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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Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

The drowning prevention research of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia is proudly supported by the Australian Government.
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 first 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 explore 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
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
## GOVERNMENT FUNDED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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

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

STACEY PIGGEOE AND PENELOPE LAARSEN
HOW WE GOT TO THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK

CLARIFY CURRENT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES + STAKEHOLDERS

SKILLS
KNOWLEDGE
ATTITUDES
BEHAVIOUR

AVAILABLE TO ALL AGES
SIMULATIONS
OPEN WATER

RESILIENT SAFE

1. ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS ADEQUATELY COVERED?
   - Yes
   - Make Pools a Risk of Assessment
   - Change Aquatic and Water Safety

2. SWIMMING FOR A SPECIFIC DISTANCE?
   - No
   - Do Students Need this Information?
   - How long will it take?

3. SHOULD WATER SAFETY SKILLS BE DEMONSTRATED DURING COMPETITIONS?
   - No
   - Competitions need open water conditions

4. DOES THE FRAMEWORK SUFFICIENTLY ALLOW FOR OPEN WATER PROGRAMS?
   - No
   - They are pool based
   - More opportunities for open water

5. HOW DO WE HELP LEARNERS PERCEIVE THE LEVEL OF SKILLS AND RISK?
   - Not sure
   - We need to clarify the framework at different points

6. ARE THE SKILLS AT THE DIFFERENT STAGES APPROPRIATE?
   - Yes
   - Minimum desired
   - No minimum requirement

7. DOES THIS FRAMEWORK ALLOW FOR THE PROGRESSION OF SKILLS?
   - Yes
   - Very different pace of progression

8. IS THE FRAMEWORK ACHIEVABLE IN ITS CURRENT FORM (NAGSS)?
   - Yes
   - Where do I go now?

CHANGES

- MAPPING STAGES & SKILLS may be confusing
- ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL
- Sharpen writing

WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY TO EACH

WE LIKE THE NEW FRAMEWORK!
- Improvement of lesson quality
- More students successful
- Read to address potential expectations

RESOURCES

SARAHTHOMAS.COM @ SARATHOMAS
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
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?
## Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Parents and community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of who’s responsibility for what e.g. federal, state, local</td>
<td>• Mutual benefits to get industry buy-in, need to be able to sell Framework to operators – answer what’s in it for me?</td>
<td>• Need either zero knowledge or enough knowledge (not just a little). If they only have a little, they make assumptions when making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Require data and detail to back up support – e.g. what are the outcomes? Can these be measured? What is the impact?</td>
<td>• Will need to see bigger picture outside of their own operations – how does this impact the industry as a whole?</td>
<td>• Want to know that swim school/instructors are using the Framework and what it means to them and their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Know what is the Government direction, position or strategy to assist with alignment and strategies</td>
<td>• Australian Water Safety Council document - recognition to organisations to give the framework ‘weight’ in the sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do they have the ability to build capacity and capability?</td>
<td>• Do they have the ability to build capacity and capability?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is their role as a deliverer or an enabler?</td>
<td>• Advocacy and alignment - Education to key stakeholders – what does this mean? Who is this going to benefit?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mutual benefits to get industry buy-in, need to be able to sell Framework to operators – answer what’s in it for me?</td>
<td>• Costs perceived or associated with aligning or changing program</td>
<td>• Lack of understanding of the relevance of a Framework – was does this actually mean and is it a benefit to my child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will need to see bigger picture outside of their own operations – how does this impact the industry as a whole?</td>
<td>• Gaining buy-in from those resistant to change</td>
<td>• Unrealistic expectations or no expectations of children’s ability or achievement levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Australian Water Safety Council document - recognition to organisations to give the framework ‘weight’ in the sector</td>
<td>• Perception that their business point of difference may be lost</td>
<td>• Are parents aware of what their children are learning and why aren’t they asking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do they have the ability to build capacity and capability?</td>
<td>• Confusion or misunderstanding of what this means for them</td>
<td>• Language and terminology that parents don’t know or understand. This can be alienating, confusing, or misunderstood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is their role as a deliverer or an enabler?</td>
<td>• May need additional workforce training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Parents and community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of funds, infrastructure and resources to support implementation</td>
<td>• Costs perceived or associated with aligning or changing program</td>
<td>• Lack of understanding of the relevance of a Framework – was does this actually mean and is it a benefit to my child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding allocation, cuts or redistribution may not be directed towards swimming and water safety education</td>
<td>• Gaining buy-in from those resistant to change</td>
<td>• Unrealistic expectations or no expectations of children’s ability or achievement levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capability limitations</td>
<td>• Perception that their business point of difference may be lost</td>
<td>• Are parents aware of what their children are learning and why aren’t they asking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity of the issues and the demand make it difficult to come to a ‘one size fits all’ strategy</td>
<td>• Confusion or misunderstanding of what this means for them</td>
<td>• Language and terminology that parents don’t know or understand. This can be alienating, confusing, or misunderstood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of understanding of the value of the health and recreation benefits and size of industry impact</td>
<td>• May need additional workforce training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability and difficulty in communicating the framework to different government departments and levels – water safety education may sit across a number of departments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Parents and community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Agreement between State and Territory governments</td>
<td>• Advocacy campaign to promote the Framework</td>
<td>• Communication strategy – one pager, factsheets, flowcharts, FAQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies on GST application for aquatic programs</td>
<td>• Communication strategy - promotional toolkit – social media, infographic, one pager, media release</td>
<td>• Parent checklist – does your swim school tick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Program monitoring processes</td>
<td>• Education – what this means for industry and teachers</td>
<td>• Tools to guide parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set of messages specific for parents that industry can use</td>
<td>– how they can help their children to reach the minimum standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommendations for developing program/how to align</td>
<td>– how they can extend their children or provide additional opportunities to enhance skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Parents and community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is a ‘good’ program?</td>
<td>• Framework has been developed by industry for industry</td>
<td>• What is a ‘good’ program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unified messages</td>
<td>• National approach to ensure consistency, standards and benchmarks</td>
<td>• Framework – why and what it means for me and my child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocacy for drowning prevention, health, fitness, recreation, social, bonding and well-being – skills for life</td>
<td>• Programs aligned are a sign of quality swimming and water safety curriculum</td>
<td>• Credibility of programs that align to Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Program providers to demonstrate they meet the Framework requirements</td>
<td>• Ability to benchmark against Framework</td>
<td>• Highlight two to three achievements most appropriate for each stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexibility of program delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLORING SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY for UNDER 5's and CHILDREN with DISABILITIES

BARBARA SMITH
COMPUTERIZE NEW ZEALAND

PHILOSOPHY IN EARLY YEARS SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

SUCCSSES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

CATHERINE BARRY
RAINBOW CLUB

LOCAL IMPACT

DAVID BURNS
AREA MANAGER BELGRAVIA LEISURE

THE BELGRAVIA FOUNDATION

PARTICIPATION IN STRUCTURED SWIMMING LESSONS: 0-5yrs

MATHS WORKSHOPS & HOMEWORK

WHAT IS SWIMMABLE?

A NETWORK OF SWIMMING CLUBS

67 MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

A NEW SWIMMING CLUB FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

71% 0-5

21% UNDER 5's

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Huge impact on reducing drowning and injuries

IS IT SAFE? IS IT ENJOYABLE?

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

Access and Inclusion

THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- HEALTH
- SOCIALISATION
- ENJOYMENT

100% OF CHILDREN WERE SATISFIED WITH PROGRAMMES

58% OF KIDS WERE PROGRAMME recycle

80% OF PARENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH PROGRAMME

WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

PARTICIPATION

THE OLDER A NEW SWIMMING CLUB IS THE MORE SUCCESSFUL IT CAN BE
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

BARRIERS
- Facilities often not sufficient

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS
- Too many in-house kids?

WHAT IS IMPORTANT?
- Friendships
- Networks

SUPPORT WORKERS TRAINED
- Not all disability

INFRASTRUCTURE
- Training
- Maintenance

DISABILITIES
- Can be confronting

ACCESS & PARKING
- Too many in-house kids?

MONITORING
- Too many in-house kids?

NETWORKS
- Friendships

EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK
- Start aquatic education in the bath

ADVOCACY GROUPS
- Raising awareness
- External

RESOURCES
- Books
- Support

EDUCATE PARENTS
- Parent.

PARENTS
- Child

BENCHMARKS
- Under 12 months

CONNECTING SECTORS
- Tools and technology

DEBATE
- What is important?

PREWAND TRAINEES
- Early years framework

RECORD KEEPING
- How to keep track of the bath

CONSULTANT MANDATE
- Not too old?

MEDICATION
- Too many in-house kids?

INCLUSION
- Appropriate ratio

MENTORING
- Too many in-house kids?

PRESCHOOL
- Too many in-house kids?

SUPPORT WORKERS TRAINED
- Appropriate activities

SUPPORT WORKERS TRAINED
- Resource

MORE PRESSURE ON BUSINESS OWNERS
- Up to date

PRESCHOOL
- Too old

MENTORING
- Too old

EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK
- More pressure on business owners

CONNECTING SECTORS
- Tools and technology

MENTORING
- Too much in-house kids?

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**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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Barriers</th>
<th>Opportunities and Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under 5’s</strong></td>
<td>• Quality and quantity of qualified infant and preschool aquatic teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality of swimming and water safety programs for infant and preschool aged programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parental perceptions, expectations and reality are not aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of understanding of the purpose of swimming and water safety programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of understanding of skill development and competency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of understanding around ‘in water’ parent/carer participation and independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children with disabilities</strong></td>
<td>• Facility limitations including pool space, limited parking, ageing facilities, not appropriately equipped or suitable (e.g. noisy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of education of facility staff (lifeguards, service desk) in understanding needs, support required, operating equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality and quantity of qualified access and inclusion teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barriers or lack of support and opportunities to gain further training and qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of understanding and implementation of NDIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to quality and appropriate swimming and water safety programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parental expectations and lack of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities and Actions</strong></td>
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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
### Cohort 1: Students who experienced environmental barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• lack of experienced teachers, facilities or equipment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• travel distance</td>
<td>• social connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• family support for costs</td>
<td>• learning new skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• being active</td>
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### Cohort 2: Long-term disengaged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• lack of interest, confidence, fitness, skill and motivation</td>
<td>• keen to try alternative sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• prioritisation of academic activities</td>
<td>• improve health and fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• little support for girls’ participation or social norms on gender appropriate sports</td>
<td>• spend time with friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Cohort 3: Students who participated but did not engage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• lack of interest, confidence, fitness, skill and motivation</td>
<td>• try new sport if all participants have low skill level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• don’t value sport</td>
<td>• spend time with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• feel self-conscious</td>
<td>• improve health and fitness</td>
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<td>• cultural practices</td>
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<td>• repetitive or unorganised activities</td>
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### Cohort 4: Students who had dropped out of playing sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• time pressures (jobs, school)</td>
<td>• challenge of competition without commitment and intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• competitive nature of sport</td>
<td>• stress relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• commitment required</td>
<td>• upkeep of fitness and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• gender norms and stereotypes for females</td>
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<td>• sport injury</td>
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</table>
**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)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Barriers</th>
<th>Opportunities and Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school aged students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Current offerings are focused on:</td>
<td>• Offer programs where the focus is directed towards:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Swimming skills and training</td>
<td>- Game-based, team and social connection activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Individual rather than team related</td>
<td>- Introducing new environments other than pools – transferring the skills into open water</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Quantity of training sessions</td>
<td>- Providing options other than competitive sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>- High skill level and competition</td>
<td>- Modified sports or ‘a taste’ of a range of aquatic recreation activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use Australian Sports Commission cohorts to understand the target market when designing programs</td>
<td>• Offer flexibility in swimwear and clothing to encourage participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased body awareness and self-esteem issues</td>
<td>• Offer flexibility in scheduling and attendance to allow for periods whereby participants may have other commitments (e.g. exams, school activities, part-time jobs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited time due to increasing workloads, commitments for school and other activities</td>
<td>• Offer pathways to employment to provide incentives and value in learning lifesaving skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of fundamental swimming and water safety skills due to limited access, participation, interest etc. in younger years.</td>
<td>• Reduce the structure of lessons for older participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parents, participants and community may not understand or value the skills and knowledge in swimming and lifesaving programs</td>
<td>• Change the terminology away from learn to swim or sport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify how to remove the stigma that learning to swim is for younger children</td>
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<td>• Ensure programs have appropriate activities and equipment for older participants</td>
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<td>• Provide consistent messaging on the wider holistic health benefits as well as the employment and recreation opportunities</td>
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<td>• Link with community groups of high risk populations to conduct ‘water safety’ education courses</td>
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craig Roberts</td>
<td>National Manager Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Scarr</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Larsen</td>
<td>National Manager Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique Sharp</td>
<td>National Manager Events and Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Shane Baker OAM</td>
<td>National Education and Training Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Pidgeon</td>
<td>Senior Project Officer Research and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thea Harrild</td>
<td>Senior Project Officer Aquatic Industry and Education</td>
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## Government Representatives

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and University</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ass. Prof</td>
<td>Recently Retired, Deputy Head, School of Health Sciences and Psychology, Federation University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Blitvich</td>
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</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Organisation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floss Roberts</td>
<td>Executive Director, Royal Life Saving NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Simpson</td>
<td>General Manager – Education &amp; Sport, Life Saving Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Mole</td>
<td>President, Royal Life Saving Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Griffiths</td>
<td>General Manager, Aquatics, Royal Life Saving NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Phillips</td>
<td>Chief Instructor, Royal Life Saving Society SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Barry</td>
<td>Executive Director, Royal Life Saving Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trent Hotchkin</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Swimming and Water Safety Education, Royal Life Saving WA</td>
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## Graphic Recorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Firth</td>
<td>Sarah the Firth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES