safety education in Australia and to make recommendations to improve program delivery supporting drowning prevention for children. The purpose of the survey was to understand more about attitudes toward the quality of swimming and water safety lessons, the effectiveness of swimming programs, factors that influence children’s swimming and water safety skill and knowledge levels, and ability to assess a child’s swimming and water safety capability. In addition, several vocational issues were explored such as teachers’ training, accreditation and course renewal and future career aspirations. This was to understand more about the personal issues facing many Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.
Objectives
The objectives of the research were to:

- Collate opinions and attitudes of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety involved in delivering programs for swimming and water safety skills,
- Compare and contrast findings with information from the study of swim school managers conducted in 2010,
- Use the recommendations arising from the research to inform swimming and water safety skill providers of issues pertinent to their industry from a teacher’s perspective.

Methods
An online survey was administered in January 2012 that consisted of nine sections with 57 detailed questions. The nine sections were: (i) introductory information, (ii) demographical questions, (iii) sections on employment issues, (iv) questions about children’s swimming and water safety skills, (v) personal values and perceptions, (vi) consideration of parental perceptions, training and professional development at aquatic centres/organisations, (vii) future career plans, (viii) details on incentive prizes and (ix) future research opportunities. The survey as it appeared online is reproduced in Appendix 1 of this report.

A market research tool, Survey Monkey TM, was used to create a platform for the professional online survey and used to conduct, manage and partially analyse the research inquiry (www.surveymonkey.com). While the survey predominantly administered closed-ended, quantitative questions, several open-ended questions were used to understand more about teachers’ attitudes to a range of issues and to explain several quantitative responses.

The draft survey was initially piloted with several people involved in aquatic education including representatives from AUSTSWIM and based on feedback to piloting, the survey was adjusted accordingly.

Survey recruitment process
An electronic email invitation was sent to possible respondents whose email addresses were contained in the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety database. The invitation encouraged respondents to complete the survey with a possibility of winning a major nominated prize or be placed in the draw for a randomly selected prize winner (Appendix 2). In addition, the survey was advertised in an AUSTSWIM newsletter, on the AUSTSWIM internet News Article page inviting interested Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety to pass on the information to others to access the link to the Survey. The survey was also advertised on the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia website (www.royallifesaving.com.au) via a news item and on the Swim and Survive website (www.swimandsurvive.com.au).

A state wide co-ordinator of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety alerted Physical Education teachers who might be involved in school swim programs to access the survey.
Respondents
In total, 47,939 email survey invitations were sent out to AUSTSWIM teacher’s database. After a 6 week time period, January-March 2012, 5,652 participants had responded (fully or partially) to the survey. During the survey period, several follow up emails were sent to encourage completion and prizes were offered as an incentive to be involved.

The 5,652 responses represented a 12% response rate, though this may be understated as email responses revealed the database was not necessarily a reflection of all current members nor were all email addresses valid. Responses were screened for insufficient data, with several cases excluded for inadequate responses prior to finalising the 5,652 responses for analysis. Opinions from several respondents working in international locations e.g., New Zealand, were included, as they were commenting on their Australian swim teaching experiences.

Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 for further analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample. Questions were dichotomous, numerical, categorical and scaled. Where participants were asked for opinions, a five-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree) was used. Participants were also asked to rank the importance of some issues, ranging from 1 (least important) to 8 (most important). Postcodes were coded into their respective States and Territories using the information in Appendix 3: Postcode Code details. Qualitative responses were thematically coded and analysed.

Limitations
The survey was only available in English language, as all swim schools use English as their mode of operation. Non-responses to the survey request could be assumed to include non-delivery of the email, incorrect email addresses, and possible effect of spam filtering. The authors made an assumption that the people who participated in the survey represented the wider aquatics industry, given the response from 5,652 individuals and though statistically sound; caution has been used in extrapolating results.

Comparison of results with 2010 Survey of Swim School Managers
Royal Life Saving and AUSTSWIM conducted an investigation into the issues surrounding swimming and water safety skills and water safety knowledge attainment of primary school children in Australia as assessed by swim school managers (N=834). The findings and recommendations from the 2010 survey have been compared with the results from the Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety survey presented in this report.
Discussion
This section of the report will discuss the key findings of the survey and, where relevant, compare to findings from the 2010 survey of swim school managers that AUSTSWIM and Royal Life Saving Society – Australia conducted. This section will also feature recommendations for the improvement of the learn to swim sector and the provision of high quality Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.

Workforce profile
AUSTSWIM as the peak industry body accredits many of the newly trained Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety annually, but this does not account for the whole population. The AUSTSWIM database was used to recruit respondents to this survey, with a response rate of 12% (n=5,652). Caution has been used in generalising to the industry as a whole. It is difficult to estimate the number of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety currently working in the Australian aquatics industry. This finding was also reported in the 2010 swim school managers report 2.

Respondents were mostly women, reflecting the high numbers of females employed within the aquatics industry, mostly living close to their swim employment venue. Respondent’s represented a range of ages and the survey found there were a highly diverse range of cultural backgrounds and languages other than English spoken which could be harness to extend the reach of the learn to swim industry and increase the number of children from CALD backgrounds participating in learn to swim.

Recommendation: Consideration be given to conducting further research with Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety trained by a variety of other training providers.

A shortage of qualified Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety was seen as a barrier to program access in many communities across Australia in the 2010 Swim School Manager’s report. Swim school managers suggested that chronic teacher shortages occurred in regional areas and during peak teaching times in pools in capital cities. Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety from different cultural backgrounds were in short supply with continued problems in rural and remote areas.
Consideration of scholarships and mentoring to improve teacher shortages may assist in resolving the problem.

Recommendation: Encourage aquatic facilities to target local populations to encourage more people in gaining Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety accreditation where shortages occur.

As most Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety appeared to live close to their employment, this suggests that local communities need to be targeted in rural and remote areas to encourage development of “home-grown” Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety and promote a sustainable supply of locally qualified teachers.

As only 64 respondents (1.1%) were from ATSI backgrounds this suggests the need to be proactive in terms of recruitment program, retention strategies, mentoring, scholarships, subsidies or other forms of financial support for targeted Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety connected to CALD and Indigenous populations in cities as well as in regional areas.
Recommendation: Harness cultural and locational diversity to extend the reach of the learn to swim industry. Recruitment programs, retention strategies, mentoring scholarships, subsidies or other forms of financial support should be considered to increase the number of CALD and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander instructors.

The aquatics industry has few full time employees and operates largely by providing casual, part time, contractual employment and also caters for trainees and volunteers. The aquatics industry is broader than this though as many employees work in other positions within and outside the aquatics industry. Employees in secondary and tertiary education are often involved in program delivery for; government education departments, private swim schools, facility management groups, local councils, and community groups. Employees were drawn from a broad range of age groups.

Recruitment of accredited Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety occurs at various life cycle employment phases i.e., university students, mothers, retirees. It is important to target young people (up to mid-twenties), particularly university students and people in the workforce that prefer part time work such as mothers caring for young children, those on a career break or those with home responsibilities, when on recruitment drives for qualified Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.

Recommendation: Target people of various ages to encourage participation in the learn to swim industry.

Swimming and water safety programs
Private swim school operators deliver a majority of swimming and water safety programs, employing part time or casual employment. The Department of Education programs usually employ school teachers. Many programs are delivered during school terms or as intensive vacation classes. Alternative programs such as private tuition, local council run programs and school group programs utilise a workforce of variable employment status (full time, part time etc.). Given the range of offerings, affordability rather than access is most likely the greatest consideration for parents when choosing swimming tuition options.

Recommendation: Conduct research with parents of Australian children to determine barriers to their child’s participation in learn to swim.

Recommendation: Conduct research with parents of Australian children to determine preferences around learn to swim providers and modes of delivery to boost participation.

Children’s swimming ability and participation
Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety confirmed that children were mastering appropriate swimming skills which align with Level 4 of Royal Life Saving Society - Australia’s Swim and Survive Program, the previous national benchmark as determined by the Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC). Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety confirmed resuscitation awareness should be taught to children from 9 years of age, but preferably to children aged 10-12 years.
**Recommendation: Providers of Swimming and Water Safety Education to give consideration to including awards such as Royal Life Saving’s Water Smart (which introduces basic resuscitation awareness to children aged 10 and over) into their programs.**

When comparing teacher’s opinions on the relative importance of various swimming and water safety skills with teacher’s perceptions of parent’s opinions, there were similar views expressed in most skill areas. Both teachers and parents were thought to view water safety knowledge and the most important skill for children to acquire, however teachers believed parents valued competitive swimming strokes more than teachers did.

**Recommendation: Conduct further research with parents of children to evaluate perceptions of children’s swimming abilities and contrast against teacher’s beliefs around parental perceptions of ability.**

Sixty two percent of respondents felt that parents didn’t understand how children learnt in general or how they acquired swimming and water safety skills. Respondents stated parents needed to modify their expectations based on their child’s cognitive processes and allow the child to have more time in the water practicing skills and playing to reinforce and attain capability. Only 18% of respondents felt that parents were aware of teaching and learning processes and held appropriate expectations. Respondents also felt parents need to understand more about a child’s cognitive processes and modify their expectations of purely competitive swimming stroke competency.

**Recommendation: Produce information for parents both about children’s cognitive processes and how learning occurs in general, as well as the benefits of practicing skills in the water and engaging in less formal learning such as playing games.**

**Recommendation: Educate parents as to the merits of the importance of water safety and personal survival skills and how to maximise the benefits of swimming and water safety lessons should be emphasised.**

**Increasing children’s participation in swimming and water safety**

Respondents identified many barriers to parents enrolling their children in swimming and water safety lessons. The main issue was cost (both of classes and pool entry) and finding the time to take children to classes among competing priorities. Similar issues were also cited as to why parents might cease swimming and water safety lessons for their children but other aspects such as a child’s age, skill level and interest in swim activities were also mentioned.

Respondents were asked about the value of strategies that might reasonably increase participation of children in swimming and water safety lessons. A majority of all respondents showed support for all actions that may be effective such as government subsidies, increased availability of lessons, tailored programs for children from CALD backgrounds and including swimming and water safety education as a compulsory part of the primary school curriculum.

**Recommendation: Evaluate the relative effectiveness of strategies for increasing children’s participation (particularly children from CALD backgrounds and/or socio-economically disadvantaged families) in learn to swim programs. Strategies may include ensuring swimming and water safety programs are compulsory in the education curriculum and providing subsidies for more affordable programs.**
In order to achieve inclusion of swimming and water safety education as a compulsory part of the primary school curriculum, schools need to be equipped to provide such education. The involvement of school teachers in the aquatics industry is already sizeable, however there are strategies (such as including swimming and water safety qualifications in teaching degrees) to increase the number of quality teachers able to service this aspect of the curriculum.

**Recommendation:** Increase the number of school teachers (at primary, secondary and tertiary level) who hold swimming and water safety qualifications by including qualifications in swimming and water safety instruction in teaching degrees.

**Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety training and professional development**

Respondents indicated that professional development activities continued to be regarded as important and teachers were keen to attend courses to improve their capability, access professional trainers and extend their professional networks.

Inaccessible, expensive and inconveniently timed professional development and training activities were issues identified by respondents. High quality professional development options need to be accessible, affordable with timely delivery. Delivering courses that were informative and provided valuable information is important. Payment of professional development courses by organisations appeared to be discretionary, this issue could be better resolved.

Providing easier pathways to high quality professional development and training activities where possible that were encouraged and funded by employers would be welcomed by Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.

**Recommendation:** High quality training and professional development activities need to be accessible, affordable and delivered in a timely fashion.

**Recommendation:** Encourage the aquatic industry to assist or support employees by funding professional development and training for teachers with longer service in the industry as an added incentive to remain in the workforce.

**Licencing and certification processes**

Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety could find the process of teacher licence renewal confusing. The AUSTSWIM Teacher’s Code of Behaviour was considered to be an important part of the renewal process by 71% of all respondents.

**Recommendation:** An in-depth review of the feedback provided around the licencing and renewal process be undertaken by AUSTSWIM to assist in enhancing the current accreditation renewal process.

**Recommendation:** Provide high quality training resources and a variety of education options towards achieving accreditation to suit the wide variety of instructors within the workforce.
Future career prospects
Respondents felt renewal requirements were necessary to maintain standards. Trained professional AUSTSWIM teachers are recognised and preferred within the industry however this should be maintained. Continued public perception of the need for highly trained and well qualified learn to swim teachers should be encouraged.

It was felt Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety have sufficient incentive to engage and stay in the aquatics industry, however a review of payment for services and recognition by all those involved of the importance of the role Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety play in drowning prevention is recommended.

Approximately half of the respondents were considering a career in teaching for longer than 6 years while the other contingent were largely contemplating a career of 5 years or less. The future needs of the aquatics industry and the supply of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety must be regularly reviewed to ensure a variety of quality staff are available into the future.

**Recommendation:** That a range of strategies be developed to support Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety in their ongoing development and career progression.
Conclusion

Findings suggest a functional, diverse workforce has been engaged, respondents have been largely accredited through AUSTSWIM training initiatives, as the AUSTSWIM database was the primary source of contact details.

In general, Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety agree that the formalised tuition activities and outcomes for children currently being taught are appropriate. Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety agreed that the skills children should acquire were adequate and reflected the content of Royal Life Saving Society - Australia, Swim and Survive program Level 4 which maps to the National Water Safety Education Competency Framework (Appendix 6). Various swimming and waters safety skills such as; swimming distance, swimming strokes, treading water, rescues, survival capability and safe entries were considered sufficient swimming and personal survival skills for children in primary schools.

There was general agreement that resuscitation activities should be considered for inclusion in swim tuition programs. As parents could benefit from knowing more about the acquisition of swimming and water safety skills and children’s cognitive processes, information to parents should be considered to assist in modifying expectations about swim competency related only to attainment of competitive swimming strokes.

The workforce has a predominantly female workforce largely engaged in part-time or less frequent employment often in swim facilities close to their residence. The aquatics industry attracts school teachers in primary and secondary education as swim training and accreditation can be required for their other employment. This strong affiliation with education could be furthered by the continued inclusion of accreditation options in targeted tertiary education courses and through training offered by TAFE sectors. More options for qualifications will advantage the aquatics industry in attracting and maintaining their workforce.

While the aquatics industry offers flexible employment, a lack of full time employment means some Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety are confronted by insufficient working hours, managing several workplace duties at aquatic centres, juggling professional employment with casual/part time swim teaching and lack of appreciation of the role that Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety play in children’s water safety and drowning prevention.

The diversity of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety in terms of cultural backgrounds and geographical distribution indicates an opportunity to engage with marginalised groups, lower socio-economic groups and those in remote and regional areas should this sector be more engaged by the aquatics industry. The industry encourages volunteers and services more disadvantaged sectors in the community so a range of skills, capability, interests and employees are required.

There are many opportunities to access swimming and water safety lessons from organisations and government departments. There are employees with varied employment status required to maintain the workforce. Given the range of offerings, affordability rather than access is most likely the greatest consideration for parents when choosing swimming tuition options. However, further research is required to indicate which children manage to access swim services and whether there is sufficient opportunity to overcome barriers of; distance to water/swimming facilities, cost of lessons/pool entry and access to qualified instructors and pool space.
To increase children’s participation in swimming and water safety programs, incorporation into the primary school curriculum is recommended. In addition, provision of government subsidies and more affordable swimming and water safety programs are necessary. Support from government funding to improve teacher’s training and professional development opportunities would be an advantage.

A review of the AUSTSWIM teacher licence renewal process has been recommended. Consideration of provision of pathways to high quality professional development and training activities with funding mechanisms is also recommended. Provision of high quality training resources and a variety of educational options towards accreditation and professional development are also recommended. Competency based training in skill sets vary in the aquatics industry so there is a need to evaluate the skills of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety and develop and adopt continuous improvement programs.

Finally, Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety feel they deserve greater recognition. Investigation of the feasibility of improved financial rewards and incentives to engage and stay in the aquatics industry with increased payment for services and recognition by all those involved of the importance of the role Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety play in drowning prevention is recommended.
References
1. As a Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety please indicate which programs for school groups do you teach?

- [ ] Basic Aquatics
- [ ] Water Safety
- [ ] Pool Safety
- [ ] Swim and Play
- [ ] All of the above
- [ ] None of the above

2. How many weeks per year do you teach swimming and water safety?

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] More

3. How many hours per week do you teach swimming and water safety?

- [ ] Less than 5
- [ ] 5-10
- [ ] 11-20
- [ ] 20 or more

4. What distance do you travel to work?

- [ ] Less than 10 km
- [ ] 10-20 km
- [ ] 20-50 km
- [ ] More

5. How long does it take you to travel to work?

- [ ] Less than 10 minutes
- [ ] 10-20 minutes
- [ ] 20-40 minutes
- [ ] More

6. Do you encourage your students to have a healthy lifestyle?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

7. How many years have you been teaching swimming and water safety?

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2-3
- [ ] 4-6
- [ ] More

8. Why do you teach swimming and water safety?

- [ ] To ensure safety in the pool
- [ ] To teach basic aquatic skills
- [ ] To educate about water safety
- [ ] All of the above
- [ ] None of the above

9. Do you think children should be taught resuscitation awareness as part of their water safety lessons?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

10. If yes, of what age do you think it would be most effective to teach resuscitation awareness?

- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 10 years
- [ ] 12 years

11. Hypothetically, if parents only had enough time and money to spend on 20 swimming and water safety lessons for their child, what would be the optimal age for the child to access these lessons?

- [ ] 1 year
- [ ] 3 years
- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 10 years

12. Do you think children should be taught first aid as part of their water safety lessons?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

13. If yes, of what age do you think it would be most effective to teach first aid?

- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 10 years
- [ ] 12 years

14. Do you think children should be taught drowning prevention strategies as part of their water safety lessons?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

15. If yes, of what age do you think it would be most effective to teach drowning prevention strategies?

- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 10 years
- [ ] 12 years

16. Do you think children should be taught water conservation strategies as part of their water safety lessons?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

17. If yes, of what age do you think it would be most effective to teach water conservation strategies?

- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 10 years
- [ ] 12 years

18. Personal values and perceptions

In this section we aim to draw from your opinions on important swimming program elements.

19. In your opinion, how important is it to teach the following skills to children?

- [ ] Very important
- [ ] Important
- [ ] Not important
- [ ] Not sure

20. Do you think the suggested options are to increase participation of children from all backgrounds? From least effective (1) to most effective (5)?

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<tr>
<td>Improved swim team uniforms (specific to age group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved swim team uniforms (specific to skill level)</td>
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</table>

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5. Which of the following best represents your definition of "use water"?

- Juniors
- Early candy
- Water
- Candy

6. Parent's justifications

- Juniors
- Early candy
- Water
- Candy

7. Training and professional development at your centre/organisation

1. Does your centre/organisation present in-house professional development for teachers of swimming and water safety?

- Yes
- No

2. Does your centre/organisation register to workshop/training with AUSTRALIAN?

- Yes
- No

3. How often does your centre/organisation undertake professional development sessions?

- Monthly
- Bi-monthly
- Quarterly
- Bi-annually
- Annually

8. Does your employer pay you to attend professional development activities?

- Yes
- No

9. Do you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding professional development activities?

- Agree
- Disagree

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Page 21
2. Future career

- How are you planning to use your skills in the aquatic industry?
- How long do you think you will continue to teach swimming and water safety?
- What is the most recent reason you stopped teaching swimming and water safety?
- What actions or changes have you made to continue or return to teaching?
- What is your current employment?
9. Competition details

Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to be entered into the prize pool on entry please enter your details below. We will contact the prize winners by email where a prize is won. Please ensure that you provide a correct email address as prizes will be offered by email. All prize winners will be contacted by the RLSSA & AUSTSWIM office.

If you do not wish to enter, please indicate this at the end of the survey.

1. Please complete the following if you want to be placed in the competition draw

Are you interested in receiving further information about a career, programs and/or promotional activities from Royal Life Saving Australia or AUSTSWIM?

☐ Yes

☐ No
Appendix 2: Survey Invitation
National Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety Survey Invitation

Dear [FirstName]

AUSTSWIM and Royal Life Saving Society - Australia are conducting a survey for Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.

By participating in this survey you will be commenting on the development of swimming and water safety skills of children in your classes and the content of Swimming and Water Safety Programs.

You will also have an opportunity to comment on professional development in your industry and your career plans. Your comments will contribute to research into drowning prevention and enhancing the swimming and water safety skills of all Australians.

This survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. All information you provide will be treated confidentially and results will be analysed in aggregate form with no identification of individual respondents.

Here is a link to the survey:

[SurveyLink]

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

If willing, could you please complete this survey by 5pm Friday 9th March 2012.

Participants who complete the survey will go into the draw to win an enrolment into an AUSTSWIM extension course offered in your State or Territory or a full registration to either the AUSTSWIM state conference or national conference (does not include travel or accommodation costs). In addition, 10 randomly chosen respondents will win a Swim and Survive Aquapak ($50).

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Dr Kim Alexander (Research Coordinator) via email at kalexander@rlssa.org.au or by phone on (02) 8217 3128. If someone you know would like to participate in this survey please email Dr Kim Alexander to receive an invitation and individual survey link. Thank you for participating in this National Survey of Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety.

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

[RemoveLink]
Appendix 3: Postcode Details
The first one or two digits generally denotes the state or territory that the postcode belongs to.

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<th>State/Territory</th>
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### Appendix 4: Countries of Birth and Languages Spoken at Home

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Appendix 5: Overview of Swim and Survive Level 4

Swim and Survive is an initiative of Royal Life Saving Society Australia. It is a national swimming and water safety program that has been educating five to 14 year olds for over 20 years. Since 1982 it is estimated that over 10 million Australians have participated in the Swim and Survive program. The program aims to reduce the number of drowning deaths by ensuring children have a sound knowledge of how to be safe when in, on and around the water, as well as skills in swimming, personal survival and basic rescue. Since programs such as Swim and Survive were introduced, there has been a 75% reduction in drowning in the five to 14 years age group.

Swim and Survive provides a broad, balanced program of swimming, water safety and survival skills, that is delivered by qualified instructors in schools and pools throughout Australia. Swim and Survive allows for flexibility and can be delivered as a weekly term program or as an intensive program.

Award Levels

There are seven core levels in the Swim and Survive program. Every level contains competencies from each of the program strands with some extension skills for those students who are progressing well.

Entries and Exits

This skill strand aims to teach a variety of entries and exits for a range of different aquatic environments to enable the student to determine the safest method.

Floating and Sculling

Sculling is the basis of all strokes and many other water safety skills. This strand enables the learner to gain balance and mobility prior to learning swimming and survival strokes.

Movement and Swimming Strokes

Learning efficient stroke techniques is an important element of any swimming and lifesaving program. Students gain confidence through developing efficient stroke techniques and improve their ability to adapt the strokes to suit the conditions of the environment.

Survival and PFD Skills

This skill strand focuses on gaining knowledge of a range of survival strategies and techniques, understanding the risks involved in specific environments, developing judgement skills in emergency situations and performing personal survival skills.

Underwater Skills

Gaining underwater skills is vital in building confidence and competence in the water and can lead to the development of more complex skills. This strand aims to provide the student with skills that may enable them to escape from dangers or search for a submerged object or person in difficulty.

Safe Diving Skills

This learning strand ensures a progressive approach to the stages of diving development. By introducing this skill in the early stages of learning, safe habits are established by learners for the long term.
Rescue Skills

This strand aims to equip students with the skills to perform a range of rescues depending upon the emergency situation and also have the experience of being rescued.

Water Safety Knowledge

Water Safety Knowledge is an integral component of the Active program with an emphasis on learners understanding the dangers of water environments, water safety strategies and personal aquatic survival skills.

Themes

Through the teaching of the eight strands, the Swim and Survive program aims to integrate and develop concurrently the following themes.

Water Confidence

The initial stage of a swimming and water safety program is to develop confidence in the water, which includes: water familiarisation, buoyancy, mobility and body orientation, propulsion, stroke exploration and development.

Water Safety Knowledge

Water safety is a key theme and is developed throughout the program. The focus of Swim and Survive is to understand the dangers in water environments and the appropriate behaviour and rules for activities in, on or around the water. In addition, the program addresses the key principles for safely assisting others.

Survival Skills

Learning survival skills provides you with the ability to perform personal survival skills in case of an aquatic emergency. This theme works on building knowledge, judgement, ability and endurance using a wide range of survival strategies and techniques.

Swimming Technique

An efficient swimming technique is vital for all levels of swimming from beginners, recreational, survival, lifesaving and competitive levels. As swimmers progress through the Swim and Survive program the degree of stroke efficiency and variety of strokes required increases.

Endurance

Increased physical fitness and improved swimming strokes will occur as swimmers progress through the program. The focus for increased endurance provides students with an improved capacity for survival, rescue, recreation and competition activities.
## Appendix 6: National Water Safety Education Competency Framework


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL LEVEL</th>
<th>COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>MINIMUM COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>% TARGET POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) INFANT AND PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>Experience in skill competencies for safe water entries &amp; exits, floating &amp; sculling, breathing, movement &amp; swimming strokes, survival &amp; underwater skills, water safety education &amp; parent education</td>
<td>• Participation in the program</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(II) PRIMARY SCHOOL</td>
<td>Personal Aquatic Survival section of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework • Competencies to be achieved by the completion of Primary School education</td>
<td>• Equivalent to Swim and Survive Level 4 (and Surf Ed where available) • Level 5 Swim and Survive (and Surf Ed where available) • Level 6 Swim and Survive (and Surf Ed where available)</td>
<td>100% 75% 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(III) SECONDARY SCHOOL</td>
<td>Life Saving section of the National Water Safety Framework – including exposure to Basic First Aid &amp; Resuscitation Training • Competencies to be achieved by the completion of Year 10</td>
<td>• Equivalent to RLSSA Dry Rescue, including Resuscitation (and SLSA Surf Survival where available) • RLSSA Bronze Star (and SLSA Surf Survival where available) • RLSSA/SLSA Bronze Medallion</td>
<td>100% 75% 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>