



Multicultural Community Water Safety Program

Saving lives, removing barriers
and building belonging.

FUNDING GUIDELINES



PATHFINDER - AMBASSADORS





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FUNDING GUIDELINES

Pathfinder - Ambassadors

WE SWIM: Multicultural Community Water Safety Program is a national, evidence-informed initiative to reduce drowning risk, remove barriers to swimming and water safety education, and build belonging for refugees, recently arrived migrants and broader multicultural communities.

PROGRAM DETAILS AT A GLANCE

WE SWIM ALIGNMENT	WE SWIM Pathfinder
APPLICATIONS CLOSE	24 September 2026
GRANT RANGE	Community organisations up to \$10,000; individuals up to \$3,000
FUNDS AVAILABLE	Approximately \$150,000 (excl. GST)
APPLICATION TYPE	Open grant and targeted invitation
DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Grant outcomes must be delivered by 31 May 2027
FUNDED BY	Australian Government
LED BY	Royal Life Saving Society - Australia
PROGRAM CONTACT	weswim@rlssa.org.au

1. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING PROGRAM

1.1 About WE SWIM

WE SWIM: Multicultural Community Water Safety Program is a national, evidence-informed initiative to reduce drowning risk, remove barriers to swimming and water safety education, and build belonging for refugees, recently arrived migrants and broader multicultural communities. The Program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by Royal Life Saving Society - Australia.

The Program responds to a clear national challenge. Multicultural communities experience higher drowning risk because of layered barriers that can include lower swimming and water safety skills, limited familiarity with local water hazards, and financial, language, cultural and access barriers to participation. The Program is structured around three connected components: national coordination, multicultural community water safety partnerships and coordination, and reporting - monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

Within that broader architecture, a WE SWIM Pathfinder is a category for time-bound, test-and-learn initiatives. Individual Pathfinder opportunities can have different purposes, priority groups, delivery models and assessment settings.

1.2 Program Objectives

The Program's objectives are framed around safety, access, equity, cohesion and opportunity. They are deliberately practical so they can guide decisions about funding, partnerships and delivery.

Over the life of the Program, WE SWIM will:

- Reduce drowning risk for refugees, recently arrived migrants, multicultural communities and international students by improving swimming and water safety skills, hazard awareness and safe behaviours around water.
- Increase access and equity in swimming and water safety education by removing financial, cultural, language, gender and geographic barriers to participation in priority areas.
- Strengthen social cohesion by creating new and deeper connections between multicultural communities and local aquatic centres, swim schools, clubs and councils.
- Grow a more diverse aquatic workforce by creating pathways into swimming instruction, lifeguarding and community water safety leadership for people from multicultural backgrounds.
- Build sustainable local capability so councils, aquatic providers and community organisations can continue culturally responsive water safety programs beyond the funding period.

1.3 Outcomes Framework

Progress against these objectives is tracked through four linked outcome domains. These are interpreted alongside Royal Life Saving's community prioritisation tool, so results are read in the context of migrant population profiles, settlement patterns and drowning risk — not raw participation numbers alone.

REACH AND PARTICIPATION

- Number and spread of funded partnerships by tier, geography, priority cohort(s), and cultural and language groups.
- Participant numbers by age, gender, cultural and linguistic background, and settlement stage.
- Retention and completion rates for lesson-based and program-based activities.

SKILLS AND SAFETY OUTCOMES

- Participants achieving agreed swimming and water safety benchmarks (for example, 25–50m swim, floating).
- Reported improvements in confidence, hazard awareness and supervision behaviours among participants and caregivers.

SOCIAL COHESION AND ACCESS OUTCOMES

- New or strengthened links between multicultural communities and pools, clubs, councils and other local services.
- Perceived cultural safety and welcome in aquatic settings, captured through feedback from participants and community partners.
- Co-investment and in-kind support secured from local partners, indicating shared ownership and sustainability.

WORKFORCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OUTCOMES

- Multicultural ambassadors, instructors, lifeguards, trainees and student leaders recruited, trained and, where relevant, employed.
- Evidence that water safety has been embedded into settlement services, local water safety plans, university programs or employer practices.

1.4 WE SWIM pillars

All funded activities under WE SWIM Pathfinder - Multicultural Community Ambassador Program must activate one or more of the four WE SWIM pillars.



WE CONNECT

Build and strengthen links between multicultural communities and local aquatic facilities, swim schools, swimming and lifesaving clubs, and councils.



WE WELCOME

Improve cultural safety, create welcoming aquatic environments, expand workforce and leadership pathways for people from multicultural backgrounds.



WE PROMOTE

Deliver targeted, multilingual water safety messages through trusted voices and channels.



WE LEARN

Remove barriers to participation in swimming and water safety education and build skills aligned to agreed benchmarks.

1.5 About this specific WE SWIM Pathfinder opportunity

Multicultural Community Ambassador Program is a specific funding opportunity under WE SWIM. It supports trusted community voices to share approved WE SWIM messages in culturally responsive ways that help save lives, remove barriers and build belonging around local pools, beaches, rivers and lakes.

This opportunity sits under WE SWIM Pathfinder, but it has its own specific purpose and guidelines. It is not an in-water delivery stream. It is a communications, engagement and community influence stream aligned primarily to WE PROMOTE, with supporting links to WE CONNECT and WE WELCOME where activity helps connect people to local services and more welcoming aquatic environments.

1.6 Policy alignment

WE SWIM Community Programs align with the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030, the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy, and the Multicultural Framework Review: Towards Fairness. This program aligns with Royal Life Saving's strategic approach to eliminating drowning, empowering communities strengthening safety, and succeeding together.

1.7 Core messaging approach

All funded activity under this opportunity must use core WE SWIM messaging. This means communication activity should balance the three objectives embedded in the program byline — saving lives, removing barriers, and building belonging — rather than focusing only on hazard messages or awareness in isolation.

Projects should use approved WE SWIM brand language, the codebook's technical and community voice conventions, and multilingual, plain-language, strengths-based communications suited to the communities being reached. Community-facing activity should explain not only how to stay safe, but also how to take part, where to go, who to trust and how local aquatic places can feel more welcoming and connected.

2. WHO CAN APPLY

2.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants may include:

- Incorporated multicultural, refugee, community or faith-based organisations.
- Local not-for-profit organisations with strong community reach and trusted relationships.
- Individual trusted voices, ambassadors, bicultural workers, community connectors, local leaders or other respected community figures with demonstrated local credibility and community backing.

2.2 Priority communities

Priority communities may include refugees, recently arrived migrants, broader multicultural communities facing access barriers, and other locally identified groups where trusted communication can improve safety, access and belonging.

2.3 Eligibility conditions

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Demonstrate trusted relationships with the communities they propose to reach.
- Show how they will use approved WE SWIM messaging and communication approaches.
- Describe the channels, languages and settings they will use.
- Explain how activity will contribute to safety, access and belonging, not just message reach.
- Participate in orientation, briefing or training requirements set by Royal Life Saving where applicable.

2.4 Who is not eligible

The following are not eligible:

- Commercial or for-profit organisations.
- Applicants without a clear community reach or trusted-voice role.
- Applicants proposing primarily in-water delivery rather than communications, engagement or ambassador activity.
- Applicants with unresolved reporting obligations to Royal Life Saving from prior funding arrangements.

3. WHAT THIS FUNDING SUPPORTS

3.1 Purpose and focus

This opportunity supports community organisations and individual ambassadors to deliver trusted voice activity in local communities. The focus is on sharing swimming and water safety messages through trusted people, community settings and culturally responsive channels, while also strengthening local relationships, advocacy capability and confidence.

3.2 Funding categories

Two funding categories are available under this opportunity:

Category	Applicant type	Maximum funding
Trusted Voice – Community Organisations	Incorporated community organisations, multicultural associations, local networks or similar entities	Up to \$10,000
Trusted Voice – Individual Ambassadors	Individual trusted voices, community connectors, bicultural workers, local leaders or similar individuals working with community backing	Up to \$3,000

3.3 Eligible activities

Eligible activities are activities that help trusted voices share approved WE SWIM water safety messages in culturally responsive ways that support saving lives, removing barriers and building belonging. All activities must be primarily communications, outreach, engagement, networking or advocacy, aligned to WE PROMOTE, with supporting links to WE CONNECT and WE WELCOME where they help connect people to local services and more welcoming aquatic environments.

Illustrative eligible activities for community organisations include:

- Multilingual community messaging using approved WE SWIM materials, scripts or campaign themes through community events, faith settings, cultural associations and local networks.
- Local information sessions, talks or community briefings in trusted settings on water safety, supervision, seasonal risks and how to join local aquatic opportunities.
- Social media, messaging app or community radio activity delivered through trusted local channels using WE SWIM core messages.
- Community outreach linked to seasonal campaigns and local hazard messages, with clear calls to action and signposting into safe local programs.
- Online and in-person networking sessions for trusted voices, ambassadors and community connectors that strengthen shared messaging and referral practice.
- Advocacy workshops that build confidence in message delivery, community voice and relationship-building with local aquatic providers and councils.

Illustrative eligible activities for individual ambassadors include:

- Social media content, messaging app activity and digital storytelling in approved languages using WE SWIM messages on local hazards, supervision and safe behaviours around water.
- Short talks, story-sharing or appearances at community events, schools or youth activities focused on water safety, confidence and inclusion.
- Participation in Royal Life Saving or partner briefing sessions and ambassador learning forums to strengthen message consistency and reach.
- Light-touch trusted voice signposting to local pools, lessons or WE SWIM opportunities where such pathways exist, without ambassadors taking on direct program delivery roles.

All activities should use multilingual, plain-language, strengths-based messaging consistent with the WE SWIM communications codebook, avoiding deficit framing or stigmatising terms.

3.4 Eligible costs

Eligible costs are costs that are necessary, modest and directly related to delivering approved trusted voices activity. All costs must support communications, outreach, engagement, networking, advocacy or brief training, and be proportionate to the funding category and delivery plan.

Illustrative eligible costs for community organisations include:

- Short-term staff or facilitator time directly linked to planning and delivering WE SWIM-aligned communications or outreach.
- Venue hire and modest catering for approved information sessions, briefings or community events.
- Design, translation and printing of WE SWIM-aligned multilingual materials and digital assets.
- Basic equipment or subscriptions needed for community radio, livestreams or online outreach, for example modest audio equipment or platform fees.
- Travel and modest participation support for community connectors or ambassadors attending approved networking, training or advocacy sessions convened by Royal Life Saving.

Illustrative eligible costs for individual ambassadors include:

- Modest stipends or honoraria recognising time spent on approved trusted voice activity.
- Travel and basic access costs to attend approved events, workshops or briefings.
- Low-cost content production expenses directly linked to WE SWIM-aligned messaging, for example simple video or audio production tools.

Costs must be clearly explained in the budget and linked to expected communication reach, engagement quality and community benefit. Royal Life Saving may determine that a cost is ineligible where it is not sufficiently connected to trusted voices activity, WE SWIM messaging or the program's purpose.

3.5 What will not be funded

Funding is not available for activities or costs that are not directly related to the approved trusted voices communications program. It is also not available where activities do not use approved WE SWIM messaging, or fall outside the modest, Pathfinder-scale intent of this opportunity.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Direct in-water program delivery as the primary activity, including lesson subsidies, pool entry for general programs, or broader aquatic programming.
- Capital expenditure, buildings, vehicles or major equipment purchases.
- Ongoing organisational overheads, such as core salaries, rent, utilities or general administration.
- Political campaigning, fundraising activity or messaging primarily designed to support non-program agendas.
- Messaging that departs from approved WE SWIM language, uses deficit framing, is not culturally responsive, or conflicts with Royal Life Saving's strategic framework and communications codebook.
- High-cost media buys or large-scale campaigns that cannot be justified within the small grant amounts.
- Activities or expenditure incurred before the funding agreement or grant acceptance process is completed.
- Costs intended to cover existing debts, deficits, fines or liabilities of applicants or partners.

Applicants unsure whether a proposed activity or cost is eligible should seek clarification from Royal Life Saving before applying.

4. NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT

Royal Life Saving will provide networking, advocacy and ambassador development activities alongside the funded communications work. This reflects Royal Life Saving's strategic framework by helping communities not only receive messages, but also build stronger local voice, confidence and connection around water safety.

Successful applicants will be encouraged to participate in some or all of these additional activities, depending on relevance, timing and local capacity. Additional travel costs associated with approved in-person participation will be provided by Royal Life Saving.

Royal Life Saving-facilitated activities may include:

- Online advocacy workshops.
- In-person networking and peer learning sessions.
- Message training for ambassadors and community connectors.
- Facilitated sessions with local aquatic venues, councils or service providers to improve referral pathways and welcome.
- Community-of-practice or ambassador learning forums hosted by Royal Life Saving.

5. BRANDING, MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

All funded partners and ambassadors must use approved WE SWIM naming, brand language and acknowledgement conventions. First reference should use WE SWIM: Multicultural Community Water Safety Program, and first reference to the organisation should use Royal Life Saving Society - Australia, followed by Royal Life Saving on subsequent references.

Community-facing materials must be multilingual and plain-language where relevant, culturally responsive, safety-first, strengths-based and values-grounded. Messaging should avoid deficit framing and should never rely on outdated or stigmatising terms.

6. WE SWIM CODE OF CONDUCT - AQUATIC RISK MANAGEMENT, CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND CULTURAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Successful grantees must ensure that programs and activities funded under the WE SWIM Multicultural Community Water Safety Program adhere to the WE SWIM Code of Conduct and demonstrate how they will do this in their application.

The WE SWIM Code of Conduct covers off eligibility criteria across all programs, including ethics, aquatic risk management, child safeguarding, cultural safety, public liability, privacy, and incident reporting and notification protocols.

The WE SWIM Code of Conduct can be found at www.royallifesaving.com.au/WESWIM.

7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Reporting for this stream should be proportionate and practical. Funded partners or ambassadors may be required to provide a short activity report, basic reach data, and examples of materials or channels used. They may also be required to provide short reflections on what worked, what communities responded to, and what helped strengthen trust, access or belonging.

Where appropriate, Royal Life Saving may also invite funded participants to join shared learning sessions, ambassador briefings or short stories of impact processes to strengthen future WE SWIM communications activity.

8. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All eligible applications are assessed against the WE SWIM Assessment Framework's five standardised criteria, weighted for this program as set out below.

#	Criterion	Weight	How this applies to Pathfinder – Ambassadors
8.1	Community need and local fit	20%	The application demonstrates strong, credible relationships with the community or communities it seeks to reach, and shows that the proposed channels, languages and settings are appropriate.
8.2	Partnership strength, delivery capability and sustainability	30%	The application presents a realistic and culturally responsive delivery approach, including any networking, advocacy or training value that will strengthen local capability and influence, and demonstrates how this builds a lasting local voice or ambassador pathway rather than a one-off appearance.
8.3	Alignment to WE SWIM pillars and outcome pathway	20%	The application demonstrates clear use of approved WE SWIM messaging and shows how activity will contribute to saving lives, removing barriers and building belonging.
8.4	Value for money and co-investment	20%	The application demonstrates a realistic, proportionate budget clearly linked to expected reach, engagement quality and community benefit.
8.5	Monitoring, evaluation and learning readiness	10%	The application shows readiness to participate in simple reporting, feedback collection and shared learning processes.

9. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications will be checked for eligibility before merit assessment.

Eligible applications will be considered by a panel convened by Royal Life Saving with expertise in multicultural engagement, water safety, partnership management and program evaluation, with conflicts of interest managed in line with organisational procedure. The panel will make recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer, who will make final funding decisions within agreed delegations. Not all eligible applications will be funded, and in some cases partial funding or rescoping may be offered.

The assessment process will use the WE SWIM Program Balancing Thresholds to help guide funding decisions. The thresholds set indicative ranges for geographic areas, participant groups and cultural communities across all WE SWIM funding programs. They help the panel achieve an appropriate mix of place-based programs, community programs and Pathfinders, while ensuring funding supports the overall objectives of the WE SWIM Multicultural Community Water Safety Program. The WE SWIM Program Balancing Thresholds are published at www.royallifesaving.com.au/WESWIM.

10. APPLICATION PROCESS

9.1 Before you apply

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Royal Life Saving before submitting an application. Early discussion can help confirm program fit, eligibility, local partnership expectations, data requirements and cultural safety considerations.

9.2 How to apply

Applications must be submitted using the WE SWIM Community Programs application form provided by Royal Life Saving. Applications should include:

- A completed application form.
- Details of the lead organisation and project partners.
- A brief project plan covering activities, community focus, timelines and roles.
- A project budget, including co-investment.
- Evidence of incorporated status and appropriate insurance for the lead applicant.
- A short explanation of how the project has been shaped with community input.

9.3 Indicative timeline

Phase	Timing	Activity
Grant opens	18 August 2026	Application documentation released
Grant closes	24 September 2026	Applications close
Outcomes notified	16 October 2026	Applicants advised in writing
Funding agreements executed	30 October 2026	Agreements finalised
Outcome delivery period	1 November 2026 to 31 May 2027	Community Programs commence and report against milestones
Final reporting and acquittal	30 June 2027	Final reports submitted

11. SUCCESSFUL FUNDED AMBASSADORS

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement or equivalent grant acceptance process with Royal Life Saving Society - Australia. Funding conditions may cover approved activities, payment arrangements, brand and messaging requirements, reporting expectations and acknowledgement obligations.

12. REPORTING AND ACQUITTAL

WE SWIM Pathfinder – Ambassadors will be required to provide a final report, alongside participation in monitoring, evaluation and learning processes. Reporting should cover activity delivery, reach, access and inclusion outcomes, co-investment, learnings and financial acquittal. The minimum dataset should be proportionate to the project, but should cover reach and participation, skills and safety outcomes where relevant, access and belonging outcomes, and practical learning about what worked in the local context.

13. KEY DEFINITIONS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY

For the purpose of these guidelines, Pathfinder refers to the broader WE SWIM category under which this funding opportunity sits. Not all Pathfinder opportunities are the same, and these guidelines should not be used as the default template for other Pathfinder streams.

14. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Royal Life Saving may publish information about successful partnerships, including lead organisation, project description, communities served and funding amount, in program communications and reporting. Applicants must declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at the time of application.

All funded activity must be delivered in accordance with applicable privacy, safeguarding and workplace obligations, as well as Royal Life Saving's values and culturally responsive practice expectations.

Royal Life Saving Society - Australia accepts no responsibility for funded projects irrespective of the funding provided, and irrespective of any project being listed on Royal Life Saving's website or other publications.

Appendix A: WE SWIM Pathfinder – Ambassador

WE SWIM alignment	WE SWIM Pathfinder opportunity aligned primarily to WE PROMOTE
Purpose	Support trusted voices to share approved WE SWIM messages that save lives, remove barriers and build belonging.
Grant range	Community organisations: up to \$10,000 (excl. GST)
Individual ambassadors: up to \$3,000 (excl. GST)	Approximately \$1,200,000 (excl. GST)
Funds available	Approximately \$150,000 (excl. GST)
Primary activity type	Communications, outreach, engagement, networking and advocacy support.
Distinguishing feature	Uses trusted local voices and channels rather than in-water delivery as the main mode.
Eligible extras	Online and in-person networking, advocacy workshops, briefing sessions and ambassador learning.
Messaging requirement	Must use core WE SWIM messaging and approved brand language.
Delivery timeframe	Grant outcomes must be delivered by 31 May 2027
Funded by	Australian Government
Led by	Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

Appendix B: Key contacts

Role	Contact
Program Contact	weswim@rlssa.org.au
Royal Life Saving website	royallifesaving.com.au/WESWIM



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