

THEORY OF CHANGE

Community Programs

How Community Programs are expected to improve swimming and water safety, reduce local access barriers, strengthen community trust, and build belonging for multicultural communities through targeted, community-level partnerships.



Multicultural
Community Water
Safety Program

THE CHANGE LOGIC

If Royal Life Saving Society - Australia supports community-based organisations and aquatic providers to co-design and deliver culturally responsive activity for a clearly defined cohort, community or barrier,

- then participants and families will be more likely to access aquatic environments, improve their water safety capability, strengthen trust in local services, and build ongoing confidence and connection around water.
 - Over time, these locally anchored changes are expected to reduce drowning risk, improve equity of access, and create stronger foundations for sustained participation and sense of belonging.

THE PROBLEM

Multicultural communities experience higher drowning risk from layered barriers. These include lower swimming and water safety skills, limited familiarity with local waterways, and financial, social, language and cultural barriers to participation.

These barriers are especially acute for refugees and recently arrived migrants during settlement and the decade after arrival, and can continue into the next generation if unaddressed. Beyond access to lessons, communities may also lack trusted information, face transport or cost barriers, or feel local pools and programs are not designed with them in mind.

ACTIVITY ACROSS THE FOUR PILLARS

WE CONNECT



Local partnership-building, referral pathways, pool familiarisation, family swim days, community briefings and practical community-to-venue links.

WE WELCOME



Culturally responsive participation models, gender-sensitive delivery, venue practice adjustments, workforce exposure and community-informed approaches.

WE PROMOTE



Multilingual water safety messaging, local trusted-voice communication, awareness sessions and simple hazard-specific communications tailored to the cohort.

WE LEARN



Subsidised or free lesson blocks, intensive or term-based swimming and water safety education, and practical in-water learning connected to the needs of the priority community.

OUTCOME PATHWAY

→ SHORT TERM

Increased reach into a defined cohort; better hazard awareness; increased confidence to attend venues; reduced immediate barriers; greater community trust.

→ MEDIUM TERM

Improved water safety capability; greater continuity of participation; more responsive local delivery models; reduced access and equity barriers.

→ LONG TERM

Reduced drowning risk for priority communities; stronger inclusion and belonging; sustainable local partnership models; a stronger evidence-informed base for local programming.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Targeted local partnerships reach communities more effectively when activity is trusted, practical and community informed
- Participants are more likely to join and stay engaged when barriers are addressed together rather than one at a time
- Practical skill-building and trusted communication reinforce each other