



**Australian
Water Safety
Council**

**National Water Safety Plan
PLANNING WORKSHOP
Future Priorities for Water Safety
Tuesday 14 – Wednesday 15 August 2007**

WORKSHOP REPORT

2007 Water Safety Plan – Planning Workshop proudly supported by



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Contents

- Contents2
- 1. Background3
- 2. Workshop Summary4
- 3. Major Sponsors / Supporters5
 - Other Organisations represented5
- 4. Workshop Program6
- 5. Summary of Breakout Sessions on NWSP7
 - 5.1 Locations7
 - 5.2 Activities8
 - 5.3 People9
- 6. Workshop Outcomes10
 - 6.1 Conference Organising Committee10
 - 6.2 National Water Safety Plan 2008-201110
- 7. Appendices12
 - 7.1 Attendance List12
 - 7.2 Important Future Water Safety Issues14
 - 7.3 Future Priorities18

1. Background

The Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) was officially formed in February 1998 as a result of strong industry consultation and with support at the time from the Federal Minister for Sport & Tourism, The Honourable Andrew Thomson MP. The Council acts as a consultative forum comprising the major water safety and related government agencies and focuses on the presentation of key water safety issues to governments, industry and the community.

The Australian Water Safety Council does not represent an additional layer of organisational bureaucracy and does not receive funding directly. The Council provides a collective voice for its member organisations. It liaises closely with kindred bodies at State, National & International levels.

The AWSC is committed to enhancing Water Safety in Australia - to producing a strong directional document, to generating bipartisan support and to overseeing the successful implementation of the **National Water Safety Plan**. The AWSC member bodies have demonstrated their commitment by throwing the resources of their respective organisations behind the Council.

Australian Water Safety Council members:

- Aquatic and Recreation Institute
- Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian National Sportfishing Association
- Australian Swimming Incorporated
- Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Association
- AUSTSWIM
- Farmsafe Australia
- Kidsafe
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia
- Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS)
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- Surfing Australia

The Australian Water Safety Council has convened four Water Safety Conferences, with the next Water Safety Conference to be held in Sydney in May 2008:

- 5 May 1998 at the Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre
- 22 November 2000 at Canberra Convention Centre
- 22-23 September 2003 at Swiss Grand Bondi Sydney
- 17-18 August 2004 at Holiday Inn Surfers Paradise Queensland.

The recommendations and spirit of cooperation engendered at the AWSC Conference on 23 September 2003 has been incorporated into the 2004-2007 National Water Safety Plan which was released in September 2004.

2. Workshop Summary

The National Water Safety Plan, Planning Workshop, Future Priorities for Water Safety, was held in Sydney at the Crowne Plaza, Coogee Beach on Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 August 2007.

An invitation to attend the workshop was extended to Australian Water Safety Council Members; State/Territory Water Safety Councils; and a small number of representatives from Health, Local Government, Injury Surveillance, Safe Communities and Tourism for their particular perspectives.

There were 28 delegates in attendance from across Australia, with a broad cross section of the Water Safety Community being represented from key government departments, agencies and statutory authorities. A copy of the attendance list has been attached. (See appendix)

The **objectives** for the workshop were:

- Evaluation of the current National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 – reviewing achievement of current performance indicators
- Highlighting new major initiatives and emerging issues
- Setting the priorities to be incorporated in the next plan
- Establishing a framework for developing the new National Water Safety Plan
 - Including the opportunity for all stakeholders to have input
- Establishing the working group that will draft the content of the new plan
- Establish the working group for organising the next National Water Safety Conference – scheduled for April/May 2008.

Water Safety Performance Indicators and Future Priorities

Attendees were requested prior to the workshop to complete and return:

- National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 – “Performance Indicators – Year 3 Achievements”
- “Future Priorities” – template – for listing future issues and priorities of stakeholder groups

This documentation was collated prior to the workshop to inform the facilitation process. A copy of these documents has been attached. (See appendix)

The Workshop was facilitated to ensure that all stakeholders had the opportunity for effective input into the process.

The sessions were facilitated by Dr Tim Driscoll PhD from the consulting company Elmatom Pty Ltd. Tim has a long background in Safety, having previously worked for the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission. He also co-authored the report “Alcohol and Water Safety”. Tim is a Fellow of both the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine and Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Each **State and Territory Water Safety Council/Taskforce** presented progress on water safety in their jurisdiction, implementation of the National Water Safety Plan 2004-2007 recommendations, provided highlights for major activities and challenges faced with Water Safety within their State/Territory.

The workshop agreed that the **current elements of the plan were still appropriate** and on the second day broke into three groups to examine the elements; locations, people and activities. Each of the groups put together a summary of their discussions that is to be considered by the National Water Safety Plan 2008-2011.

A conference organising committee and a wider reference group who will provide feedback on the plan was also organised at the meeting.

3. Major Sponsors / Supporters

The Australian Water Safety Council are grateful for the support and financial assistance provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to deliver the 2007 National Water Safety Planning Workshop.



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

The Conference was supported by Australia Water Safety Council Member organisations including:

- Aquatic and Recreation Institute
- Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian National Sportfishing Association
- Australian Swimming Incorporated
- Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Association
- AUSTSWIM
- Farmsafe Australia
- Kidsafe
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia
- Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS)
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- Surfing Australia

Other Organisations represented

- State and Territory Water Safety Councils
- Department of Information Technology, Communications and the Arts
- Department of Health and Ageing

4. Workshop Program

Tuesday 14 August 2007

| Time | Activity | Location | Expected outcome |
|-------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| 0900 - 1030 | Registration | Maroubra Foyer | |
| 1030 - 1100 | Welcome and introductions | Maroubra | Everybody knows each other |
| 1100 - 1130 | Overview | Maroubra | Background |
| 1130 - 1230 | Presentations on initiatives and issues – starting with States and Territories; other groups to then contribute anything that hasn't been covered | Maroubra | List of issues about water safety – today and into the future 10 mins max |
| 1230 - 1330 | Lunch | The Promenade Restaurant | |
| 1330 - 1430 | Presentations continued | Maroubra | |
| 1430 - 1530 | Review of 2004-2007 plan | Maroubra | Understanding of what has worked well and not so well |
| 1530 - 1600 | Afternoon tea | Maroubra Foyer | |
| 1600 - 1700 | Discussion of priority areas for new plan and coverage of plan | Maroubra | Agreed priority areas |
| 1700 | Close | Maroubra | |
| 1830 | Dinner | The Promenade Restaurant | |

Wednesday 15 August 2007

| Time | Activity | Location | Expected outcome |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| 0830 - 1000 | Develop specific content for each priority area | Maroubra | Suggested content for use by National Safety Plan working group |
| 1000 | Morning tea | Maroubra Foyer | |
| 1030 - 1200 | Report back on specific content | Maroubra | Suggested specific content for use by National Safety Plan working group |
| 1200 - 1300 | Lunch | Maroubra Foyer | |
| 1240-1300 | <i>Aquatic and Marine Safety Qualifications – Overview</i> | <i>Maroubra - Information for those that are interested</i> | |
| 1300 - 1400 | Framework and timeframe for further development of work plan – especially how to prioritise issues | Maroubra | Agreement on approach to developing work plan |
| 1400 | Membership of workgroup to further develop plan and working group to organize the next Water safety Conference | Maroubra | Agreement on membership of the work plan and NWS conference groups |
| 1430 | Wrap-up | Maroubra | |
| 1500 | CLOSE | | |

5. Summary of Breakout Sessions on NWSP

In the last session of the first day it was decided that the current elements of the plan were still appropriate and that during the next day the participants should be divided into three groups to examine: locations, activities and people.

The following is the information produced from each of the groups, to be used by the National Water Safety Plan 2008-2011 working group in their deliberations.

5.1 Locations

Locations are grouped to the following areas:

1. Home (Backyard pools, bathtubs, buckets, etc)
2. Commercial (Public swimming pools, hotel / resorts, etc)
3. Coastal (Inshore – beach, rocks, white water; off shore – open water)
4. Urban Water ways
5. Natural Water ways (river, lakes, dams, etc)

Each location has a unique set of hazards and circumstances that lead to injuries and drowning at these locations.

Underpinning principles (statements)

Note: these are a set of statements that all people would agree underpin the thinking in the area.

The Australian water safety council recognises that:

1. All public swimming pools in Australia should be using the GSPO
2. All coastal locations should have an audit
3. The surveillance of drowning deaths and their circumstances are important
4. Red and yellow uniforms should be worn by all
5. The standardisation of legislation / policy / regulations across Australia improves water safety
6. Alignment of national and state and territory plan – water safety activities
7. ISO standards should be seen as appropriate best practice
8. That appropriate prevention / rescue and emergency services must be provided at all aquatic locations regularly used
9. Appropriate standards should be developed to help prevent injuries and drowning at aquatic locations.

Recommendations

1. Increase the use of the GSPO from % to % Australia wide including in hotels and resorts and improve the compliance of the GSPO from % to %
2. Increase inspection service of home pools by local government from % to % in Australia
3. Increase the number of coastal locations that have risk and safety auditing and management plans from % to %
4. That all land managers of new developments near or going to be near water undertake water safety impact assessments
5. Risk and safety audit of black spots be undertaken

5.2 Activities

Categories

Fishing

- Rock
- Boating
- Beach

Alcohol

Boating

Scuba/Snorkelling

Learn to swim

Recreational sports

- Surfing
- Kitsurfing
- Water skiing
- PWC
- Swimming
- Water craft

| | Recreational Fishing | Alcohol/other Drugs | Falls | Recreation boating | Swimming as a life skill | Aquatic sports |
|--------|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Including rock, boat and beach Unexpected water entry | Includes prescription drugs | Includes all accidental entry | Includes recreational, sailing, motorboats | Encourages all Australian's and survival swimming | Range of water based sports |
| | Knowledge Environment Skills Safety equipment | Impaired swimming ability Unexpected entry Risk taking Impact on supervisions | Awareness Management of venues, signage etc Rescue implications | PFD's | Skills Recreations | |
| Target | CALD groups Males Non-swimmers | Men 15 + Indigenous | Older people, younger people | Men CALD 55 + | All Children | |
| Action | Evidenced based education and awareness programs Angel rings, rescue systems Access, signage Links to associations, ethnic groups, local government Fishing licenses to include water safety education | Random drug and alcohol tests for boaters Awareness programs targeting males, alcohol, water Consistency in legislation , education and links to licensing Ensure that alcohol issue factored into research | Survival swimming education and skills Falls awareness programs Venue guidelines Supervision Lifeskills in schools | Safety equipment PFD's legislation, standards, requirements Gaps in licensing Alcohol over lap Research into PFD, design, use, affordability, wear-ability etc Survival swimming skills | Promote survival swimming skills | Influence safety practices |
| | Volume, reach of programs Evaluations of programs | Volume, reach of programs Evaluation of programs Achievement | | | | |

5.3 People

| PEOPLE | RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|--|---|--|
| 0-4 | Pool Fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop & implement pool fencing inspectors program (NPSAC) - Research to determine compliance of legislation - Education of pool fencing - Nationally consistent approach to sale/rent of property i.e. pool fencing | Home Water i.e. baths/buckets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education of supervision |
| Scholastic (primary & high) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase swim, survive, & rescue life skills into core curriculum - Research into current competencies of swimming skills of all Australians | |
| Rural & Remote (0-4, 10+) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research/audit into aquatic resources/facilities available in rural/remote areas - Provision of adequate facilities - Community development model to be developed | |
| International Tourists & Migrants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research target groups & source/destination of international tourists & migrants - Targeting hospitality industry (i.e. hotels) & tourism operators supplying with educational resources & meeting safety guidelines i.e. brochures/videos - Engaging key CALD community leaders - Auditing CALD water safety programs/information and generation of central water safety program database - Survey question/questions incorporated into Citizenship test | |

NOTE

Collation of real life stories to enhance uptake of programs (for the plan)

6. Workshop Outcomes

6.1 Conference Organising Committee

Conference Organiser: Monique Sharp, Royal Life Saving Society Australia

- Ben Whibley, Surf Life Saving Society Australia
- Richard Franklin, Royal Life Saving Society Australia
- Gordon Mallett, AUSTSWIM
- Samantha Diplock, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- Caroyln Brimfield, Department of Sport and Recreation NSW

Conference Date

Conference to be held in late May, other conferences that are occurring around the same time include:

- Marine Safety Conference 27-29 May 2008
- ARI
- Swim Teachers and Coaches 5-11 May 2008 Gold Coast
- AUSTSWIM April 2008 Adelaide

Who should attend

- Researchers
- Practitioners
- Industry
 - Scuba
 - Boating
 - Aquatics
- Local Government
- AWSC Members

Themes

To be decided by the organising committee

Workshop/s

Workshops that focus on the recommendations or specific areas of the National Water Safety Plan 2008 – 2011 to be considered for inclusion in the conference.

6.2 National Water Safety Plan 2008-2011

Time frames

Mid to Late October 2007 – First Draft

Mid December 2007 – Second Draft

Final Feedback - Mid Feb 2008

Final Document - End of March 2008 to be available for Conference in May 2008

Working Group

- Royal Life Saving (Rob Bradley, Justin Scarr, Richard Franklin)
- Surf Life Saving (Brett Williamson, Peter Agnew, Ben Whibley)

Advisory Group

- Chris Mashcotta, Department of Sport and Recreation SA
- Shann Myall, Water Safety Advisory Council NT
- Samantha Diplock, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

- Peter Fox, Water Safety Council TAS
- Rebecca Kelley, Department of Sport and Recreation ACT
- Dawn Spinks, Australian Safe Communities Foundation QLD
- Nigel Taylor, Life Saving Victoria
- Gordon Mallett, AUSTSWIM
- John Egan / Carolyn Brimfield, Department of Sport and Recreation NSW

7. Appendices

7.1 Attendance List

| First Name | Last Name | Position | Company | State |
|------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Peter | Agnew | Operations Manager | SLSA | NSW |
| Warren | Bolton | | QLD Dept of Local Govt | QLD |
| Robert | Bradley | CEO | RLSSA | NSW |
| Carolyn | Brimfield | Senior Project Officer | Dept Tourism, Sport + Recreation | NSW |
| Ann | Campton | Manager Sport Division | DCITA | ACT |
| Samantha | Diplock | | Dept of Health & Ageing | ACT |
| Tim | Driscoll | Facilitator | | NSW |
| Peter | Fox | | Tas Water Safety Council | TAS |
| Richard | Franklin | Research & Health Promotion Manager | RLSSA | NSW |
| Sean | Hodges | Executive Officer | RLSSA ACT Branch | ACT |
| Rebecca | Kelley | | ACT Dept of Sport & Rec | ACT |
| Stan | Konstantaras | Safety Officer | ANSA National | NSW |
| Gordon | Mallett | CEO | Austswim | Vic |
| Chris | Maschotta | Manager | SA Dept of Sport & Rec | SA |
| Greg | Morris | Manager | DCITA | ACT |
| Shaan | Myall | Executive Officer, NT | Water Safety Adv Council NT | NT |
| Chris | Mylka | Data & Research Co-ordinator | Nat Marine Safety Council | NSW |
| Gary | Penfold | Director - Warringah Aquatic | ARI | NSW |
| Adam | Pine | Sport Development Manager | Swimming Australia | ACT |
| Rob | Pitt | Director | QISU | QLD |
| Daphne | Read | Chair | Water Safety Adv Council NT | NT |

| | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Ralph | Richards | CEO | ASCTA | |
| Justin | Scarr | COO | RLSSA | NSW |
| Monique | Sharp | National Manager Events | RLSSA | NSW |
| Dawn | Spinks | Vice Chair | Aust Safe Communities Foundation | QLD |
| Nigel | Taylor | CEO | Life Saving Victoria | VIC |
| Ben | Whibley | National Lifesaving Manager | SLSA | NSW |
| Brett | Williamson | CEO | SLSA | NSW |

7.2 Important Future Water Safety Issues

Prior to the workshop all Australian Water Safety Council members and State and Territory Water Safety Taskforce / Councils were sent a questionnaire about what they considered the 5 most important issues in water safety to be over the next 3-5 years. They were asked "What do you think over the next 3-5 years are going to be the 5 most important issues for Australia and how do you think we could address these issues?"

The following information was provided and was used to develop the workshop and will be considered as part of the development of the National Water Safety Plan 2008-2011.

| Most important issues for water safety? | How could these issues be addressed? | Organisation |
|--|---|---|
| New migrants | Compulsory learn to swim via citizenship test. Targeted programs. | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Lack of proficiency of swim skills of ageing population | Learn to swim proficiency awards. Targeted programs | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Increasing no. of developments with man made water courses or by the coast | Guidelines for safe development of man made water courses | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Pressure on existing resources | Improve industry co-ordination, collaboration and sharing of resources | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Impact of climate change on volume of recreational swimmers at public facilities and beaches | Risk Audits. Action Planning | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Rural shift of residents to coastal and river land environments i.e. seachange phenomena | Public education, and swim classes for older Australians, | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Ageing population who are unaware of the impacts of prescription medicines on their activities in the water e.g. in such pursuits such as scuba diving | Public education (specifically targeted at divers) | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Water safety education for linguistically and culturally diverse communities whose first language is not English. | Public education | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| 1. Issues with alcohol and drugs in aquatic environments | Continued public education supported by compliance | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Increased need for more tightly targeted water safety programs to meet the needs of specific communities | Analysis of migrant cultures arriving into Australia, developing appropriate water safety programs and liaising with key community groups. • Analysis of specific community populations being associated with aquatic drownings and deaths with related resources produced | SLSA |
| Increasing demand for water safety infrastructure and services in non-metropolitan coastal regions | Creation of a 'Beach Safety Service Development' Fund that will assist with providing targeted infrastructure, personnel and resources into areas of the Australian coastline which are considered as high risk or 'black spots'. • Expansion of services that are able to respond to a larger part of the Australian Coastline. • Growth in services into areas of population expansion. | SLSA |
| Improvement of water safety research and associated collection of accurate data | Improved access to, and collection of, detailed information relating to aquatic drowning and death incidents. • Coordinated approach to collection of aquatic drowning and death related statistical information. • Research into the public's attitude to aquatic safety and risk perception. | SLSA |

| Most important issues for water safety? | How could these issues be addressed? | Organisation |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Technology development to improve monitoring of waterways in remote areas | Investment into improved and more effective patrolling methods around the Australian Coastline of existing services. • Utilisation of improved remote technologies i.e. webcam systems, to not only watch the waterways, but also collect essential information for analysis and incorporation into future drowning prevention management programs. | SLSA |
| Drowning in 0-4 year old age group | Ongoing public awareness campaigns for: § Close and active supervision of young children near water bodies – especially backyard swimming pools, bathtubs and farm dams. § Effectiveness of barriers such as pool fencing and safe play areas on farms to prevent unsupervised access to water hazards in close vicinity, such as swimming pools & farm dams. § Learning of child resuscitation techniques § Review effectiveness of an ongoing inspection or ‘systems for pool fencing § Research other strategies (e.g. “licencing” system for backyard pool owners / proximity devices to assist supervision) | FSA |
| Drowning in rivers /oceans/harbours | Improve risk management procedures in public recreational areas. Ongoing public awareness campaigns for: - Close and active supervision of children in/near natural water bodies - Familiarisation with natural water bodies - Supervision/ buddy system with a “friend” – meaning a competent adult. - Learning of resuscitation techniques. - CALD communities (i.e. rock fishing). - Flood safety – incl. impact of climate change extreme weather events. | FSA |
| Drowning associated with powered boating activities in public recreational areas (e.g. rivers & lakes in state recreation parks) | Improvements in ignition cut out systems or regulation of these for powered boats (e.g. design features similar to ski boats). Promote use of PFD’s amongst adults (& children) using boats and regulating this where possible in public recreational areas, where management systems are in place. Improve risk management procedures in public recreational areas. | FSA |
| Introduction of tanks into urban areas | Review current standards on tank design; to ensure these encompass features that prevent child access and entrapment. Ensure such standards are followed through a surveillance system which may/may not include regulation /inspection (e.g. local government inspection similar to pool fencing & building approvals). § Public awareness campaign on these measures | FSA |
| Swimming programs | Ongoing development of school /skill-based swimming programs to ensure all school-aged children have access to swimming & water safety instruction. § Development of parent education components for school age programs and under fives swimming programs. § Ongoing promotion of children/young people being involved in SLS clubs as a community-service oriented & healthy lifestyle choice | FSA |
| Ensuring that all Australians learn to swim | By ensuring that States/Territories have appropriate programs in place and funding | NTWSC |
| Under 5 drownings and near drownings | States/Territories have tough Swimming Pool Safety regulations/standards. Continuing awareness campaigns | NTWSC |
| Safe recreational boating and fishing | Appropriate laws in place to ensure maximum safety. • Awareness campaigns. • Appropriate training programs available for recreational boat owners. | NTWSC |
| Water Safety Awareness Nationally | National awareness campaign bringing all States/Territories together e.g. Australian Water Safety Week | NTWSC |

| Most important issues for water safety? | How could these issues be addressed? | Organisation |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Alcohol | National awareness campaign of the dangers of mixing "alcohol with water." | NTWSC |
| Parents still dropping young children off at the pool, and some teachers still viewing swim lessons/carnivals as a pupil free day. | Ongoing and increased promotion of the successful program | ARI |
| The high proportion of tourists/non English speakers etc that get into trouble in both open water and pools due to lack of understanding of Australian conditions. | Education process through the tourism industry | ARI |
| With public liability issues the currency and consistency of qualifications for all areas and states, country and metro areas. | Review of the accreditation process for RTOs | ARI |
| Fishing | Better education needed around this to prevent fishing related drownings. Water safety lifesaving skills | DoHA |
| Boating | Education around safety. National guidelines re small boats and watercraft, especially in relation to hire boats. Regulations | DoHA |
| Swimming and water safety teachers | Improved working conditions for swim instructors to address workforce shortages and retention problems. Endorsing bodies could require compliance with best practice recommendations, pay rates, OHS issues, educating workers re rights and entitlements | DoHA |
| Alcohol | Research need on circumstances surrounding alcohol related drowning and to inform prevention strategies. Boating legislation and enforcement | DoHA |
| Adverse health effects of swimming pools (not related to drowning) | Research / literature needed on this to determine what is known and where further knowledge required. Use this information to promote safe enjoyment of aquatic exercise / swimming. Also important for those working in aquatic industry (OHS issue). | DoHA |
| Beach Safety | Programs addressing beach/coastal knowledge; Surf Lifeguard minimum training standards; Signage; Media Campaigns; School Projects; Schools Surf Programs; | Tas |
| Pool Safety | Consistent supervision policy and legislation; Pool Lifeguard minimum training standards; Greater emphasis on pool audit programs (home/domestic pools) Partnerships – Insurance markets – media / reward Signage; Media Campaigns; School Projects; | Tas |
| Swimming and Water Safety Education | Lobby government to address the need to extend the LTS/Awareness programs into secondary schools; Introduce RLSSA/SLSA certificated courses in curriculum; Introduce competency standards for swimming and water safety for 13-17 year olds. Establish rural and remote swimming & water safety programs in partnership with country schools; | Tas |
| Boating and Fishing Safety | Mandatory wearing of PFD's as part of safety equipment for all recreational boaters is legislation and mandatory for all persons under 12 years at all times when in water craft. Increased signage; Increased promotion through registration process; | Tas |
| Increased levels of ownership of personal water craft, and issues of safe usage. | Mandatory wearing of PFD's as part of safety equipment; Support retailers in campaign programs; Signage and media campaigns; | Tas |

| Most important issues for water safety? | How could these issues be addressed? | Organisation |
|--|---|---------------------|
| developing water safety plans through the Safe Communities programs so they can be effectively delivered to the public | Via safe communities | Safe Communities |
| Data base for all pools | All councils to develop accurate data base on number of pools and when inspections commenced AND completed | Safe Communities |
| finalising of Standards | To simplify application for public and inspectors | Safe Communities |
| training program for inspectors | | Safe Communities |
| Continued access to safe and quality aquatic environments | Needs both federal and state government support to provide these venues and the dollars to maintain them. | LSV |
| Effective inclusion programs for CALD communities | Re think the way we deliver our program or services, and learn to understand and work within these communities. | LSV |
| Prolonged /Continued education and public awareness campaigns | Gain support and investment for prolonged campaigns that promote generational change. | LSV |
| Development of strategic partnerships for comprehensive delivery of water safety programs | | LSV |
| Climate Change | | LSV |
| Lack of quality teaching space as councils hold back plans to build pools due to water crisis. | Lobby councils to 'quarantine' land for future pools and set long-term development strategies for modern aquatic facilities. | ASCTA |
| Scio-economic changes in the population with swimming and water safety (as a desired skill) taking on less importance. | Work with all socio-economic and ethnic groups to promote the importance of water safety and learn-to-swim skills. | ASCTA |
| Large numbers of migrants not being familiar with the potential water hazards. | Continue current programs for beach, river, lake (i.e. all open water) safety. | ASCTA |
| Child Drowning deaths | Keep Watch, Home pool inspectors program | RLSSA |
| Older person drowning deaths | A specific program targeting older Australians | RLSSA |
| School Children water safety and swimming programs | Examination of swimming and water safety competencies, specific school based programs | RLSSA |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Safety | A program of work that improves the skills, including job outcomes | RLSSA |
| More resources for prevention programs | Increasing the amount of funds that are available both for prevention programs and the evaluation of these programs to examine their effectiveness. | RLSSA |

7.3 Future Priorities

Prior to the workshop all Australian Water Safety Council members and State and Territory Water Safety Taskforce / Councils were sent a questionnaire about what they considered the future priorities for water safety to be. They were asked “What are the 3 major issues your State or Territory is currently facing in the area of water safety, why are they currently issues and what do you think are the possible solutions to these issues?”

The following information was provided and was used to develop the workshop and will be considered as part of the development of the National Water Safety Plan 2008-2011.

| Major issue in water safety | Why is this an issue? | How do you think we would solve the issue? | Organisation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keep Watch @ Public Pools | Keep Watch” initiative has been well received and successful in targeting parents around the pool side. With publicity available before patrons even reach the pool the number of “drop off children” under the age of 10 has also reduced. | The main disappointment from a facility perspective is that it was not a national initiative, since this would have helped to reinforce the message. | ARI |
| Diving into shallow water at Carnivals | Some protocols have been developed between RLSSA (NSW Branch), The Department of Education and ARI for “Diving into shallow water at Carnivals.” Under the GSPO the water depth requirement in relation to the height of the dive point above the waterline has meant that many traditional pools are no longer compliant | The protocols Include. - Shallow water diving assessments. - Risk management matrix. -Permission note. -Competitor notification. -Progressive diving notification. - Announcement statements. | ARI |
| Shortage of Learn to Swim Teachers is a major issue for all facilities. This has meant that facilities have been unable to run full Learn to swim programs. | Given that most of the swim teachers are casual staff/students etc the cost of undertaking the initial training has been identified as a major barrier to attracting people into the industry. This is compounded by the additional costs of re registration, and attending conferences/seminars to maintain the points required. | | ARI |
| Development of a SA Water Safety Plan | Do not have one – gap in co-ordination. · Drive work of SAWSCC. Improve co-ordination and resource sharing across SA Water Safety industry | Plan is in development | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| To have learn to swim recognised as a life skill requiring whole of life proficiency | 95% of Australians live and/or recreate by the coast or water. Will minimise drowning, near drowning, injury | Advocate to link learn to swim to citizenship test for new migrants. Promote learn to swim as a life skill (nationally) and develop targeted programs· Promote (using media) reality of drowning causes and results e.g. drink driving campaigns Develop age group proficiency awards with high level recognition e.g. signed by PM | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Higher level co-ordination at National and State level to achieve more efficient use of existing resources | No formal National to state linkages Minimal co-ordination in SA Finite resources Will achieve higher impact Minimise duplication | Formalise AWSC through SCORS. Establish SAWSCC. Establish SAWSP – with a commitment to sharing. Highlight successful case studies e.g. Lifesaving Vic (formerly RLS Vic and SLS Vic) | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |

| Major issue in water safety | Why is this an issue? | How do you think we would solve the issue? | Organisation |
|--|---|---|---|
| Low water levels in River Murray, Lakes, and inland waters | Low water levels and flows are now revealing previously hidden snags, and obstacles that are posing hazards to safe navigation for vessels. Low water levels and flows are possibly also creating increased turbidity in the water which has the potential to significantly increase the hazards for swimmers i.e. extensively murky waters. | Intense public education supported by snag identification and marking with buoys. This is underway with funding support from Boating Industry Australia SA and Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Task being managed in SA at this time, by BIASA. | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| Alcohol consumption in an aquatic environment | Alcohol tends to make people less able to function and assess risks associated with their activities | Intense public education supported by compliance | SA Water Safety Co-ordinating Committee |
| People swimming at beach locations that are not patrolled by surf lifesavers or lifeguards | Swimming at these locations increases the risk of drowning considerably. • SLSA Surf Safety Report documented this evidence with approximately 99% of drownings over the past 5 years recorded occurring at unpatrolled locations & times | Increased beach safety education to the broader community through such programs as school based practical programs will result in an increased understanding and recognition of beach hazards to make informed decisions. | SLSA |
| Lack of beach safety education to International Tourists visiting, and/or moving to, Australia | More than 15% of the people that die as a result of drowning, or aquatic related deaths, on the Australian Coastline are international tourists. • The Australian coastline can display very different conditions that international visitors are unfamiliar with which can result in death and injury. | • Generate beach and aquatic safety information i.e. short DVD's and promotional material, that can be displayed on international airlines on approach to Australia. • Liaising with international tourist companies who conduct tours on and around the Australian coastline or aquatic environments to utilise short educational tools to increase understanding. • Incorporating beach and aquatic safety education into the school curriculum to ensure that international migrants are educated on the Australian Coastline. | SLSA |
| Lack of standardised procedures and guidelines for the Australian Coastline in relation to Public Safety | The lifeguard image to the public is not standardised around Australia which has resulted in at least 1 known recorded drowning. • Inappropriate equipment and procedures being utilised for suppling water safety at coastal events. • Lack of coordination with respect to emergencies along the coastline e.g. Tsunami evacuation | Development, implementation and encouragement of a set of national coastal public safety guidelines and procedures. | SLSA |
| Drowning in 0-4 year old age group | Young children continuing to wander away from supervision and fall into water bodies (e.g. pools, dams). § Children under 1 year old left unsupervised in/near bathtubs. § Young children do not have the developmental capacity to assess risk or skills to get out of water once they have fallen in. § Parents perhaps still over-rely on passive / intermittent supervision without other preventive mechanisms in place. | Ongoing public awareness campaigns for: - Close and active supervision of young children near water bodies – especially backyard swimming pools, bathtubs and farm dams. § Effectiveness of barriers such as pool fencing and safe play areas on farms to prevent unsupervised access to water hazards in close vicinity, such as swimming pools & farm dams. § Learning of child resuscitation techniques § Review effectiveness of an ongoing inspection or 'systems for pool fencing § Research other strategies e.g. "licencing" system for backyard pool owners / proximity devices to assist supervision | FSA |

| Major issue in water safety | Why is this an issue? | How do you think we would solve the issue? | Organisation |
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| Drowning in rivers /oceans/harbours | Children and adults unfamiliar with water safety risks when swimming at these locations. § Risks associated with rock-fishing activities. § Risks associated with powered boating activities (see below) for both boaters & swimmers. | Improve risk management procedures in public recreational areas. § Ongoing public awareness campaigns for: o Close and active supervision of children in/near natural water bodies. o Familiarisation with natural water bodies; o Supervision/ buddy system with a “friend” – meaning a competent adult; o Learning of resuscitation techniques; o CALD communities (i.e. rock fishing); o Flood safety – incl. impact of climate change extreme weather events | FSA |
| Drowning associated with powered boating activities in public recreational areas (e.g. rivers & lakes in state recreation parks) | Powered recreational boating is a higher risk activity involving vehicles at speed. § Powered recreational boating is often assoc. with social occasions and can be complicated by alcohol consumption – impeding judgement and response to risky/complex situations. § There is a rural culture of adults not wearing PFD’s in boats. § Areas for recreational boating areas are limited in inland areas - often resulting in crowding at weekends/holiday times. | Improvements in ignition cut out systems or regulation of these for powered boats (e.g. design features similar to ski boats). § Promote use of PFD’s amongst adults (& children) using boats and regulating this where possible in public recreational areas, where management systems are in place. § Improve risk management procedures in public recreational areas | FSA |
| Adults drinking and drowning | Over 90% of the adults that drowned this financial year were intoxicated. There has been a significant increase in drowning deaths this year when compared to other years. Alcohol is playing a major role in those deaths. The majority of the adults were Indigenous. Government are unwilling to introduce legislation re drink driving a recreational boat. | Maybe the new alcohol restrictions in communities will help? Education programs delivered in Aboriginal languages. Planning a major PR campaign with the Boating Industry to tackle this issue. | NTWSC |
| No compulsory swimming lessons for school aged children | With water being an important aspect of the Territory lifestyle. Children that can not swim are placed at high risk of drowning not only as a child but as an adult as well. There are approx 28,000 pools in the NT –one pool for every four people. Many children attending high school can not swim and therefore can not complete bronze medallions. | Research conducted into other States school swimming programs. Cabinet submission prepared and submitted. Letters to Education Minister, Local Government Minister and Sports Minister. PR campaign and media coverage of the issue. | NTWSC |
| Continuation of the Water Safety Awareness Program (for children under 5 years of age) | Current program is very successful and needs continuous funding. | Cabinet submission detailing the success of the program (showing no drowning deaths in the under 5 age group since implementation). | NTWSC |
| Continued Perception by parents and teachers that water safety is the responsibility of only lifeguards. | Parents still dropping young children off at the pool, and some teachers still viewing swim lessons/carnivals as a pupil free day. | Ongoing and increased promotion of the successful “Watch around water/Keep Watch programs” | ARI |
| Education of tourists/non English speakers | The high proportion of tourists/non English speakers etc that get into trouble in both open water and pools due to lack of understanding of Australian conditions. | Education process through the tourism industry | ARI |
| Diving into shallow water at Carnivals | Most pools 1 metre depth and school carnival participants are not trained. | NSW RLSSA and Department of Education developed protocols. | ARI |
| Sensitive issue of the ability of primary carers to provide supervision | Recent issue of a primary carer having an epileptic fit and dragging child under water. | This is still being considered due to its sensitivity. May just be an isolated case. | ARI |

| Major issue in water safety | Why is this an issue? | How do you think we would solve the issue? | Organisation |
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| Pool Fencing | Toddler Drowning | Strong legislation, enforcement, education, national consistency, increase responsibilities or real estate agencies e.g. ensure pool fences compliant before leasing houses | DoHA |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safety | High drowning rates & lack of accessible programs | Strategies specifically targeted at this community including education, swimming lessons and water safety skills and life saving skills | DoHA |
| Water safety and swimming skills for rural and remote populations | High drowning rates & lack of accessible programs | Strategies targeted at this population including education, swimming lessons and water skills, lifesaving skills, promotion of safe play areas. | DoHA |
| Boating Safety Focussing on recreational boating, and the use of pfd's | Recreational boating continues to be a significant part of leisure time. The state has a high level of boat ownership with one of the highest registrations as a % of population. With a significant fishing industry attached to this, the awareness of safety continues to be an important factor as there has been a slight increase in boating incidents and accidents in comparison to previous years. Increased levels of ownership of personal water craft. (kayaks etc). | Continued full media approach, using major aquatic events (Major offshores, i.e. Syd – Mel to Hob - Dev / Wooden Boat Festival) . Review campaign as component of boating registrations. Signage (boat ramps, suppliers and retailers). Retailer market behind campaigns at shopfront. | Tas |
| Swimming Ability - NESB / CaLD Backgrounds And Teenagers | Officially, LTS programs in schools ends at Grade 5, the continued emphasis on swimming ability ceases as part of the curriculum. In addition, the increasing levels of immigration of students above primary school level who demonstrate no ability at all causes concern. Notably, the low standard in ability exists when entrants apply for entry to workplaces such as Police and Emergency Services, and as a result these standards are being lowered to account for low efficiency levels. | Lobby government to address the need to extend the LTS/Awareness programs into secondary school, with the potential to include RLSSA/SLSA certificated courses in curriculum. | Tas |
| Increasing levels of supervision of children by older persons i.e. Grandparents. Older people are more active. | More grandparents are carers for their grandchildren and friends, and therefore exposed to the role of supervisor in aquatic environments. While older people are more active, an awareness and knowledge base is needed to manage unforeseen situations. | Opportunity exists to promote and offer a range of programs to older people. (First Aid / CPR Resus etc) | Tas |
| Data base for all pools | | All councils to develop accurate data base on number of pools and when inspections commenced AND completed | Safe Communities |
| finalising of Standards | To simplify application for public and inspectors | | Safe Communities |
| training program for inspectors | | | Safe Communities |
| Increase use by and access to aquatic venues and recreation by Multicultural communities | Many community lack base skills | Provision of awareness and education programs | LSV |
| Access to safe aquatic environments | Due to continued drought people are accessing many different and hazardous environments | Education and public awareness of the issues | LSV |

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| Keeping water safety education as a focus in schools | For many members of the community this is the only affordable access to aquatic based education | Lobby education departments to continue the inclusion of this in state education programs | LSV |
| Shortage of qualified Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety; especially during 'peak' afternoon times on weekdays (3.30 – 5.30pm) | Lessons in Personal Aquatic Survival Skills play an important role in the drowning prevention equation and form the grounding for future safe, healthy swimmers. Shortage of teachers at key times of the day may reflect the changing job market (i.e. teachers employed under hourly rates) and who 'typically' fills these jobs. | (1) improve the profile of Teaching positions. (2) recruit Teachers from various demographics (i.e. not just mothers of school-age children seeking part time work) (3) recruit Teachers from ethnic minority group, etc. | ASCTA |
| Decreasing affordability of lessons at traditional 'low-cost' council-owned venues. | Fewer children are likely to enrol in learn-to-swim classes | 1) promote community benefits of learn-to-swim programs in 'economically challenged' areas (2) encourage Council operated pools to waive admission fees to adults accompanying children for lessons. | ASCTA |
| Cost of maintaining teacher of swimming qualifications; e.g. CPR, professional update courses, etc. | While we support the need for continuing re-qualification, the cost of may be a limiting factor for some teachers. | Review requirement for annual CPR update, or perhaps update at lower cost (given new CPR requirements). | ASCTA |
| Children Under 5 years of Age | Large number and high rate of drowning deaths in this age group | Keep Watch Program Pool Fencing Legislation being enforced | RLSSA |
| Evidence for the effectiveness of water safety programs and activities | There are a limited amount of resources available for water safety and to ensure the best use of these resources a program of work that monitors, evaluates and provides research into water safety and drowning prevention would enhance water safety in Australia | Greater resources to undertake evaluations, research and monitoring of drowning and water safety. | RLSSA |
| Water Safety Skills of Primary School Children | It is unclear in Australia what levels of water safety skills are being achieved by children | A program that examines the level of water safety skills obtained by children in Australia by State / Territory and age | RLSSA |
| Older Australian | The number of drowning deaths in this age group is increasing and if something is not done today then the number of deaths will increase as the population increases. | A program targeting older Australia's water safety | RLSSA |