



# 2ND NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY REPORT

PARKROYAL HOTEL, SYDNEY  
9-10 MAY 2018



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
AUSTRALIA

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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 and international networks.

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## FOREWORD

In April 2017, the first National Swimming and Water Safety Education Symposium was held with great success. The debate and discussion was met with openness and cohesion amongst all the attendees, so much so, that attendees expressed support for a second Symposium to continue momentum, collaboration, and to investigate solutions to provide opportunities for all to learn essential swimming and water safety skills and knowledge, regardless of their cultural background, location or socio-economic status.

The 1st National Swimming and Water Safety Education Symposium resulted in a set of statements and complementary actions aimed at building a national approach to increasing swimming and water safety education for all Australian children.

The Symposium Statements are:

- Strengthen school and vacation swimming and water safety programs in the community;
- Revise the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework;
- Set and report progress against a National Benchmark;
- Devise strategies to increase access and participation for those 'at risk';
- Improve availability and access to aquatic facilities;
- Increase the swimming and lifesaving skills of Secondary School students.

Over the past 12 months, much work has been initiated:

- The National Swimming and Water Safety Education Reference Group has been formed;
- Work to redevelop the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework has commenced;
- A range of commitments by Governments to education and vacation programs have been made;
- Research into understanding swimming and water safety achievement levels has continued;
- Initiatives to provide greater access to those 'at risk' and who miss out have increased;
- Media focus on a range of swimming and water safety issues has increased.

The 2nd Symposium continued an open, inclusive and collaborative approach. It brought together 55 representatives from across Government, Industry, Private Sector and Academia to continue the discussion surrounding a shared set of objectives:

- Support AWSS Goal 1 – Reduce drowning deaths in children aged 0-14 years and Goal 2 – Reduce drowning deaths in young people aged 15-24 years, specifically key objectives vi and vii relating to swimming and water safety education and ii relating to participation in lifesaving education programs during secondary school years, respectively.
- Continue to engage and collaborate with a range of key stakeholders from across Industry, Government, Private Sector and Academia.
- Report on progress against the 1st Symposium Statements and Actions.
- Facilitate presentations and workshop discussions including the revision of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework.

Two days were spent actively tackling issues and opportunities using the engaging presentations to provide insights and instigate thought-provoking brainstorming and discussion.

The Symposium provided an opportunity to present the second draft of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework which incorporated feedback from the Reference Group, to gauge feedback and workshop ideas for an implementation roadmap focused on the perspectives of Government, Industry and Parents. The Symposium addressed areas that were placed in the 'parking lot' at the 1st Symposium; swimming and water safety for under 5's and children with disabilities, and an opportunity to further explore participation in swimming and lifesaving beyond primary school. The sessions highlighted key issues and barriers to participation and brainstormed opportunities and actions to further explore or implement as an outcome.

We all have a role and responsibility to play in building a national approach to increasing swimming and water safety education and I encourage you to take up or explore further some of these opportunities and actions.

Thank you to all Symposium participants who showed passion to discuss issues openly and the desire to find solutions or opportunities to be explored further. The room was filled with people sharing their expertise, listening to others and working together collaboratively.



**Justin Scarr**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

# EXPLORING STATE & TERRITORY

# GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS



## EXPLORING STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

State and Territory Government funded school and vacation swimming and water education programs play an important role. For many children, these programs may be the only swimming and water safety education they experience during their childhood, particularly those from low-socio economic backgrounds. They are vital to the rural or remote communities where access is limited.

Since the 1st Symposium in 2017, there had been a number of developments at State and Territory Government. The 2nd Symposium provided an opportunity to gain an insight into new and existing policies and programs, as well as the government vacation programs that have been in existence for many years.

Combining the State and Government data collected at the 1st and 2nd Symposium provides an Australian-wide perspective of the offerings, the issues and challenges and the diversity of models provided.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To explore the successes, potential and challenges of State and Territory school and vacation swimming and water safety programs.

### PRESENTATIONS:

1. Victorian 'Swimming Schools' Program  
*Melanie Quin, Director Primary Learning and Development Reform, Victorian Department of Education*
2. Queensland Department of Education Swimming and Water Safety  
*Robyn Rosengrave, Executive Director Curriculum, Queensland Department of Education*
3. Water Safety and Life Skills NT School Trial  
*Rebecca Johnson, Senior Manager, Partnerships and Programs, Northern Territory Department of Education and Floss Roberts, CEO, Royal Life Saving NT*
4. VACSWIM, South Australia's Iconic Water Safety Initiative  
*Neil Mackenzie, General Manager, Enventive*
5. Vicswim Summer Kidz Program  
*Grant Connors, Chief Executive Officer, Aquatics & Recreation Victoria*

### QUESTIONS RAISED:

- What is a 'good' program?

### SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS:

- Delivery and funding models varied including:
  - Funding amount per student each year i.e. \$50 - \$90 per year 6 student enrolled
  - Funding for travel allowance and pool admission
  - Funding for pool maintenance for schools with pools
  - Subsidised lessons to reduce the costs parents pay
  - Condensing program and building in life skills to reduce time out of classroom and increase engagement
  - Funding program delivery and instructors
- A one-size fits all approach may not be effective – need for flexibility
- Challenges included:
  - Perceptions of what a 'good' program looks like
  - Measuring outcomes and reporting
  - Managing school, teacher, parent and community expectations
  - Access and availability of safe aquatic environments, facilities and distances for travel
  - Obtaining staffing/volunteers for safe supervision ratios
  - Qualified and experienced swimming and water safety teachers
  - Time taken out of the classroom
  - Low achievement rates for those participating
  - Costs of travel and pool entry continue to be a barrier
- Consultation with stakeholders is important in providing quality evidence-based options for swimming and water safety education
- It is estimated that between 550,000 to 600,000 children participate in Government funded swimming and water safety programs annually
- Annually, over \$40 million is provided by State and Territory Governments for school swimming and water safety programs

## EXPLORING STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

### GOVERNMENT FUNDED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

STATE/ TERRITORY	TARGET YEARS	PROGRAM OVERVIEW	INSTRUCTORS	PARTICIPATION Government schools
<b>ACT</b>	Year 2	10 x 30 minute lessons	70-80 instructors	2,911 students (85.5%) 63 schools (99%)
<b>NSW</b>	Year 2 Years 3-6 who are unable to swim 25m in deep water	10 x 45 minute lessons	550 instructors	115,748 students 1,419 schools (85%)
<b>NT</b>	TRIAL water safety and life skills program Years 4, 5 and 6	3 x full days Day 1: 2 x 45 mins Day 2: 3 x 35 mins Day 3: 3 x 35 mins		117 students: 11 didn't attend Day 1: 103 students Day 2: 97 students Day 3: 88 students
<b>QLD</b>	Grants are provided for eligible schools for travel allowance and pool entry	Equivalent to 10 visits		800 schools receive funding
<b>SA</b>	Foundation to Year 12	3.75 -7.5 hours 5 x 45 minute lessons – 10 x 45 minute lessons (or 5 x 1 hour lessons)	800 instructors	125,000 students 522 schools (98.9%) (2013 figures)
<b>TAS</b>	Year 3, 4, 5 and at risk Year 6 students	10 x 45 minute lessons	210 instructors	17,000 students 159 schools (100%)
<b>VIC</b>	Funding based on per Year 6 student over 3 years Flexibility for school to use as required	1st year \$50 per student 2nd/3rd year \$90 per student		New funding 12,765 Victorian Water Safety certificates ordered in 2017
<b>WA</b>	Years Foundation to Year 7	10 x 40 minute lessons	2,172 instructors	177,878 students 749 schools (97%)



## EXPLORING STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

### GOVERNMENT FUNDED VACATION PROGRAMS

STATE/ TERRITORY	TARGET AGES	PROGRAM OVERVIEW	INSTRUCTORS	PARTICIPATION Government schools
<b>NSW</b>	18 months to 12 years	9 x 30 or 8 x 35 minutes (preschool) 9 x 40 or 8 x 45 minutes (school age)		2,015 students 60 pools
<b>SA</b>	5-14 year olds	Either 5 x 60 minutes 7 x 45 minutes	463 instructors	11,915 students 126 locations
<b>VIC</b>	4-12 year olds	5 x 30 minutes	240 instructors 12 regional coordinators	10,695 students 138 locations
<b>WA</b>	5-17 year olds	5-10 x 35-45 minute lessons	1,310 instructors	56,073 students 396 venues



# REVISING THE NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

your thoughts AND FEEDBACK

STACEY PIDGEON and PENNY LARSEN  
HOW we got to THE CURRENT framework



RESILIENT SAFE



CLARIFY: CURRENT STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES + STAKEHOLDERS



1 ARE the FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS adequately COVERED?

YES YES!  
MORE on RISK ASSESSMENT  
CHANGE to SWIMMING and WATER SAFETY

2 SWIMMING for a SPECIFIC DISTANCE?

SEEMS like A GOOD(SM) DISTANCE  
100-200M AS EXTENSIONS  
is it related to propulsion?  
WHAT about TIME?  
DISTANCE and TIME!

3 SHOULD water safety skills be DEMONSTRATED with CLOTHES ON?

IS IT PRACTICAL? YES YES

4 DOES THIS FRAMEWORK SUFFICIENTLY allow for OPEN WATER PROGRAMS?

NO... they ARE POOL BASED  
MORE COMPREHENSIVE  
NEED OPEN water environments BROADER EXPERIENCES

5 IS THE FRAMEWORK ACHIEVABLE in its CURRENT format (SMART)?

YES NOT SURE

CHANGES  
SKILL STAGES:  
• FUNDAMENTAL  
• INTERMEDIATE  
• ADVANCED

MAPPING STAGES to SCHOOLING may be CONFUSING?  
SEPARATED BY AGE

ONE SIZE DOESN'T fit all!

SHARPEN wording

IS IT A GUIDE or a FRAMEWORK? WILL need a LOT of DOCUMENTATION



FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS STAGE

NATIONAL BENCHMARK to be achieved by end of FOUNDATION YEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

WATER SAFETY SKILLS STAGE

NATIONAL BENCHMARK to be achieved by end of PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIFESAVING SKILLS STAGE

NATIONAL BENCHMARK to be achieved by the end of YEAR 10 SECONDARY SCHOOL

START HERE!



WE NEED to COMMUNICATE differently TO EACH



NEED to BE ABLE to ENTER into FRAMEWORK at DIFFERENT POINTS

How Do we help LEARNERS PERCEIVE their LEVEL of SKILL and RISK?



7 ARE the SKILLS in the DIFFERENT STAGES appropriate?

YES YES  
MINIMUM vs DESIRED  
BENCHMARKS or MINIMUM requirements  
LIFESAVING STAGE too NARROW

6 DOES this allow FOR the PROGRESSION of SKILLS?

YES YES  
VERY DIFFERENT rates of PROGRESSION

WE LIKE THE NEW FRAMEWORK!  
An improvement  
looks good  
much is subjective  
need to address parental expectations



## NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

The National Swimming and Water Safety Framework aims to define the swimming and water safety skills and knowledge required to lead a healthy, safe and active life in and around water. The Framework provides guidance for the development and provision of a broad balanced curriculum that can be delivered in any context.

A revision of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework was proposed at the 1st Symposium and the key actions outlined were to:

- Provide opportunities for shared ownership and collaboration
- Refine the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework
- Simplify language to increase accessibility and use by all key stakeholders

Subsequently the project commenced with a reference group formed to provide input and feedback.

This session provided an insight into the review process, the main points of feedback and presented the revised draft of the Framework.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Review actions and processes for the revision of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework
- Provide a summary of feedback on the Consultation Draft
- Introduce the Revised Draft of the Framework

### PRESENTATIONS:

1. Reviewing the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework

The review process steps taken – from 1st Symposium to now

*Stacey Pidgeon, Senior Research & Policy Officer, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia*

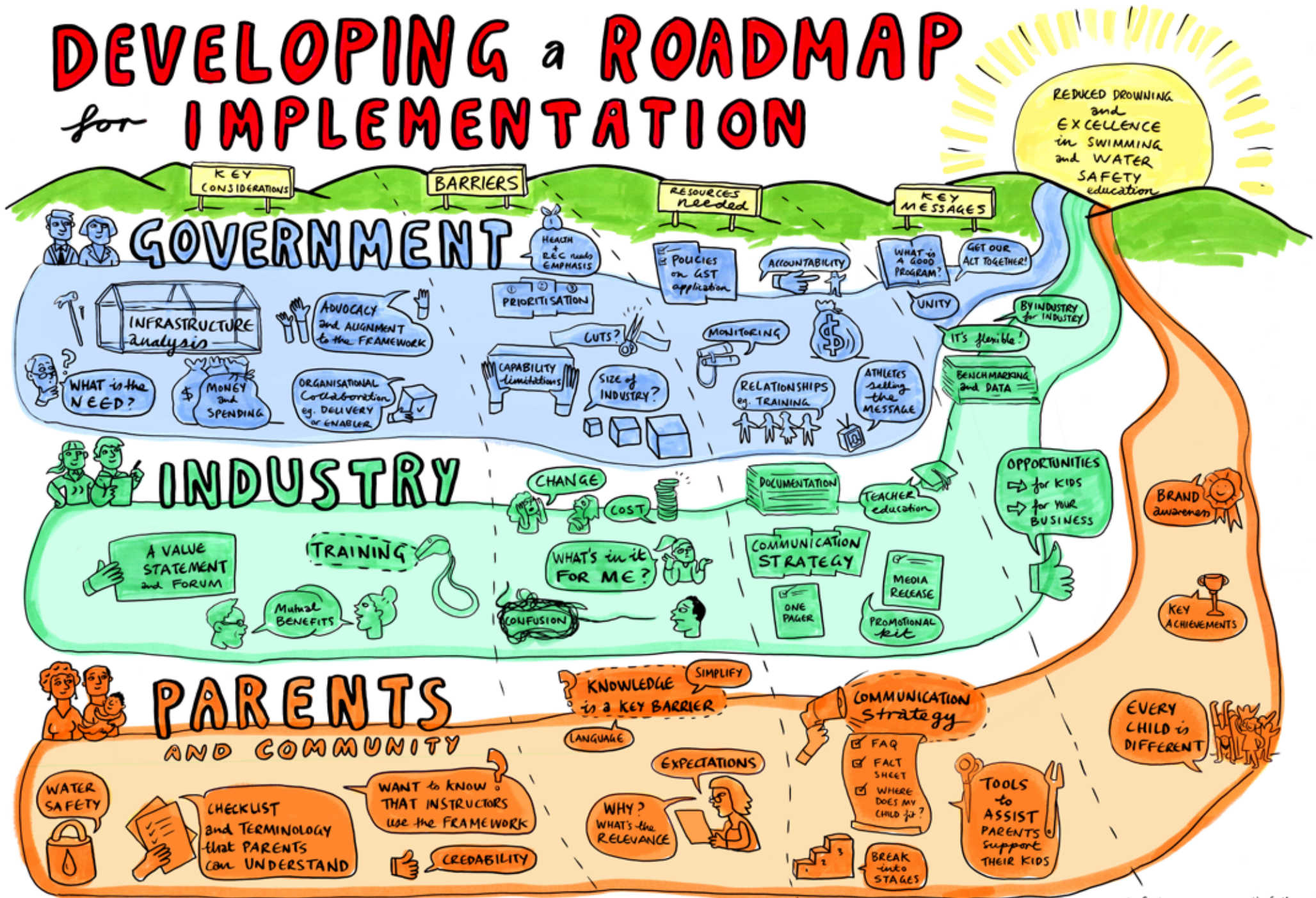
From Consultation Draft to Symposium Draft – Presentation of the Revised Framework

*Penny Larsen, National Manager – Education, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia*

### SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS:

- A National Swimming and Water Safety Reference Groups was established to review and consult on the Framework – 23 from the 1st Symposium joined
- A Delphi-style research method was adopted to collect responses and feedback on questions with the aim to reach a consensus, or continuing asking and refining until consensus is achieved
- Round 1 questions addressed the purpose and objectives, target audience, strengths and weaknesses, alignment to key documents, learning areas
- Round 2 questions included clarification of purpose, primary audience, age, range, alignment and rationale
- Round 3 was the first consultation draft and accompanying notes of the revised Framework
- Consultation draft feedback provided some common themes with which the basis of the revised Framework draft was developed
- Key components of the revised Framework presented included:
  - The development of three stages ranging in skill and knowledge development
  - Model focuses on the minimum competencies required for each stage
  - Five key elements; skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviour
  - Strands are appropriate to the stage
  - Sequence of learning will guide the development of the skill competency
  - Testing competency by combining a range of skills in both survival and rescue sequences
  - Still to come: roles and responsibilities – what this means for each target audience, assessment guide, terminology guide, water safety knowledge items guide, recommendations for target audiences

# DEVELOPING a ROADMAP for IMPLEMENTATION



## WORKSHOP: NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

### Aim:

To discuss strategies for implementation and promotion of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework.

### Format:

Each group had to answer a series of seven yes or no questions in relation to the revised Framework:

1. Are the fundamental skills adequately covered? Yes – majority
  2. Swimming for a specific distance or time? Distance – majority
  3. Should water safety skills be demonstrated with clothes? Yes – majority
  4. Does the framework sufficiently allow for open water programs? Yes – 50%, No – 50%
  5. Is the framework achievable in its current format? Yes – majority
  6. Does the framework allow for a progression of skills? Yes – majority
  7. Are the skills in each stage appropriate? Yes – majority
- What would you change?
    - Remove 'skills' from stage titles as it's more than skills
    - Titles to be consistent across all three stages
    - Change years of schooling to ages to alleviate any problem where start years differ
    - Needs consistent terminology or description
    - Lifesaving stage to include content around broader range of aquatic activities
    - More content around open water environments
    - Include 'knowing their limits' to develop capacity to perceive the level of risk and level of competency
    - Clear entry level distinction and note that one size doesn't fit all

Next, groups were assigned one of the key target audiences of the framework; Government, Industry and Parents and Community. Groups were to brainstorm answers to the following questions from the perspective of their assigned audience:

1. What are the key considerations to implement the Framework?
2. What barriers are there in implementing the Framework?
3. What resources are needed to support the implementation of the Framework?
4. What are the key messages and/or information to successfully implement the Framework?





## WORKSHOP: NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

	Government	Industry	Parents and community
<b>Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of who's responsibility for what e.g. federal, state, local</li> <li>• Require data and detail to back up support – e.g. what are the outcomes? Can these be measured? What is the impact?</li> <li>• Know what is the Government direction, position or strategy to assist with alignment and strategies</li> <li>• Do they have the ability to build capacity and capability?</li> <li>• Is their role as a deliverer or an enabler?</li> <li>• Advocacy and alignment - Education to key stakeholders – what does this mean? Who is this going to benefit?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual benefits to get industry buy-in, need to be able to sell Framework to operators – answer what's in it for me?</li> <li>• Will need to see bigger picture outside of their own operations – how does this impact the industry as a whole?</li> <li>• Australian Water Safety Council document - recognition to organisations to give the framework 'weight' in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need either zero knowledge or enough knowledge (not just a little). If they only have a little, they make assumptions when making decisions</li> <li>• Want to know that swim school/instructors are using the Framework and what it means to them and their children</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of funds, infrastructure and resources to support implementation</li> <li>• Funding allocation, cuts or redistribution may not be directed towards swimming and water safety education</li> <li>• Capability limitations</li> <li>• Diversity of the issues and the demand make it difficult to come to a 'one size fits all' strategy</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of the value of the health and recreation benefits and size of industry impact</li> <li>• Ability and difficulty in communicating the framework to different government departments and levels – water safety education may sit across a number of departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs perceived or associated with aligning or changing program</li> <li>• Gaining buy-in from those resistant to change</li> <li>• Perception that their business point of difference may be lost</li> <li>• Confusion or misunderstanding of what this means for them</li> <li>• May need additional workforce training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding of the relevance of a Framework – was does this actually mean and is it a benefit to my child?</li> <li>• Unrealistic expectations or no expectations of children's ability or achievement levels</li> <li>• Are parents aware of what their children are learning and why aren't they asking?</li> <li>• Language and terminology that parents don't know or understand. This can be alienating, confusing, or misunderstood.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement between State and Territory governments</li> <li>• Policies on GST application for aquatic programs</li> <li>• Program monitoring processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy campaign to promote the Framework</li> <li>• Communication strategy - promotional toolkit – social media, infographic, one pager, media release</li> <li>• Education – what this means for industry and teachers</li> <li>• Set of messages specific for parents that industry can use</li> <li>• Recommendations for developing program/how to align</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication strategy – one pager, factsheets, flowcharts, FAQs</li> <li>• Parent checklist – does your swim school tick</li> <li>• Tools to guide parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– how they can help their children to reach the minimum standard</li> <li>– how they can extend their children or provide additional opportunities to enhance skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a 'good' program?</li> <li>• Unified messages</li> <li>• Advocacy for drowning prevention, health, fitness, recreation, social, bonding and well-being – skills for life</li> <li>• Program providers to demonstrate they meet the Framework requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework has been developed by industry for industry</li> <li>• National approach to ensure consistency, standards and benchmarks</li> <li>• Programs aligned are a sign of quality swimming and water safety curriculum</li> <li>• Ability to benchmark against Framework</li> <li>• Flexibility of program delivery</li> <li>• Positive outcomes and opportunities for participants and your business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a 'good' program?</li> <li>• Framework – why and what it means for me and my child</li> <li>• Credibility of programs that align to Framework</li> <li>• Highlight two to three achievements most appropriate for each stage</li> </ul>

# EXPLORING SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY for UNDER 5's and CHILDREN with DISABILITIES

BARBARA SMITH  
COMPUTERIZE NEW ZEALAND

JULIE ZANCANARO  
HILLS SWIMMING

CATRIONA BARRY  
RAINBOW CLUB

DAVID BURNS  
AREA MANAGER BELGRAVIA LEISURE

## PARTICIPATION in STRUCTURED SWIMMING LESSONS: 0-5 yrs

**USING the DATA we've got**

- 71% 0-5
- 237,000 CHILDREN
- 1.8 MILL Bookings 10 yrs
- 40 PRIVATE SWIMMING SCHOOLS

**RETENTION to INCREASE SKILL and SAFETY**

- HUGE intake 0-12 months then HUGE DROP off
- 19-22 month PARTICIPATION
- MORE than 50% of KIDS leave PROGRAMS age 5

**WHAT ARE the REASONS for EXIT?**

- HEALTH
- COST
- UNKNOWN 57%!
- NO SHOW to a HUGE REASON 11.5%
- OTHER COMMITMENTS to a HUGE REASON

**PARTICIPATION:**

↑ DOUBLED SINCE 2007	↑ INCREASE SINCE 2007	STEADY SINCE 2007
UNDER 12 months	UNDER 4 yrs	4-5 yrs

**WHY DON'T SWIM SCHOOLS re-engage with parents?**

- ROUTINE + CONCRETE thinking

## PHILOSOPHY on EARLY YEARS SWIMMING and WATER SAFETY education

**QUALITY**

- SOONER → BETTER → LONGER
- GLOBAL invitations to EDUCATE
- What is good and what is QUALITY
- A DUTY to our CHILDREN
- WHAT IS SWIMMING?
- PERCEPTUAL MOTOR GAINS
- DEVELOPMENTAL and SAFETY BENEFITS MOVING FORWARD

**AUSTRALIA has a CULTURE of SWIMMING and more swim schools per capita than anywhere**

**philosophy**

- Love and respect for the water
- Developing CORE BELIEFS
- child CENTRED developmentally sound
- BALANCE of SKILLS
- EXPERIENTIAL WITH HELP
- PARENTAL education + PARTICIPATION

**WHAT + WHY**

- ROUTINE
- RESPECT
- RECOGNITION

**67 ASSESSABLE OUTCOMES**

- EXPERIENCES
- HEIGHTS
- PURPOSE BUILT
- BALANCE
- BREATH CONTROL
- BUOYANCY
- COOPERATION

**WE NEED to EDUCATE the COMMUNITY MORE**

**THE OLDER A NEW STARTER - the more fearful, MUST CONSIDER THIS!**

## SUCCESSES and CHALLENGES of IMPLEMENTING SWIMMING and WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS for CHILDREN with SPECIAL NEEDS

**A WEEKEND activity during school TERM**

**3 YEARS entry AGE**

**FINDING teachers can be CHALLENGING**

**INDIVIDUALISED lessons**

**SWIM THE RAINBOW**

- RED: WATER CONFIDENCE
- ORANGE: SAFETY BASICS
- YELLOW: RESISTANCE + BUOYANCY
- GREEN: FORWARD INDEPENDANCE
- BLUE: TRANSITION to SWIM STROKES
- INDIGO: SWIMMING SAFELY
- VIOLET: SWIMMING THE RAINBOW
- GOOD: SWIMMING IN MAINSTREAM

**CHALLENGES**

- POOL SPACE
- QUALIFIED TRAINERS
- MAINTAINING QUALITY of TRAINERS and FACILITIES
- MOVING KIDS along
- LONG waiting LIST 500+!
- POOL SPACE!
- WE need a Campaign

**SOCIAL activities**

- WREST BANDS
- POSTERS
- COMMUNITY
- INCLUSIVE events
- GREAT feedback on our trains
- ENHANCED SCHOOL READINESS

## THE BELGRAVIA FOUNDATION

**How a charity!**

- A PRIVATE management COMPANY
- 150 FACILITIES
- CONNECTING the COMMUNITY to LEISURE
- POVERTY
- DISADVANTAGE

**LOCAL IMPACT**

- ACCESS and INCLUSION
- MORE CONFIDENCE
- MORE KNOWLEDGE
- DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES have DIFFERENT needs
- all data and evidence BASED

**YouMeUs**

PROGRAM to UNDERSTAND DIVERSE needs

**TAKE CHARGE PROGRAMS to SUPPORT**

ONE in FIVE people have mental illness

**BETTER OUTCOMES!**

- ✓ PRIORITISED
- ✓ LOCAL
- ✓ LOCAL funds raised LOCALLY USED LOCALLY!

**THE BENEFITS of PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:**

- ✓ HEALTH
- ✓ SOCIALISATION
- ✓ ENJOYMENT

## EXPLORING SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FOR UNDER 5'S AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Both children aged under five years and those with disabilities are at greater risk of drowning due to their lack of understanding of the risk and dangers associated with water, and the level of swimming and water safety skills and knowledge due to their development stage.

Swimming and water safety for under fives and children with disabilities was flagged at the 1st Symposium but due to limited time was delegated to the parking lot for consideration at a later stage.

This session provided an insight into the participation of children aged under five, program philosophies and objectives, and the challenges for greater access particularly for those children with special needs. Discussion aimed to identify strategies to address inclusion and participation, as well as ensuring programs best met the needs of participants.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To increase understanding of participation, the issues, challenges and success of water safety programs and initiatives for those 'at-risk' and those 'over-represented' in drowning statistics

### PRESENTATIONS:

1. Participation in Structured Swimming Lessons: 0-5 Years  
*Barbara Smith, Computerize, New Zealand*
2. Philosophy on Early Years Swimming and Water Safety Education  
*Julie Zancanaro, Hills Swimming*
3. Successes and Challenges of Implementing Swimming and Water Safety Education for Children with Special Needs  
*Catriona Barry, Rainbow Club*
4. The Belgravia Foundation  
*David Burns, Area Manager, Belgravia Leisure*

### QUESTIONS RAISED:

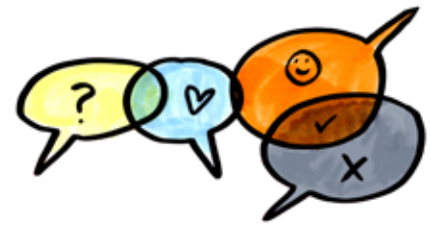
- What is a quality program?
- Do parents understand what children are learning and why?
- What are the reasons that children exit programs?
- How do we define swimming?

### SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS:

- The participation research showed that:
  - Huge enrolments for 0-12 months – doubled over the past 10 years
  - Increase in enrolments 1-4 years
  - Steady enrolments for 4-5 years
  - More than 50% leave programs at age 5 years
  - Period of participation is 19-22 months
  - Birth order has an impact on participation but not gender; first born receives less education
- Philosophy of programs should focus on:
  - Love and respect for water
  - Developing core beliefs
  - Child-centred
  - Developmentally sound
  - Balance of skills
  - Experiential with help
  - Parent education and participation
- Challenges for programs for special needs included pool space, qualified teachers, meeting high demand, improving and maintaining quality of teachers and facilities
- Special needs programs focus on creating social outlet and activities
- Programs need to connect the community to leisure activities and encourage broader benefits of health, socialisation and enjoyment
- As different communities have different needs, focus on local impact



# BRAINSTORMING



## ACCESS & INCLUSION

## UNDER 5's





## WORKSHOP: EXPLORING SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FOR UNDER 5'S AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

### Aim:

To further understand the issues and barriers affecting participation and discuss strategies to increase access and awareness of programs.

### Format:

Groups were assigned one of the target groups; under fives or children with disabilities and were asked to brainstorm thoughts and report back to the larger group. The following questions were provided to direct the discussion:

1. What are the issues and barriers for water safety education of the target group?
2. What is the purpose and aims for programs for the target group?
3. What are some opportunities and actions that may help to overcome some of the issues and barriers?

	Issues and Barriers	Opportunities and Actions
Under 5's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and quantity of qualified infant and preschool aquatic teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved swimming and water safety teacher training</li> <li>• Further education and development of swimming and water safety teachers</li> <li>• Continued investment in employees</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of swimming and water safety programs for infant and preschool aged programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards/guidelines for quality programs</li> <li>• Accountability of providers to raise standards</li> <li>• Links to early years framework</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental perceptions, expectations and reality are not aligned</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of the purpose of swimming and water safety programs</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of skill development and competency</li> <li>• Lack of understanding around 'in water' parent/carer participation and independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent charter to guide participation in swimming and water safety programs</li> <li>• Consistent guidelines and messages to parents and community</li> <li>• Advocacy campaign to increase awareness and understanding</li> </ul>
Children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility limitations including pool space, limited parking, ageing facilities, not appropriately equipped or suitable (e.g. noisy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source other venues; schools and special schools</li> <li>• Overall strategy around infrastructure, transport, workforce and education</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of education of facility staff (lifeguards, service desk) in understanding needs, support required, operating equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information for facility staff to improve managing and supporting clients with disabilities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and quantity of qualified access and inclusion teachers</li> <li>• Barriers or lack of support and opportunities to gain further training and qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider quality mentoring as opposed to formal qualifications in the first instance</li> <li>• Information for teachers to improve understanding of the varied needs of individuals (e.g. what you will see, how they may behave)</li> <li>• Engagement with disability sector to source potential teachers and train carers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding and implementation of NDIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review guide /provider toolkit on the NDIS including how does it work, what is a registered provider and how can you register and/or contact the NDIA</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to quality and appropriate swimming and water safety programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide on where to find aquatic facilities providing programs (including access, needs/ suitability information)</li> <li>• Engagement with groups that can assist with planning programs for different needs (e.g. autism, asthma)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental expectations and lack of engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide for parents and carers to assist with understanding what can be achieved, what are the program objectives, to encourage aquatic participation before formal lessons</li> </ul>

# SWIMMING & LIFESAVING *beyond primary school*

KATHRYN SCHULZ

STACEY PIDGEON

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION RESEARCH PROJECT



## BENCHMARKING AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S SWIMMING and WATER SAFETY SKILLS *part 2: beyond primary school*



## BRAIN STORM

## SWIMMING AND LIFESAVING BEYOND PRIMARY SCHOOL: AN INSIGHT INTO PARTICIPATION

Much of the information around participation in swimming and lifesaving by secondary school aged children has been anecdotal to date with little research in this area to increase understanding. Reports of decreased participation, a decline in the swimming and water safety skills and the fact that exposure to risk around water is greater for this cohort were all reasons this was noted as an area to be explored further at the previous Symposium.

As one of the goals of the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2016-2020 is to reduce drowning deaths in young people aged 15-24, it is vital that secondary school children have access to and participate in swimming and lifesaving education programs particularly in the early secondary years prior to recreating with their peers in a range of aquatic environments.

This session focused on learning more about who was participating, what they were learning and achieving and what were their motivations for participation. Discussion revolved around the issues and barriers to participation for secondary school students and identifying opportunities and actions that may reduce or resolve the issues and barriers raised.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To increase understanding in participation of youth in swimming and water safety programs and strategies to address the challenges

### PRESENTATIONS:

1. Youth Participation Research Project  
*Kathryn Schulz, Participation Manager, Australian Sports Commission*
2. Benchmarking Australian Children's Swimming and Water Safety Skills: Part 2: Beyond Primary School  
*Stacey Pidgeon, Senior Research & Policy Officer, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia*

### QUESTIONS RAISED:

- What's in it for me? Identify what they want!

### SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS:

- Limited opportunities for teenagers to learn and develop swimming and water safety skills and knowledge
- Strokes such as freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke are predominately the focus on programs for 13-15 year olds and there are limited lifesaving and survival skills being taught
- 40% of 13-15 year olds in research cohort were taught basic/beginner or water familiarisation skills – this may suggest they are receiving instruction for the first time
- Only 30% were able to swim 50 metres
- 75% were unable to achieve the Year 4 Benchmark, far below the minimum standards for Year 7

### SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS:

- Sport experiences a decline in student participation going in secondary school
- Research showed there are 4 cohorts of disengaged:
  - Students who experienced environmental barriers
  - Long-term disengaged
  - Students who participated but did not engage
  - Students who had dropped out of playing sport
- Delivery considerations included program timing, number of participants, number, length and frequency of sessions, ratios, facilities and equipment
- Design considerations included flexibility and adaptability, game sense approach, team activities, student motivations and empowerment, gender specific, skill level divisions, modified sport
- Deliverer considerations included skills, experience and training, confidence level, presence, multiple and mixed gender, organisation and communication, peer-to-peer learning, empathy and resilience, build student confidence

## AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT - FOUR COHORTS OF DISENGAGED

### Cohort 1: Students who experienced environmental barriers

Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of experienced teachers, facilities or equipment</li> <li>• travel distance</li> <li>• family support for costs</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social connection</li> <li>• learning new skills</li> <li>• being active</li> </ul>

### Cohort 2: Long-term disengaged

Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of interest, confidence, fitness, skill and motivation</li> <li>• prioritisation of academic activities</li> <li>• little support for girls' participation or social norms on gender appropriate sports</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keen to try alternative sports</li> <li>• improve health and fitness</li> <li>• spend time with friends</li> </ul>

### Cohort 3: Students who participated but did not engage

Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of interest, confidence, fitness, skill and motivation</li> <li>• don't value sport</li> <li>• feel self-conscious</li> <li>• cultural practices</li> <li>• repetitive or unorganised activities</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• try new sport if all participants have low skill level</li> <li>• spend time with friends</li> <li>• improve health and fitness</li> </ul>

### Cohort 4: Students who had dropped out of playing sport

Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time pressures (jobs, school)</li> <li>• competitive nature of sport</li> <li>• commitment required</li> <li>• gender norms and stereotypes for females</li> <li>• sport injury</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• challenge of competition without commitment and intensity</li> <li>• stress relief</li> <li>• upkeep of fitness and skills</li> </ul>



## WORKSHOP: SWIMMING AND LIFESAVING BEYOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Aim:

To increase understanding in participation of youth in swimming and water safety programs and strategies to address the challenges.

### Format:

Groups were assigned one of the target groups; under fives or children with disabilities and were asked to brainstorm thoughts and report back to the larger group. The following questions were provided to direct the discussion:

1. What are the issues and barriers for water safety education of the target group?
2. What are some opportunities and actions that may help to overcome some of the issues and barriers?
3. What are some strategies for engaging youth?
4. What are some strategies for those playing catch-up (those with little or no skills)?

	Issues and Barriers	Opportunities and Actions
Secondary school aged students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current offerings are focused on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swimming skills and training</li> <li>- Individual rather than team related</li> <li>- Quantity of training sessions</li> <li>- High skill level and competition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer programs where the focus is directed towards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Game-based, team and social connection activities</li> <li>- Introducing new environments other than pools – transferring the skills into open water</li> <li>- Providing options other than competitive sport</li> <li>- Modified sports or ‘a taste’ of a range of aquatic recreation activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use Australian Sports Commission cohorts to understand the target market when designing programs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased body awareness and self-esteem issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer flexibility in swimwear and clothing to encourage participation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited time due to increasing workloads, commitments for school and other activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer flexibility in scheduling and attendance to allow for periods whereby participants may have other commitments (e.g. exams, school activities, part-time jobs)</li> <li>• Offer pathways to employment to provide incentives and value in learning lifesaving skills</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of fundamental swimming and water safety skills due to limited access, participation, interest etc. in younger years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the structure of lessons for older participants</li> <li>• Change the terminology away from learn to swim or sport</li> <li>• Identify how to remove the stigma that learning to swim is for younger children</li> <li>• Ensure programs have age appropriate activities and equipment for older participants</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, participants and community may not understand or value the skills and knowledge in swimming and lifesaving programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide consistent messaging on the wider holistic health benefits as well as the employment and recreation opportunities</li> <li>• Link with community groups of high risk populations to conduct ‘water safety’ education courses</li> </ul>



## RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

1. Ensure consistency of language is used across the Framework and is at the appropriate level of the audience.
2. Develop practical resources that assist with implementation of the Framework.
3. Develop clear and simple communication resources that are specific to the audience and explain the Framework.
4. Promote and advocate the Framework as the industry standard for swimming and water safety education.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE NATIONAL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY FRAMEWORK

1. Finalise the Framework and accompanying documents.
2. Seek final feedback and approval from reference group.
3. Devise communication and implementation strategies.
4. Launch of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework.

### FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION

#### Swimming and Water Safety for Under 5's

- Develop consistent guidelines and messaging to increase the awareness and understanding of under 5's participation in swimming and water safety.
- Investigate ways to improve the number and quality of swimming and water safety teachers delivering lessons to under 5's.

#### Swimming and Water Safety for Children with Disabilities

- Investigate opportunities for partnerships and strategies around access to facilities, transport and workforce to increase participation opportunities.
- Improve the education of facility staff, carers and the community to ensure program participation results in a positive experience.
- Review the NDIS and the implications for the aquatic industry and how this may increase opportunities for participation.

#### Swimming and Lifesaving Beyond Primary School

- Consider market segmentation to target programs to meet the needs and motivations of secondary school students and beyond.
- Develop swimming and water safety programs that offer greater flexibility, less structure and meet the motivation needs of participants.
- Promote the holistic values of swimming and water safety programs including social networking, health and fitness, team-building and leadership development.



## SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES

### Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

Name	Role
Craig Roberts	National Manager Operations
Justin Scarr	Chief Executive Officer
Penny Larsen	National Manager Education
Monique Sharp	National Manager Events and Marketing
Dr Shane Baker OAM	National Education and Training Adviser
Stacey Pidgeon	Senior Project Officer Research and Policy
Thea Harrild	Senior Project Officer Aquatic Industry and Education

### Government Representatives

Name	Role and Department
Heidi Sinanovski	Swim and Survive Project Officer, NSW Office of Sport
Kate Malone	Project Officer, Office of Emergency Management, NSW Department of Justice
Kathryn Schulz	Participation Manager, Australian Sports Commission
Leonie McKenzie	A/Manager Swimming and Water Safety, WA Department of Education
Lucette King	Acting School Sport Policy Advisor, NSW Department of Education
Melanie Quin	Director, Primary Learning and Development Reform Branch, Vic Department of Education
Michelle Cockerell	Southern Coordinator, Swimming and Water Safety Program Tas Department of Education
Nathan Vincent	Principal Policy, Analyst, Office of Emergency Management, NSW Department of Justice
Neil Mackenzie	On behalf of SA Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing, General Manager, Invenitive
Peter Roberts	Manager, Sport, Swimming and Aquatics, SA Department for Education and Child Development
Phyllis Elliott	A/Team Leader, Swimming and Water Safety, WA Department of Education

Rebecca Johnson	Senior Manager, Partnerships and Programs, NT Department of Education
Robyn Rosengrave	Executive Director Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Qld Department of Education
Ross Morrison	Manager School Sport Unit, NSW Department of Education
Samantha Shields	A/ Senior Consultant – WA Sport and Recreation
Steve Clancy	School Swimming and Water Safety, NSW Department of Education
Tracy Gallagher	Manager/School Leader B, ACT Department of Education

### Aquatic Industry Representatives

Name	Role and Organisation
April Ryan	Public Safety Coordinator, Surf Life Saving Australia
Barbara Smith	Computerize Ltd.
Catriona Barry	General Manager, Rainbow Club
Chloe Maxwell	Community Awareness Coordinator, Surf Life Saving Qld
David Burns	Area Manager, Belgravia Leisure
Eveline Rijkssen	Research Coordinator, Surf Life Saving Australia
Gary Toner	Executive Officer, Swim Australia /ASCTA
Grant Connors	Chief Executive Officer, Aquatics & Recreation Victoria
Helen Hallett	Community Awareness Manager, Surf Life Saving Qld
James Ellender	NSW State Manager, Belgravia Leisure
Janelle Falkingham	Aquatic Project Manager, YMCA Victoria
Jared Wilson	General Manager – Operations AUSTSWIM
Joanne Massey	Community Education Manager, Surf Life Saving NSW
Jonty Mills	Chief Executive, Water Safety New Zealand
Julie Zancanaro	Director, Hills Swimming
Kym McMahon	National Participation Manager, Swimming Australia

Laurie Lawrence	Kids Alive do the Five
Michelle Young	National Aquatic Manager, Belgravia Leisure
Michael Anderson	Community Education Project Officer – Surf Life Saving NSW
Nicola Davies-Cooke	Rainbow Club
Ross Gage	Chief Executive Officer, Australian Swim Schools Association
Shane Daw	National Coastal Risks and Safety Manager, Surf Life Saving Australia
Teresa Stanley	Research and Development Manager, Drowning Prevention Auckland

### Academia

Name	Role and University
Ass. Prof Jenny Blitvich	Recently Retired, Deputy Head, School of Health Sciences and Psychology, Federation University

### Royal Life Saving Society – State and Territory Member Organisations

Name	Role and Organisation
Floss Roberts	Executive Director, Royal Life Saving NT
Kate Simpson	General Manager – Education & Sport, Life Saving Victoria
Les Mole	President, Royal Life Saving Qld
Matt Griffiths	General Manager, Aquatics, Royal Life Saving NSW
Maurice Phillips	Chief Instructor, Royal Life Saving Society SA
Paul Barry	Executive Director, Royal Life Saving Qld
Trent Hotchkin	Senior Manager, Swimming and Water Safety Education, Royal Life Saving WA

### Graphic Recorder

Name	Organisation
Sarah Firth	Sarah the Firth



## SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES





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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call **02 8217 3111**  
Email **info@rlssa.org.au**

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