

# National Aquatic Industry Committee Position Statement

**Position on ongoing reaccreditation and licensing requirements for key aquatic industry positions considering COVID-19 restrictions and associated lockdowns across the country mandating the closure of public and public-access swimming pools.**

## Note:

- This position is current as at: 10 September 2021
- This position must be considered against the remit of the National Aquatic Industry Committee (NAIC) as a steering committee for national industry guidelines and their responsibility in creating business operating certainty with safety as the foundational principle.
- Although published by Royal Life Saving, this position represents the collective opinion of the aquatic industry across Australia, through a considered development and review process undertaken by the National Aquatic Industry Committee (NAIC).
- At the time of writing, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) courses are being provided “@Home” by a range of providers
- It is noted that affected employees, affected employers and affected Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are operating in a more difficult and constrained financial landscape than in 2020.

## Background and context

A timeline of lockdowns across Australia relevant to this position statement as well as economic support for workers relevant to this position statement are included in the appendices.

## Implications

It is known that lockdowns frequently require aquatic facilities to close, face-to-face aquatic training to stop and can leave the potential for employees of aquatic facilities to lapse in their qualifications. This creates uncertainty for employers and regulators on the effect of staff ability to carry out their duties safely.

In addition to the effects of lapsing qualifications, employees, particularly casual employees, are financially impacted by the inability to work. Concern is felt by employers that employees will continue the exodus to other industries if action is not taken to ensure the workforce can be retained through the crisis so that aquatic facilities can reopen.

## Position

The National Aquatic Industry Committee (NAIC) is providing specific advice in relation to lifeguard re-accreditation and swim teacher licensing in response to the ongoing lockdowns.

The NAIC advises that with reference to the applicable sections of the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations an extension will be put in place for Swimming and Water Safety Teachers, Pool Lifeguards and Aquatic Program Instructors whose ongoing re-accreditation and licensing requirements have been or are due for renewal during a lockdown period and the date from

which aquatic facilities are able to be reopened or are able to recommence the applicable programming and/or training relevant to the role of the individual employee type.

## **Pool Lifeguards**

### Reference:

GSPO Aquatic Supervision SV9.7.1: "Pool lifeguards are required to be assessed every 12 months to demonstrate currency of their knowledge and skills."

SV9.7.2: "Assessments should be conducted by an Assessor who is either employed by an RTO or acting under the registration of an RTO."

### **Position:**

*"Any pool lifeguard reaccreditation and/or license due for renewal during a lockdown period:*

- *of up to 4-weeks should be extended by 4-weeks (28 days); or,*
- *greater than 4-weeks should be extended by the duration of the applicable lockdown (e.g. a 12-week lockdown would equate to a 12-week extension);*

*from the date facilities can reopen, after which time, the usual industry standard process outlined in the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations SV9.7.1 and SV9.7.2 comes back into effect.*

*Aquatic facilities should consider the length of closure and lapsing of reaccreditation on the employees' ability to competently execute their duties and consider providing in-service training for affected employees in line with the employer's risk appetite.*

*Employees should be aware of their own skills and limitations and give consideration to their own in-service training should their employer not make provisions for employer-provided in-service training."*

## **Swim Teachers**

### Reference:

GSPO Swimming, Water Safety and Aquatic Exercise Programs

SV2.8.1: "All swimming and water safety teachers should be licenced no more than every 3 years by process of verification of skills assessment and ongoing professional development."

SV2.8.2: "Licensing of swimming and water safety teachers should include but not be limited to:

- Requiring and citing evidence of training and assessment including CPR and basic water rescue techniques
- Requiring evidence of on-going professional development in both water safety and teaching techniques
- Requiring an assessment that the swimming and water safety teacher remains a fit and proper person to perform their duties."

### **Position:**

*"Any swimming and water safety teacher licence due for renewal during a lockdown period of at least 7 days, should be extended by 4-weeks from the date facilities can, under applicable health restrictions, recommence swimming and water safety programming. 'Working with Children Checks' or their equivalents are still required to be kept up-to-date for any active swimming and water safety teacher in line with relevant legislation.*

*Payment plans and/or flexible payment arrangements for affected swimming and water safety teachers are encouraged to be applied by licensing organisations as applicable to support industry recovery.*

*Licensing organisations should apply extensions, in line with the timing above, to licenses for affected swimming and water safety teachers.*

*Aquatic facilities should consider the length of closure and lapsing of licensing periods on the employees' ability to competently execute their duties and consider providing in-service training for affected employees in line with the employer's risk appetite.*

*Employees should be aware of their own skills and limitations and give consideration to their own in-service training should their employer not make provisions for employer-provided in-service training."*

### **Aquatic Program Instructors**

Reference:

GSPO Swimming, Water Safety and Aquatic Exercise Programs

SV3.4.1: "To perform the duties of an Aquatic Program Instructor, an individual should hold a:

- a) Current Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO); and a,
- b) 'Working With Children Check' or equivalent as required by relevant State or Territory Legislation; and a,
- c) Recognised minimum qualification for instruction of the programmed activity (as per the table in SV3.4.4)

SV3.4.4

Code	Competency
Swimming Coaching	Swimming Australia Ltd Bronze Coach Licenses or Equivalent Qualification (as recognised under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme).
Diving Coaching	Australian Coaching Council / National Coaching Accreditation Scheme Level 1 or Equivalent Qualification.
Pool Lifesaving Sport	Royal Life Saving Society Australia Level 1 Coach Licenses or Equivalent Qualification
Scuba Diving	Dive Instructor qualification from a recreational scuba training organisations or the equivalent industry qualification
Hydrotherapy	Hydrotherapy Aquatic Safety Certificate, or the equivalent industry qualification

Lifesaving (RLSSA Bronze Star, Medallion, Cross)	Current Royal Life Saving Society Australia Teacher of Lifesaving or Bronze Medallion Examiner accreditation
Water polo	Australian Water polo Association Coaching Qualification or the equivalent industry qualification
Aqua-Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSBRSK401 Identify risk and apply risk management processes</li> <li>• HLTWHS001 Participate in workplace health and safety</li> <li>• SISCAQU002 Perform basic water rescues</li> <li>• SISCAQU008 Instruct water familiarisation, buoyancy and mobility skills</li> <li>• SISFFIT008 Instruct water-based fitness activities</li> <li>• SISFFIT022 Instruct aquatic sessions for specific population groups</li> <li>• HLTAID003 Provide First Aid</li> </ul>
Helicopter Underwater Escape Training	PMAOHS214B Undertake helicopter safety and escape and a current TAE40116 - Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

**Position:**

*“Any aquatic program instructor due for a qualification and associated CPR renewal during a lockdown period and the date from which aquatic facilities are able to be reopened, should be extended by 4-weeks (28 days) from when facilities can reopen. ‘Working with Children Checks’ or their equivalents are still required to be kept up-to-date.*

*Licensing or reaccreditation organisations should apply extensions, in line with the timing above, to licenses for affected aquatic program instructors.*

*Aquatic facilities should consider the length of closure and lapsing of qualification periods on the employees’ ability to competently execute their duties and consider providing in-service training for affected employees in line with the employer’s risk appetite.*

*Employees should be aware of their own skills and limitations and give consideration to their own in-service training should their employer not make provisions for employer-provided in-service training.”*

**Conclusion**

The NAIC will continue to monitor the pandemic and may provide further advice accordingly.

The members of the NAIC will communicate this position statement to their respective constituents as applicable.

## Appendix A – Timeline of lockdowns across Australia

### Lockdowns

- Sydney has been in lockdown since on or around 25 June depending on the LGA.
- On 27 June, at 1pm, Darwin went into a 'snap' lockdown, until 2 July.
- On 28 June, at midnight in Western Australia, a 4-day lockdown was declared in the Perth and Peel regions.
- On 29 June in Queensland a 3-day lockdown was announced for Brisbane and all of South East Queensland plus Townsville city, Magnetic Island and Palm Island.
- On 15 July in Victoria, Premier Daniel Andrews that the state would enter a snap lockdown for 5 days from 11:59pm on 15 July (Thursday) until 11:59pm on 20 July (Tuesday).
- On 20 July, from 6pm, South Australia went into lockdown for 7 days. Victoria has extended its lockdown for a further 7 days.
- On 5 August in Victoria, in response to six new cases in the community, the Victorian Government announced their sixth lockdown, commencing that day at 8pm for seven days.[69] On 11 August the lockdown was extended for 7 days, extended again on 16 August for 14 days with a curfew added, then on 21 August regional Victoria joined Melbourne in lockdown. Also on 12 August, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), including Australia's capital city Canberra, went into lockdown at 5pm, initially for seven days, later extended to 2 September.
- On 14 August, all of regional NSW went into lockdown from 5pm, at first until 22 August. This was later extended by 7 days to end on 28 August, then extended again to September 10 after growing cases in western NSW.
- On 16 August in Victoria, their lockdown, already extended a week, was extended for another 14 days, with an overnight curfew reinstated and an end date of 2 September.
- On 19 August in NSW, the end of the lockdown in regional NSW was extended from 22 to 28 August.
- On 21 August at 1pm, regional Victoria was also placed into lockdown and other restrictions tightened, such as the 5 km limit for essential shopping, and exercise activities.
- On 4 September, Victoria announced Melbourne lockdown likely to continue until end of October (when the state hits 70-80% adult vaccinations).

## Appendix B – Economic support – workers

On 22 February 2021, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the JobSeeker Payment base rate would be increased by A\$50 a fortnight from April 2021. The payment will rise to A\$614 a fortnight, with an estimated cost over forward estimates of A\$9 billion. It is also intended to increase the threshold amount recipients can earn before their payment starts to be reduced.

On 26 February 2021, the Chief Executive of the Australian Airports Association, James Goodwin, said that Australian airports had been losing A\$320 million every month during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also said over the past 12 months, job losses amounted to 25 per cent of the airports' workforce.

On 10 March 2021, the Federal Government announced steps worth A\$1.2 billion to encourage Australians to holiday within Australia to assist ailing tourist destinations. Between April and July, up to 800,000 airfares to 13 regions normally favoured by international tourists will be halved for domestic travellers.

On 3 June 2021, the Federal Government announced that people who lose work as a result of lockdowns, of at least 7 days' length, may be eligible for a A\$325 or A\$500 per week Temporary COVID Disaster Payment. To be eligible:

- Person must be older than 17
- Live/ work in a Commonwealth defined hot-spot
- Have less than A\$10,000 liquid assets
- Would have worked except for lockdown, and,
- Will lose income due to lockdown
- Can't access special pandemic or sick leave, or,
- Have used it up

Those on other types of income support from the Commonwealth, like JobSeeker, are ineligible.

To get the full A\$500 payment, the lost work must be at least 20 hours. If the lost work is under 20 hours, the payment is \$325.

Victoria announced A\$30 million of financial support on 7 June 2021 for residents "locked out of work" by COVID lockdowns. The Victorian government also extended its emergency "hardship support payment" to October. This helps those on temporary or provisional visas who are not able to get income from the Commonwealth.