

STAFF TRAINING – PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

KEEP WATCH
AT PUBLIC POOLS



Drowning at public pools



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Boy, 7, nearly drowns in [REDACTED] Leisure
Centre [REDACTED]

| Four-year-old girl drowns in crowded public pool

Teen fighting for life after almost drowning in
[REDACTED] public pool

Little boy fighting for life after near drowning incident
at public pool in [REDACTED]

Two people pulled from pools in
near-drowning accidents on final
day of [REDACTED]

Near drowning of toddler at [REDACTED]
aquatic centre

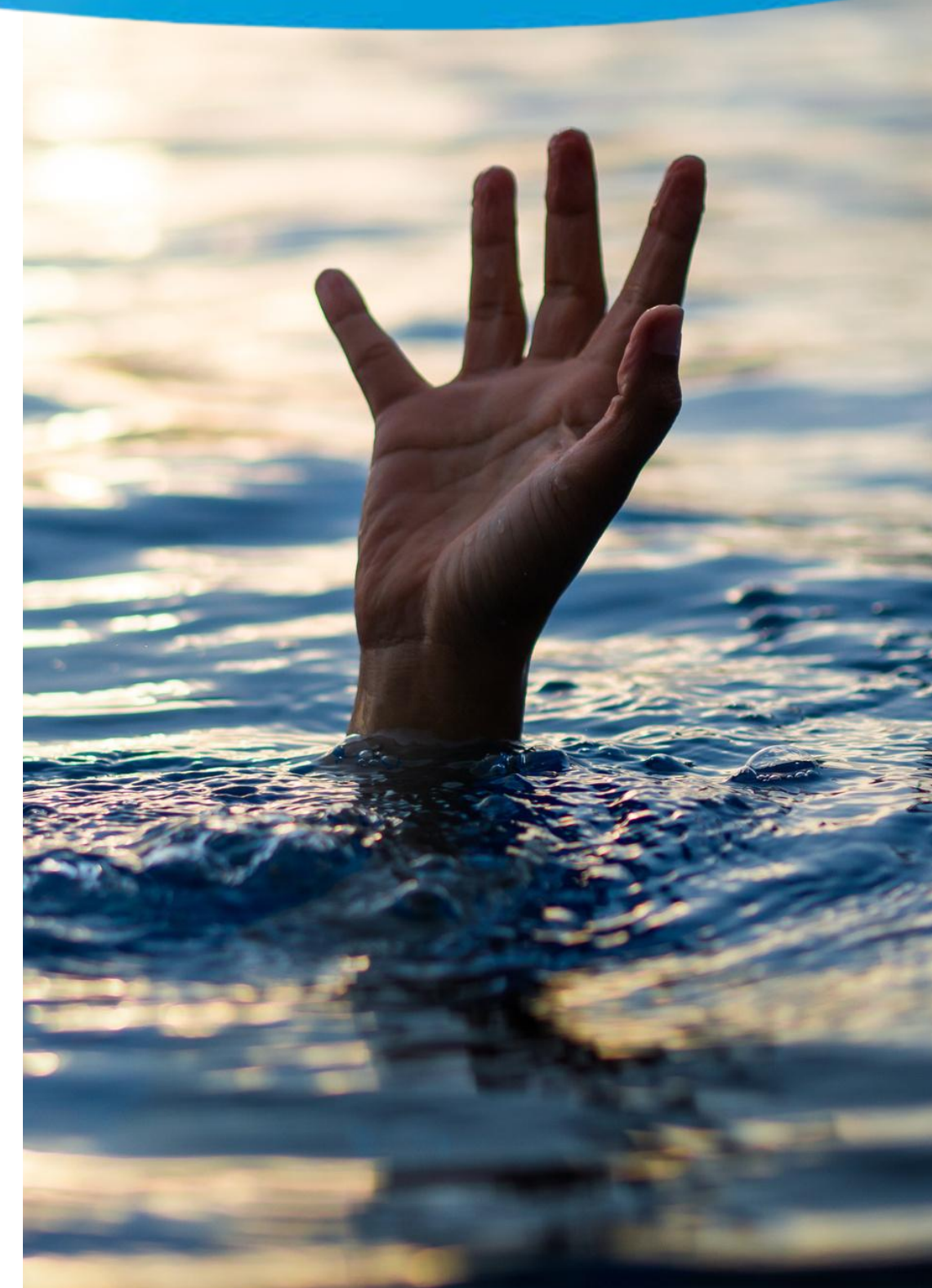
Drowning in Australia



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357 people drowned in
Australian Waterways
between 1 July 2024 - 30 June
2025



Drowning in Australia



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81%
were males

32%
were people born
overseas

24%
drowned whilst
swimming and
recreating

Child drowning



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15

children 0-4 years
drowned in
2024/25

53% were unintentional falls into water

53% occurred in swimming pools

13% occurred whilst swimming and recreating

Drowning in Australia

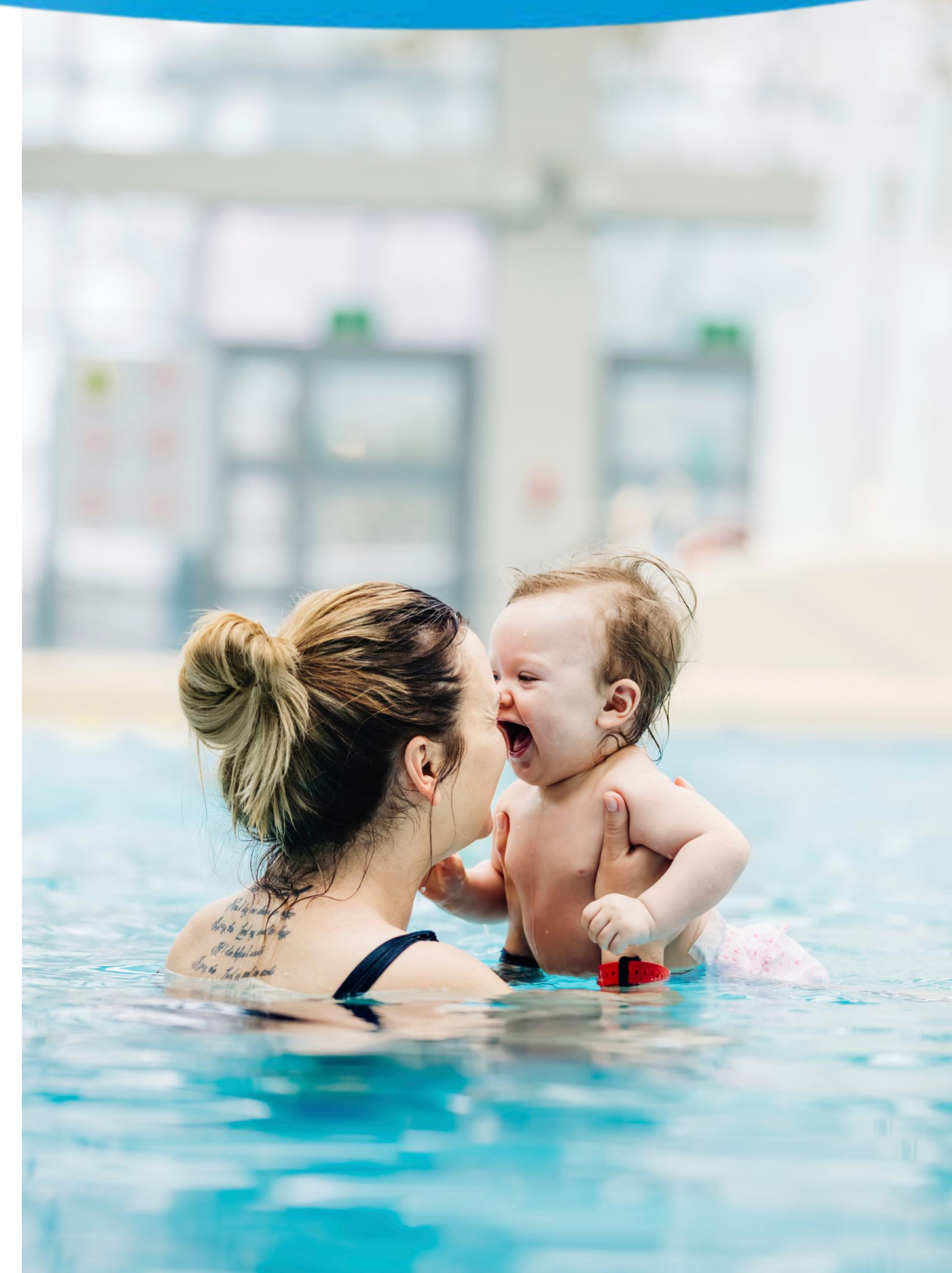


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**Children aged 1, accounted for
40% of 0-4 drowning deaths**

**Drowning risk triples following
a child's first birthday.**



Drowning in Australia



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For every child drowning fatalities there are an estimated 7 non-fatal drowning incidents that require hospitalisation.

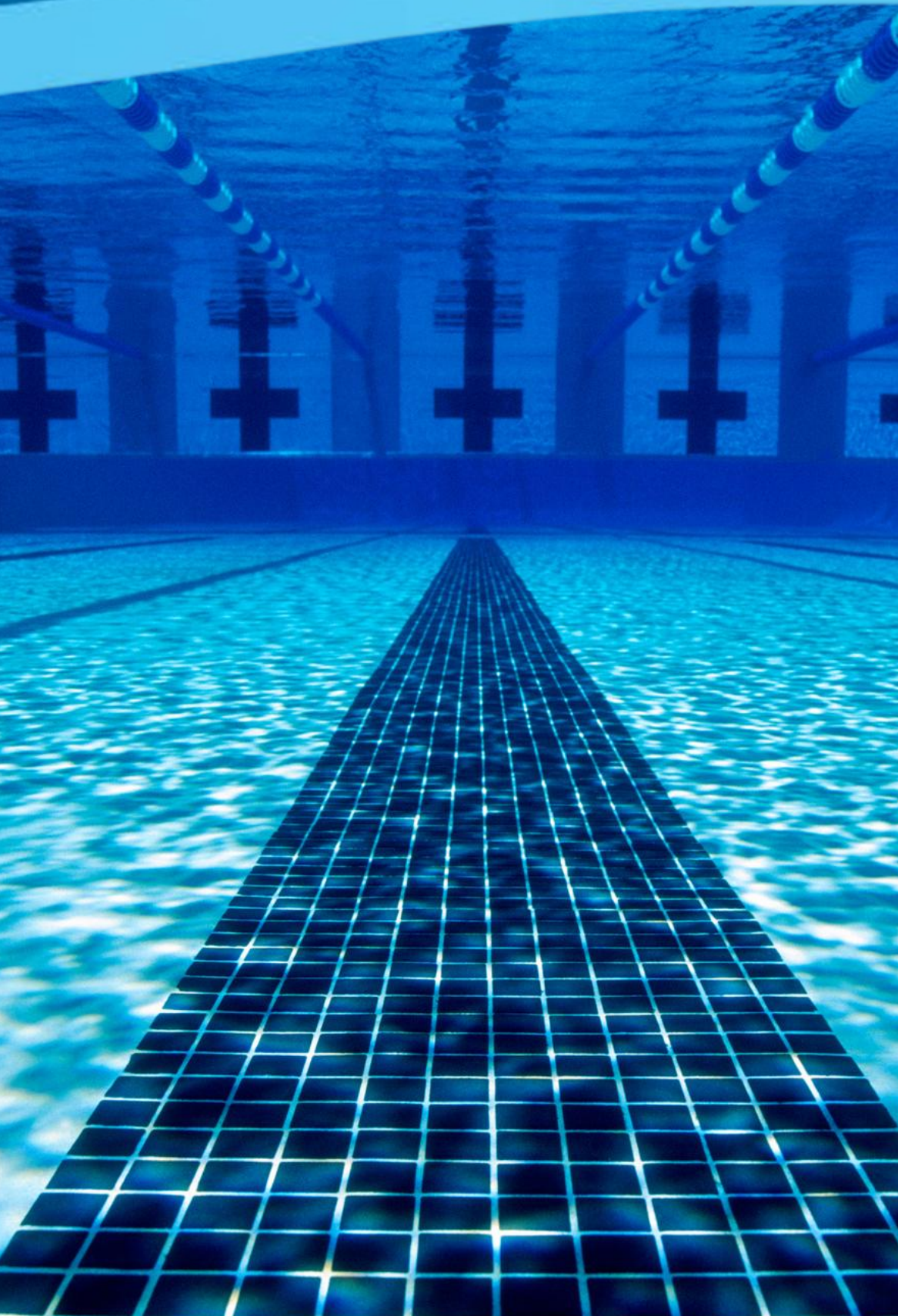


Rescues at public pools



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In Australian aquatic centres
throughout 2024-25

~8000

Rescues were
performed

~21

rescues every
day

1

rescue every
45minutes

Why children are at risk



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- Children are **attracted** to water
- Do not understand **DANGER**
- Absence or lack of adult **supervision**
- False sense of **security**
- **Silent** event



Keep Watch Program Purpose



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**To prevent drowning
in children through
supervision, safe
environments, early
learning, and
emergency response**

Keep Watch Program History



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1993 - Royal Life
Launches Keep Watch
in response to high
toddler drowning
rates



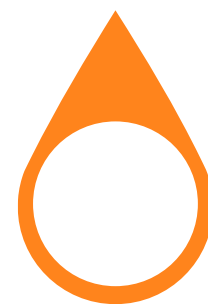
2000's - Expansion of Keep
Watch beyond pools to
include bathtubs, dams,
beaches and other hazards



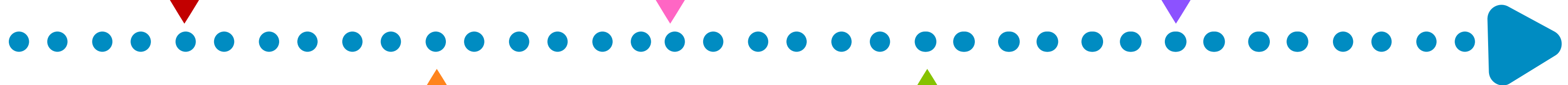
2020's - National Program
promoting 4 key actions, saving
lives through education, advocacy
and layered protection strategies



1993-1999 - Advocacy
drives stronger pool
fencing legislation across
Australia



2010's - Development of multimedia
campaigns, partnerships with
childcare, health, and community
organisations



Keep Watch - what's involved



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Being a Keep Watch Partner venue involves not only having the signage in place, but also educating parents and carers of the dangers and need of supervising their children.

It involves ensuring staff are properly trained and prepared to provide the appropriate education to all relevant persons and enforcing the program at all times.

Responsibilities



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Parents/carers are responsible for the supervision and care of all children within their care.

Lifeguards and other aquatic staff assist in ensuring the venue is a safe place for all persons



Parental Supervision



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The Keep Watch Program identifies 4 key elements of parental Supervision

Be Prepared

Parents/carers should ensure they are fully prepared to enter the water and have all items they need at hand.

Be Close

Always stay within arms reach of your child

All your Attention

Focus all of your attention on your child - no distractions

All of the Time

Never leave children alone in the water if U/5years

Do not leave them in the care of an older child or lifeguard whilst at the pool

Keep Watch Policy



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0-5 year olds and Non-Swimmers

**Parents / carers must
stay within arms reach**



6-10 year olds and Weak Swimmers

**Parents / carers must be
close close, be prepared
and maintain constant
visual contact**



11-14 year olds

**Parents / carers must
maintain visual contact**





Venues can easily implement the Keep Watch Program through the following steps:

- 1) **Become a Program Partner**
- 2) **Include program principles in induction and in-service training**
- 3) **Display signage materials in key locations**
- 4) **Utilise additional resources to provide ongoing community education**



DISTRACTIONS ARE DANGEROUS
PARENTS MUST ALWAYS KEEP WATCH

KEEP WATCH

Implementation



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Key signage placements:

- **Entry to venue (Entry sign)**
- **Bathroom doors or entry (A4 posters or wall sign)**
- **Pathways/ concourses near key pool locations i.e., toddler pools, splash pads, shallow end, program pools etc. (concourse signs, banners or bollards)**
- **Cafe areas, playgrounds, seating areas (bollards, concourse signs, wall signs, banners)**



Implementation



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Key Resources:

- **Wristbands - handed out to all children U/5years**
- **Flyers - Handed out upon entry or when providing community education**
- **Digital media - social media posts, campaigns, regular awareness**

Implementation by Staff



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Front of House

- First point of contact - mention the keep watch program and provide reminders of supervision
- Hand out wristbands to children under 5 years
- Ensure the display of Keep watch resources and materials
- If people comment that they have not heard of the program, provide them with a flyer

Swim Instructors

- Parent briefings - remind parents at the start of the term of their supervision responsibilities
- Use lessons to educate the students about safe behaviour around water and the need for parental supervision
- Encourage parents to collect children from the water after the lesson and not run off

Lifeguards

- Actively observe and identify unsupervised children or distracted parents
- Encourage (respectfully) proper child supervision and provide education
- Engage with patrons to consistently enforce supervision
- Make public reminders over the PA during peak times

Community Education opportunities:

- Host a water safety workshop
- LTS water safety week - child supervision session
- Have a chat with every parent / carer
- Regular PA announcements throughout the day
- Share campaigns on venue social platforms
- Visit schools / child care centres to deliver water safety sessions



Additional Resources



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Additional Resources are available for venues to include in information packs, water safety talks, etc. Please contact your state office for more information.

Keep Watch @ the Farm

Child Drowning – Fact or Fiction?
FICTION: Toddlers are a naturally curious and do not like to explore around water.
FACT: Toddlers are a naturally inquisitive group and are attracted to water. Children under 5 years of age are especially at risk because of their natural curiosity about their environment.
FICTION: Children are aware of the dangers water poses to them and will take care around water.
FACT: Children do not understand or perceive the hazards that water presents to them. They have no real sense of danger and require a high level of supervision.
FICTION: It is possible to sense all water bodies on a farm to keep them safe from drowning.
FACT: It is not always possible to fence all bodies of water on a farm as they may be needed for stock to drink out of. They may also be empty at certain times of the year.
FICTION: When children are drowning they will make a lot of noise and cry and call for help.
FACT: This is a common misconception. Childhood drowning is a silent event as children do not usually cry out for help. A drowning child may not cough or splash. The child swallows water, sinks and loses consciousness in less than a minute.
Drowning happens quickly and silently!

Would you like to know more about how you can prevent your child from drowning?
Visit the Keep Watch website at www.keepwatch.com.au

Or contact your local Royal Life Saving Branch:

Australian Capital Territory
Ph: (02) 4940 5400 Email: act@rls.org.au

New South Wales
Ph: (02) 9634 2700 Email: nsw@rls.org.au

Northam, Southern
Ph: (08) 9461 5026 Email: nrg@rls.org.au

Queensland
Ph: (07) 3422 2822 Email: qld@rls.org.au

South Australia
Ph: (08) 8234 9344 Email: sa@rls.org.au

Tasmania
Ph: (03) 6242 7156 Email: tas@rls.org.au

Victoria
Ph: (03) 9476 0900 Email: vic@rls.org.au

Western Australia
Ph: (08) 9420 6200 Email: wa@rls.org.au

National
Ph: (02) 8217 3111 Email: info@rls.org.au

Readily supporting the Keep Watch @ the Farm Program

FarmSafe AUSTRALIA INC
www.farmsafe.org.au

Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Child Safe Play Area

Restrict Access @ The Farm
CREATE A CHILD SAFE PLAY AREA
ENSURE CHILD SAFE PLAY AREA IS SECURELY FENCED
FILL IN UNUSED DITCHES, DIPS AND POST HOLES
COVER WELLS AND TANKS

Royal Life Saving

Keep Watch @ Bath Time

Child Drowning – Fact or Fiction?
FICTION: Whilst in the bath, young children can be left in the care of older children.
FACT: Never leave young children in the care of older children. Older children may not perceive the amount of danger a young child may be in and may confuse drowning for playing. They lack the attention levels needed to supervise correctly.
FICTION: Water needs to be reasonably deep for children to drown in it.
FACT: Children only need a small amount of water to drown in. Water that is deep enough to cover their nose and mouth is enough for a child to drown in.
FICTION: I can leave my child alone in the bath for a few seconds whilst I grab something I forgot, or to go to the toilet.
FACT: Drowning can occur in a matter of moments and you should never leave your child without active adult supervision. Ensure you have everything you need before filling the bathtub.
FICTION: A bath seat keeps a child safe in the bath.
FACT: Children have drowned while in a bath seat. Using a bath seat does also not replace the need for constant active adult supervision.
Drowning happens quickly and silently!

Would you like to know more about how you can prevent your child from drowning?
Visit the Keep Watch website at www.keepwatch.com.au

Or contact your local Royal Life Saving Branch:

Australian Capital Territory
Ph: (02) 4940 5400 Email: act@rls.org.au

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South Australia
Ph: (08) 8234 9344 Email: sa@rls.org.au

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Ph: (03) 6242 7156 Email: tas@rls.org.au

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Ph: (03) 9476 0900 Email: vic@rls.org.au

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Ph: (08) 9420 6200 Email: wa@rls.org.au

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Both Time: A time for water awareness
Bath time is also a great chance for your child to explore and enjoy the water. You should use a baby bath big enough to allow movement. Hold the baby underneath their head and move them forwards and backwards allowing them to feel the movement of the water. Do not be afraid if the baby's head and eyes get wet. Allow the water to circle the baby's face without covering the eyes, mouth or nose. You can also use a soft sponge or washcloth to trickle water on the baby's face. Make sure you dry their ears by gently using a towel to sponge off the water. Do not place anything in the child's ears.

Actively Supervise @ Bath Time
BE PREPARED
BE WITHIN ARMS' REACH
ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION
ALL OF THE TIME

Royal Life Saving

Keep Watch Brochure

SUPERVISE
Close / Constant / Focused
• Be Prepared, Within Arms' Reach
• All of Your Attention, All of the Time
Many drowning deaths in children under 5 occur in a few seconds when parents are distracted by a knock on the door or a phone call.
Active supervision means that a child is being constantly watched by an adult who is within arms' reach at all times. All of your attention should be on the child and you should never leave a child alone, or in the care of an older child, when they are in, on, or around water.
If you must leave the area when your child is bathing or swimming, take your child with you or have another responsible adult take over.
Active supervision is essential in protecting your child from drowning.
Supervision is required when children are in, on, or near water sources such as bathtubs, fish ponds, dams, creeks, rivers and water features.
For more Keep Watch information and useful resources visit www.keepwatch.com.au

RESTRICT ACCESS
Fence / Gate / Maintain
• Maintain your pool barrier and gate
• Provide a Child Safe Play Area
Creating a barrier between your child and the body of water is one of the most effective ways of preventing drowning. Pool fencing has been shown to save children from drowning. Fencing must isolate the water body (including swimming pools, spas and wading pools) from the house and should be regularly maintained with a gate that self-closes and self-latches. Any object a child could use to climb over a barrier should be removed.
Pool fencing has been shown to save children from drowning.
Visit www.homepoolafety.com.au for your home pool safety checklist that will help you maintain your fence and gate in good working order.
A child safe play area can be created inside or outside the house and will also restrict a child's access to water. Inside the house, doors and windows should be locked to prevent the child being able to wander away and the bathtub should be emptied immediately after use and the bathroom door kept shut.

WATER AWARENESS
Familiarise / Develop / Educate
• Enrol your child and experience water together
• Help educate and develop lifelong skills together
Helping your child familiarise themselves with water can be fun for both you and your child. Water awareness classes build confidence and introduce children to basic water safety.
Contact your local pool or Royal Life Saving Branch for details on classes such as the Swim and Survive Wonder program in your area.
You can also play in the pool with your child, or use bath time, to help them become familiar with water. When you go to a new aquatic venue, become aware of the environment and create a set of rules, for example no going near the water unless an adult is present.
Swimming lessons and flotation devices are no substitute for adult supervision.
Remember, always Keep Watch when children are in, on, or around water.

RESUSCITATE
Learn / Update / Act
• Enrol and Update Annually
• Have a go, ASAP, Call 000
Many children are alive today because their parents knew how to perform resuscitation and were able to respond quickly. Parents are often first on the scene and by knowing CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) they can provide the most assistance to their child in a drowning situation.
Resuscitation is a skill for life, and in a drowning situation, any attempt is better than nothing. Immediate resuscitation is also vital for preventing long term neurological impairment associated with drowning.
Royal Life Saving runs resuscitation courses and you can be accredited in 4 hours.
Visit www.royallifesaving.com.au or call 1300 737 763 for more information.
For more Keep Watch information and useful resources visit www.keepwatch.com.au

Venue walk through activity



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1) Using a piece of paper draw a basic plan of your venue including entry, bathrooms, pools, cafe areas etc.

2) With your drawing (in a different colour) walk around your venue and note where you would place the following Keep Watch resources.

3) upon returning to your group, discuss where and why you chose the placements of the resources.



2x Bollard signs



3x concourse signs



1x box of wristbands



6x A4 posters



Flyer



Distracted Parent on Phone

Situation: A lifeguard notices a parent of a 3-year-old sitting on the pool deck scrolling on their phone while the child plays in the water nearby.

Objective: Practise approaching politely, reminding the parent of supervision responsibilities, and encouraging compliance without confrontation.

Discussion Prompt: How did the parent respond? What words worked best to de-escalate and reinforce the rule?



Entry Point Education

Situation: A family with two children (aged 4 and 8) comes through the front of house. They don't know about the wristband system and have not heard of Keep Watch.

Objective: Staff to practice explaining the Keep Watch rules clearly and positively, and fitting children with wristbands.

Discussion Prompt: How can we make the explanation quick, friendly, and clear while avoiding sounding like a lecture?



Supervised by Older Child

Situation: A lifeguard sees a 9-year-old playing in the shallow water (1.1m) with a toddler, their guardian is chatting with friends across the venue.

Objective: Practice approaching the parent/guardian and reminding them of active supervision expectations for 0-4 and 6-10-year-olds.

Discussion Prompt: How can lifeguards keep the message consistent without seeming too strict? How can lifeguards ensure the safety of the children whilst approaching the parent/guardian?



Escalation & Teamwork

Situation: A parent becomes defensive after being reminded twice about supervision requirements for their toddler.

Objective: Practice escalation pathways — when and how to involve a supervisor or team leader, and how staff can back each other up.

Discussion Prompt: How do we support one another in difficult situations? What's the balance between firmness and customer care?

Quiz



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**Test your teams
knowledge on Keep
Watch; join in teams,
pairs or individuals and
have fun!**

Thank you



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