



# Supervision of children at public pools:

An analysis of industry programs

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Part 1 research findings



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Royal Life Saving is a public benevolent institution (PBI) dedicated to reducing drowning and turning everyday people into everyday community lifesavers. We achieve this through: advocacy, education, training, health promotion, aquatic risk management, community development, research, sport, leadership and participation and international networks.

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**A water-loving nation  
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## CONTENTS

04	Overview
05	Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (GSPO)
06	Current Supervision at Public Pools Programs
07	Program Resources
10	Background
11	Study objectives and design
12	Results
12	<b>Section 1:</b> Literature Review
14	<b>Section 2:</b> National Statistics on Supervision at Public Pools programs
15	Where are the pools with supervision programs located?
16	Metropolitan or Regional pool locations by State
18	<b>Section 3:</b> What are the socio-economic demographics of where these pools with supervision programs are located?
20	Discussion
21	Conclusion
22	Next Steps
23	Methods
24	References

## OVERVIEW

Following a string of drowning incidents of children under the age of 10 at public pools in the early 2000s, child supervision programs were introduced across the national aquatic industry aimed at:

- › Increasing parent and guardian supervision of their children in public pools and
- › Implementing policies, procedures and training resources for aquatic facility staff and patrons, all aimed at reducing the incidence of child drowning in public pools.

As individual aquatic facilities and organisations sought to address child drowning at public pools and supervision practices, inconsistencies in language, policies and aquatic facility rules created confusion for pool customers. Recognising the need for standardised practices and messages for this critical safety issue, industry peak associations developed two supervision at public pools programs now available across Australia.

The two programs are **Keep Watch at Public Pools (NSW, QLD, TAS, NT, ACT) and Watch Around Water (VIC, WA, SA).**

### **Keep Watch at Public Pools (KWPP)**

In 1996, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia developed a program called Keep Watch at Public Pools. With lack of direct supervision by a parent or guardian believed to be a contributing factor in 70% of all drowning deaths at public pools, the Keep Watch at Public Pools program aims to eliminate all drowning deaths and reduce the number of non-fatal drowning incidents at public pools. The program targets parents and guardians of young children to help them understand their responsibilities and the dangers of leaving children unattended at the pool.

### **Watch Around Water (WAW)**

Watch Around Water (WAW) is an industry-driven program that aims to ensure the safety of young children by reducing risk at public pools. The WAW program was developed in 2004 by the Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics (LIWA) and was extended to Victoria through a partnership between Life Saving Victoria (LSV) and Aquatics & Recreation Victoria (ARV) in 2008. Around 2011 it was extended to South Australia through a partnership of Recreation South Australia, LIWA and ARV. WAW provides a consistent message to parents and guardians about effective supervision of young children at public pools and aims to reduce the incidences of drowning and non-fatal drowning of children in public pools.

Royal Life Saving research investigating drowning at public pools over a 10-year period identified that 25% of drowning deaths were children under 10 years old, and in 78% of those cases there was a lack of parent or guardian supervision at the time of the incident [1].

Coronial recommendations were provided in 72% of cases relating to: identifying non-swimmers and poor swimmers, minimum safety standards and safety features, supervision of pool patrons by lifeguards, swimming and water safety education, drowning prevention programs (including supervision programs) and relevant regulatory bodies for public pools. [1]

Children are a key population group identified in the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 as requiring concerted and sustained action in reducing the burden of drowning on this population group; in addition to aquatic facilities as a key location for drowning prevention [2].

Key risk factors for this age group are well known and include lapses in adult supervision or unsupervised access to water. One key objective of the Strategy is to evaluate the effectiveness of child safety messaging in aquatic facilities and seek, if possible, to standardise messaging across these campaigns and programs.

### **In order to do so, Royal Life Saving has undertaken research to:**

1. Seek to understand the range and scope of public pools with existing programs in place; and,
2. Analyse the reach of child supervision programs against established measures of socio-economic disadvantage in community profiles

### **The second phase of this research to be conducted in 2022/23 will:**

3. Determine which messages and interventions are effective in positively influencing parent and guardian supervision practices; and,
4. Determine which elements of programs are effective in supporting aquatic facility staff and management in applying their child supervision policies and practices.

### **Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (GSPO)**

For 30 years, Royal Life Saving has written the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (GSPO).

The GSPO is the recognised national industry standard that describes and makes recommendations as to the appropriate minimum standards of safety that should be attached to the design, ownership and operations of aquatic facilities thereby providing a recognised standard of care in a particular area of design and/or operations.

Although published by Royal Life Saving, the GSPO represents the collective opinion of the aquatic industry across Australia, through an extensive and consultative development and review process undertaken by the **National Aquatic Industry Committee (NAIC)**. As such, the GSPO is written and authorised for industry by industry - leveraging a formal network of collaborators both nationally and internationally.

All aquatic facility designers, owners and operators are strongly recommended to access and have an understanding of the GSPO in order to meet their obligations under the respective State/ Territory health and safety legislation, including child supervision programs.

The GSPO is made up of 12 guidelines, each with their own sub-guidelines:

- Aquatic supervision (SV1-SV31)
- Aquatic signage (AS1-AS14)
- Asset management (AM1-AM7)
- Emergency planning (EM1-EM5)
- Facility design (FD1-FD13)
- Incident management (IM1-IM11)
- Managing COVID-19 risk (CV1-CV4)
- Risk management (RM1-RM13)
- Safety equipment (SE1-SE12)
- Safe design (SD1-SD6)
- Swimming pool design (SP1-SP17)
- Swimming, water safety and aquatic exercise programs (AP1-AP13)

These Guidelines have been developed by Royal Life Saving Society - Australia under the guidance of the National Aquatic Industry Committee and include key information for adoption by the Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Governments and owners and operators of facilities or locations with aquatic environments.



## CURRENT SUPERVISION AT PUBLIC POOLS PROGRAMS (as of June 2022)

Table 1: Current supervision messaging at aquatic facilities by program, aligned to the Royal Life Saving Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO) (as at June 2022)

KEEP WATCH AT PUBLIC POOLS	WATCH AROUND WATER	ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY – AUSTRALIA GSPO SV 14	KEEP WATCH AT PUBLIC POOLS	WATCH AROUND WATER	ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY – AUSTRALIA GSPO SV 14
<p>Children aged 0 – 5-years old &amp; non-swimmers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay within arms' reach</li> </ul>	<p>Children under 5 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be accompanied into the centre and the water by a responsible parent / guardian</li> <li>Must stay within arm's reach during recreational play activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children under five (5) years will not be permitted entry without an appropriate parent/ guardian who is prepared to swim</li> <li>Children under five (5) years must be constantly supervised by an appropriate parent/guardian who is prepared to swim. Adequate supervision requires the parent/guardian to accompany the child in the water and remain within arm's reach of the child at all times</li> <li>Unsupervised children under five (5) years should be removed from the water and placed in a safe area until collected by the parent/guardian</li> <li>Children must be accompanied into the centre and supervised in the pool and within arm's reach. Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 2 Children</li> </ul>	<p>Active supervision at public pools key messages:</p>	<p><b>Recommended Policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups / families will not be permitted entry where the number of Parent / Guardian's supervising a group of children under ten (10) years exceeds the ratio of 1:4</li> <li>If a staff member is concerned for the safety of an unsupervised child, they have the ability to remove the child from the water.</li> <li>An unsupervised child of poor swimming ability regardless of age should be removed from the water by a staff member.</li> <li>All staff should complete a Supervision of Children Professional Development program such as Keep Watch or Watch Around Water.</li> <li>A risk management approach should be taken with the view of increasing the proximity, attention and / or the number lifeguards at times when children under ten (10) years are more likely to frequent the facility or are in attendance at the facility.</li> <li>Lifeguards should consider zoning aquatic activities or locations which restrict children to access higher risk activities or locations and enable easier monitoring and quicker response by lifeguards.</li> <li>This may include such things as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A line on pool deck or on lane ropes which indicates a depth greater than 900mm and no children ten (10) years and under past that point</li> <li>No running, jumping or diving</li> <li>Restriction to activities based on height / age</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Children aged 6 - 10 years old &amp; weak swimmers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be closer, be prepared &amp; maintain constant visual contact</li> </ul>	<p>Children under 10 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be accompanied into the centre by a responsible parent / guardian</li> <li>Must be constantly and actively supervised</li> <li>Parents / guardians must position themselves to have a clear view of the child with no physical or structural barriers between them and the child / children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children under ten (10) years will not be permitted entry without an appropriate parent / guardian</li> <li>Children under ten (10) years must be constantly accompanied by an adult while in the aquatic area of the Facility.</li> <li>Children must be accompanied into the centre and supervised by maintaining visual contact with the child at all times. Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 4 Children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Be Prepared:</b> Ensure you have everything you need before getting into the water, such as towels and dry clothes.</li> <li><b>Be Close:</b> Always be within arms' reach of your child.</li> <li><b>All of Your Attention:</b> Focus all of your attention on your child and get into the pool and talk and play with them.</li> <li><b>All of the Time:</b> You should never leave your child alone in the water, nor should they be left in the care of an older child or with the assumption that your responsibility diminishes due to the presence of lifeguards.</li> </ul>	<p>Children under 10 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 4 Children</li> </ul> <p>Children under 5 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 2 Children</li> </ul>	
<p>Children aged 11 - 14 years old:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain visual contact</li> </ul>	<p>Children 10 years old and over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents must use their knowledge of an individual child's swimming ability and general development to determine the level of accompaniment required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For children ten (10) years and older parents must use their knowledge of the child's swimming ability to determine the level of accompaniment required.</li> <li>Parents must use their knowledge of the child's swimming ability to determine the level of accompaniment required.</li> <li>N.B. Children 11 years and older may be non-swimmers or weak swimmers and parental supervision should not be restricted by age in these circumstances.</li> </ul>			

## PROGRAM RESOURCES

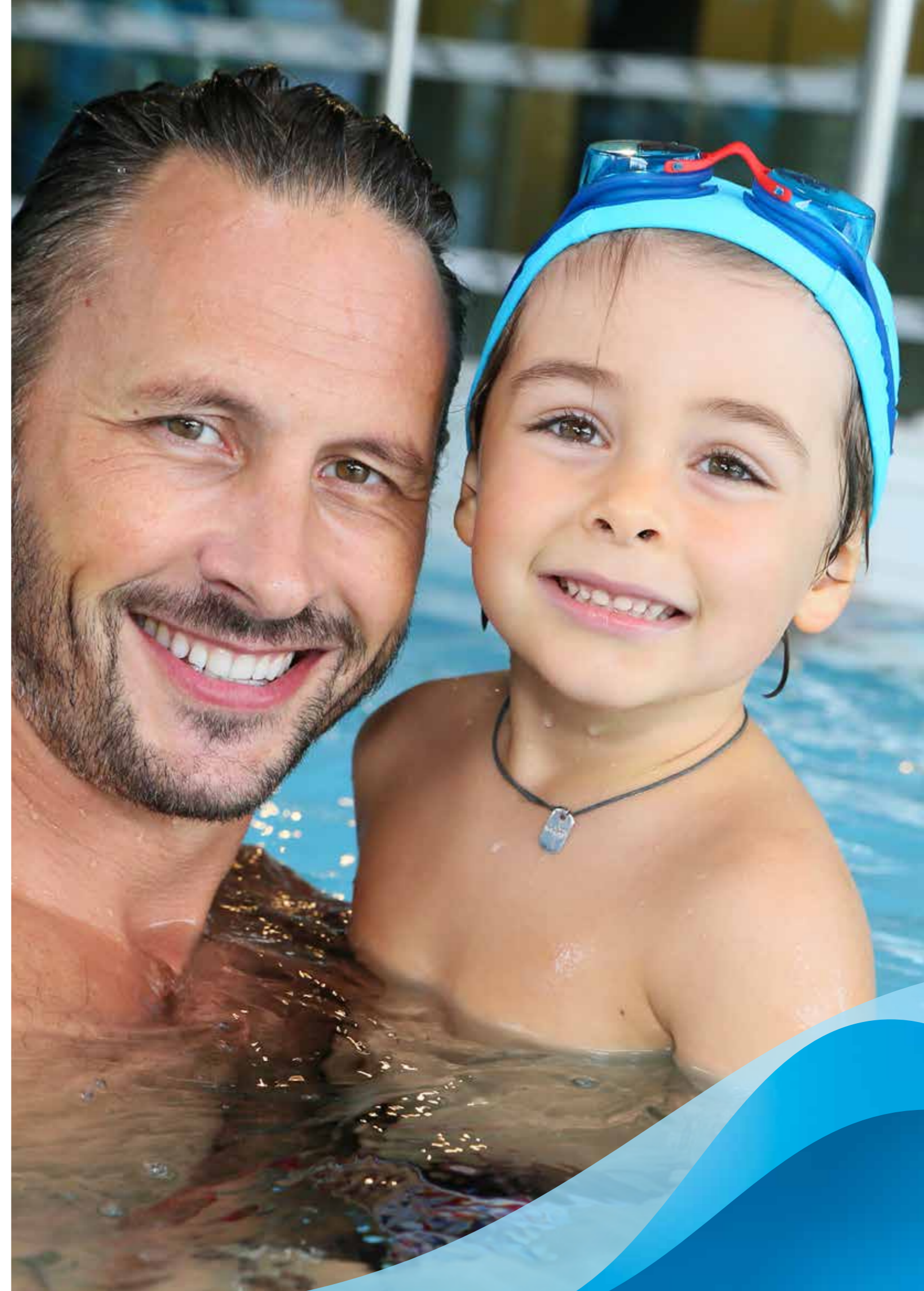
### KEEP WATCH AT PUBLIC POOLS

- Banners
- Yellow wristbands for children under 10
- Posters
- Flyers
- Lifeguard Cards
- Signage
- Policies
- Staff training DVD

### WATCH AROUND WATER

- Banners
- Yellow wristbands for children 5-10
- Pink wristbands for children 0-5 (Victoria)
- Multicultural materials / translated resources (no. of languages)
- Posters
- Flyers
- Lifeguard Cards
- Signage
- Policies
- Staff Training Session (2 hours)
- Staff and Management Training Manual
- Patron and Staff Online Learning Module

### Resource Examples



## BACKGROUND

Publicly accessible pools (including council-owned indoor or outdoor pools, and commercial pools or fitness centres, university/school pools and commercial learn to swim centres) offer a safe place to swim and learn water safety skills, providing an estimated \$174 million in avoided child drowning costs per year in Australia [3].

Tragically, despite the design expertise and skilled management of these spaces, child drownings at publicly accessible pools do occur.

Between 2002/03 and 2020/21

23

Children aged 0 – 14 years drowned in a publicly accessible pool

Age breakup

61%

5-9 YEARS

30%

0-4 YEARS

9%

10-14 YEARS

In the previous 19 years (2002/02 and 2020/21)

1.2

Average child drowning deaths occur at publicly accessible pools per year

Reducing drowning deaths at publicly accessible pools continues to be a focus for Royal Life Saving and aquatic facility owners and operators, with a Coroner commenting “no one should drown in a public pool” [4]. Preventing child drowning at aquatic facilities requires a collective effort between aquatic facility staff, parents and guardians.

Supervision messaging is a set of expected behaviours that need to be communicated, understood and applied. Affecting change in supervision behaviours of parents and guardians at aquatic facilities has the potential to influence supervision behaviour in other aquatic environments, including home pools, rivers, creeks, lakes, dams and beaches.

Ensuring all publicly accessible pools have a supervision program in place, and the supervision messaging is communicated and applied effectively is an important part of achieving the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 target of reducing drowning at aquatic facilities by 50% by 2030. RLSSA’s vision is a water-loving nation free from drowning.

## STUDY OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

A study into the social impact of the national aquatic industry revealed owners and operators believe that aquatic facilities are critical in delivering lifesaving education and water safety skills to their community [5]. These factors reinforce the need for aquatic facilities nationwide to actively practice and promote water safety behaviours and supervision messaging for children, parents and guardians in meaningful and effective ways.

The GSPO, Keep Watch at Public Pools and Watch Around Water have influenced water safety messaging for decades. However, differences continue to exist in the target age groups, wording and intent of the supervision messaging available.

While evaluations of Keep Watch at Public Pools and Watch Around Water have been conducted on the individual programs, this is the first known evaluation of both supervision programs with consideration of the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation as well.

A ten-year analysis of drowning in aquatic facilities (2005/06 – 2014/15) found a key risk factor was the lack of active supervision by parents or guardians for children [1]. In 78% of child drowning deaths at public pools, there was no adult supervision at the time of the incident [1], with 71% of cases reporting indirect supervision (supervising adult was in the vicinity of the child but not giving their full attention) and in 29% of cases, adult supervision was entirely absent [1]. Common distractions for adult supervisors were noted to be a conversation with another adult or attending to another child in their care [1].

Aquatic facilities are distributed widely across Australia with 89% of Australians living within 20 minutes’ drive of an aquatic facility. However, populations in the Northern Territory and Tasmania are relatively underserved with only 63% and 67% respectively living within a 20 minute drive of an aquatic facility [3]. The diversity of populations that aquatic facilities cater to, must be taken into account when considering how effectively supervision messaging is being provided to parents and guardians. This study has analysed the number of metro and regional public pools registered with a child supervision program.

A recent ten-year study on drowning among children aged 5 – 14 years (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2021), found children from moderate and low socio-economic areas were most likely to drown (across all aquatic environments) (86%) [6]. Research has found that 57% of children attending private swimming lessons are from higher socio-economic areas [7], and 40% of children who drowned were known to be poor swimmers [6] indicating an inequality in access to swimming and water safety skills for children from low and moderate socio-economic areas. This study has therefore analysed the socio-economic data relating to public pools registered for a child supervision program.

In summary, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing pool supervision programs, this study sought to:

- Review existing child supervision and lifeguard literature and policy recommendations
- Establish an understanding of the number and demographics of facilities currently implementing supervision messaging campaigns/programs

# RESULTS

## Section 1: Literature Review

This section provides a review of existing supervision and drowning prevention literature to provide a background to the issue of child supervision at publicly accessible pools.

### Lifeguard surveillance and supervision

Ten journal articles on lifeguard surveillance and supervision were reviewed and thematically analysed [8-17]. The research studies aimed to understand how eye movement patterns and information processing occurs for professional lifeguards to better support identified gaps in supervision training.

Study findings detailed how experienced lifeguards are not more superior at scanning or visual search tasks when compared with novice lifeguards or untrained study participants.

However, the use of contextual information gained through their experiences supported their overall superior drowning detection. This understanding of swimmer behaviours, pool layout, and other pool-specific experiences supported the lifeguard research participants to process and act upon their visual scanning information.

The literature identified several gaps in lifeguard supervision and surveillance competencies. The themes that emerged from these ten articles speak to the complexities of lifeguard supervision and surveillance in publicly accessible pool environments.

While the research builds a convincing argument to reduce the lifeguard ratio from 1:100 to 1:50, the following research recommendations from the literature provide a pathway for more targeted professional development opportunities.

- 1. Swimming behaviour training:** A better understanding of how people of different ages and abilities move through and enjoy the water could enhance the ability for lifeguards to identify erratic behaviours and near-miss events with more precision. Videos utilised in swim teacher training courses may be relevant in showing lifeguards the variety of swimming styles, strokes and degrees of ability relating to water competency. For example, being able to identify a swimmer who is not confident in foundational swimming skills such as floating would alert lifeguards to ensure that swimmer doesn't go into deeper water unassisted.
- 2. Behavioural management training:** Supporting lifeguards to develop behavioural management strategies are an important element of enforcing pool safety rules. By working in collaboration with all pool users, especially caregivers, adolescents and children, lifeguards can help to create a more collaborative pool supervision experience for everyone. Behaviour management practices can enhance positive behaviours, an important element of shared-use spaces such as public pools.
- 3. Contextual knowledge training:** Providing avenues for experienced lifeguards to share their contextual knowledge with younger or more novice lifeguards. This could take place within team meetings or more formally as part of a professional development course.

Although lifeguards are trained professionals, the literature reinforces the degree of human error related to visual search and processing times. The critical importance of parent and guardian supervision is reinforced by this literature review.



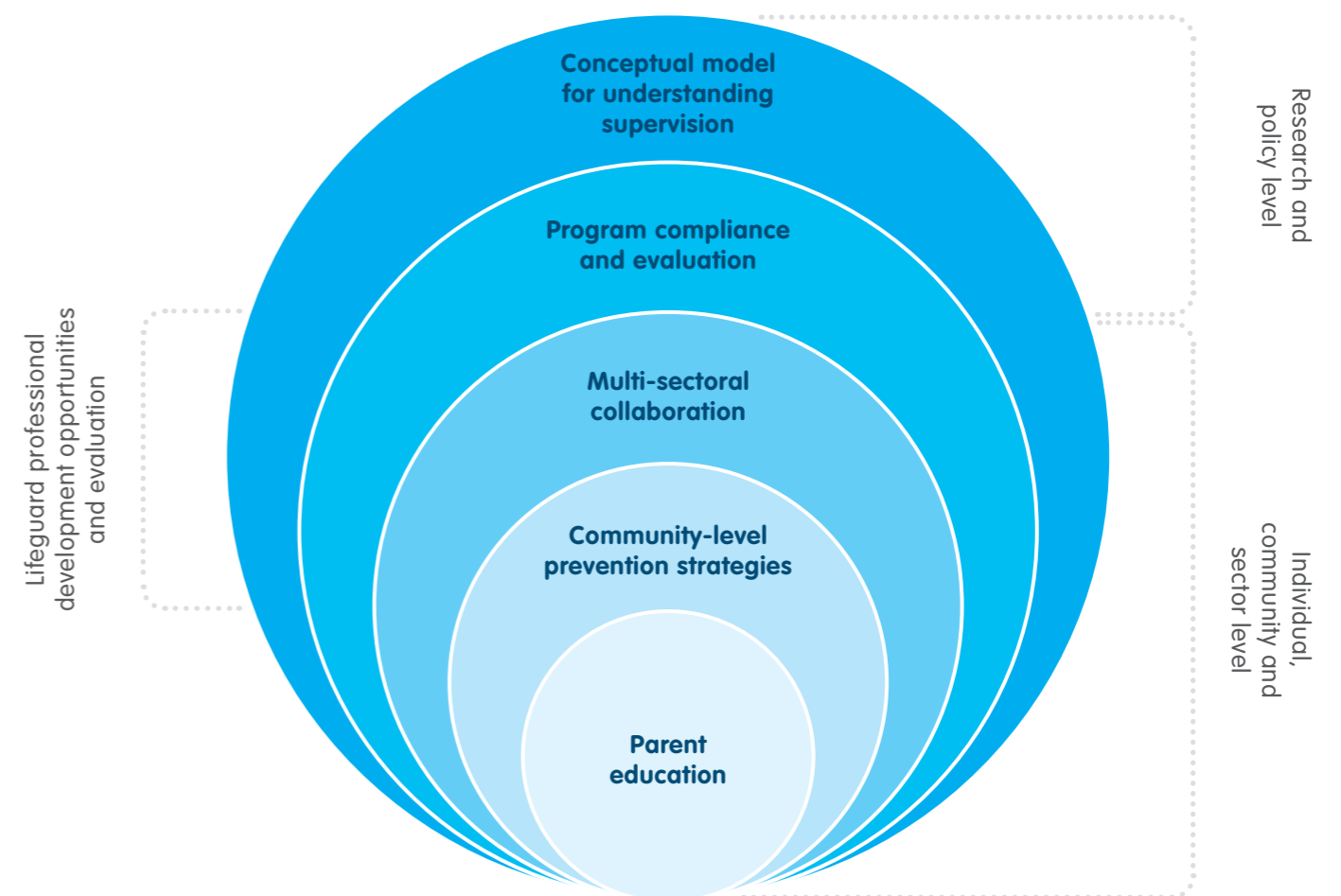
### Caregiver supervision literature

A literature scoping review was conducted on 46 literature sources relating to caregiver supervision of young children regarding drowning prevention and child injury prevention [19-41].

According to the literature, affecting change in caregiver supervision behaviours will require:

- **A conceptual model for understanding supervision**  
*Providing valid measures of supervision and taking into account real-world complexity*
- **Regular and coordinated program compliance and evaluation**  
*Evaluating the implementation and compliance of supervision program across all levels of pool staff as well as parent and guardian supervision behaviours*
- **Multi-sectoral collaboration to promote and educate caregivers**  
*Consistency of coronial database information and drowning prevention strategies shared between public health, family support and education sectors*

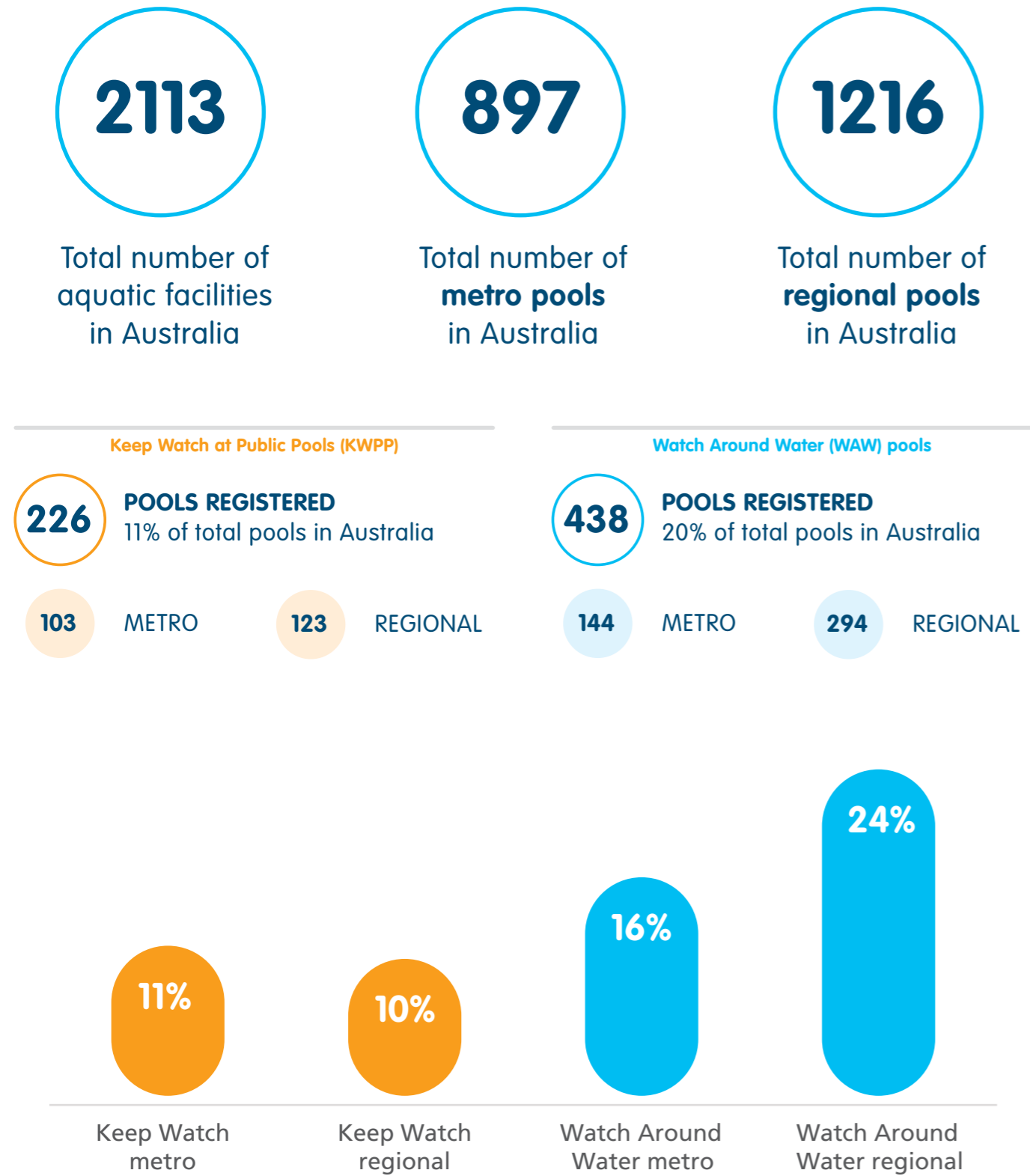
- **Community-level prevention strategies to further the education messaging**  
*Community health nurse and parenting support programs sharing supervision around water messaging, home safety interventions, encouraging drowning prevention conversations, locally-led community-based interventions*
- **Parent education for supervision behaviours built into all other water safety and learn to swim programming**  
*Parent-focused component to learn to swim programs, water safety workshops available to parents and guardians, messaging that challenges parent and guardian perceptions of risk*



Themes emerging from literature review

## Section 2: National statistics on child supervision at publicly accessible pools programs

This section provides an understanding of the number of facilities currently implementing child supervision messaging programs.



## Where are the pools with child supervision programs located?

To better understand how effective supervision messaging is at publicly accessible pools, it is important to understand which pools in Australia are registered with a child supervision program and where these pools are located.

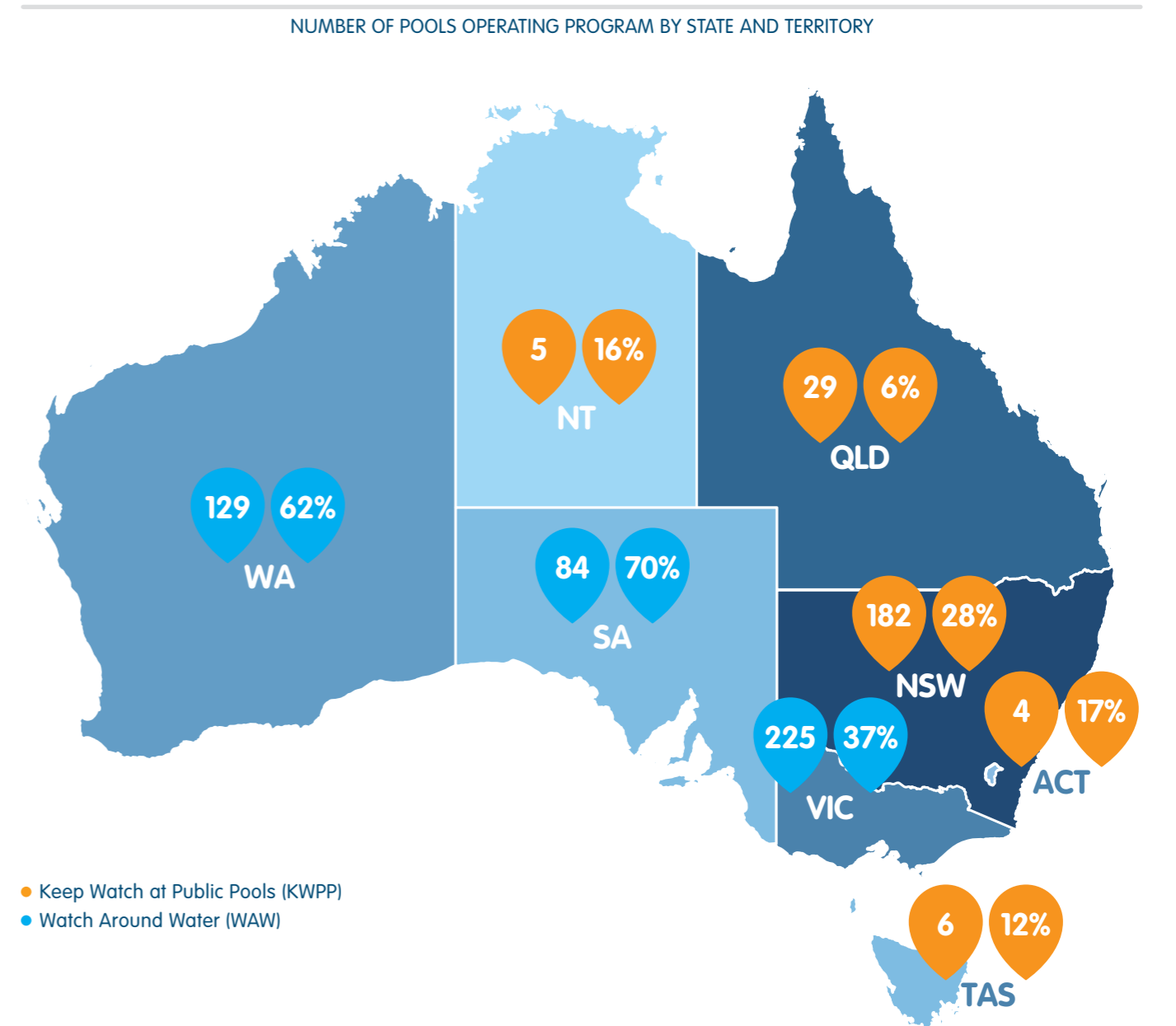


Fig. 1 Metro and regional pools registered for KWPP and WAW



Metropolitan or regional pool locations by state

State	Total Pools	Keep Watch Metro Pools	Keep Watch Regional Pools
NSW	182 (28% of total)	73 (29% of total metro NSW)	109 (27% of total regional NSW)
QLD	29 (6% of total)	19 (11% of total metro QLD)	10 (3% of total regional QLD)
TAS	6 (28% of total)	3 (27% of total metro TAS)	3 (8% of total regional TAS)
NT	5 (16% of total)	4 (50% of total metro NT)	1 (4% of total regional NT)
ACT	4 (17% of total)	4 (17% of total Metro ACT)	0
VIC	225 (37% of total)	74 (23% of total metro VIC)	151 (54% of total regional VIC)
WA	129 (28% of total)	36 (38% are Watch Around Water)	93 (82% are Watch Around Water)
SA	84 (70% of total)	34 (82% of total metro SA)	50 (63% of total regional SA)

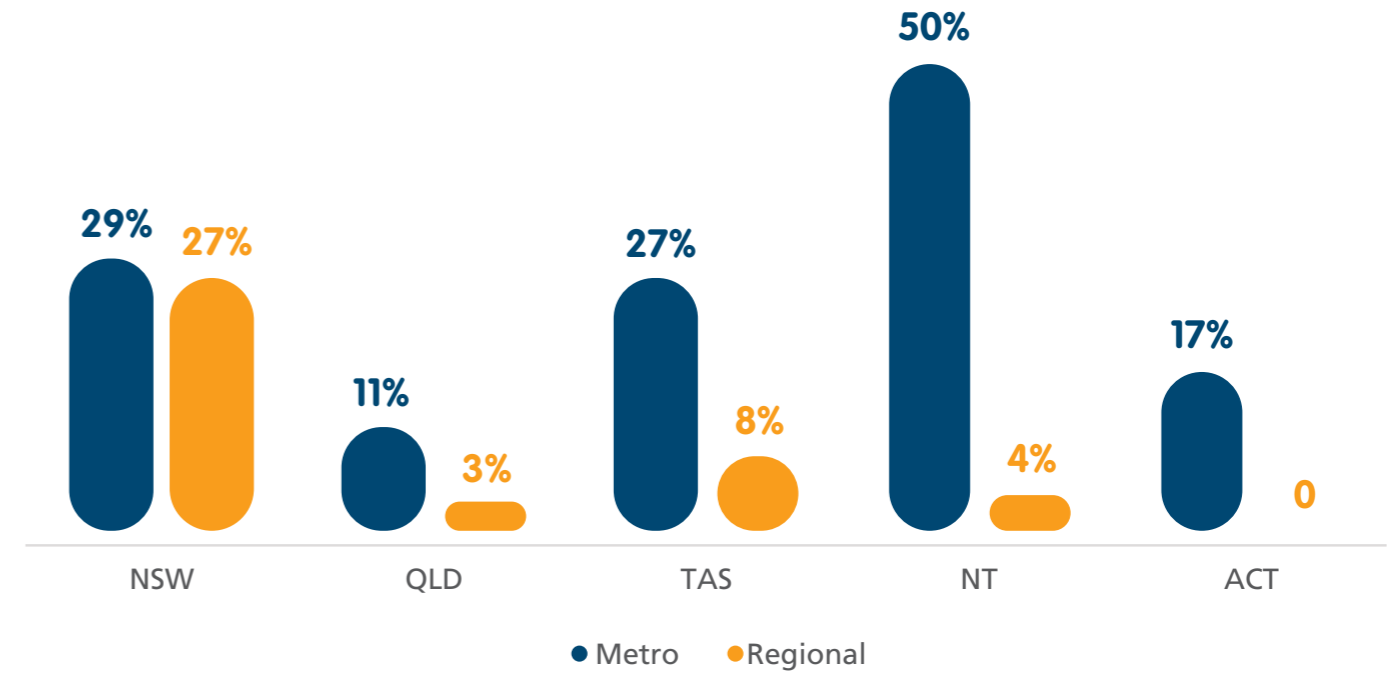


Fig 2. Pools registered for Keep Watch at Public Pools (KWPP), metro and regional locations

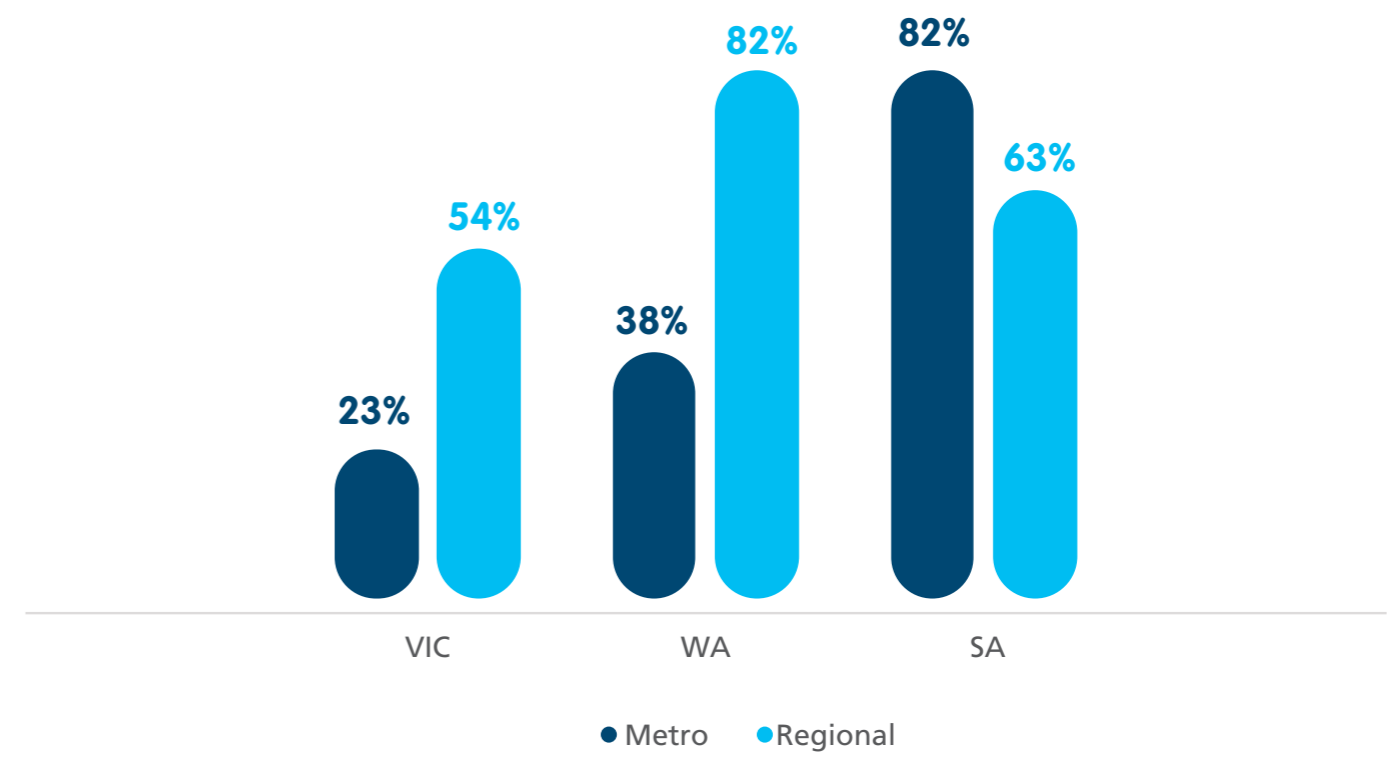


Fig 3. Pools registered for Watch Around Water (WAW), metro and regional locations

**Section 3: What are the socio-economic demographics of where these pools with child supervision programs are located?**

SEIFA Index	Pools in Australia	KWPP	WAW	Number of pools not registered to KWPP or WAW
Least advantaged areas in Australia (SEIFA decile 1 & 2)	<b>461 pools</b> 22% of total pools	<b>61 pools registered</b> 13% of total pools in least advantaged areas of Australia	<b>103 pools registered</b> = 22% of total pools in least advantaged areas of Australia	<b>297 pools (64%)</b> not registered
Moderately advantaged areas in Australia (SEIFA decile 3 – 8)	<b>1190 pools</b> 56% of total	<b>111 pools registered</b> 9% of total pools in moderately advantaged areas of Australia	<b>284 pools registered</b> 24% of total pools in moderately advantaged areas of Australia	<b>795 pools (67%)</b> not registered
Most advantaged areas in Australia (SEIFA decile 9 & 10)	<b>455 pools</b> 21% of total pools	<b>54 pools registered</b> 12% of total pools in most advantaged areas of Australia	<b>51 pools registered</b> 11% of total pools in most advantaged areas of Australia	<b>350 pools (77%)</b> not registered

\*4 postcodes were excluded from the SEIFA 2016 dataset by the ABS, due to small population size.



## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has provided an overview of the available programs of child supervision programs: Keep Watch at Public Pools (KWPP) and Watch Around Water (WAW) as well as the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO).

This research sought to:

- A. Review existing child supervision and lifeguard literature and policy recommendations
- B. Establish an understanding of the number and demographics of facilities currently implementing supervision messaging campaigns/programs

### What recommendations has the literature identified about child supervision at public pools?

The lifeguard supervision literature identified three key recommendations for lifeguard training and support that are supported by the current GSPO and are in place.

1. **Swimming behaviour training** for lifeguards into the training. This is currently offered by KWPP and WAW through the use of wristbands supporting lifeguards to identify non and weak swimmers (based on children's ages). The effectiveness of wristbands and their implementation as a supervision measure will be evaluated in Part 2 of this research.
2. **Behaviour management training** is recommended. This could be a future training option that could be added into the KWPP and WAW supervision training packages. Communicating the pool's expected child supervision practices to parents and guardians can be a stressful and complex part of a lifeguard's role, taking away from their priority task of drowning prevention.
3. **Public pools provide opportunities for experienced lifeguards to share their contextual knowledge (including as it relates to each individual pool layout and design) with novice lifeguards.** Opportunities for formal or informal sharing of experiential knowledge between lifeguards is recommended to be added into the KWPP and WAW supervision programs. Studies measuring accuracy of lifeguard scanning and surveillance techniques found that the use of contextual information gained through being a more experienced lifeguard supported their overall superior drowning detection.

The child injury and drowning prevention literature identified an additional two key recommendations for supervision programs at public pools.

- **Aligning these supervision programs with a theoretical framework** to effectively measure how these supervision programs are affecting behavioural change. The KWPP and WAW supervision programs are currently not designed or evaluated against a theoretical model. Common theories that underpin injury and drowning prevention programs include the public health model, risk reduction framework, Health Belief Model (HBM), the Transtheoretical Model/Stages of Change (TTM), and the Social Ecological Model to name a few.
- **Collaboration between sectors as well as with community level and existing parent/guardian support programs and initiatives** is recommended. Sharing the responsibility for promoting and educating parents and guardians with other sectors in our society can lead to increased application of expected supervision behaviours at public pools.

### What gaps has this research identified?

- **This study has identified that only 32% of all public pools in Australia are registered for a supervision campaign or program.**
- Alarmingly, this leaves 68% of the remaining public pools without an up-to-date and industry approved child supervision program.
- As mentioned earlier, ensuring all public pools have a child supervision program in place, and that supervision messaging is communicated and applied effectively is an important part of reducing the drowning rate at aquatic facilities by 50% by 2030 [2].

### Metro/regional areas

- Across Australia, pools registered for KWPP are almost equally spread between Metro and Regional Areas (Metro pools: 11%, Regional Pools: 10%).
- Comparatively, pools registered for WAW are predominantly based in regional areas (metro pools: 16%; regional pools: 23%). Regional areas are known to have limited access to swimming and water safety programs [2], providing additional incentive to ensure child supervision programs are available and effectively implemented in regional aquatic facilities.
- In regional areas where an outdoor pool may only be open in the summer months, the pool staff may have limited access to training. Parents/guardians in regional areas also may not have visited the pool as often as parents/guardians in metro areas with access to an indoor aquatic facilities throughout the year.

### Socio-economic demographics

- This study highlights that across all socio-economic areas in Australia, there is a need to promote and increase registration of aquatic facilities with a child supervision program.
- While it seems registration for child supervision programs is equally spread across low, moderate and highly advantaged areas of Australia, we know that 57% of children attending private swimming lessons are from higher socio-economic areas and 40% of children who drown are known to be poor swimmers [6], placing children in low and moderately advantaged areas at higher risk of drowning, as they may not be attending swimming lessons, and may also be visiting public aquatic facilities without a child supervision program.

### Conclusion

These findings emphasise there is no one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring the expected supervision behaviours are communicated, understood and applied by parents and guardians as well as pool staff.

This scoping review has added to our knowledge from previous evaluations of Keep Watch at Public Pools and Watch Around Water and provides a strong foundation for further research using a mixed-methods design.



### The second phase of this research to be conducted will:

- › Determine which messages and interventions are effective in positively influencing parent and guardian child supervision practices; and,
- › Determine which elements of programs are effective in supporting aquatic facility staff and management in applying their child supervision policies and practices.

The second phase of this research will incorporate qualitative research findings from parents and guardians and aquatic facility staff to understand how effectively the existing child supervision messaging is being provided to parents and guardians. This research will seek to include a range of diverse parent and guardian voices, across a range of geographical and socio-economic areas and delve deeper into the nuances of family life in relation to supervision behaviour. The aim is to further understand how parents and guardians adapt their behaviours based on these messages.

Understanding the perspective of pool staff is integral to ensuring the available child supervision programs are also meeting their objectives. Aquatic facility staff, including front desk staff, lifeguards and pool management, will be invited to be part of the study, either through interviews or focus group discussions and will include facilities providing both supervision programs.

By getting the perspective from both parents/guardians and aquatic facility staff, this will strengthen our overall understanding of the effectiveness of both programs.

The objective of the second phase research is to provide recommendations on:

- The most effective supervision messaging wording for the target age groups and identify any gaps in the current supervision messaging.
- The most effective theoretical framework to underpin both supervision programs, to ensure all future program evaluations consider health behaviours and the context in which they occur. This will strengthen our overall understanding of the effectiveness of both programs.

The first phase of this research began with a literature scoping review of 10 literature sources relating to lifeguard supervision, published between 2007 and 2020.

The literature scoping review then looked at 46 child injury and drowning prevention literature sources, including 33 academic articles, 8 program evaluations, 4 literature reviews and 1 editorial article published between 1993 and 2021. The literature review provided an overview of what is known about adult supervision of children for injury and drowning prevention.

A scoping review of pools registered for either Keep Watch @ Public Pools or Watch Around Water was then conducted. Emerging trends were identified and discussed.

Socio-economic data was sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2016 dataset.

### Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) summarises information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area, including both relative advantage and disadvantage measures.

For SEIFA 2016, the concept of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage is the same as that used for SEIFA 2011. That is, the *ABS broadly defines relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society.*

A **low** score indicates **relatively greater disadvantage and a lack of advantage** in general. For example, an area could have a low score if there are:

- many households with low incomes, or many people in unskilled occupations, AND
- few households with high incomes, or few people in skilled occupations.

A **high** score indicates a **relative lack of disadvantage and greater advantage** in general. For example, an area may have a high score if there are:

- many households with high incomes, or many people in skilled occupations, AND
- few households with low incomes, or few people in unskilled occupations.

### Royal Life Saving Society Australia Pool Database

The Royal Life Saving Society Australia Pool Database was the source for national pool statistics. KWPP and WAW registration information was provided by state and territory member organisations.

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