

AUSTRALIAN WATER SAFETY STRATEGY 2030 MIDPOINT UPDATE



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BACKGROUND

The Australian Water Safety Strategy (AWSS) sets a shared agenda for preventing drowning and promoting safe use of the nation’s waterways and swimming pools. The AWSS 2030 was launched in 2021 with an aspirational target to halve fatal drowning by June 2030.

At the AWSS 2030 midpoint, the Australian drowning prevention and water safety sector engaged in a review process of the strategy involving multiple forums and workshops and culminating in the 2025 National Water Safety Summit.

The consultative midpoint review assessed progress so far, identified what adjustments to the strategy were required, and determined which actions mattered most for reducing drowning, resulting in an updated version of the strategy.

The AWSS Midpoint Update streamlines the strategy framework, prioritises action by naming the ‘three things that matter most’ for each focus area, and introduces three national imperatives that signal where collective action is needed most to create lasting, transformative impact.

NATIONAL IMPERATIVES: WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Swimming and water safety skills for all Strengthen government programs Ensure no one misses out Retention beyond age 7 Infrastructure and workforce	Localising water safety efforts Empower local action Bring together groups Create coalitions Develop plans	Aligning policies and partnership for change Whole of government approaches Whole of society approaches Scaled resources for impact Generate and celebrate success
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FOCUS AREAS: WHAT MATTERS MOST?

PEOPLE

Children (0-4 years) Pool fencing legislation Parent and caregiver education Interventions for two-year-olds
Young males (15-29 years) High-school programs Peer-driven messages Segmented strategies
Older people (65+ years) Partnering into the healthy ageing agenda Engagement for lifelong aquatic activity Strategies for managing medical conditions

PLACES

Beaches Coordinated and collaborative lifesaving systems Beach safety skill-building and awareness Managing risk at unpatrolled beaches
Rivers and lakes Inland waterway systems-level prevention Land manager leadership Disaster resilience
Aquatic facilities Strengthen industry standards Address infrastructure and workforce fragilities Safety standards for communal pools

POPULATIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Alignment of agendas to close the gap Equitable access to programs and facilities Embedding First Nations knowledge and leadership
Multicultural communities Cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration Skills and community capacity Integration into migrant pathways
Regional and remote communities Support regional networks Equitable access to education opportunities Local planning for high-risk sites

ACTIVITIES

Boating and watercraft Regulations and waterway management Unified education efforts High-risk craft and user groups (PWC)
Rock fishing Consistent policy and risk management systems Education paired with skills and equipment Blackspot rock platforms
Diving and snorkelling Safety systems and standards Education for tourists and occasional participants Address risk among vulnerable groups

