



NEW SOUTH WALES GREY MEDALLION EVALUATION REPORT

.....
A report into the findings of the Evaluation of 50
Grey Medallion Courses in New South Wales.

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Royal Life Saving

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



ABOUT ROYAL LIFE SAVING

Royal Life Saving is focused on reducing drowning and promoting healthy, active and skilled communities through innovative, reliable, evidence based advocacy; strong and effective partnerships, quality programs, products and services; underpinned by a cohesive and sustainable national organisation.

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
- International Networks

We are guided by the values of: Safety, Quality, Integrity and the Humanitarian tradition and have been serving the Australian community for over 119 years.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Grey Medallion program is a water safety and lifesaving skills initiative for older adults. It aims to encourage a healthy, independent and active lifestyle through the development of essential skills in order to participate in aquatic recreation activities safely. The Grey Medallion program provides older adults with personal survival techniques, improved swimming skills, skills to deal with emergency situations and a thorough understanding of water safety knowledge in order to reduce the likelihood of drowning.

Royal Life Saving Society – New South Wales secured funding from the New South Wales Government Water Safety Black Spots Fund to engage 100 facilities across the state in a two stage process. The first phase was an engagement of 50 facilities, 25 of which were in regional and remote locations. This report details the findings of the evaluation of the first 50 courses and facilities.

This research utilised pre and post course surveys of the course participants to evaluate changes in self-reported water safety awareness, changes in self-reported knowledge of drowning prevention strategies and participant demographic information and enjoyment of the Grey Medallion course and its components.

Paper based pre and post participation surveys were provided for course participants to complete in their first and last sessions of the course. These paper based surveys were collected and data was entered online into Survey Monkey by Royal Life Saving NSW staff. The facility survey was run solely online through Survey Monkey with participating facilities provided with the link to access the survey via email. Data for all three surveys was downloaded from Survey Monkey and data cleaning and analysis was undertaken in SPSS.

The surveys of participants found that almost three quarters of the participants in the course were females, which indicates there is further work that needs to be done in engaging men aged 55 plus in swimming and water safety programs, particularly as given men account for 80% of Australian drowning statistics each year.

The responses of participants showed that the Grey Medallion program is a great way to engage and re-engage older Australians in semi-formal instruction and education on water safety and drowning prevention strategies. Sixty three percent of respondents had not previously participated in a lifesaving course prior to participating in the Grey Medallion. Of those who had participated in a lifesaving course, 69% hadn't participated in a course for 20 years or longer.

Ninety percent of respondents also reported that they believed participating in the Grey Medallion course had motivated them to improve their health and wellbeing. Eighty three percent reported an improvement in their aquatic skills and 77% were considering participating in more aquatic activities as a result of participating in the course.

All course components and sessions were rated as excellent by the vast majority of respondents with many participants seeking ongoing pathways to continue to engage in aquatic activity and formal instruction such as recreational swimming, aqua aerobics, first aid courses and learning resuscitation. It is important that instructors promote ongoing opportunities for participation and learning to engage passionate participants and encourage longer term engagement with the aquatic facility.

Although positive feedback and enjoyment of the course was reported by almost all participants, it was concerning to note that 15% of facilities stated that they were unsure if they would run another Grey Medallion course in the future. It is recommended that informal follow up is conducted with facilities running the course in the future to identify barrier to running ongoing courses.

General feedback received on the program suggested there was both a need and a desire for people who are learning to swim and those aged 55 and over who are non-swimmers to participate in the program. Although the Grey Medallion, in its name and promotion, is heavily aimed at people aged 55 years and over it would be suitable for weak swimmers of adult age and could be modified for non-swimmers as well. Future promotion and engagement with aquatic facilities and training of instructors should highlight the flexible delivery options and course content of the Grey Medallion and promote alternative audiences for the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore avenues for targeting and encouraging older men to participate in the Grey Medallion program given the burden of men in national drowning statistics.
- Identify and develop strategies for engaging older Australians with the Grey Medallion who are not regularly visiting their local pool.
- Explore alternative avenues for promotion of the Grey Medallion course, such as libraries, child care centres, men's sheds and senior's week events.
- Ensure that ongoing pathways and participation in aquatic activity is included in instructor training and continually communicated to course participants to highlight enthusiasm and eagerness to continue to engage in swimming and lifesaving activities.
- A priority in the ongoing development of the Grey Medallion program should be to ensure that promoting other opportunities for participation is communicated to instructors in their training and aquatic facilities are encouraged to continue to engage the older Australian demographic with other activities and pathways at their facility.
- Work with aquatic facilities to develop strategies to encourage recruiting instructors aged 55 plus to run Grey Medallion courses. This could include exploring the option to re-engage past graduates of the program who are interested in continuing to be involved in formal instruction.
- Continue to promote the Grey Medallion program and importance of drowning prevention strategies for older Australians around the country both to the public and to the aquatic industry to ensure maximum uptake of the program.
- Conduct informal ongoing discussions with facilities running the course in the future to identify barriers to running ongoing courses.
- Future promotion and engagement with aquatic facilities and training of instructors should highlight the flexible delivery and course content of the Grey Medallion and promote alternative audiences for the program such as adults learning to swim and non-swimming seniors.

Funding Acknowledgement

Royal Life Saving Society – New South Wales would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the New South Wales Government – through the Water Safety Black Spots Fund – for their valuable support.

BACKGROUND

The Grey Medallion program is a water safety and lifesaving skills initiative for older adults. It aims to encourage a healthy, independent and active lifestyle through the development of essential skills in order to participate in aquatic recreation activities safely. The Grey Medallion program provides older adults with personal survival techniques, improved swimming skills, skills to deal with emergency situations and a thorough understanding of water safety knowledge in order to reduce the likelihood of drowning. Royal Life Saving has been implementing the Grey Medallion program around Australia since the program's development in early 2008.

Research into aquatic activity and the water safety attitudes of older Australians (aged 55 and over) has previously been conducted by Royal Life Saving in 2006. This research found that water safety in open waterways and bathing safety were of importance in drowning prevention strategies for this age group. Research also identified activities prior to drowning and personal attributes such as swimming ability and underlying medical conditions can increase an older person's risk of drowning. This research led to the development of the Grey Medallion program.

Royal Life Saving's most recent National Drowning Report for 2013 found that 114 people aged 55 years and over drowned in Australian waterways between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013. This accounted for 39% of all drowning deaths in Australia across the 2012-13 financial year and represented a 31% increase on the 10 year average of 87 drowning deaths. With Australia's well documented ageing population, drowning prevention education and awareness raising programs that specifically target older people, such as the Grey Medallion, are desperately needed.

Royal Life Saving Society - New South Wales secured funding from the New South Wales Government Water Safety Black Spots Fund to engage 100 facilities across the state in a two stage process. The first phase was an engagement of 50 facilities, 25 of which were in regional and remote locations. The second phase will include engagement of a further 50 facilities across the State.

Those who participated in the program were provided with training and resources free of charge at their facility in return for conducting a Grey Medallion course. By participating in this project, the facility is asked to commit to conducting further courses using their own resources in the future.

This report details the findings of an evaluation of the first 50 courses and facilities.

AIMS

This research aims to evaluate the New South Wales implementation of the Grey Medallion program with respect to:

- Demographic information of the participants.
- Changes in self-reported water safety awareness.
- Changes in self-reported knowledge of drowning prevention strategies.
- Participant enjoyment of the Grey Medallion program and its components.
- Identify attitudes of industry to conducting future Grey Medallion courses.
- Identify barriers to industry adopting the Grey Medallion program more broadly.

METHODS

The Evaluation was a three stage process:

1. Pre-participation survey of course participants.
2. Post-participation survey of course participants.
3. Post-implementation of course survey of facility contact person.

Facility Selection

All aquatic facilities in New South Wales were invited to participate in the Grey Medallion Initiative. Invitations were sent via email and/or letter. Interested facilities were asked to contact their nearest Royal Life Saving branch. By accepting Royal Life Saving's invitation, each facility was asked to develop a long term strategy or commitment to continue to promote and service programs supporting the 55+ age groups. The first 50 aquatic facilities (25 Sydney, 25 Regional and Remote Locations) were provided with a range of resources, training and administrative assistance to assist with implementation.

Survey Development and Data Collection

Pre and Post Participation Surveys of Course Participants

The content for the pre and post participation surveys were developed by researchers from Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and formatted in a word document for paper based distribution to the course participants in their first and last sessions.

The pre and post participation surveys were also formatted online. The paper based surveys were collected by the course instructor and sent to Royal Life Saving Society – New South Wales, where data was entered online in Survey Monkey for ease of analysis. The original paper based surveys were sent to Royal Life Saving Society – Australia to cross-reference if required.

The collection of data from the pre and post participation surveys commenced on November 7, 2012 ceased at July 9, 2014.

Facility Survey

The content for the facility survey was developed by researchers from Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and the survey was set up online using Survey Monkey. The online survey was piloted in house and with staff from Royal Life Saving Society – New South Wales. A copy of the Facility Survey can be found in Appendix 3 of this report.

The link to the facility survey was provided to the contact person at each of the first 50 facilities that ran a Grey Medallion course. Respondents entered their answers online.

The collection of data from the Facility Survey commenced on November 12, 2012 and ceased at 14 July 2014.

Data Cleaning and Analysis

De-identified survey data was downloaded from Survey Monkey for each of the three surveys. The data was cleaned and analysed in SPSS. Some variables were coded for ease of analysis. There were no duplicate surveys that needed to be removed from the dataset.

Where respondents were asked to rank a set of responses, average rankings were calculated across the number of responses received to the question. Remoteness classification of participant's residential postcode and facility location was determined using postcode and using postcode to identify the corresponding Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC).

Region of facility was determined using the segmentation of facilities throughout New South Wales as used by Royal Life Saving Society – New South Wales.

A lifesaving course was defined as a formalised program teaching swimming and water safety skills. An older person was classified as someone aged 55 year or older.

RESULTS

Overall

Pre-participation and post-participation surveys were collated from 36 of the 50 courses, which was a participant response rate of 72%. A total of 221 pre-participation surveys and 175 post-participation surveys were collated.

Of these courses, 71% took place in the Sydney region, followed by 14% in the Western region of New South Wales and 8% in the Hunter region. With respect to remoteness classification of the course location, 76% took place in areas deemed Major Cities. Ten percent of courses took place in areas deemed Inner Regional and Outer Regional respectively. A further 5% of courses were conducted in areas classified as Remote.

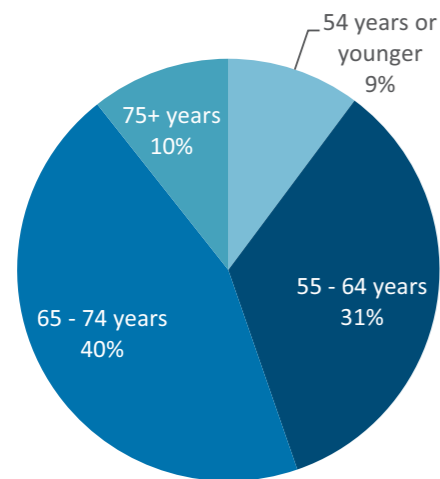
PRE-PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Demographic Information

A total of 221 responses were received for the pre-course survey. Of these 72% (n=160) of participants were female and 22% were male (n=48). There were 13 responses where sex of the respondent was not recorded.

Of the respondents to the pre-participation survey, 40% of respondents were aged 65 to 74 years, 31% were aged 55 to 64 years of age (Figure 1). There were 24 respondents where age group of was not recorded.

Figure 1: Age group of respondents, pre-participation survey (n=197)



When respondents were asked about their work status, over half of all respondents were retired (58%). A further 12% respectively were semi-retired or working part time. There were 25 respondents for whom work status was not recorded.

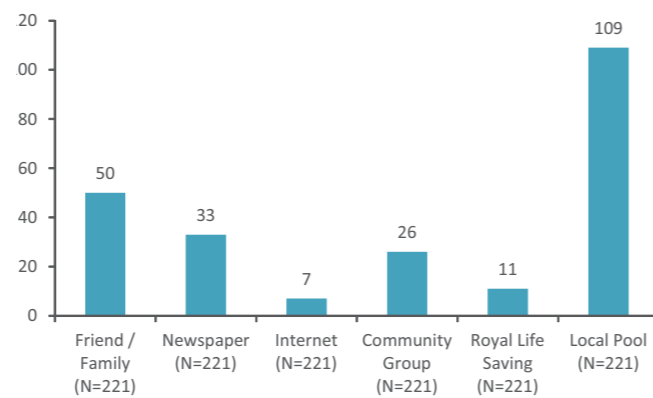
Just over three quarters of course participants that responded to the pre-course survey resided in a postcode that was classified as Major Cities. A further 13% resided in areas deemed Outer Regional and just 3% of pre-participation survey respondents were from areas deemed Remote. There were a total of 8 respondents where residential postcode was not provided and calculating remoteness classification of their residential address was not possible.

Grey Medallion Course Promotion Avenues

Respondents to the pre-participation survey were asked where they had found about the Grey Medallion course they were participating in. The most common response was the local pool (49%), followed by friends or family (23%) and the newspaper (15%) (Figure 2).

Respondents were also asked to identify if there were any other avenues that they heard about the course through. Responses included their local council, their local gym, senior's week advertising, the local library, grandchild's childcare centre, the Men's Shed and University of the Third Age.

Figure 2: How course participants heard about their Grey Medallion course, pre-participation survey



Prior Participation in Lifesaving and First Aid Courses

Respondents to the pre-course survey were asked if they have previously participated in a lifesaving course. Sixty three percent of respondents stated that they had not previously participated in a lifesaving course prior to their participation in the Grey Medallion program. Twenty seven percent stated that they had participated in a lifesaving course previously and 8% of respondents were unsure.

Of those who had previously participated in a lifesaving course, almost half (48%) last attended a course between 21 and 50 years ago, with a further 21% having last attended a lifesaving course 51 year ago or longer.

Respondents to the pre-participation survey were also asked if they had previously attended a resuscitation or first aid course previously. Just over half of the respondents (52%) had participated in a resuscitation or first aid course previously with a further 43% who had not.

Of those who had attended a resuscitation or first aid course previously, almost one third of respondents (31%) had participated in a resuscitation or first aid course between 21 and 50 years ago. A further 25% had participated in a resuscitation or first aid course between 1 to 5 years ago.

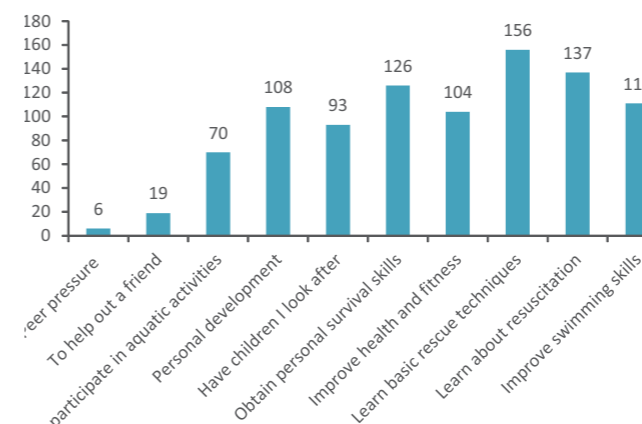
Respondents to the pre-participation survey were also asked, if they had previously participated in a resuscitation or first aid course, how long ago they had done an update for their qualification. Almost half of those who responded (46%) had done an update within 1 to 5 years. A further 21% hadn't done an update within the last 10 years or more.

Motivation for Participating in Grey Medallion Course

The next section of the pre-participation survey asked respondents why they decided to attend the Grey Medallion course. The most popular reason was to learn basic rescue techniques (70% of respondents), followed by to learn about resuscitation (62% of respondents) and to obtain personal survival skills (57% of respondents) (Figure 3).

Respondents were also asked to identify other reasons not already listed for choosing to participate in the Grey Medallion course. Responses included: to have fun, having done lifesaving at school and interested to see how it had changed, to help in the local community, being interested in seeing what was available, as a refresher course, to simply gain more knowledge in water safety and to be able to swim in the deep end.

Figure 3: Reasons for attending the Grey Medallion course, pre-participation survey (N=221)



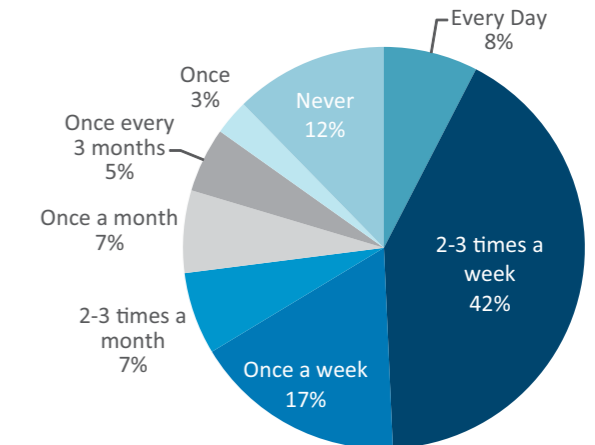
Prior CPR Performance

Respondents were asked if they ever had to perform CPR previously, and 10% of respondents stated that they had. Of those who had previously had to perform CPR, 17% had performed it on a friend or family member.

Frequency, location and type of aquatic activity in previous 6 months

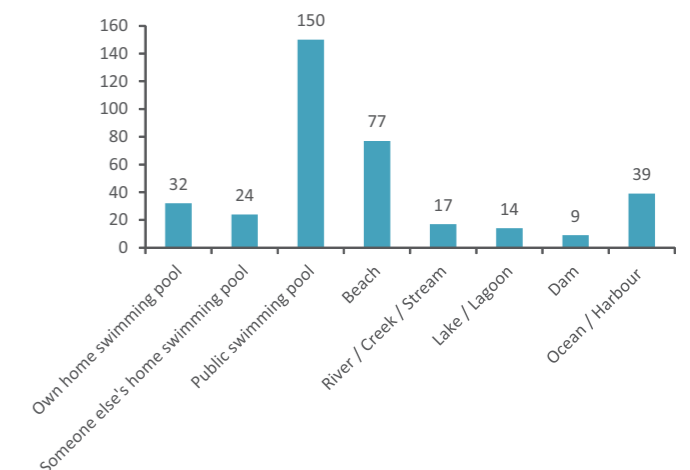
Eighty four percent of respondents to the pre-participation survey had participated in aquatic activity at least once within the last 6 months. Participants were asked how often they had undertaken aquatic activity in the last 6 months. Almost half of all respondents (42%) had participated in aquatic activity 2 to 3 times a week within the last six months. A further 17% participated in aquatic activity once a week on average within the last 6 months. Twelve percent of respondents had done no aquatic activity within the previous 6 months (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Frequency of aquatic activity within the last 6 months, pre-participation survey (n=211)



For those who had participated in aquatic activity in the previous 6 months, the most commonly visited aquatic location was the public swimming pool (81% of respondents who had participated in aquatic activity within the previous 6 months). This was followed by the beach (42%) and the Ocean / Harbour (21%) (Figure 5). Other responses included gym pools, hydrotherapy pools, natural thermal baths and hotel and resort pools.

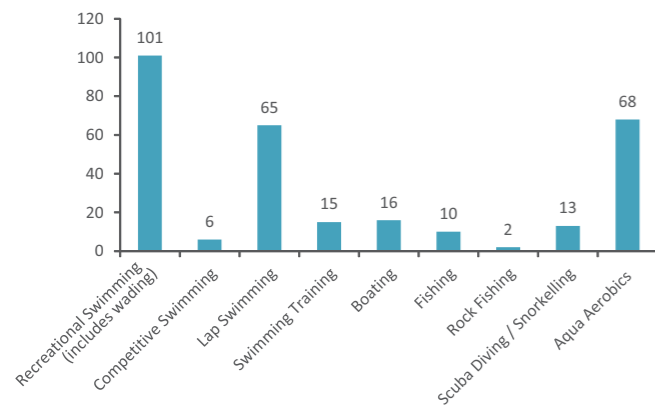
Figure 5: Types of aquatic locations visited by respondents within the last 6 months, pre-participation survey (n=185)



Respondents were also asked the types of aquatic activity they were undertaking. The most commonly undertaken aquatic activity was recreational swimming (55% of those undertaking aquatic activity), aqua aerobics (37%) and lap swimming (35%) (Figure 6).

Other aquatic activities being undertaken by respondents included yoga on the beach, kayaking, hydrotherapy, paddle boarding, canoeing and surfing.

Figure 6: Type of aquatic activity undertaken in previous 6 months, pre-participation survey (n=185)



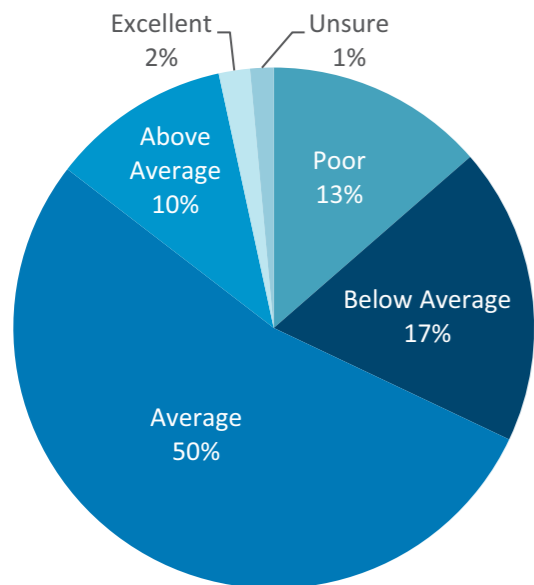
Experience in conducting aquatic rescues

Respondents to the pre-participation were asked if they had had to perform an aquatic rescue before, of which 10% stated that they had. Of those who had performed an aquatic rescue, 39% stated they had performed an aquatic rescue on a family member or friend.

Self-reported water safety knowledge

Those responding to the pre-participation survey were asked to describe their water safety knowledge on a scale from poor to excellent. Half of all respondents (50%) reported that their water safety knowledge was average. Just 2% of respondents rated their water safety knowledge as excellent (Figure 7).

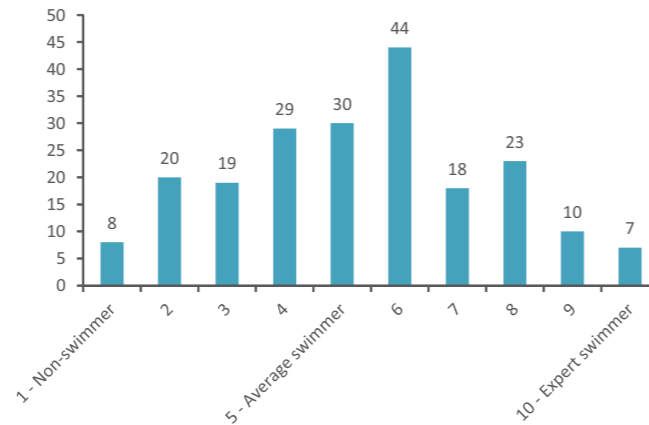
Figure 7: Self-reported water safety knowledge, pre-participation survey (n=206)



Self-reported swimming ability

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 where '10' means expert swimmer and '1' means cannot swim, their own swimming ability. Twenty one percent of respondents rated their swimming ability as a 6 out of 10, 4% of respondents rated themselves as non-swimmers and 3% rated themselves as expert swimmers (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Self-reported swimming ability, pre-participation survey (n=208)



Providing care for young children

Just over half of all respondents (55%) to the pre-participation survey stated that they had a responsibility for looking after children. Of those who had a responsibility to look after children, just over half (55%) were looking after children under five years of age.

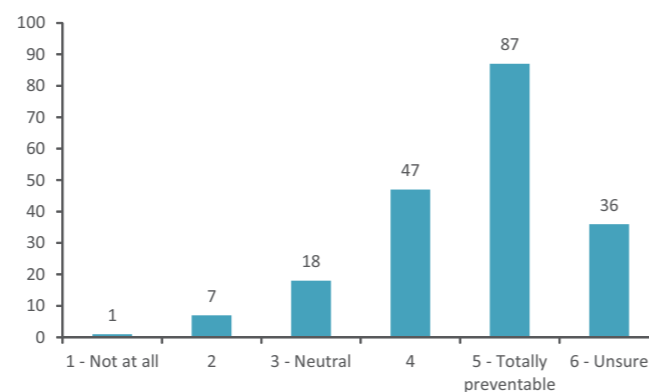
Access to swimming pool at residential address

Twenty three percent of respondents had access to a swimming pool at home (or in their complex). Of these almost all (96%) stated that they accessed the pool through a gate. Eighty eight percent of those with a pool that was accessed via a gate, stated that the gate self-closed and self-latched shut.

Self-reported opinion of prevention of drowning

Respondents were also asked in their opinion, on a scale of 1(not at all) to 5 (totally preventable), how preventable is drowning in older people (i.e. people aged 55 years and over). Almost half of all respondents (44%) believed that drowning in older people was totally preventable. Eighteen percent of respondents were unsure how preventable drowning in older people was (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Respondent rating of how preventable drowning in older people is, pre-participation survey (n=196)



POST-PARTICIPATION SURVEY

After completing the course, respondents were asked to complete the post-participation survey about the course they had just participated in.

Demographic Information

A total of 173 responses were received for the post-course survey. Of these, 75% of respondents to the post-participation survey resided in areas classified as Major Cities. Thirteen percent resided in areas classified as Outer Regional and 3% from areas deemed Remote.

Rating of aspects of Grey Medallion course

After completing the course, respondents were asked to rate aspects of the course from the venue and information received prior to participating in the course, as well as each of the sessions. The majority of respondents rated all aspects of the Grey Medallion course as being excellent or good (Figure 10) (Figure 11).

Figure 10: Rating of aspects of Grey Medallion Course, post-participation survey (N=173)

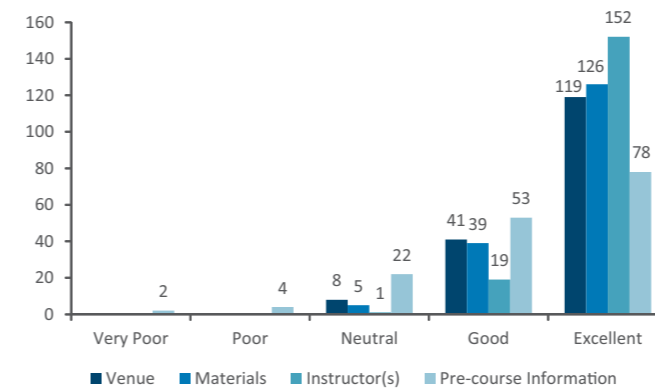
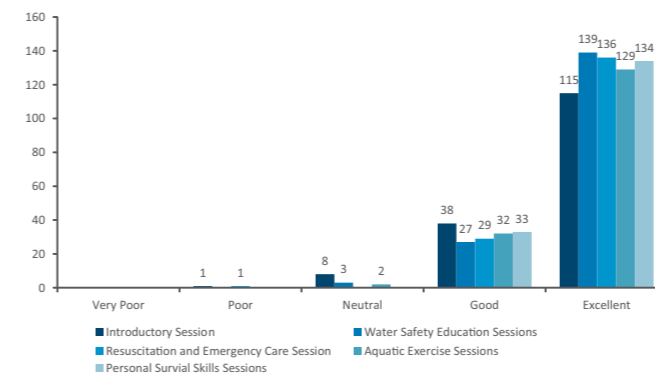


Figure 11: Rating of sessions of the Grey Medallion Course, post-participation survey (N=173)



Duration of course and participant attitudes of course duration

The Grey Medallion is flexible in its delivery and therefore the duration of sessions and number of sessions that make up a course can vary. Almost three quarters (74%) of course participants attended a course that was delivered over 8 x 1 hour sessions. This delivery method was overwhelmingly the most common delivery method. Eighty percent of respondents who participated in a Grey Medallion course delivered over 8 x 1 hour sessions attended all eight sessions. There was a 100% attendance rate in those respondents who attended a course delivered over 5 x 1 hour sessions, 9 x 1 hour sessions and 12 x 1 hour sessions.

Most commonly (67%), a session of the Grey Medallion course would last for a period of 2 hours. Seventy nine percent of respondents believed that the number of sessions that their course lasted for was enough to learn and practice everything. Of the 13% of respondents who felt that the delivery method of the course they were attending did not provide enough time to learn and practice everything, just over three quarters (78%) would have preferred more sessions.

With respect to the overall duration of the program the participants attended, 83% of respondents stated that they felt the duration of the program was just right, with a further 8% stating that the course they attended was too short in duration. Only 5% of respondents felt that course was too long.

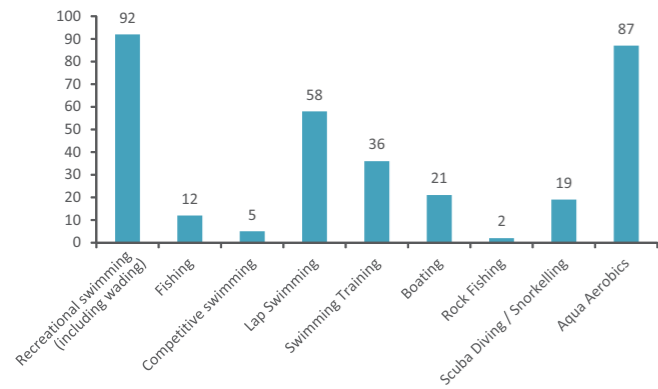
Aquatic activity – perceived improvement & future participation

Respondents to the post-participation survey were asked if they felt that their aquatic skills had improved as a result of undertaking a Grey Medallion. Eighty three percent of participants believed that their aquatic skills had improved as a result of participating in the course. Just 6% didn't believe that their skills had improved.

When respondents were asked if, after completing the Grey Medallion program, they were considering participating in more aquatic activities. Over three quarters of respondents (77%) stated that they were considering participating in more aquatic activities as a result of participating in the course. Just 7% of respondents were not intending to participate in more aquatic activities. The most popular activities respondents intended to participate in was recreational swimming (including wading) (53% of respondents), followed by aqua aerobics (50% of respondents) and lap swimming (34% of respondents) (Figure 12).

Other activities respondents intended to participate in included a Bronze Medallion course, Masters Swimming, Teaching swimming and swimming with grandchildren in the pool.

Figure 12: Aquatic activities respondents planned to undertake post participating in a Grey Medallion course, post-participation survey (N=173)

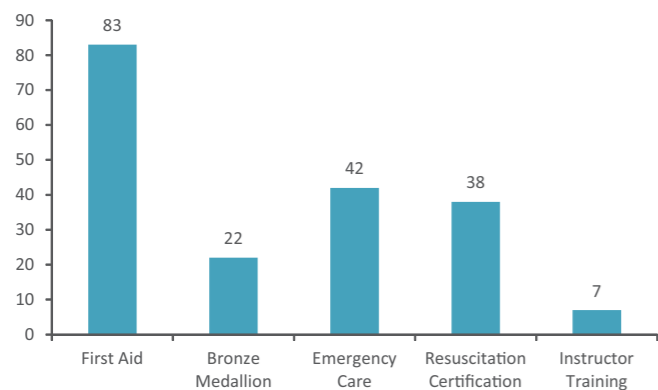


Future course participation and confidence in associated lifesaving skills

Respondents to the post-participation survey were also asked about their interest in undertaking a variety of other lifesaving courses and programs. Almost half of all respondents (48%) to the post-participation survey were interested in undertaking a first aid course. Participating in courses that taught emergency care and resuscitation were the next most popular, with just 4% of respondents intending to pursue training as an instructor (Figure 13).

Participants were also asked to note other courses they would be interested in participating in, that were not previously listed as options in the survey. Six respondents wanted to continue to engage with the Grey Medallion program in some way or another. Other popular responses included learning to swim, becoming a lifeguard, participating in Masters Swimming and aqua aerobics.

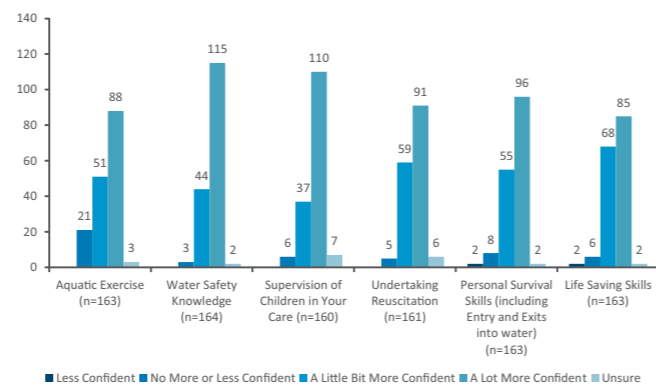
Figure 13: Courses and Programs respondents were interested in undertaking post participation in Grey Medallion course, post-participation survey (N=173)



As a result of their participation in the Grey Medallion course, respondents to the post-participation survey were asked if they felt more or less confident on a 4 point scale from less confident to a lot more confident, across 6 key areas.

Respondents reported increased confidence across all aspects of the course, with the majority reporting that they were a lot more confident across each area. Respondents were more likely to report an increase in confidence in the water safety knowledge component (70% of respondents reporting they were a lot more confident), followed by supervision of children (69% of respondents reporting they were a lot more confident) (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Self-reported changes in confidence, post-participation survey



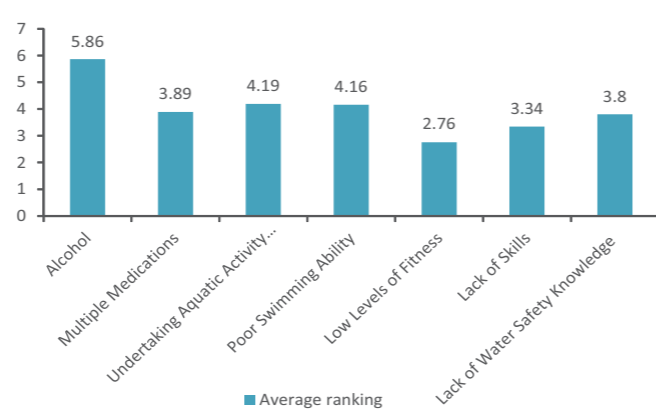
Self-reported increases in knowledge

Respondents were also asked, having completed the Grey Medallion course, if they felt the course had increased their knowledge of the risk factors for drowning and also their knowledge of how to prevent drowning.

Almost all respondents (96%) to the post-participation survey believed that the Grey Medallion had increased their knowledge of the risk factors for drowning. Almost all respondents also believed that their participation in the Grey Medallion course had increased their knowledge of how to prevent drowning (97%).

Respondents were asked to rate the factors that can increase the risk of drowning on a scale of 1 to 7 from most to least risky. When the rankings were averaged across the responses, alcohol was deemed to be the most risky factor for drowning, followed by undertaking aquatic activity alone and poor swimming ability. Having a low level of fitness was deemed the least risky of the seven factors (Figure 15).

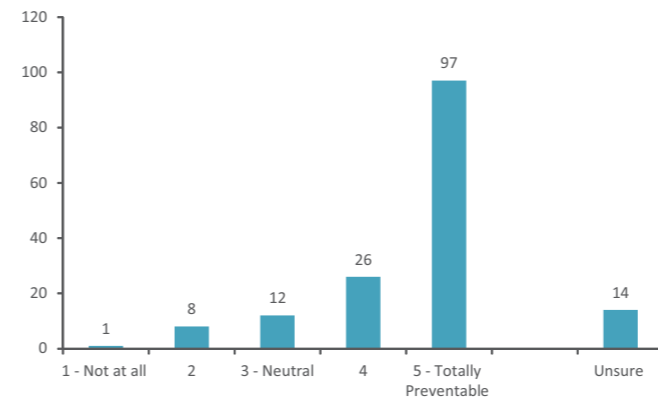
Figure 15: Ranking of risk factors for drowning, post-participation survey (n=147)



Respondents were asked if, as a result of their participation in the Grey Medallion course, they had an increased knowledge of how to keep children safe from drowning. Ninety five percent of respondents believed that the course had increased their knowledge of how to keep children safe from drowning.

Participants were also asked, in their opinion, how preventable they believed drowning in older people is on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (totally preventable). Almost two thirds of respondents (61%) believed drowning in older people to be totally preventable (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Opinion on how preventable drowning is in older people, post-participation survey (n=158)



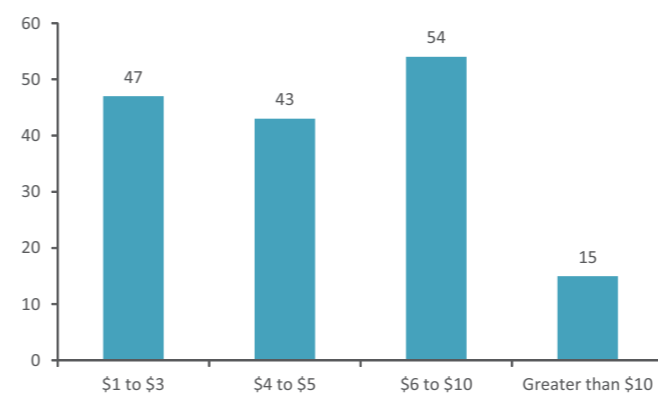
Ongoing / Future Involvement with the Grey Medallion program

Respondents to the post-participation survey were asked if the course had motivated them to increase their efforts to improve their individual health and wellbeing. Ninety percent of respondents stated that they believed their participation in the Grey Medallion program had motivated them to improve their health and wellbeing.

Participants were also asked if they would be likely to recommend this program to their peers. Overwhelming, 99% of respondents stated they would recommend the program to their peers.

Finally, participants in the Grey Medallion course were asked how much they would be willing to pay for each 1 hour session of the course. Respondents placed a reasonably high value on the course, with the largest group of respondents (34%) stating that they would be willing to pay between \$6 to \$10 per session (Figure 17).

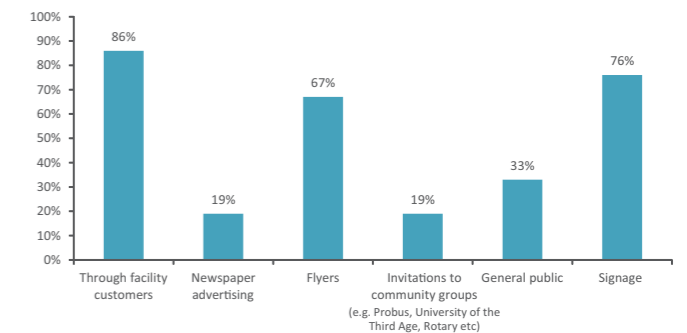
Figure 17: Amounts respondents were willing to pay for Grey Medallion sessions, post-participation survey (n=159)



FACILITY SURVEY

A total of 21 of the 50 facilities that participated in the pre and post evaluation completed surveys. This represents a response rate of 42%. The most common promotional avenues for the Grey Medallion program were through facility customers (86%), followed by signage and flyers (Figure 18). Other examples of promotional avenues included during Seniors Week and on council and facility websites and active seniors programs run through local councils.

Figure 18: Promotional avenues for the Grey Medallion course, Facility survey (N=21)



The facility survey also asked if the facility had easy access in and out of the pool for older and less mobile customers, of which 90% of respondents stated that their facility did.

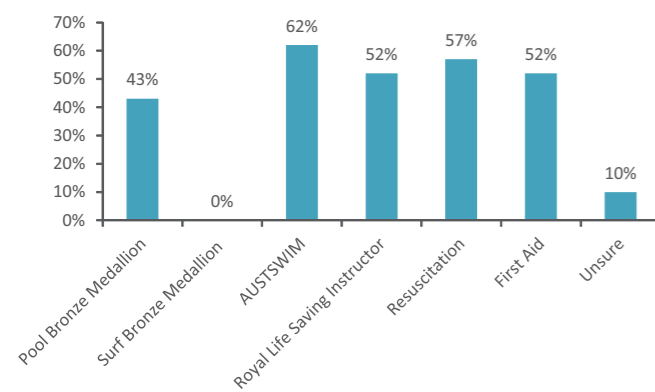
With respect to running the Grey Medallion course, two thirds of those facilities that responded to the survey stated that they used an instructor from within their facility to run the Grey Medallion course. Of the 33% that did not, almost all utilised a Royal Life Saving trainer to deliver the course, with the view that a staff member from the facility observed the course and intended to run future courses in-house.

When surveyed about the age of the instructor used, 76% of respondents stated that they utilised an instructor that was aged between 35 and 54 years old. Just 14% of respondents used an instructor that was aged 55 year or older (the target age of the Grey Medallion program). Ten percent of facilities had an instructor aged between 18 and 34 years who ran the Grey Medallion program.

The instructors used to run the Grey Medallion program had a range of qualifications. The most common was an AUSTSWIM qualification (which was held by 62% of instructors), followed by a Resuscitation qualification (57%) and Royal Life Saving Instructor and First Aid qualifications (52% respectively) (Figure 19).

Other qualifications instructors delivering the Grey Medallion possessed included CPR assessor and pool lifeguard qualifications.

Figure 19: Qualifications held by Grey Medallion instructors, facility survey (N=21)

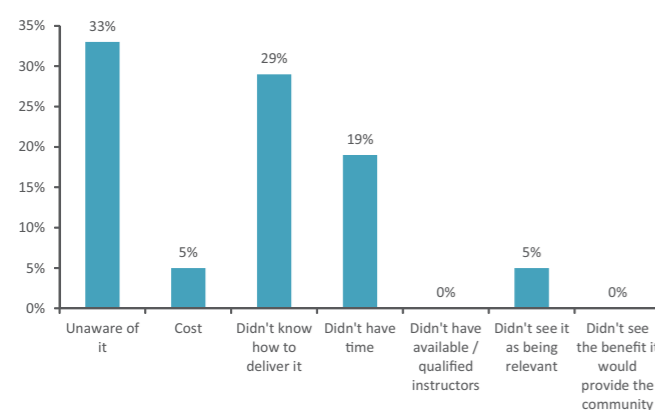


Respondents to the facility survey were asked if they felt there had been an increase in the number of older Australians visiting their facility. Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) stated that they had seen an increase. Almost one quarter (24%) stated that they had not seen an increase, and 10% were unsure.

Experience Running Grey Medallion courses

Two thirds of respondents (67%) had not run a Grey Medallion course before the one they recently participated in. One third of respondents had run a course prior to this one. Those facilities that had not run a Grey Medallion course previously were asked about the barriers to having run a course in the past. Most common responses were not being aware of the Grey Medallion (33%), followed by not knowing how to deliver it (29%) and not having the time to deliver it (19%) (Figure 20).

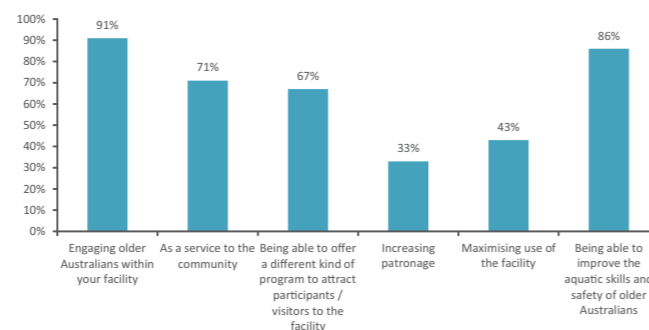
Figure 20: Reasons for not having run a Grey Medallion course prior, facility survey (N=7)



Eighty five percent of facilities surveyed stated that they would run another Grey Medallion course. Of some concern 15% stated that they were unsure if they would run another Grey Medallion course and the reasons behind this should be explored further. Of those who stated they would run the course again, 74% of facilities surveyed would still be willing to run the course if there was a cost associated with it, depending on the cost. One facility suggested implementing a \$2 donation per session for older Australians to cover the cost of running the course.

When facilities were asked about what they believed the benefits of running the Grey Medallion were, the most commonly reported benefits was engaging older Australians within the facility, followed by improving the aquatic skills and safety of older Australians and providing a service to the community (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Benefits of running the Grey Medallion course, facility survey (N=21)



General feedback on the Grey Medallion course

Respondents to the facility survey were asked to describe how Royal Life Saving could assist the facility in delivering future Grey Medallion courses. The most popular forms of support included providing ongoing training as needed for facility staff, assisting with ongoing marketing and promotion of the course, both at a local and National level and any other ongoing support as needed.

Facility respondents were also asked if they had any other issues or comments they would like to make about the Grey medallion. Many of the comments received were very positive about the program and the feedback received from the course participants. Several of the comments included:

"All participants gave a very positive feedback and now wish to branch out to other aquatic experiences e.g. aqua aerobics etc"

"Great program and feedback from participants has been overwhelming. All have found it a very valuable and enjoyable program"

"I do feel that although it is targeting the over 55s it could be opened up slightly as I had numerous Learn to Swim parents that wanted to partake and these in the near future will be the over 55s"

"I really feel that there is a HUGE need to offer the course to NON-swimming seniors, as many use the pool for 'walking' and gentle exercise and NEED to improve their water safety."

DISCUSSION

The pre and post participation surveys gave some excellent insights into the types of people choosing to participate in the Grey Medallion program, their motivation for participating and what they thought of the course and its components.

Almost three quarters (72%) of the participants were females, with just 22% being male. This shows there is further work to be done in engaging older men in swimming and water safety programs, particularly given men account for approximately 80% of Australian drowning statistics each year. Exploring avenues for targeting and encouraging older men to participate in the Grey Medallion should be a key priority in the short term for the expansion of the Grey Medallion program into the future.

The pre-participation survey gave some interesting insight into how the respondents had heard about the Grey Medallion course they were participating in. The results highlighted that the majority of those participating in the course were already engaging with their local pool in some form, as it was the avenue that most respondents heard about the Grey Medallion course through. Exploring how to engage older Australians who are not currently regularly engaging with their local pool should also be something that is considered to further expand the reach of the Grey Medallion program.

The pre-participation survey also identified that the Internet was not the most appropriate avenue to promote the Grey Medallion course to older Australians. Royal Life Saving should further explore alternative avenues such as local newspapers and community groups as well as Senior's Week events and local council facilities such as the local library, childcare centres and men's sheds, to further promote the Grey Medallion course.

It was interesting to note that sixty three percent of respondents had not previously participated in a lifesaving course, prior to participating in the Grey Medallion program. Of those who had participated in a lifesaving course before, sixty nine percent hadn't participated in a course for 20 years or longer. The Grey Medallion appears to be working as a program that eases older Australians back into a course of semi-formal instructions in water safety and lifesaving skills and knowledge.

Respondents to the surveys were more likely to have participated in a resuscitation course than a swimming or lifesaving course. It would be interesting to delve further into why this was the case. It may be that taking on greater responsibilities for the care of grandchildren, which just over half of all respondents (55%) stated they did, prompted this engagement. It would also be interesting to note why people are more likely to engage with a resuscitation course than a swimming or lifesaving course.

Eighty four percent of respondents to the pre-participation survey had participated in aquatic activity at least once within the previous 6 months of being surveyed. Almost half of these were engaging in aquatic activity 2 to 3 times a week. Those undertaking regular aquatic activity were most commonly swimming at the public swimming pool followed by the beach and in the ocean or harbour.

Respondents to the pre-participation survey were asked if they had previously performed either an aquatic rescue or resuscitation, and if so, whom they had performed it on. It was interesting to note that 39% of those who had performed an aquatic rescue had had to do so on friends or a family member, but those who had performed CPR were more likely to have had to perform it on strangers than family or friends.

When asked about how preventable they believed drowning to be, 44% of all respondents to the pre-participation survey stated that they believed it to be totally preventable. Almost 18% were unsure how preventable drowning in older people was. It was pleasing to note that after participation in the course, this had risen to almost two thirds of respondents (61%) rating drowning in older people as being totally preventable. The number of people who responded that they were unsure also halved to 9% of respondents in the post-participation survey.

The post-participation survey delivered valuable feedback on the course itself and its components. The majority of respondents rated all aspects of the course, such as venue, materials, instructor(s) and all five sessions of the course as being excellent. This enjoyment in the course was evident in the fact that over half of all respondents attended all sessions of the program. When asked if they would be likely to recommend the program to their peers overwhelmingly 99% of respondents stated that they would.

The enjoyment derived from the course and the value placed on the subject matter was also evident in the responses to the question asking respondents if they would be willing to participate in the course if it was no longer free of charge. Respondents placed a reasonably high value on the course, with the largest group of respondents (34%) stating that they would be willing to pay between \$6 and \$10 per session to participate in a Grey Medallion course.

Post-participation in the Grey Medallion course, 83% of participants reported an improvement in their aquatic skills and just 6% didn't believe their skills had improved. Linked to this, was the response that 77% of respondents stated that they were considering participating in more aquatic activities as a result of participating in the course.

After participating in the Grey Medallion, 90% of the respondents stated that they believed their participation in the course had motivated them to improve their health and wellbeing. Almost half of all respondents intended to participate in a first aid course.

Respondents also reported increased confidence across all aspects of the course, with the largest increases in confidence occurring in the water safety knowledge and the supervision of children components.

It was interesting to note that many participants wanted to continue to engage in formal instruction, be it a first aid or resuscitation course, participate in learn to swim or continue to engage with the Grey Medallion program. Although the Grey Medallion is a discrete program, these responses highlight the need to ensure that course participants are offered a range of ongoing wet and dry educational opportunities to ensure their ongoing participation and engagement with swimming and water safety education. A priority in the ongoing development of the Grey Medallion program should be to ensure that promoting other opportunities for participation is communicated to instructor in their training and aquatic facilities are encouraged to continue to engage the older Australian demographic with other activities and pathways at their facility.

The facility survey also provided important feedback from aquatic facilities who participated in this roll out of the Grey Medallion program. It was interesting to note that just 14% of respondents used an instructor that was aged 55 years or older to run the course. Given previous research has identified age appropriate instructors as a key issue for older Australians participating in the Grey Medallion, strategies should be put in place to encourage facilities to engage instructor aged 55 years or older to run the course, perhaps exploring the option of engaging passionate past graduates of the program who are interested in continuing to be involved in formal instruction.

A third of those respondents who had not run a Grey Medallion course previously had not done so because they were unaware of the program. A further 29% had not conducted one previously as they didn't know how to deliver it. Ongoing promotion of the Grey Medallion course and the importance of drowning prevention strategies for older Australians must occur both to the public and to the aquatic industry to ensure maximum uptake of the program.

Although positive feedback and enjoyment of the course was overwhelmingly reported by almost all participants it was concerning to note that 15% of facilities stated that they were unsure if they would run another Grey Medallion course in the future. It is recommended that informal follow up is conducted with facilities running the course in the future to identify barriers to running ongoing courses.

General feedback received on the program suggested there was a need and a desire for people who are learning to swim and those aged 55 plus who are non-swimmers to participate in the program. Although the Grey Medallion, in its name and promotion, is heavily aimed at people aged 55 years and over it would be suitable for weak swimmers of adult age and could be modified for non-swimmers as well. Future promotion and engagement with aquatic facilities and training of instructors should highlight the flexible delivery and course content of the Grey Medallion and promote alternative audiences for the program.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore avenues for targeting and encouraging older men to participate in the Grey Medallion program given the burden of men in national drowning statistics.
- Identify and develop strategies for engaging older Australians with the Grey Medallion who are not regularly visiting their local pool.
- Explore alternative avenues for promotion of the Grey Medallion course, such as libraries, child care centres, men's sheds and senior's week events.
- Ensure that ongoing pathways and participation in aquatic activity is included in instructor training and continually communicated to course participants to highlight enthusiasm and eagerness to continue to engage in swimming and lifesaving activities.
- A priority in the ongoing development of the Grey Medallion program should be to ensure that promoting other opportunities for participation is communicated to instructors in their training and aquatic facilities are encouraged to continue to engage the older Australian demographic with other activities and pathways at their facility.
- Work with aquatic facilities to develop strategies to encourage recruiting instructors aged 55 plus to run Grey Medallion courses. This could include exploring the option to re-engage past graduates of the program who are interested in continuing to be involved in formal instruction.
- Continue to promote the Grey Medallion program and importance of drowning prevention strategies for older Australians around the country both to the public and to the aquatic industry to ensure maximum uptake of the program.
- Conduct informal ongoing discussions with facilities running the course in the future to identify barriers to running ongoing courses.
- Future promotion and engagement with aquatic facilities and training of instructors should highlight the flexible delivery and course content of the Grey Medallion and promote alternative audiences for the program such as adults learning to swim and non-swimming seniors.

References

1. Franklin RC, Mathieu E. Older Australian Aquatic Safety. Sydney: Royal Life Saving Society Australia, 2006.
2. Royal Life Saving Society - Australia. Royal Life Saving Society - Australia National Drowning Report 2013: Royal Life Saving Society - Australia, 2013.

APPENDIX 1: PRE-COURSE SURVEY

This survey should take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please try to answer as many of the questions as possible. If a question is not relevant, please move on to the next one. **All the information that you provide is strictly confidential.** Once you have completed the survey please return it to the instructor

Course Start Date (DD-MM-YYYY): _____ Course Location: _____
 Instructor: _____ Your Name: _____ Your Residential postcode: _____

1) How did you find out about the Grey Medallion course? (tick as many as are appropriate)

- Friend / Family Newspaper Internet Community Group Local Pool
 Royal Life Saving Newsletters Other (please specify) _____

2) Have you attended a formalised lifesaving course previously? Yes No Unsure

2.1) If yes, how long ago did you last attend a course (approximately)? ____ years

3) Have you attended a Resuscitation / First Aid Course previously? Yes No Unsure

3.1) If yes, how long ago did you do your first course (approximately)? ____ years

3.2) If yes, how long ago did you do an update (approximately)? ____ years

4) Why did you decide to attend the Grey Medallion course? (tick as many as are appropriate)

- Peer pressure To help out a friend To participate in aquatic activities
 Personal development Have children I look after Obtain personal survival skills
 Improve health and fitness Learn basic rescue techniques
 Learn about resuscitation Improve swimming skills
 Other (please specify): _____

5) Have you ever had to perform CPR previously? Yes No

5.1) If yes, was it a friend or family member? Yes No

6) In the last 6 months how often have you undertaken aquatic activity? (tick most appropriate)

- Every day 2-3 times a week Once a week, 2-3 times a month
 Once a month Once every three months Once Never

7) If you have participated in aquatic activities, which of the following aquatic locations have you visited in the last 6 months? (tick all that are relevant)

- River / Creek / Stream Lake / Lagoon Beach Dam
 My own home swimming pool Someone else's home pool Public swimming pool
 Ocean / Harbour Other (please specify): _____

8) If you have participated in aquatic activities, which of the following activities have you undertaken in the last 6 months? (tick all that are relevant) Recreational Swimming (includes wading)

- Boating Competitive Swimming Lap swimming Swimming training
 Fishing Rock Fishing Aqua Aerobics Scuba Diving / Snorkelling
 Other (please specify): _____

9) Have you ever had to perform an aquatic rescue? Yes No Unsure

9.1) If yes, was it on a family member or friend? Yes No

10) How would you describe your water safety knowledge? (tick most appropriate)

- Poor Below average Average Above average Excellent Unsure

11) On a scale of 1 to 10 where '10' means expert swimmer and '1' means cannot swim, how would you rate your swimming ability? (please tick most appropriate)

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12) Do you look after children? Yes No

12.1) If yes, Are any of the children under 5 years of age? Yes No

13) Do you have a swimming pool at home (or in your complex)? Yes No

13.1) If yes, Do you have to go through a gate to get to the pool? Yes No Unsure

13.1.1) If, yes does the gate self close and latch shut? Yes No Unsure

14) In your opinion, how preventable on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (totally preventable) is drowning in older people (i.e. people aged 55 plus)?

- (1) Not at all (2) (3) Neutral (4) (5) Totally preventable (6) Unsure

15) Are you? Male Female

16) Are you? (please tick the one that best describe your situation) Retired Semi-retired

Working part time Working full-time Student Other (please describe) _____

17) What is your age— 54 years or younger 55-59 years 60-64 years, 65-69 years,
 70-74 years 75-79 years 80-84 years, 85+ years

Thank you for completing the survey. All the information that you provide is strictly confidential. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Amy Peden on (02) 8217 3133.

Office Use Only	Initials of Participant:	Name of who entered data:
Date entered (DD-MM-YYYY):	Course Region:	

APPENDIX 2: POST-COURSE SURVEY

This survey should take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please try to answer as many of the questions as possible. If a question is not relevant, please move on to the next one. **All the information that you provide is strictly confidential.** Once you have completed the survey please return it to the instructor

Course Start Date (DD-MM-YYYY): _____ Course Location: _____
 Instructor: _____ Your Name: _____ Your Residential postcode: _____

1) How would you rate the following? (From 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

	1 Very Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	Unsure	Not Applicable
a. Venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Instructor (s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Pre-course information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Introduction session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Water safety education sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Resuscitation and emergency care sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Aquatic exercise sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Personal survival skills sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 2) How many 1 hour sessions was the course in total? _____
- 3) How many 1 hour sessions of the course did you attend? _____
- 4) Was the number of sessions enough to learn & practice everything? Yes No Unsure
 5.1) If No, would you have liked? More or Less
- 5) Was the duration of the program? Too short Just right Too long Unsure
- 6) Have your aquatic skills improved from undertaking the Grey Medallion? Yes No Unsure
- 7) Now that you have completed this program are you considering participating in more aquatic activities? Yes No Unsure
- 8) If yes, what activities are you planning to undertake? (tick as many as are appropriate)
- Recreational swimming (includes wading) Fishing Competitive swimming
- Lap swimming Swimming training Boating Rock Fishing
- Scuba Diving / Snorkelling Aqua Aerobics Other (please specify): _____
- 9) Now that you have started learning some skills are you interested in undertaking any of the following courses / programs? (please tick all that you are interested in)
- First Aid Bronze Medallion Emergency Care
- Resuscitation Certification Instructor training
- Other aquatic activity _____

10) Do you feel? (more or less confident)

	Less Confident	No more or less confident	A little bit more confident	A lot more confident	Unsure
a) Aquatic Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Water Safety Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Supervision of children in your care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Undertaking resuscitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Personal survival skills (including entry and exits into water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Life Saving Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11) Has the Grey Medallion course increased your knowledge of the risk factors for drowning?

Yes No Unsure

12) Has the Grey Medallion course increased your knowledge of how to prevent drowning?

Yes No Unsure

13) Please rate these factors that can increase the risk of drowning from most to least risky (please rank from 1 – most risky to 7 – least risky)

- Alcohol Multiple medications Undertaking activity alone
- Poor swimming ability Low levels of fitness Lack of skills
- Lack of water safety knowledge Other (please specify): _____

14) Has the Grey Medallion course increased your knowledge of how to keep children in your care safe from drowning? Yes No Unsure

15) In your opinion, how preventable on a scale of 1 (to a great extent) to 5 (not at all) is drowning in older people (i.e. people aged 55 plus)?

(1) Not at all (2) (3) Neutral (4) (5) Totally preventable (6) Unsure

16) Has the Grey Medallion course motivated you to increase your efforts to improve your health and wellbeing? Yes No Unsure

17) Would you recommend this program to your peers? Yes No Unsure

18) What would you be willing to pay for each 1 hour session during a Grey Medallion course? (please choose one)

\$1 to \$3 \$4 to \$5 \$6 to \$10 Greater than \$10

Thank you for completing the survey. All the information that you provide is strictly confidential. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Amy Peden on (02) 8217 3133.

Office Use Only	Initials of Participant:	Name of who entered data:
Date entered (DD-MM-YYYY):	Course Region:	

APPENDIX 3: FACILITY SURVEY

This survey aims to gather facility or programs manager feedback around the recently conducted Grey Medallion program. This survey should take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please try to answer as many of the questions as possible. If a question is not relevant please move on to the next one. All the information that you provide is strictly confidential.

*1. Course Location:

*2. Your initials:

3. Facility Postcode:

4. How was the course your facility ran promoted? (tick all that are relevant)

- Through facility customers (e.g. Aqua aerobic group)
- Newspaper advertising
- Flyers
- Invitations to community groups (e.g. Probus, University of the 3rd Age, Rotary etc)
- General public
- Signage

Other (please specify)

5. Does your facility have easy access in and out of the pool for older/less mobile customers?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

6. If no, why not?

7. Did you get someone from within your facility to run the Grey Medallion course?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. If not, where did you source the instructor from?

9. What was the age of the instructor?

- Under 18
- 18-34
- 35-54
- 55+

10. What are their qualifications? (tick all that are relevant)

- Pool Bronze Medallion
- Surf Bronze Medallion
- AUSTSWIM
- Royal Life Saving Instructor
- Resuscitation
- First Aid
- Unsure

Other (please specify)

11. Have you noticed an increase in older Australians visiting your facility?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

12. Is this the first Grey Medallion course your facility has run?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

13. If yes, why have you never run a Grey Medallion course previously? (choose as many as are relevant)

- Unaware of it
- Cost
- Didn't know how to deliver it
- Didn't have time
- Didn't have available / qualified instructors
- Didn't see it as being relevant
- Didn't see the benefit it would provide to the community

Other (please specify)

14. Would you run another Grey Medallion course?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

15. If yes, would you run it if there was a cost to running it?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe depending on cost
- Unsure

16. If no, why?

17. What do you see to be the benefits of running Grey Medallion courses at your facility? (choose all that are relevant)

- Engaging older Australians with your facility
- As a service to the community
- Being able to offer a different kind of program to attract participants / visitors to the facility
- Increasing patronage
- Maximising use of the facility
- Being able to improve the aquatic skills and safety of older Australians

Other (please specify)

18. How could Royal Life Saving assist you in delivering future Grey Medallion courses?

19. Are there any other issues or comments you would like to make about the Grey Medallion?

Thank you for completing the survey. All the information that you provide is strictly confidential. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Amy Peden on (02) 8217 3133.

-  facebook.com/RoyalLifeSaving
-  twitter.com/royallifesaving
-  youtube.com/RoyalLifeSavingAust
-  royallifesaving.com.au

ROYAL LIFE SAVING NSW CONTACT DETAILS:

To ensure we stay in tune with the needs of the diverse communities that make up our aquatic facilities, Royal Life Saving maintains a network of offices throughout NSW.

For more information contact:

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