



Australian Water Safety Council



NATIONAL WATER SAFETY PLAN

2004 - 2007

CONTINUING COOPERATION AND COMMITMENT
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DROWNING

THE AUSTRALIAN WATER SAFETY COUNCIL

The Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) was officially formed in February 1998 as a result of strong industry and government consultation. The AWSC 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 AWSC does not represent an additional layer of organisational bureaucracy and it will not receive funding directly. The AWSC will however, provide a collective voice for its member organisations. It will also liaise closely with kindred bodies at State, National & International levels as well as working hand in hand with Government at all 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.

On 22-23 September 2003 the AWSC conducted the 3rd National Water Safety Conference at Bondi in Sydney involving a broad cross-section of the Australian Water Safety community and including representatives of government departments, agencies and statutory authorities from throughout Australia. The recommendations and spirit of cooperation engendered on 23 September have been incorporated into the objectives and priorities presented in this Plan.

The AWSC has pleasure in presenting this National Water Safety Plan to the Australian public with the great expectation that by following the recommendations contained herein there will be a significant reduction in the number of lives lost to drowning and aquatic related incidents.

AUSTRALIAN WATER SAFETY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Robert Bradley (Convenor)
Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA)

Greg Nance
Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA)

Gordon Mallett
AUSTSWIM

Brendan Lynch
Australian Swimming Incorporated (ASI)

Max Wells
Surfing Australia

Gary Penfold
Aquatic and Recreation Institute (ARI)

Laurie Stiller
Farmsafe Australia

David Oelrichs
Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating
Education Group (ANZSBEG)

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

Paco Iglesias
Commonwealth Dept of Communications,
IT and the Arts (DCITA)

John Egan
NSW Dept of Sport, Recreation and Tourism –
(representing Standing Committee on Recreation
and Sport)

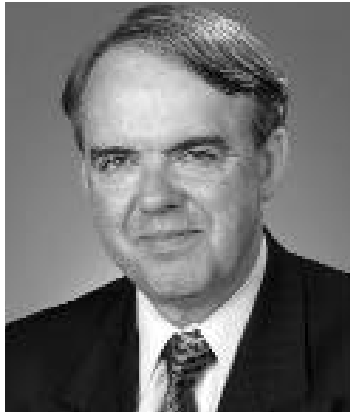
Richard Franklin (Research Committee convenor)
Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA)

Inactive Members:
Kidsafe Australia
Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association
(ASCTA)

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foreword

Ours is a nation of water-lovers – it is one of the defining features of our island home. Many Australians live near or visit our beautiful coastline, and for those who don't, trips to the local pool or swimming hole are a favourite pastime.

But participation in water-based recreational activities comes with certain risks and responsibilities. Each year, too many people lose their lives as a result of drowning. What makes these deaths even more tragic is that they are nearly always preventable.

Six years ago, the Australian Water Safety Council responded to the alarming number of water-related deaths in Australia and released the National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003. At the time of its publication, more than 300 Australians drowned each year. Five years on, we have seen a reduction of 17 per cent to 250 drowning deaths each year.

Put simply, the National Water Safety Plan is about saving lives.

The Australian Water Safety Council has played – and will continue to play – a key leadership role in spearheading collaboration between all levels of government, water safety organisations, and sport and recreation service providers. This close collaboration is vital if we are to achieve the key objective of reducing water-related deaths. The Australian Government recognises that the Australian Water Safety Council and its members are crucial to realising the vision of comprehensive water safety awareness in Australia.

If all of us in government, water safety, sport and recreation can continue to cooperate and build upon the strong partnerships that have been forged already, we are most likely to succeed in saving lives. I look forward to continuing the successful collaborative approach that has been the hallmark of the Australian Water Safety Council.

Senator the Hon Rod Kemp
Minister for the Arts and Sport

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original National Water Safety Plan was developed by the Australian Water Safety Council, Sydney, July 1998.

The National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 builds on the foundation provided by the original. The National Water Safety Plan 2004-2007 was developed by the AWSC, Sydney, February 2004. Principal contributors to this plan are Rob Bradley, Richard Franklin, Greg Nance, Justin Scarr and Prof John Pearn.

The AWSC would like to acknowledge and thank those individuals and organisations that have contributed to the development of this plan including Commonwealth, State and Territory departments of Sport and Recreation, Health and Education and the broad range of water safety related agencies.

For further information
or comment please contact the AWSC Convenor
PO Box 558 Broadway NSW 2007
Ph: (02) 8217 3111
Fax: (02) 8217 3199

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executive summary



This National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 has been written in consultation with the many and varied stakeholders with the goal of providing a coordinated and cooperative approach to Water Safety throughout Australia.

The plan will build on the achievements of the inaugural National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003 in identifying and highlighting the new priorities - the standards, policies, programs and legislation - that will continue the momentum towards a water safe Australia.

Implementation of the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 will be undertaken by the members of the AWSC in close partnership with the three tiers of government and State/Territory Water Safety Councils. This strategic document presents an integrated approach, incorporating State and Territory water safety objectives to ensure the effective delivery of operational outcomes throughout Australia.

A major objective of the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 is to more adequately fund and effectively utilise the significant programs, resources, facilities and international best practice that currently exist. Through increasing access to resources, enhancing communication and encouraging the sharing of ideas within the Water Safety structure the desired improvement in Australia's water safety record will be achieved.

The National Water Safety Plan will:

- Identify, prioritise and benchmark the major Water Safety issues
- Establish the Water Safety Standards and Policies to be applied and monitored nationally
- Commit to improve the expertise, programs and resources that currently operate within the system
- Maximise organisational linkages
- Ensure that duplication of effort and resources are avoided
- Ensure that positive ideas and best practice are shared throughout Australia

The Key Result Areas highlighted within the Plan are:

1. Water Safety Education
2. Water Safety Research
3. Aquatic Locations
4. Targeting of Key Drowning Demographics

NATIONAL WATER SAFETY PRIORITIES:

1. WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

Water Safety Education has been identified as the highest priority. Education provides the knowledge and skill base from which all other water safety

considerations flow. It is clear that the public are not yet well enough educated about the dangers of aquatic locations. Quality Water Safety Education must be made available to every Australian.

2. WATER SAFETY RESEARCH

Water Safety Research must move forward from identifying and quantifying injury and risk to providing evaluation and intervention strategies.

3. AQUATIC LOCATIONS

There are many and varied aquatic locations in Australia that have a range of safety issues and are managed by a variety of organisations. To ensure the safety of people who visit these locations, a range of strategies is required. This plan provides the basis for managing risk at aquatic locations through a range of standards, legislation and management strategies and through the provision of surveillance and rescue services.

4. TARGETING KEY DROWNING DEMOGRAPHICS

The highest "at-risk" priority groups identified for immediate action are essentially the same groups targeted in the 1998-2003 plan. It has been deemed necessary to continue work with these demographics because the current situation is still unacceptable:

- i. Children in the 0-4 age group
- ii. Males 16-35 years - the traditional risk-taking group, particularly looking at the affect of alcohol
- iii. The Regional and Rural Community including Farms and Rural properties – access and delivery of water safety services
- iv. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population
- v. Rock fishers
- vi. People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities including inbound tourists

When the inaugural National Water Safety Plan was launched in 1998 over 300 Australians drowned each year. Five years on that figure now stands at 250 drowning deaths – a reduction of over 17%.

While the reduction in the drowning rate is acknowledged our ultimate goal remains "zero drowning deaths and the establishment of a water safety culture in Australia". The objective for the period of this plan is to achieve a continuing reduction of drowning deaths to 200 by 2007. This represents a 20% decrease on the 250 drowning deaths in 2003 or a 5% decrease per annum over the period of the plan.

The AWSC is committed to implementing the recommendations contained in this Plan and will be working tirelessly to ensure that responsibilities are assigned and that results are achieved.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

KRA 1: WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

- Recommendation 1: That Water Safety Competency Targets and Success Targets be set for all Australian children - established at appropriate age/developmental levels.
- Recommendation 2: That all Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence and professional development, and safety skills. It is recognised that the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety offers such an accreditation system.
- Recommendation 3: That all Coaches of Swimming be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence and professional development, and safety skills. It is recognised that the ASI/ASCTA offer such an accreditation system.
- Recommendation 4: That all Pool and Beach Lifeguards be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence, professional development and rescue skills. It is recognised that the RLSSA offers such an accreditation system for Pool Lifeguards and that SLISA offers such an accreditation system for Beach Lifeguards.
- Recommendation 5: That State and Territory Governments require that lifejackets (Personal Flotation Devices) are worn as a mandatory piece of Safety Equipment for all recreational boaters when under power. Responsibility for the wearing of lifejackets in these circumstances is the boat's skipper/driver.
- Recommendation 6: That State and Territory Governments require that lifejackets (Personal Flotation Devices) are worn as a mandatory piece of Safety Equipment for children under 12 years of age in watercraft at all times. Responsibility for the wearing of lifejackets in these circumstances is the boat's skipper/driver.
- Recommendation 7: That all States and Territory Governments develop and implement Codes of Practice for Diving and Snorkelling that meet the minimum training requirements within the Australian Standard AS4005.1.
- Recommendation 8: That recreational fishers, particularly rock fishers and people fishing from boats, be provided with improved access to educational programs and safety systems.

KRA 2: WATER SAFETY RESEARCH

- Recommendation 9: That the Australian Water Safety Research Committee continues in the role of Research Coordinating Body to identify water safety research needs and to facilitate research opportunities and projects.
- Recommendation 10: That the National Water Safety Audit again be conducted to determine all currently available services, programs and resources. Results are to be made available on the website www.watersafety.com.au for ease of access.
- Recommendation 11: That Drowning Statistics be collated from the National Coroners Information System (NCIS) and State Coroners with subsequent information dissemination and access to relevant Water Safety organisations.

KRA 3: AQUATIC LOCATIONS

- Recommendation 12: That the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO) be used as the safety standards and best practice for all aquatic venues and facilities.
- Recommendation 13: That the Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Aquatic Risk and Safety Auditing incorporating the Australian Beach Safety and Management Program provide safety standards and best practice for all surf beach locations and environs.
- Recommendation 14: That a Home Pool Inspection System be adopted by all States and Territories and by all Local Government authorities. The Home Pool Inspection regime employed in Western Australia (2004) may be used to provide the safety standards and best practice.
- Recommendation 15: That State and Territory Governments require National Signage Standards for aquatic locations be adopted and promoted. The Victorian Government's Aquatic and Recreation Signage Style Guide is considered best practice and it is recommended that this document is adopted by all jurisdictions.
- Recommendation 16: That standardised uniform colours of red and yellow be worn by all lifesavers and lifeguards at aquatic locations to enable ease of recognition by the public.
- Recommendation 17: That an analysis of State and Territory water safety related legislation be undertaken to identify and report on areas of inconsistency and/or deficiency.
- Recommendation 18: That a guide to water safety for local government authorities be produced, that contains information about legislative requirements and best practice.
- Recommendation 19: That Risk and Safety Audits be conducted and Risk Management Plans be prepared and implemented at all regularly used Aquatic Locations - beaches, pools, inland swimming holes.
- Recommendation 20: That appropriate Prevention, Rescue and Emergency Services must be provided at all locations regularly used for aquatic recreation.

KRA 4: TARGETING KEY DROWNING DEMOGRAPHICS

- Recommendation 21: That a nationally coordinated Drowning Prevention strategy based on the RLSSA Keep Watch program be implemented to reduce drowning deaths in the 0-4 age group.
- Recommendation 22: That programs that educate 16-35 year olds against “risk-taking” behaviour be developed and implemented.
- Recommendation 23: Programs that increase awareness of water safety in the 55+ age group and that provide opportunities for the acquisition or re-discovery of water safety skills should be developed.
- Recommendation 24: Access and availability of water safety facilities, programs and services must be appropriately increased to meet the needs of the regional, rural and remote community.
- Recommendation 25: Increase the promotion and adoption of securely fenced safe play areas on farms and rural properties.
- Recommendation 26: Access and availability of facilities, water safety programs and services must be appropriately increased to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Recommendation 27: That key water safety messages be publicised in a variety of different languages and promoted directly to ethnic groups through working closely with appropriate Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community organisations, Local Councils and through cultural specific publications. Further that people from CALD communities be encouraged to participate in specifically targeted water safety programs.
- Recommendation 28: That Inbound Tourists and Migrants receive Water Safety Information through available avenues.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

- Recommendation 29: That appropriate groups representing the sailing, diving and recreational boating industries be invited to become members of the AWSC.
- Recommendation 30: That the AWSC develop and implement a communications and media strategy for the 2004-07 plan.
- Recommendation 31: That the AWSC develop a system that chronicles, updates and makes recommendations on water safety standards at a national level.
- Recommendation 32: That the AWSC develop and implement an evaluation plan for the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07.



introduction australians and the water

There is no escaping the fact that most Australians love the water. Whether it is splashing playfully amongst the waves, riding the river rapids or being caressed by the crystal blue waters of the local swimming pool Australians and visitors each year enjoy our many and varied aquatic experiences. The aquatic environment plays a huge role in moulding the Australian culture, in preparing our children for life ahead and in promoting our beautiful country and lifestyle to the rest of the world.

Unfortunately for some people, exposure to the water results in their injury or death. Drowning deaths and near-drowning incidents occur in rivers, lakes and dams; they happen at unpatrolled beaches, off-shore, in the bathtub, in the swimming pool, in nappy buckets - in fact wherever there is water drowning deaths can occur.

When the inaugural plan was launched in 1998 over 300 Australians drowned each year. Five years on that figure is now 250 drowning deaths – a reduction of 17%.

Drowning is currently the fourth largest cause of unintentional death in Australia overall and in the 0-4 age group it is the now the second largest cause of unintentional death.

The real tragedy of drowning is that almost every drowning is preventable.

It is pleasing to note the achievement and implementation of the majority of objectives and recommendations proposed within the inaugural National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003. Since July 1998 there has been an increased focus on water safety by a very committed group of stakeholders and a significant injection of funds from government and the corporate sector.

The Australian Government has identified drowning and near-drowning as one of the four priority areas for immediate action by the health sector within the National Injury Prevention Plan¹.

The [Evaluation of the Australian National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003](#) released in February 2004⁵ indicates that there have been some significant successes in reducing the national drowning toll and in improving the coordination and penetration of water safety and lifesaving initiatives. Public awareness of water safety issues and prevention strategies has never been higher. Water Safety organisations have worked strongly over the past five years, with the support of government to produce a broad range of initiatives, programs and services that have significantly improved the quality and effectiveness of water safety education and rescue services.

COMPARISON OF BENCHMARKS (1994-98 - 5-YEAR AVG)	1998	2003
Drowning deaths in Australia	300	250
Ranking of Cause of Accidental Death	3rd	4th
Drowning deaths of 0-4 Age Group	58	35
Ranking of Cause of Accidental Death in the 0-4 Age Group	1st	2nd

While the improved situation is acknowledged it is very clear that 250 drowning deaths each year is totally unacceptable and there is still much to be achieved.

It is therefore essential that Water Safety organisations and government at all levels continue to take responsibility for ensuring that people are adequately prepared to use our aquatic environment. The Australian community must be properly educated and skilled and be made well aware of the hidden dangers of water. Likewise owners, operators, managers and government instrumentalities responsible for aquatic locations must ensure that these environments are free from hazards and should be held accountable for public safety.

This second [National Water Safety Plan 2004-07](#) will build on the solid foundation of the 1998-2003 Plan, supported by over 100 years of lifesaving in Australia, generations of volunteer and professional lifeguards and highly skilled education and training professionals now working in this important community arena.

The [National Water Safety Plan 2004-07](#) will identify and highlight the priorities - the standards, policies, programs and legislation that, coupled with the operational plans of States and Territories, will continue the momentum towards a Water Safe Australia.

¹ Strategic Injury Prevention Partnership (2001). National Injury Prevention Plan: Priorities for 2001-2003. Department of Health and Aged Care; Canberra

drowning in australia a snapshot



The following tables provide a Snapshot of Drowning in Australia by providing details of where, how and at what age, drowning deaths occur.

It should be noted that a significant reduction in overall drowning deaths has occurred in each decade since records began in the 1920's². What is alarming, however, is that in the most recent history there has been a levelling off or, in fact, a startling increase in some key demographics.

One particularly encouraging trend is the significant decline in drowning deaths in the 5-14 age group to a world leading 0.8 per 100,000 over the past 20 years. This result is largely due to the success of quality Water Safety education programs such as the Royal Life Saving Society's Swim and Survive program introduced in the late 1970's and incorporated into programs of State and Territory Education Departments in schools.

A major factor in the nation's overall low rate of drowning must also be attributed to the contribution of Surf Life Saving Australia's (SLSA) volunteer surf lifesavers. There are over 7,000 accessible ocean beaches in Australia and an estimated 60,000,000 annual beach visitations, which combined, create a huge safety problem. SLSA patrols over 330 beaches, from a base of 280 surf clubs and 107,000 members. SLSA services rescue more than 11,000 people each year.

Studies examining the cost of injuries in Australia^{3,4} found that the lifetime cost of a drowning death ranges between \$370,000 and \$463,511. At 250 drowning deaths in 2002-03 the cost to the Australian economy each year is between \$92.5 million and \$115.9 million.

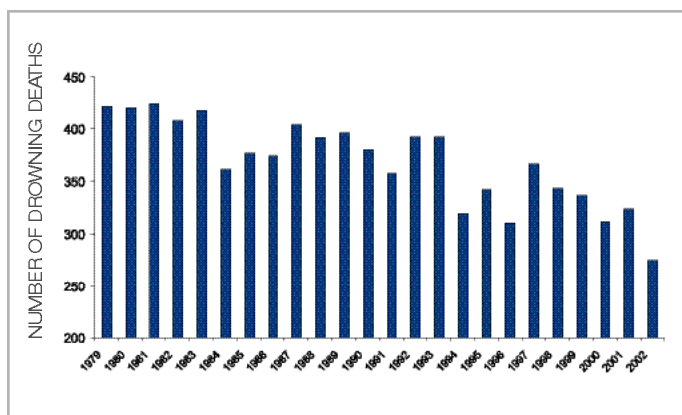


Figure 2. Drowning Deaths in Australia 1979-2002

Notes: ICD9 codes E910, E954, E964, E984 used to 1998 and ICD10 codes W65, W66, W67, W68, W69, W70, W73, W74, X71, X92 and Y21 from 1999 onwards. Information is provided on year of death registration

Source: National Injury Surveillance. Unit Injury Deaths Australia 1979 – 1998 and ABS Mortality Data 1999-2002.
<http://www.nisu.flinders.edu.au/data/phonebook/phbkmain.php> 19-2-2004

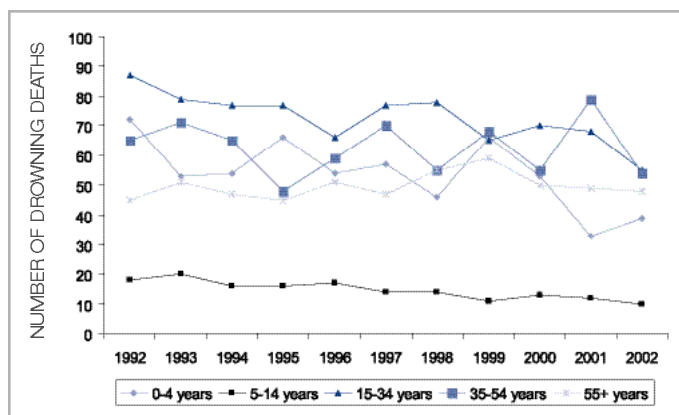


Figure 3. Unintentional Drowning Deaths in Australia by age group 1992-2002

Note: 2002 is an incomplete year as not all drowning cases are registered in the year of the person's death.

² Mackie Dr I., & Tebb N. 1996. National Drowning Study, Fourth Report, Sydney

³ Watson W.L & Ozanne-Smith J. 1997. The Cost of Injury To Victoria, Report No. 124, Monash University, Melbourne

⁴ Potter-Forbes, M. & Aisbett, C. 2003. Injury Costs: A valuation of the burden of injury in New South Wales 1998-1999. NSW Injury Risk Management Centre, University of New South Wales: Sydney

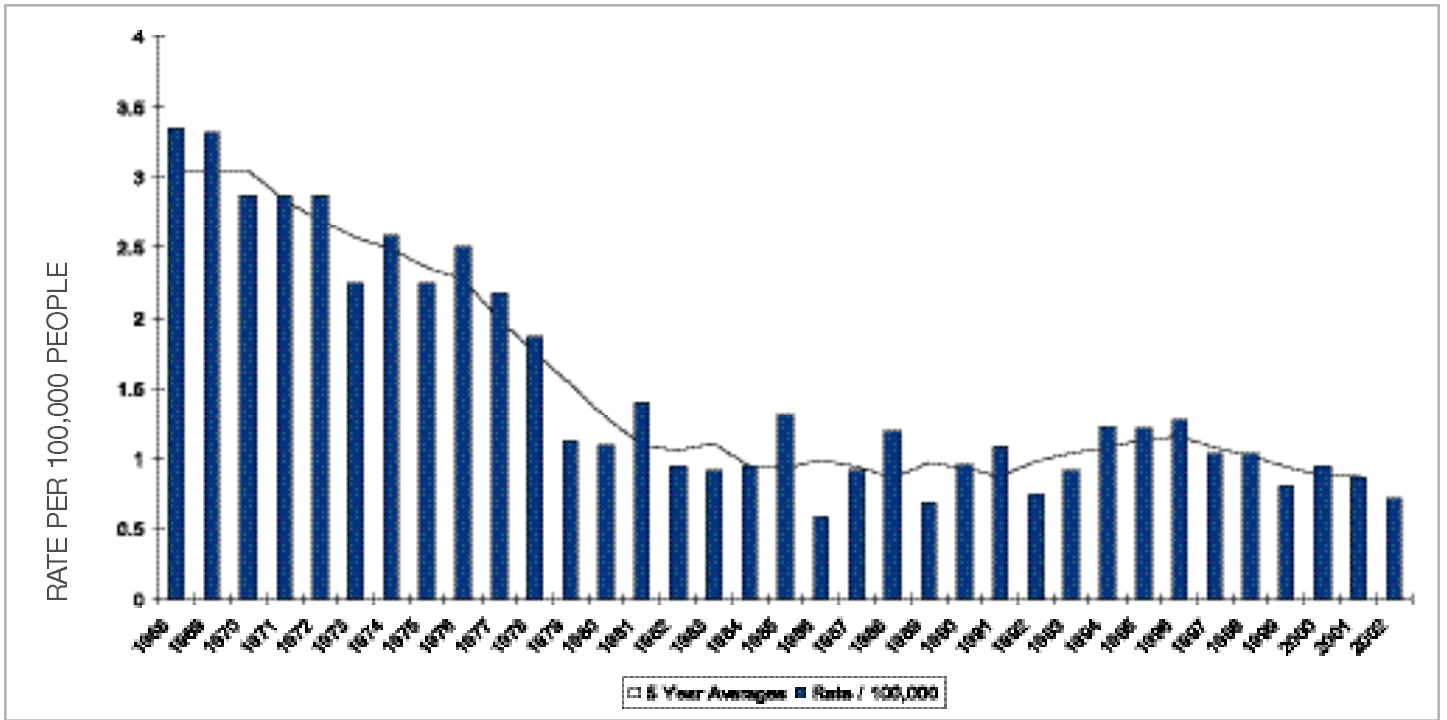


Figure 1. Unintentional non-boating drowning deaths of people aged 5-14 years, Australia 1968-2002

Note: 2002 is an incomplete year as not all drowning cases are registered in the year of the person's death.

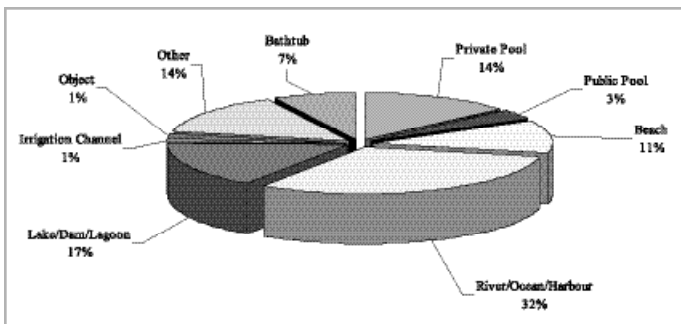


Figure 4. Unintentional Drowning Deaths in Australia by Location, 1992-2002

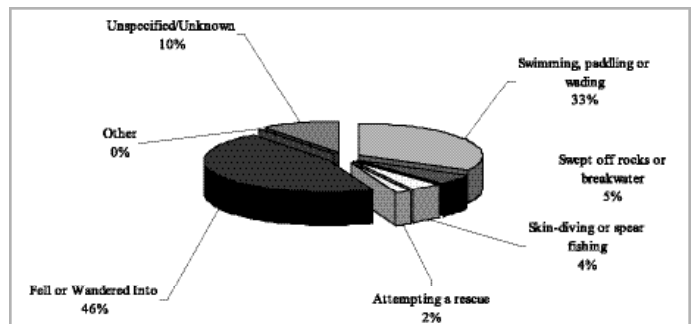


Figure 5. Unintentional Drowning Deaths in Australia by Activity, 1992-2002

evaluation national water safety plan 1998-2003

During 2003 the Australian Water Safety Council commissioned the [Evaluation of the National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003](#) with funding assistance from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (via the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport).

The evaluation was carried out during 2003 and used five methods to gain an understanding of the impact of the National Water Safety Plan (NWSP). The five methods were: the analysis of drowning deaths, literature review, questionnaires and key informant interviews, examining progress against recommendations, and examination of State and Territory water safety plans or frameworks. The Evaluation report was released in March 2004.⁵

The major findings of the evaluation are listed below and the recommendations of the report have been incorporated into the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07.

Trends in drowning: Since the introduction of the NWSP 1998-2003 there has been a decline in the number and rate of people drowning in Australia. Although there has been a decrease in the number of deaths of children 0-4 years this should continue to remain a priority area, with a drowning rate four times higher than any other age group. There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of deaths during the summer months while deaths in the other seasons remain constant.

Finding 1: The drowning rate is declining for Australia, 0-4 year olds have a drowning rate four times higher than the rest of the population and ocean/ivers, lakes, private swimming pools and beaches are common locations of drowning deaths.

Identification and prioritisation of water safety issues: To ensure that drowning prevention occurs nationally the major water safety issues need to be identified.

Finding 2: That the NWSP 1998-2003 successfully identified and prioritised the major water safety issues in 1998.

Communication and Cooperation: The majority of people who were interviewed or responded to the questionnaire had heard about the NWSP through existing water safety networks, workplaces, conferences or industry publications. Response rates were poor from the diving, sailing, fishing and recreational boating industries.

Finding 3: That the NWSP 1998-2003 has helped to increase the amount of information sharing in the water safety community.

Finding 4: The NWSP 1998-2003 has improved communication within the water safety community, through the provision of conferences, regular meetings and joint research projects

Duplication: The avoidance of duplication of effort and resources has occurred due to organisations identifying roles and responsibilities and through improved linkages between organisations

Finding 5: That there has been some identification and improvement in organisational linkages. The impact of avoiding duplication of effort and resources is probably only small at this time and may be due to only a small amount of duplication currently occurring.

Water Safety Standards and Expertise: To reduce the number of people drowning the uptake of appropriate standards and expertise are crucial.

Finding 6: That the NWSP 1998-2003 has had an effect on the distribution of standards nationally. That some States incorporated information from the NWSP into their plans/frameworks also implies that the NWSP has had some influence on the production of the standards.

Finding 7: There is a commitment to support, bolster and improve the expertise, programs and resources in water safety.

Resources: Many of the key informants did identify that there had been an increase in resources in some states, in particular in Victoria and New South Wales. That many of the not-for-profit organisations have managed to attract sponsors to their programs since the development of the NWSP 1998-2003 is also a sign that the amount of resources for water safety has increased.

Finding 8: The amount of resources has increased since the introduction of the NWSP 1998-2003 and the development of water safety strategies and frameworks in other States.

Overall finding of the Evaluation: Overall the NWSP 1998-2003 was a successful document and that although it is difficult to quantify its success, without it there would not have been as much activity in water safety. There were some major strengths of the NWSP such as improved communication. In particular it is recognised that the NWSP has helped many of the States and Territories develop their own water safety plan or framework. Weaknesses of the plan include the measurement of and reporting on progress of the NWSP, communication about the NWSP and the establishment of timeframes and baselines.

⁵ Franklin RC. Evaluation of the Australian National Water Safety Plan (1999-2003). Sydney, Australian Water Safety Council [Secretariat: Royal Life Saving Society Australia, PO Box 558, Broadway NSW 2007, Australia], 2004

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCORS WATER SAFETY
WORKING PARTY REPORT TO SRMC
– AUGUST 2003**

In August 2002 the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council (SRMC) directed the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sports (SCORS) to conduct an analysis of the existing structure of Water Safety coordination in Australia and to make recommendations on how to improve and streamline the delivery of water safety services throughout Australia.

In August 2003 the SCORS Working Party chaired by Michael Cahill (Sport and Recreation Victoria) and comprising representatives of State and Territory Departments, Water Safety organisations and interested parties delivered a report to SRMC containing a number of recommendations:

Many of the recommendations have subsequently been implemented in AWSC operations and further recommendations have been incorporated into the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07. A full list of recommendations is shown in Appendix 3.

challenge national water safety plan 2004-07



OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL WATER SAFETY PLAN

Success of the [National Water Safety Plan 2004-07](#) will depend on the continuing effectiveness of cooperation and coordination between key stakeholders. Significant benefits have already been derived from economies of scale, from building on existing research and planning and by utilising the excellent programs and world's best practice already available within the system.

The National Water Safety Conference held in Sydney in September 2003 and the recommendations of the SCORS Water Safety Working Party (2002) confirmed the need to build on the achievements of the past five years. It is vital that the roles of National vision and coordination are clearly delineated from the State and Territory functions of program implementation in ensuring the achievement of the objectives of the national plan.

It is for this reason that the [National Water Safety Plan](#) will play a strategic, guiding, directional role, building on the significant "political will" now evident in supporting Water Safety at all levels of Government. The objectives of each State and Territory Water Safety plan are incorporated to provide a coordinated and integrated approach to water safety in this country.

The objectives of the National Water Safety Plan are to:

1. Provide a strategic overview for Water Safety in Australia by identifying and prioritising the major water safety issues
2. Develop and establish water safety benchmarks, standards and strategies to be applied as best practice nationally
3. Recognise the operational objectives of each State and Territory Water Safety Plans as an integral part of the national approach
4. Commit to improve the quality of expertise and programs already operating effectively within the system through an evidence based approach
5. Maximise organisational linkages through delineation of roles and responsibilities and effective communication to ensure that duplication of effort and resources are avoided
6. Ensure effective communication of water safety through the sharing of ideas and best practice throughout Australia
7. Build in performance indicators including timeframes with which to assess the success of this plan.

LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

The Australian Water Safety Council will play a key leadership role in the implementation and coordination of the Plan. The philosophy underpinning the development and delivery of the Plan is that "in Australia water safety is driven by Life Saving and Water Safety organisations, with the strong support of Government". This should hold true at National, State and Local levels.

It should be noted that the AWSC operates on a user-pays basis and does not accept funding for administrative purposes. The philosophy is to ensure that no funds are diverted from program development and implementation where they are needed most.

The AWSC believes that by successfully implementing the objectives of the plan the following will be achieved:

- A continuing reduction in Australian drowning rates and incidence of aquatic related injury
- The attainment of the skills and knowledge for all Australians to ensure their safety in, on, around, and near aquatic locations
- Measurement and achievement of set goals and objectives related to water safety
- The benchmarking and improvement of current standards, programs and resources through an evidence base
- Risk management strategies implemented at all aquatic locations
- Encourage and support the expansion of safe participation in aquatic recreation throughout Australia
- Measurable increases in awareness by at-risk population groups of water safety message specific to them
- The successful training of teachers, coaches and instructors in the requirements of a balanced Water Safety education

While the reduction in the drowning rate is acknowledged our ultimate goal remains "zero drowning deaths and the establishment of a culture of a water safety in Australia", this cannot be achieved overnight. The objective for the period of this plan is to achieve a further reduction of the period of this plan is to achieve a further reduction of the drowning deaths to 200 by 2007. This represents a 20% decrease on the 250 drowning deaths currently or a 5% decrease per annum over the period of the plan.

FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES OF GOVERNMENT

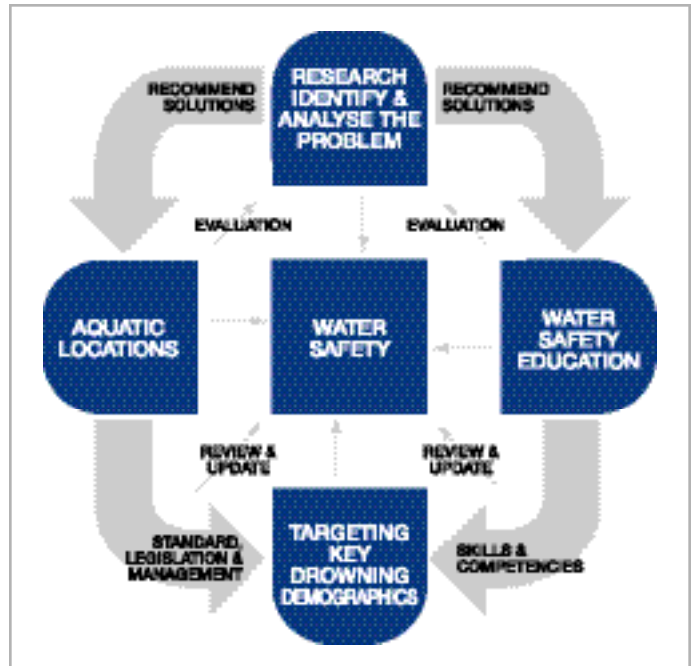
Government is a key partner in Water Safety in Australia. Significant resources have been committed by the three tiers of Government over the past five years and Government should be acknowledged for its contribution, particularly the Victorian Play It Safe by the Water and NSW Safe Waters programs. The successful implementation of this Plan will assist in fulfilling a number of stated Government objectives and principles at Australian Government, State and Local levels:

- Access and Equity - The Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society as the key mechanism for implementing Access and Equity as a whole-of-Government strategy
- Health and Ageing - The health sector is committed to working with other sectors in the reduction of drowning and near-drowning and consequent injury in Australia. The high incidence of drowning in the target populations identified in the National Injury Prevention Plan Priorities for 2004 and Beyond Discussion Paper will influence the decision to include drowning and near-drowning as an injury prevention priority for immediate action
- Department of Transport and Regional Services - Maximising safety in the rural environment.
- Sport and Recreation - To reduce the number of drownings and aquatic accidents in Australia, and to enable all Australians to safely participate in and enjoy aquatic activities.
- Tourism - Enhancing the safety and security of visitors in Australia by working with frontline agencies to promote water safety
- Education - Meeting the stated Health and Physical Education goals within the National Curriculum Framework (Pathways for Planning and Programming)
- Emergency Services - Providing lifesaving services integrated with National and State Emergency Services Plan. "An active partnership between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, statutory and voluntary organisations and communities is needed. The endeavour of this partnership is to save lives and minimise human suffering."
- Local Government - Ensuring effective Risk Management of local government locations and facilities, including residential swimming pools
- Departments of Multi-Cultural Affairs - in promoting important water safety messages to the range of CALD populations

KEY WATER SAFETY ISSUES

The Australian Water Safety Council has identified four major Key Result Areas that must be addressed in a comprehensive approach to the Water Safety issue.

Without satisfactorily addressing each of these components the Plan will fail to deliver the desired results in the long term.



KEY RESULT AREAS

The following major priorities were identified through the process of evaluating the National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003 and during the National Water Safety Conference September, 2003.

1. WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

Water Safety Education has been identified as the highest priority. Education provides the knowledge and skill base from which all other water safety flows. It is clear that the public are not yet well enough educated about the dangers of aquatic locations. Quality Water Safety Education must be made available to every Australian.

2. WATER SAFETY RESEARCH

Water Safety Research must move forward from identifying and quantifying injury and risk to conducting evaluation of water safety intervention strategies, including taking into account cost effectiveness of prevention strategies.

3. AQUATIC LOCATIONS

There are many and varied aquatic locations in Australia that have a range of safety issues and are managed by a variety of organisations. To ensure the safety of people who visit these locations, a range of strategies are required. This Plan provides the basis for managing risk at aquatic locations through a range of standards, legislation and management strategies.

4. TARGETING KEY DROWNING DEMOGRAPHICS

The highest at-risk priority groups identified for immediate action are essentially the same groups targeted in the 1998-2003 plan. It has been deemed necessary to continue work with these demographics because the current situation is still unacceptable:

- i. Children in the 0-4 years age group
- ii. Males 16-35 years age group - the traditional risk-taking group, particularly looking at the affect of alcohol
- iii. The Regional and Rural Community including farms and rural properties – access and delivery of water safety services
- iv. Rock fishers
- v. People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities including inbound tourists
- vi. The Indigenous population

KEY RESULT AREA 1: WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

Water Safety is a whole of life skill - it is “foundation learning” and every Australian must be provided with the opportunity to acquire and maintain a minimum standard of Water Safety competency. A balanced swimming and water safety education should develop knowledge, skills and behaviours in a range of aquatic environments for a variety of aquatic pursuits throughout the whole of life.

It should be recognised that Water Safety Education can be delivered through a variety of sources and is the responsibility of the parent, carer and/or the individual and is not solely the responsibility of State Education Departments. Flexibility and cooperation between a number of agencies is needed in the delivery of Water Safety education to the community.

KRA 1.1 BUILDING ON PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS IN WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

The following programs and achievements from 1998-2003 are acknowledged and will be built upon:

ACHIEVEMENTS 1998 - 2003:

“Swim and Survive” (RLSSA 1982 - 2003)

“Beach to Bush” (SLSA 2000-03)

“Infant Aquatics” (RLSSA 1999 -2003)

“Kids in Boats” (ANZSBEG 2001-03)

“Wet’n’Wise” – teacher resource kits to 12,000 Primary Schools and 2,500 Secondary Schools (RLSSA 2000-02)

“Go Swim” (ASI – 2003-04)

“BronzeRescue” (RLSSA – 1901-2003)

AUSTSWIM - development of “Towards Competitive Strokes” course and resources (released 2003)

ARI – reports that “Water Safety Weeks” are now incorporated into the programs of many aquatic facilities

“Surf Ed” and “Surf Survival” (SLSA 1995-2003)

“Keep Watch – Toddler Drowning Prevention Program” (RLSSA 1996-)

“Safe Surfer Program” (Surfing Australia 2003-)

KRA 1.2 WATER SAFETY EDUCATION POLICY AND STANDARDS

The AWSC believes the Australian water safety culture would be enhanced if all tiers of government and non-government organisations were to make a strong commitment to water safety through policy statements and requisite commitment of resources. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training; and State/Territory Departments of Education and Training, in particular have a key role to play in ensuring the designated water safety competencies are achieved by all Australian children.

Primary School

All Australian children must be given the opportunity and encouraged to achieve a minimum benchmark level of competence prior to leaving primary school as specified in the Personal Aquatic Survival section of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework⁶.

The competencies equivalent to those contained in RLSSA “Swim and Survive Level 4” best represent this benchmark. Whilst a benchmark is appropriate, this does not negate the need for ongoing opportunities to develop water safety and swimming competencies. The competencies equivalent to those contained in SLSA’s “Surf Ed” program represents this benchmark for surf safety competence prior to leaving primary school.

It is recognized that the World Health Organisation (WHO) “Safe Communities” program offers a model that would be suitable for the delivery of Water Safety education in the general community. The ‘Health Promoting Schools’ concept offers a useful framework to promote health, including awareness of water safety prevention measures, within the school environment.

Secondary School

All Australian adolescents must be given opportunity and encouraged to achieve a minimum benchmark level of personal aquatic survival and basic rescue competence prior to leaving secondary school, as illustrated in the Life Saving section of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework.

The competencies equivalent to those contained in RLSSA BronzeRescue strand and SLSA Surf Survival best represent this benchmark. The AWSC encourages access to a variety of aquatic safety programs by a variety of providers.

A national study investigating swimming and water safety achievement levels of primary and secondary students across the country would add significant insights to those responsible for water safety policy, standards and programs.

- Recommendation 1: That Water Safety Competency and Success Targets be set for all Australian children - established at appropriate age/developmental levels as set out following.

⁶RLSSA National Swimming and Water Safety Framework, (Sydney, 1998)

SCHOOL LEVEL	COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	MINIMUM DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCIES	SUCCESS RATES % of target population
(I) INFANT AND PRE-SCHOOL	Infant Aquatics section of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework	Participation in the program	100%
(II) PRIMARY SCHOOL	Personal Aquatic Survival section of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework • Competencies to be achieved by the completion of Primary School education	Equivalent to Swim and Survive Level 4 (and Surf Ed where available)	100%
		Level 5 Swim and Survive (and Surf Ed where available)	75%
		Level 6 Swim and Survive (and Surf Ed where available)	50%
(III) SECONDARY SCHOOL	Life Saving section of the National Water Safety Framework – including exposure to Basic First Aid & Resuscitation Training. • Competencies to be achieved by the completion of Year 10	Equivalent to RLSSA Bronze Star Dry Rescue, including Resuscitation (and SLSA Surf Survival where available)	100%
		RLSSA Bronze Star (and SLSA Surf Survival where available)	75%
		RLSSA or SLSA Bronze Medallion	50%

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It is recognised that the national training framework plays a significant role in building and maintaining a water safety culture across all sectors of the community. Not only does the framework provide training opportunities and career pathways for individuals working and/or volunteering within aquatic environments, it also enhances aquatic risk management strategies within these environments. Training packages such as the Community Recreation Training Package and the Public Safety Training Package provide a career pathway for vocations such as lifeguards, swimming and water safety teachers into administrative and management roles across the industry.

Whilst acknowledging the role of the national training framework, the importance of industry and community accreditation systems such as RLSSA Pool Lifeguard Award, SLSA Bronze Medallion and the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety should not be overlooked. Accreditation systems allow for the recognition and ongoing professional development, assessment of current competence and ensure that all safety techniques remain current.

KRA 1.3 ACCREDITATION OF WATER SAFETY TEACHERS, INSTRUCTORS AND COACHES

It is essential that every swimming and water safety teacher in Australia must hold an appropriate accreditation which at least recognises their current teaching and safety competency and provides for ongoing professional development opportunities.

- Recommendation 2: That all Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence and professional development, and safety skills. It is recognised that the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety offers such an accreditation system.

It is also important that every swimming coach in Australia must hold an appropriate accreditation which at least recognises their current coaching and safety competency, and provides for ongoing professional development opportunities. Swimming Coaches must be educated in their role of reinforcing water safety education to individuals in their charge. Australian Swimming Incorporated/ASCTA is best placed to administer such an accreditation.

- Recommendation 3: That all Coaches of Swimming be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence and professional development, and safety skills. It is recognised that the ASI/ASCTA offer such an accreditation system.

PROGRAM AND SUPPORT MATERIALS

Every effort must be made to foster the development of consistent and sustainable water safety education programs that target all aspects of water safety and all areas of risk within the community and are based on the best available evidence. Cooperation and collaboration between water safety educators, safety organisations, government and corporate Australia will result in the better return on investment from such development activities.

Water Safety programs should be evaluated for effectiveness and sustainability as suggested in Key Result Area 2. Organisations, government and the wider community must provide for greater access to water safety education for specific at-risk groups like rural and remote communities, inbound tourists and members of Indigenous and CALD populations.

KRA 1.4 ACCREDITATION OF LIFEGUARDS

It is also essential that every lifeguard, whether patrolling a surf beach, municipal aquatic facility, hotel or resort swimming pool or rural swimming hole must hold an appropriate accreditation which at least recognises their current lifeguarding and rescue competency, and provides for ongoing professional development opportunities.

- Recommendation 4: That all Pool and Beach Lifeguards be required to hold an appropriate level of accreditation that recognises their initial training, ongoing demonstration of current competence, professional development and rescue skills. It is recognised that the RLSSA offers such an accreditation system for Pool Lifeguards and that SLSA offers an accreditation system for Beach Lifeguards.

KRA 1.5 SAFETY DURING AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Specific Safety Standards must be met to manage the risks inherent in all Aquatic Recreational pursuits. These safety standards, including the understanding and management of risk and obtaining the required level of knowledge and experience is unique to each individual aquatic activity. There are however five basic strategies which apply to all aquatic activities:

- Improving the expertise of the individual to execute the particular skill
- Improving knowledge about the risks and ways to manage these risks associated with the activity
- Reducing risk-taking behaviour
- Promoting safe participation
- Increasing the ability of the participants to stay afloat.

1.5.1 WATER CRAFT

Water Craft includes but is not limited to activities within: Boating, Sailing, Personal Water Craft (PWC), Canoeing, Kayaking and Surfing.

Boating

Recreational boating is a popular pastime around Australia. Boats are used in a range of settings and applications, including use for work purposes. This heavy patronage of our waterways comes at a cost of some 70 deaths per annum⁷.

In changes to legislation in Tasmania from 1 January 2001, it is a requirement for all motorised vessels of less than 4hp to carry the minimum required safety equipment as per the Marine and Safety (Motor Boats and Licences) By-Laws 1998⁸, which includes a fire extinguisher, bailer or bilge pump, flares, an anchor with the correct length of chain and rope and oars or paddles.

Also from 1 January 2001 it is compulsory for all recreational boaters to wear a PFD at all times when under power.

- Recommendation 5: That State and Territory Governments require that lifejackets (Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) are worn as a mandatory piece of Safety Equipment for all recreational boaters when under power. Responsibility for the wearing of lifejackets in these circumstances is the boat's skipper/driver.
- Recommendation 6: That State and Territory Governments require that lifejackets (Personal Flotation Devices) are worn as a mandatory piece of Safety Equipment for children under 12 years of age in watercraft at all times. Responsibility for the wearing of lifejackets in these circumstances is the boat's skipper/driver.

The NSW Waterways Authority is definite in stressing the need for sound safety measures in times of 'heightened risk' which it defines as times when tides, river flows, visibility, rough seas, adverse weather, crossing coastal bars, boating at night or an emergency on board or in the vicinity of the vessel cause a risk to the safety of a person on a vessel. Research conducted by the Waterways Authority indicates that boating incidents are more likely to occur under these circumstances.

Surfing

Surfing Australia has partnered with the Australian Sports Commission to develop the "Safe Surfing" Program in a bid to increase the number of young Australians involved in physical activity and raise their awareness of ocean safety. Anecdotal evidence suggests that surfboard riders often assist in rescuing swimmers who have been dragged out of their depth by rips or currents. "Safe Surfing" is a progressive, 5 certificate level program that covers not only the technical skills of surfing but areas such as first aid, oceanography, surf rescue techniques and environmental awareness.

Safe Surfing was launched in October 2003 and is conducted by qualified Surfing Australia surf school instructors. It is expected that 40 000 participants will complete the level 1 course each year with many of these people going on to complete other levels.

1.5.2 DIVING AND SNORKELLING

Australia's coastal environment and weather provide excellent conditions for diving and snorkelling. Diving and snorkelling continue to grow in popularity with many people visiting Australia for the sole purpose of undertaking these activities. There are very few studies in Australia exploring the circumstances of diving or snorkelling deaths.

Over a 10 year period (1987-1996) there were 60 deaths found due to snorkelling activities, of the people who drowned about one-third were inexperienced or were novices (38.3%). One third were tourists (36.7%)⁹.

In 2002-03 Western Australia conducted an examination of recreational diving and snorkelling through the Underwater Recreational Diving Taskforce and subsequently developed a code of practice for diving and snorkelling¹⁰.

⁷ Australian Transport Safety Bureau (2000). Annual Review 2000. Canberra

⁸ Marine And Safety (Motor Boats And Licences) By-Laws 1998

⁹ Edmonds CW, Walker DG (1999). Snorkelling deaths in Australia, 1987-1992. MJA 171(11/12): 591-594

¹⁰ The Underwater Recreational Diving Taskforce (2003). Diving and Snorkelling Codes of Practice: Recreational diving using compressed gas and recreational snorkelling: 2003. Department of Sport and Recreation, Government of Western Australia; Perth

- Recommendation 7: That all State and Territory Governments develop and implement Codes of Practice for Diving and Snorkelling that meet the minimum training requirements within the Australian Standard AS4005.1.

The process used in the development of the Western Australia Government Codes of Practice for Diving and Snorkelling - Training and Certification of Recreational Diver¹¹ is considered best practice.

1.5.3 FISHING

In 2003 the NSW Water Safety Taskforce published a report examining fatalities associated with rock fishing¹². This report identified 74 rock fishing fatalities and suggested four broad strategies of: improving knowledge about the risks of rock fishing; reducing risk-taking behaviour; promoting safe rock fishing (there were 13 key messages identified); and increasing the ability of rock fishers to stay afloat.

- Recommendation 8: That recreational fishers, particularly rock fishers and people fishing from boats, be provided with improved access to educational programs and safety systems.

KEY RESULT AREA 2: WATER SAFETY RESEARCH

Water safety research provides the underlying evidence for the prevention of drowning, as well as providing direction for targeting prevention activities. It also assists with the monitoring of drowning trends in the population and the evaluation of water safety strategies and programs.

KRA 2.1 BUILDING ON PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH

The following studies and achievements undertaken by a variety of stakeholder groups during 1998-2003 are acknowledged and will be built upon:

ACHIEVEMENTS 1998 - 2003:

National Water Safety Research Committee (established 1999)

- Identified areas of need for water safety research and evaluation

National Coronial Information System

- Established through MUNCCI – on-line 2000
- Drowning specific Data Set Feasibility study and Report Form developed, MUNCCI (2000)

Major Research Studies - including:

- “Analysis of Drowning in Australia” - A. Williamson (2000)
- “Analysis of drowning of children under 5 years in NSW” (2002)
- “Alcohol and Water Safety” – T. Driscoll et al (2003)
- “Commercial Vessel Fatalities in Victoria 1999-2001” M Batchelor & L Bugeja (2003)
- “Recreational Vessel Fatalities in Victoria 1999-2002” L Bugeja (2003)
- “Investigation into the Coronial files of rock fishing fatalities that have occurred in NSW between 1992 and 2000” M Jones (2003)
- “Recreational Boating Review Safety Review” Marine and Safety Tasmania (2000)
- “Assessment of fatal and non-fatal injury due to boating in Australia” P O’Connor (2000)
- Unintentional Drowning: Toddlers in Dams in Victoria 1989-2001” L Owens (2002)
- “Drowning in Western Australia” Arena et al (2002)
- “Research Project on the adequacy of inspections of barriers to private swimming pools” Stevenson et al (2001)
- “Evaluation of the National Water Safety Plan 1998-2003”

Statistical Collation and Reporting

- National Drowning Reports – produced annually by RLSSA – based on ABS
- National Surf Safety Reports – produced annually from the Coastal Incident Database – collated by SLSA (2001-)
- Boating Incident Database – collated by AMSA (1999 -)
- State Drowning Reports – produced annually in most States

International Links – International Lifesaving Federation (ILS)

- ILS Medical Commission – Medical Statements and Policies

¹¹ Standards Australia, (AS 4005.1 1-1992 Training and Certification Divers - Part -1:Minimum Entry Level SCUBA Diving.

¹² Jones M (2003). Investigation into coronial files of rock fishing fatalities that have occurred in NSW between 1992 and 2000. NSW Water Safety Taskforce: Sydney

KRA 2.2 COORDINATION OF RESEARCH

While it is recognised that most of the issues in water safety have been identified further work needs to be undertaken into researching effective interventions and evaluating the programs and resources which currently exist.

- Recommendation 9: That the Australian Water Safety Research Committee continues in the role of Research Coordinating Body to identify water safety research needs and to facilitate research opportunities and projects.

The Australian Water Safety Research Committee will encourage joint research through organisations like National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Injury Surveillance Unit (NISU), National Coronial Information System (NCIS) and Research Departments of Universities as well as State and Territory water safety councils or taskforces.

Joint research projects are largely a no-risk way of improving collaboration between water safety organisations, as well as improving knowledge of and providing an evidence-base for water safety.

Existing Water Safety programs, services and resources should be evaluated for effectiveness and sustainability.

- Recommendation 10: That the National Water Safety Audit again be conducted to determine all currently available services, programs and resources. Results are to be made available on the website www.watersafety.com.au for ease of access.

KRA 2.3 COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DROWNING STATISTICS

Timely access must be provided to statistics and anecdotal information on drowning, near-drowning and other aquatic related incidents. While there has been some improvement in access to information via the National Coronial Information System (NCIS) the system is not currently operating at full capacity and is not reliably providing timely accurate information. Quality information is vital to ensure a quick response to drowning trends and to ensure that corrective programs are targeted effectively.

- Recommendation 11: That Drowning Statistics be collated from the NCIS and State Coroners with subsequent information dissemination and access to relevant Water Safety organisations.

Continued verification of historical data through the Australian Bureau of Statistics is essential. It is recommended that:

- RLSSA to continue compiling the National Drowning Report annually
- SLSA to continue compiling the National Surf Safety Report annually and continue expansion of the Incident Report Database (IRD) that will be available online for use by local government to standardise the collection of coastal incident data.
- The expansion of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Boating Incident Database to include all aquatic incidents should be investigated.

KEY RESULT AREA 3: AQUATIC LOCATIONS

Over the past five years there has been an obvious increase in the level of cooperation between water safety agencies and State and Local government to address the issue of aquatic venue safety. This has been due in part to the recent crisis over Public Liability Insurance but the groundwork has definitely been laid to ensure the more effective management of this issue in the future.

With aquatic facilities and locations of all types experiencing dramatically increased patronage it is critical that both Risk Management and liability management issues are addressed.

This includes minimising safety risks at aquatic facilities and locations and ensuring the provision of patrol and rescue services as a safety net where required. Governments have shown a willingness to legislate where necessary to support policy change and to implement best practice across jurisdictions.

KRA 3.1 BUILDING ON PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS

The following programs and achievements developed by a range of stakeholder groups during 1998-2003 are acknowledged and will be built upon:

ACHIEVEMENTS 1998 - 2003:

Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO)

- Safety Audits on Aquatic Facilities
- Safety Audits on "Small Pools" – Tasmania

Home Pool Safety

- Fencing legislation now in place in each State
- Home Pool Inspections by Local Councils or designates in some areas

SLSA Aquatic Risk and Safety Auditing including the Beach Safety and Management System

Guidelines for Safe Open Water Locations

- Extension of GSPO principles to other aquatic locations

ANTA – Development of VET Training Packages

- Community Recreation TP and Community Safety TP
- Public Safety TP

Guidelines for Water Safety in Urban Developments

- Water safety for purpose built environments which the general public may frequent

KRA 3.2 STANDARDS

It is clear that National Standards must be developed and adopted to ensure consistency of implementation throughout Australia. Effective training and accreditation processes are an integral component of this issue. Standard categories and approaches are required across a range of areas and are not restricted to the following:

- Recommendation 12: That the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO) be used as the safety standard and best practice for all aquatic venues and facilities.
- Recommendation 13: That Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Aquatic Risk and Safety Auditing incorporating the Australian Beach Safety and Management Program provide safety standards and best practice for all surf beach locations and environs.
- Recommendation 14: That a Home Pool Inspection System be adopted by all States and Territories and by all Local Government authorities. The Home Pool Inspection regime employed in Western Australia (2004) may be used to provide the safety standards and best practice.
- Recommendation 15: That State and Territory Governments require National Signage Standards for aquatic locations be adopted and promoted. The Victorian Government's Aquatic and Recreation Signage Style Guide is considered best practice and it is recommended that this document is adopted by all jurisdictions.

It is noted that the Aquatic and Recreation Signage Style Guide was developed in collaboration with a number of State and Territory governments and is considered to present the nationally agreed approach.

It is also noted that the International Life Saving Federation (ILS) has formally adopted "Red and Yellow" as the colours of lifesaving. In April 2004 the AWSC also endorsed "red and yellow" as the lifesaving colours and encourages the use of standard uniform colours for lifeguards at aquatic locations.

- Recommendation 16: That standardised uniform colours of red and yellow be worn by all lifesavers and lifeguards at aquatic locations to enable ease of recognition by the public.

KRA 3.3 LEGISLATION

It is important that State and Territory jurisdictions and Local Government employ consistent legislation and regulations to ensure the adoption of best practice policies and principles of water safety throughout Australia. The AWSC offers to work with State and Territory Governments to streamline this objective.

The key authorities in this area vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and may include Departments of Housing, Local Government and Building Codes. Local Government must be engaged to ensure that compliance measures are consistently applied and monitored.

- Recommendation 17: That an analysis of State and Territory water safety related legislation be undertaken to identify and report on areas of inconsistency and/or deficiency.

The AWSC offers to work with Local Government to develop an action plan designed to minimise the risks to public safety.

- Recommendation 18: That a guide to water safety for local government authorities be produced, that contains information about legislative requirements and best practice.

KRA 3.4 MANAGEMENT

It should be noted that nearly half of all unintentional drowning deaths (47.4%) occur in oceans, rivers and lakes. Often the responsibility for the safety of these areas rests with multiple agencies and organisations. To reduce the number of people drowning at these locations management plans must include the provision of effective water safety and lifeguarding services incorporating surveillance.

Local government must ensure that for unsupervised coastal locations, that have been identified as high risk, or have an increase in population or use, that an Aquatic Risk and Safety Audit is conducted to evaluate the need for a lifesaving service or other form of aquatic location management.

3.4.1 RISK MANAGEMENT OF AQUATIC LOCATIONS

- Recommendation 19: That Risk and Safety Audits be conducted and Risk Management Plans be prepared and implemented at all regularly used aquatic locations - beaches, pools, inland swimming holes.

3.4.2 RESCUE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Recommendation 20: That appropriate Prevention, Rescue and Emergency Services must be provided at all locations regularly used for aquatic recreation

Analysis of risk exposures of individual locations should be conducted using recent advances in technology that have significantly improved access to and affordability of surveillance equipment. Using the results of the analysis a priority list should be developed and services progressively implemented.

Additionally property developers must ensure that areas under development have an Aquatic Risk and Safety Audit to evaluate the need for a lifesaving service or other form of aquatic location management.

KEY RESULT AREA 4: TARGETING KEY DROWNING DEMOGRAPHICS

Establishing a “Water Safety Culture” promoted by Governments and embraced by the Australian public will ensure a continuing reduction in the national drowning toll in the future.

It is recommended that standard water safety messages be used to communicate with the targeted groups.

Each Drowning Demographic has its own peculiar characteristics and specifically targeted strategies are required to bring about significant improvement. As highlighted by the Snapshot of Australian Drownings a coordinated response and appropriate resources must be allocated to address the 0-4 years and Male 16-35 years age group demographics as well as allocating support to rural and regional Australia.

KRA 4.1 BUILDING ON PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS

The following programs and achievements, incorporating the support of Government and the corporate sector from 1998-2003 are acknowledged and will be built upon:

ACHIEVEMENTS 1998 - 2003:

Public Awareness Campaigns

- Pfizer “**Keep Watch**” - Toddler Drowning Prevention (RLSSA 1999-03)
- Kelloggs “**Surf Safe Summer**” (SLSA - 1998-2003)
- PlayStation “Swim and Survive” Program (RLSSA – 1997-2003)
- “**Play It Safe by the Water**” – multi-faceted approach from Victorian Dept of Sport and Recreation (1998-2003)
- “**Safe Waters**” – media campaign and project support from NSW State Dept of Sport and Recreation (1998-2003)
- Targeting Inbound Tourists through Australian Tourist Commission publications
- “**Keep Watch**” Water Safety materials translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Arabic (RLSSA and NSW Dept of Sport and Recreation 2003)
- Telstra “**Beach to Bush**” (SLSA – 2003)
- “**Kids Alive – Do the Five**” – L.Lawrence
- **Child Safe Play Areas on Farms** (Farmsafe Australia and Dept of Health and Ageing – 2002-03)
- “**Know Know Know your Boat**” (ANZBEG 1998 – 2002)”
- “**Boat Smart from the Start**” (ANZBEG 2001 – 03)”

KRA 4.2 CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE - THE NO.1 PRIORITY TARGET GROUP

Although there has been some improvement in the drowning rate of the 0-4 age group the number of drowning deaths (at 2.8 per 100,000) is still unacceptably high. Consequently the 0-4 age group remains the No 1 priority target group. There is to be Zero Tolerance of drowning deaths in the Home Environment.

- Recommendation 21: That a nationally coordinated Drowning Prevention strategy based on the RLSSA Keep Watch program be implemented to reduce drowning deaths in the 0-4 age group.

Best Practice:

- **Keep Watch program** – integrated public awareness and education program (developed by RLSSA, 1996)
- **Voucher System** - provision of Five - Free Water Safety lessons for 0-4 – (developed by Northern Territory Government, 2004)
- **Home Pool Inspection service** – (developed by RLSSA WA 1999 -)
- **In-servicing of Community Health Workers** in the Keep Watch program & provision of resources – (NSW Water Safety Taskforce & RLSSA NSW/WA - 2003)
- **Child Safe Play Areas on Farms promotion** – (Farmsafe Australia & Dept Health and Ageing – (2002-03)

KRA 4.3 CHILDREN: 5-14 YEARS

By ensuring that the recommendations contained in KRA's 1.2 & 1.3 Water Safety Education are implemented the 5-14 Age Group will be effectively catered for and further improvement on the 0.8 per 100,000 drowning rate will be achieved.

The benefits of this Water Safety education conducted during a child's developing years will remain with those individuals as they progress through their lives.

KRA 4.4 TRADITIONAL RISK TAKERS: MALE 16-35 (THE NO.2 PRIORITY GROUP)

As is the case with motor vehicle incidents the percentage of injury and drowning deaths in this demographic far outstrips acceptable limits. Over 85% of drowning deaths in this category are male and there is evidence that alcohol and drugs are a factor in many of these deaths. Alcohol is twice as likely to be present in males aged between 15-54 years than females. Programs that are currently in place, such as those implemented for road safety, school safety, party safety (Police) and other programs would provide a good basis for addressing risk-taking in males 16-35 years and may be able to be modified to incorporate water safety messages.

- Recommendation 22: That programs that educate 16-35 year olds against “risk-taking” behaviour be developed and implemented.

Programs should take into account findings of research conducted into Alcohol and Recreational Activity in this age group generally and should concentrate on educating against risk-taking behaviour.

KRA 4.5 ADULTS IN THE 36 - 54 AGE GROUP

There are no specific strategies for targeting this group but it is important to continue the general emphasis on appropriate behaviour in, around and near water. Many members of this group will also be targeted as parents through the Toddler Drowning and School Water Safety Education campaigns and through club membership and nipper parent programs.

Safety in this age group will also be addressed by making specific aquatic activities and locations safer as proposed in KRA's 1.5 and 2. Approaches used to educate the 16-35 age group on the effect of alcohol on water safety should also be considered and adapted (if necessary) with this group.

KRA 4.6 AUSTRALIA'S AGEING POPULATION 55+ YEARS

With Australia's "ageing population" the numbers of those over 55 year of age is growing steadily. It is of concern that the drowning rate of those 55+ is also increasing.

- Recommendation 23: Programs that increase awareness of water safety in the 55+ age group and that provide opportunities for the acquisition or re-discovery of water safety skills should be developed.

KRA 4.7 RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural and regional communities have been identified as one of the four High Risk groups of drowning victims.

The major issues for action include:

- Access and availability of aquatic facilities
- Access and availability of quality water safety programs and instruction
- Access to appropriately supervised/lifeguarded open water venues
- Adoption of securely fenced safe play areas on farms and rural properties as a means of preventing toddler drowning
- Implementation of identified best practice measures by farm/property owners and managers
- Recommendation 24: Access and availability of water safety facilities, programs and services must be appropriately increased to meet the needs of the regional, rural and remote community
- Recommendation 25: Increase the promotion and adoption of securely fenced safe play areas on farms and rural properties

KRA 4.8 THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION

Within Australia members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are more likely to die or be hospitalised from an injury. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are three times more likely to drown than the rest of Australia¹³. It is estimated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in remotes area have 1.9 times for males and 10.5 times for females the risk of dying due to drowning compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from other areas¹⁴.

BEST PRACTICE:

Aboriginal Water Safety Projects

- Drowning prevention programs for Aboriginal Health Workers throughout Rural and Remote Western Australia (RLSSA WA 2002-01)
- Remote Aboriginal Swimming Pools Project (RLSSA WA 2000-)
- SLSQ Indigenous Skill Development Project (2003)
- SLSQ Indigenous Rookie Lifeguard Program (2002-)
- Indigenous Surfing Program (Surfing Victoria 2002-)

- Recommendation 26: Access and availability of facilities, water safety programs and services must be appropriately increased to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

KRA 4.9 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES (CALD)

- People from Non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB)

It is often difficult to access people from CALD backgrounds through mainstream communication mediums, and consequently members of this group may place themselves and those in their care at-risk because of their lack of understanding of the Australian aquatic conditions. Predominantly CALD communities are not the focus of education and training programs due to language and cultural barriers and as such greater effort needs to be made to effectively educate these communities. Higher drowning rates in Australia exist for people who were born in Vietnam, China, Japan, Korea, Germany, Poland, Italy, France, United Kingdom, United States and New Zealand.

BEST PRACTICE:

- Translation of Keep Watch water safety messages into Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese and Arabic (RLSSA & NSW Dept of Sport and Rec -2003)
- Surf Safety and Participation programs for people of a NESB (SLSA and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Harmony Day – 2002-03)

- Recommendation 27: That key water safety messages be publicised in a variety of different languages and promoted directly to ethnic groups through working closely with appropriate Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community organisations, Local Councils and through cultural specific publications. Further that people from CALD communities be encouraged to participate in specifically targeted water safety programs.

Success in addressing the target groups in KRA's 4.9 & 4.10 will not only achieve a reduction in the incidence of drowning but will significantly reduce demand on rescue services.

KRA 4.10 INBOUND TOURISTS

People who are less familiar with the local conditions are more likely to be at-risk of drowning. In the report on drowning in Australia¹⁵ there were 119 tourists who drowned between 1992 and 1998, common locations included open water (56.3%) and swimming pools (21.8%).

As Australia's reputation as a tourist destination continues to grow water safety organisations are now coping with an ever increasing demand. State and Territory Tourism agencies will be encouraged to play a role in disseminating this critical information.

- Recommendation 28: That all Inbound Tourists and Migrants receive Water Safety Information through all available avenues.

¹³ ABS and AIHW. The health and welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1999). Canberra. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1999

¹⁴ Moller J, Thomson N, Brooks J (2003). Injury prevention activity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Volume I: Programs, projects and actions. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: Canberra

¹⁵ NSW Injury Risk Management Centre (2000) Analysis of Drowning in Australia and Pilot Analysis of Near-Drowning in New South Wales. Australian Water Safety Council: Sydney

implementation of the plan



“AN INTEGRATED APPROACH”

The role of the AWSC will be to oversee and where necessary provide communication and direction to ensure the effective implementation of the priorities and strategies contained within the Plan. The members of the AWSC will be responsible for the communication strategy.

The AWSC will liaise closely with key stakeholders including State and Territory Water Safety Councils, government and with the major Water Safety development and delivery agencies. This liaison will ensure that all parties are aware of the initiatives of other agencies and where similar programs or resources are required across States or Territories, it will provide the conduit for sharing resources.

The integration between the National Water Safety Plan and State and Territory plans will ensure a more effective implementation of the plan at grass-roots level. In effect the State and Territory water safety plans or frameworks will become the working documents of the water safety industry.

Commitment by Government is a vital ingredient in the ultimate success of this process. It is important that communication and funding channels are created with relevant Government Departments and Agencies. It is also important that these departments are partners in addressing particular water safety issues. The AWSC will undertake to liaise closely with Government on these water safety issues and ensure effective communication and input.

Primary commitment to the National Water Safety Plan should remain with the Commonwealth Department responsible for Water Safety (as at July 2004 - the Dept of Communication, IT and the Arts) with subsequent conduits to State and Territory Sport and Recreation Departments through the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council (SRMC), the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS) and State Emergency Service Departments with water safety responsibilities. Additional commitment and support is required of other relevant Commonwealth and State and Territory Government Departments including access to key decision making forums such as:

- Directors General of Education
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Australian Health Ministers Council
- National Public Health Partnership
- Strategic Injury Prevention Partnership
- Emergency Management Australia (EMA) within the Department of Defence
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and State Local Government bodies (eg: Local Government and Shires Association of NSW)
- Tourism Ministers Council

Advocacy support in promoting the Plan will also be sought from professional associations, such as the Public Health Association of Australia and the Australian Injury Prevention Network.

EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP OF THE AWSC

In 2003 the AWSC expanded its membership to include representation from SCORS and Aquatic Industry Management. Because of the continuing number of drowning related deaths and injury attributed to sailing, diving and recreational boating the AWSC must establish closer direct links with representatives of these pursuits.

- Recommendation 29: That appropriate groups representing the sailing, diving and recreational boating industries be invited to become members of the AWSC.

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STRATEGY

The AWSC is committed to improving the flow of information during the roll-out of the 2004-07 plan including ongoing reporting to, feedback from and dialogue with stakeholder groups.

Strategies to ensure effective communication between stakeholders will include:

- Reporting linked to the performance indicators contained within the plan
- Stronger communication links between AWSC and State and Territory Water Safety Councils
- An annual meeting will be held of the AWSC with representatives of State and Territory Water Safety Councils to discuss the progress and integration of the plan
- Water Safety Interest Group conferences and workshops to be scheduled regularly throughout the period
- Posting of regular communiqués, reports and resource library on the website www.watersafety.com.au

Media Strategy

A media strategy will also be developed to ensure regular updates on progress of the National Water Safety Plan and to ensure broad promotion of the Plan's existence and achievements. The media strategy will also include a regular water safety conference.

- Recommendation 30: That the AWSC develop and implement a communications and media strategy for the 2004-07 plan.

SPECIFIC ISSUE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

During the past five years a much greater depth of evidence, knowledge and expertise has been developed in specific areas of water safety. Experts now reside in a variety of organisations from water safety organisations, government departments and university faculties.

The AWSC will convene forums to discuss specific issues in detail as well as conducting general conferences. An issue where a specialist group will be convened to closely analyse and make recommendations is that of "Home Pool Safety - Legislation and Compliance".

This approach of involving specialist stakeholders with interest and expertise in the designated area will allow a greater depth of analysis of key issues and will generate greater acceptance and support for the recommendations.

IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICE AND SETTING STANDARDS

A key role of the AWSC during the implementation of this Plan is to establish a process that chronicles and updates existing standards and identifies areas of need for new standards.

This identification of standards and best practice will support the goal of continuous improvement of water safety standards in Australia.

This approach should also resolve the concern voiced by the water safety industry that while some States or Territories employ world's best practice in aspects of water safety this situation is not reflected consistently across Australia. It has also been identified that there is currently no avenue for the water safety industry to seek ratification of a national standard.

- Recommendation 31: That the AWSC develop a system that chronicles, updates and makes recommendations on water safety standards at a National level.

MONITORING

The success of the Plan in reducing the number of people drowning in Australia by 20% by 2007 is contingent on the recommendations being adopted by the various organisations responsible for water safety throughout Australia. To ensure the successful implementation and delivery of the recommendations in a timely manner a number of performance indicators have been developed. As the water safety community strives to continually improve its effectiveness the performance indicators will provide the means to measure success and progress and to identify where further work needs to be undertaken.

The structure for an evaluation of the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 will be established by the Australian Water Safety Council in close cooperation with State Water Safety Councils or their equivalents during the first year of the plan.

- Recommendation 32: That the AWSC develop and implement an evaluation plan for the National Water Safety Plan 2004-07.

As has been highlighted throughout the Plan there are many Water Safety oriented programs being successfully carried out throughout Australia. There has been however, very little analysis of the effectiveness of these programs either individually or collectively. This Plan seeks to establish baseline standards and benchmarks and will set clear timeframes from which future improvement can be measured. The National Water Safety Plan will also establish measures of performance on an annual basis to allow the water safety industry to monitor performance and respond to specific issues.

CONCLUSION

While it must be acknowledged that improvements have been made in the quality and coordination of Water Safety in Australia over the past five years there is still much to be achieved. Significant contributions have been made by governments, statutory authorities, the corporate sector, water safety organisations and by dedicated individuals – these contributions are acknowledged.

The purpose of this National Water Safety Plan 2004-07 is to ensure that there is a coordinated and cooperative approach to the development and delivery of water safety throughout Australia. This strategic document presents an integrated approach, incorporating State and Territory water safety objectives to ensure effective delivery of operational outcomes throughout Australia.

For the period 2004-07 it is essential that Water Safety remains a high priority for Governments at all levels and that the commitment by key Water Safety stakeholders is not fragmented or diminished.

While the reduction in the drowning rate is acknowledged our ultimate goal remains "zero drowning deaths and the establishment of a culture of a water safety in Australia". The objective for the period of this Plan is to achieve a continuing reduction of drowning deaths to 200 by 2007. This represents a 20% decrease on the 250 drowning deaths in 2003 or a 5% decrease per annum over the period of the Plan.

The Australian Water Safety Council is pleased to propose the [National Water Safety Plan 2004-07](#) and looks forward to working with all stakeholders to successfully implement the plan and together achieving our objectives.

appendices



APPENDIX 1: STATE AND TERRITORY WATER SAFETY PLANS

- Summary of State and Territory Objectives and Key Result Areas

1.1 AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Document Title	Safe Waters ACT Framework and Action Plan
Co-ordinating Body	ACT Water Safety Working Party (Sport & Recreation ACT)
Timeframe of Plan	Action Plan 2000-2002
Website Address	http://www.sport.act.gov.au/development/projects/prjwater.html
Vision Statement	The ACT community is well informed about water safety with no drowning or near drowning incidents.
Goal Statement	To increase community awareness about water safety principles. To prevent drowning and near-drowning incidences.
KEY OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Key Objective 1:	<p>Public Education and Awareness Encourage responsible water safety behaviour of people when in and around water.</p> <p>1.1 To achieve maximum impact on public awareness through the use of a consistent message in a new water safety campaign.</p> <p>1.2 To strengthen community awareness and understanding of water safety principles.</p> <p>1.3 To investigate sponsorship opportunities for the public awareness campaign.</p>
Key Objective 2:	<p>Prevention Increase and improve swimming and water survival skills of the ACT community.</p> <p>2.1 To ensure the delivery of programs is provided by appropriately accredited instructors.</p> <p>2.2 To deliver effective water safety programs for primary and secondary school-aged children.</p> <p>2.3 To increase the opportunities for the whole community to participate in swim school and water safety education programs.</p> <p>2.4 To provide water safety education programs that comprises water safety, swimming and personal survival components.</p>
Key Objective 3:	<p>Surveillance Create safer environments in and around water.</p> <p>3.1 To minimise safety risks near and in water.</p> <p>3.2 To provide patrols and rescue services where required</p>
Key Objective 4:	<p>Research To have available up-to-date research and statistics on drowning, near-drowning and other water related incidents.</p> <p>4.1. To obtain timely access to statistics and anecdotal information on drowning, near drowning and other water-related incidents from police, ambulances and other appropriate sources.</p> <p>4.2. To use research information to determine if current approaches are well targeted and effective.</p>

1.2 NEW SOUTH WALES

Document Title	NSW Water Safety Framework: 2001-2003
Co-ordinating Body	NSW Water Safety Taskforce
Timeframe of the Plan	2001-2003
Website Address	www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au
Vision Statement	To continue the downward trend in the annual rate of drownings, near-drowning and water-related accidents in NSW
Goal Statement	The overall goals of this framework are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve a coordinated and collaborative framework for water safety in NSW; and• Ensure an effective and strategic management of water safety in NSW.
KEY OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Key Objective 1:	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 To improve the education and awareness for those responsible for delivering water safety services.<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1.1 Identify the education needs of those responsible for delivering water safety services.1.1.2 Develop education programs for those responsible for delivering water safety services.1.1.3 Implement education programs for those responsible for delivering water safety services.1.2 To improve public awareness of the risks associated with aquatic environments.<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.2.1 Identify the water safety education needs of users of aquatic environments including those of under-represented groups.1.2.2 Develop water safety and public education programs for users of aquatic environments.1.2.3 Implement water safety and public education programs
Key Objective 2:	Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Ensure that policy, legislation, regulations and standards pertaining to water safety are appropriate and effective.<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1.1 Monitor and review current policy, legislation, regulation and standards.2.1.2 Identify policy, legislation, regulation and standards requirements.2.1.3 Implement identified policy, legislation, regulation and standards requirements.2.2 Improve aquatic environments and industry standards<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.2.1 Develop and implement standardised water safety signage.2.2.2 Develop and implement improved safety, rescue and emergency procedures.2.2.3 Develop and implement improved safety, rescue and emergency equipment.2.2.4 Develop and implement agreed standards for water safety education programs and personnel involved in the delivery of these programs.
Key Objective 3:	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Have access to comprehensive data on drowning, near-drownings and water-related injuries.<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1.1 Develop and implement improved data collection methods.3.2 To reduce risk of drowning and near-drowning and water-related injuries in aquatic environments.<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.2.1 Develop and implement mechanisms for identifying risk in aquatic environments.3.2.2 Develop and implement risk awareness strategies that target user groups, environments, activities and specific knowledge and/or skills.3.2.3 Evaluate the implementation of good practice standards for aquatic locations.3.3 To have a coordinated approach to ensure the efficient use of resources to improve water safety initiatives.<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.3.1 Identify and promote good practice in relation to water safety education initiatives and the design and management of water environments.3.3.2 Establish a system for the regular monitoring and evaluation of water safety initiatives.

1.3 NORTHERN TERRITORY

Document Title	Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2003-2006
Co-ordinating Body	Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council
Timeframe of the Plan	2003-2006
Website Address	www.watersafety.nt.gov.au
Vision Statement	To reduce the rate of drowning, near-drowning and water-related injuries in the Northern Territory
Goal Statement	To achieve a coordinated and collaborative plan for the community with safe water: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environments;• Education;• Practices; and• Skills.

KEY OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Key Objective 1:

Public Awareness

- 1.1 To promote informed and responsible safe practices in and around water
 - 1.1.1 To coordinate an annual NT Water Safety Week, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.
 - 1.1.2 To develop, implement and evaluate appropriate ongoing 'seasonal' aquatic safety public awareness campaigns targeting high-risk groups with culturally appropriate messages.
 - 1.1.3 Develop a database of displays, slogans, water safety images and water safety resources from all stakeholders for use by the wider community
- 1.2 To increase participation in swimming and water safety programs to develop skills, resuscitation and safe participation in and around water.
 - 1.2.1 To develop swimming and water safety programs to target relevant audiences.
 - 1.2.2 Identify the gaps in water safety skills, attitudes, knowledge and behaviour of community members.

Key Objective 2:

Education

- 2.1 All school based children be provided with the opportunity to acquire a minimum standard of swimming and water safety competencies.
 - 2.1.1 Determine the minimum standard of water safety and swimming competencies.
 - 2.1.2 Develop strategies to improve schools ability to access water safety programs.
 - 2.1.3 Develop comprehensive wet and dry swimming and water safety packages to achieve education framework outcomes.
- 2.2 To promote and make available best practice resources and current research.
 - 2.2.1 Assist health workers, police, and tourism operators to develop standardised culturally appropriate water safety information and support for service providers.
 - 2.2.2. Establish a matrix of water safety resources and stakeholders

Key Objective 3:

Standards, Legislation and Compliance

- 3.3 To investigate options for policy and legislative change to maximise 'water safety'.
 - 3.3.1 Review current NT legislation in accordance with national standards and best practice.
 - 3.3.2 Compare legislation, regulations, policy and standards with other jurisdictions and identify gaps.
 - 3.3.3 Make appropriate recommendations regarding changes to legislation and regulations.
- 3.4 To establish best practice water safety standards and guidelines.
 - 3.4.1 In line with other jurisdictions, review and consider adopting the Australian Standards Signage.
 - 3.4.2 In line with other jurisdictions gain Australian Standards approval for signage and seek consensus of landowner / managers in implementing standards
 - 3.4.3 Identify and monitor standards for venues, aquatic activities and qualification of service providers according to nationally recognised standards from peak aquatic agencies.
- 3.5 Recommend monitoring and enforcement of legislation and regulations.
 - 3.3.1. Make a recommendation to stakeholders to develop audit systems to monitor enforcement of legislation.
 - 3.3.2. Monitor level of compliance of audit systems

Key Objective 4:

Information and Monitoring

- 4.1 To monitor drowning, near-drowning and consequential injuries to provide information that is accurate, reliable and accessible.
 - 4.1.1 Utilise Monash University National Centre for Coronial Information (MUNCCI) database for coronial information.
 - 4.1.2 Develop rigorous standardised methodology for collection of water-related injuries that occur in the aquatic setting and home environment. Liaise with NSW regarding minimum dataset for rescues.
 - 4.1.3 Develop a longitudinal research plan that ensures consistent and accurate trend analysis.
- 4.2 To research and evaluate the underlying causes, associations and links that contribute to drowning, near-drowning and consequential injuries in all settings where these incidences occur.
 - 4.2.1 Develop a coordinated and comprehensive research agenda that highlights the causes of water-related injury and drowning.
 - 4.2.2 Establish and maintain research practice and reporting for water-related injury and drowning.
 - 4.2.3 Conduct ongoing research with stakeholders regarding best practice.

1.4 QUEENSLAND

Document Title	“Safe Waters For Queensland” – The Queensland Water Safety Plan
Co-ordinating Body	Queensland Water Safety Council
Timeframe of the Plan	2004 - 2007
Website Address	
Vision Statement	Safewaters For Queensland
Goal Statement	To develop, implement and monitor strategies for water safety through awareness, education, surveillance, rescue and research programs which will minimise, if not eliminate, deaths and injuries caused by participation in any water-related activity therefore creating a safer and more enjoyable time for all those who work, live and play in and around water in Queensland.

KEY OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Key Objective 1:

Co-Operative Co-ordination

- 1.1. Formalise the Queensland Water Safety Council (QWSC)
 - 1.1.1. Establish a QWSC Secretariat
 - 1.1.2. Establish a QWSC Executive
 - 1.1.3. Establish and maintain a database of organisations and agencies
 - 1.1.4. Convene and conduct meetings and seminars
 - 1.1.5. Convene an annual symposium of stakeholders
 - 1.1.6. Provide an annual Implementation Progress Report
- 1.2. Information and Resource Sharing
 - 1.2.1. Monitor water safety advances
 - 1.2.2. Establish, commission and maintain a collection point and database for analyses of data
 - 1.2.3. Establish and maintain a QWSC website
- 1.3. Facilitate joint programmes and partnerships
 - 1.3.1. Support the co-operative planning and implementation of joint programmes and partnerships
 - 1.3.2. Promote effective monitoring and evaluation of such programmes
 - 1.3.3. Develop joint funding proposals
- 1.4. Establish a credible and consistent advocacy role for the QWSC in the field of water-based safety.

Key Objective 2:

Research, Analysis and Program Development

- 2.1 Seek to establish, by means of the State Coroner, uniform standards for investigating drownings and other water-related events
- 2.2 Develop a consolidated reliable but non-identified database that identifies the varying actual causes and location of death or contributory causes and circumstances surrounding each drowning
- 2.3 Develop and provide a non-identified database on near-drownings
- 2.4 Provide interpretation of the data collected on aquatic misadventures to develop strategies
- 2.5 Develop regular briefings for the members of the QWSC, highlighting trends and other information
- 2.6 Improve the evidence base
- 2.7 Seek the development of reliable performance indicators
- 2.8 Evaluate proven and promising drowning prevention countermeasures
- 2.9 Ensure any relevant locally collected data is forwarded to national agencies

Key Objective 3:

Increased Public Awareness and Education

- 3.1 Identify any gaps
 - 3.1.1. Develop awareness and education programmes
- 3.2 Develop and promote identified multi- strategic, state-wide water safety campaigns targeting:
 - 3.2.1 Inbound Tourists
 - 3.2.2 New arrivals
 - 3.2.3 Members of rural and remote communities including indigenous communities
 - 3.2.4 Home pool owners and those retailers that provide pool supplies, pool toys and primary chemical supplies
 - 3.2.5 Users of all forms of water facilities who are not members of clubs, including;
 - 3.2.5.1 Boat owners along with boat hirers and their staff
 - 3.2.5.2 Fishing enthusiasts
 - 3.2.5.3 First time parents and their children
- 3.3 Promote 'Safewaters'
- 3.4 Support and enhance existing water safety and awareness programmes currently delivered
- 3.5 Encourage the inclusion of Sun Safety and skin cancer prevention messages in all relevant water safety programmes
- 3.6 Encourage the inclusion of 'Water Safety in Queensland' messages in video and other material shown/given to inbound tourists and new arrivals
 - 3.6.1 Develop effective counter disaster responses for water-related disasters
 - 3.6.2 Provide information to raise awareness of appropriate flood safety behaviour
- 3.7 Encourage and actively promote the widespread teaching of CPR techniques
- 3.8 Develop a general public education and awareness campaign promoting the proper use of PFD's

Key Objective 4:

Surveillance and Compliance

- 4.1. Support accredited water safety organisations providing safety surveillance services
- 4.2. Support safety audits of natural and constructed aquatic locations
- 4.3. Promote the development of uniform 'Industry Codes of Practice'
- 4.4. Promote compliance with the highest standards of 'accident' injury minimisation controls in the management of all aquatic areas.
- 4.5. Promote standardisation of pool fencing and inspection regulations and the enforcement thereof through:
 - 4.5.1. Local government
 - 4.5.2. Manufacturers and retailers
 - 4.5.3. Importers, manufacturers and retailers
- 4.6. Promote extension of the requirements for a recreational shipmasters licence
- 4.7. Promote requirements of all boat license holders to possess a current First Aid Certificate
- 4.8. Promote 'safety impact assessments' for proposed developments near water
- 4.9. Provide 'risk assessment' assistance services for facility design
- 4.10. Promote the development of PFD's used by boat users
- 4.11. Promote the establishment of fenced 'Child Safe Play Areas' on rural properties
- 4.12. Undertake a review of relevant state legislation, and codes of practice
- 4.13. Promote the teaching of resuscitation
- 4.14. Promote the compliance with the recommended safety gear requirements
- 4.15. Promote implementation of standardised water safety related training programs and instructor qualifications
- 4.16. Promote the introduction of a national compliance plate for recreation water vessels
- 4.17. Promote the compulsory display of a CPR chart on all domestic pool fences

Key Objective 5:

Efficient Rescue Services

- 5.1 Support accredited water safety organisations providing rescue services
- 5.2 Promote minimum uniform standards for the providers of water safety rescue services
- 5.3 Encourage the expansion of capabilities for rapid medical response
- 5.4 Explore the possibilities of supporting training and programs for those involved in water safety in nearby countries
- 5.5 Encourage the development of local emergency services networks

1.5 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Document Title	South Australian - State Water Safety Plan
Co-ordinating Body	Interim SA Water Safety Council / SA Office of Sport and Recreation
Timeframe of the Plan	2000 – (final draft)
Website Address	
Vision Statement	<p>The low number of drownings and near-drownings in South Australia will be maintained and further reduced. In addition, water activity related injury will be reduced.</p> <p>This will be achieved through an even greater commitment to coordination and collaboration by relevant industry stakeholders.</p>
KEY OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Key Objective 1:	<p>Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Need for formal representative coordinating group.1.2 Lack of linkages in planning and providing programs.1.3 Need for ongoing coordinated review of programs and services.1.4 Limited resource sharing.1.5 Independent promotion of water safety.1.6 Organisations and government departments involved in the prevention of water-related incidents to work with rescue based organisations to develop programs and information packages for use by the rescue organisations in promoting water safety.1.7 Develop a communication strategy, including opportunities for information sharing and awareness.1.8 ‘Whole’ of government approach required.
Key Objective 2:	<p>Public Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Need for consistent water safety ‘message’.2.2 Require stronger focus on water activity injury and risks.2.3 Require stronger rural focus.2.4 Need to target water safety information to ‘at-risk’ groups.2.5 Need for safety guidelines linked to industry sectors, eg boating.
Key Objective 3:	<p>Teaching and Accreditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Need for recognition of and commitment to existing valued water safety skill development programs.3.2 Need competency based framework within programs.3.3 Range of organisations with different swim teaching techniques.3.4 No required commitment to standards (particularly by commercial sector).
Key Objective 4:	<p>Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">4.1 Need to identify and manage danger environments and situations.4.2 Issues with alcohol and aquatic environments.4.3 Need to highlight water environment risks and encourage ‘user responsibility’.
Key Objective 5:	<p>Legislation and Regulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">5.1 Lack of legislation for risk management and consumer safety.5.2 Require inspection and enforcement of home swimming pool fencing regulations.
Key Objective 6:	<p>Statistical Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">6.1 Lack of coordinated information on drownings, near-drownings, accidents and injury.6.2 Information required to determine “at-risk” groups.

1.6 TASMANIA

Document Title Tasmanian Water Safety Plan

Co-ordinating Body Tasmanian Water Safety Council

Timeframe of the Plan 2001-2003

Website Address

Vision Statement Furthering the Fight Against Drowning

KEY OBJECTIVES STRATEGIES

Key Objective 1:

Leadership

To work with community, government, and industry to promote water safety standards and practices

1.1 Community service

1.1.1 Establish the Tasmanian Water Safety Council

1.1.2 Develop a generic community awareness campaign for non-boating related water safety

1.2 Government Liaison

1.2.1 Declare commitment to the Tasmanian Water Safety Charter 2001-2003

1.2.2 Achievement of formal government recognition for Tasmanian Water Safety Charter

1.2.3 Communicate directly with relevant government departments and agencies

1.3 Risk Management

1.3.1 Promote the provision of aquatic risk management advice and assessment against recognised standards

1.4 Research

1.4.1 Promote research into drowning, near-drowning and injury and other aquatic related incidents

Key Objective 2:

Prevention and Rescue

To highlight and reduce the risks of injury and drowning in Tasmanian aquatic environments

1.1 Safety & Signage Audits

1.1.1 Promote aquatic safety and signage audits as an effective tool for Government, community and private sector risk management strategies.

1.1.2 Emergency services

1.1.3 Develop and promote the cooperative network of aquatic emergency services available in Tasmania

1.1.4 Encourage the increasing provision of prevention and rescue services in Tasmania

1.3 Research and Development

1.3.1 Promote research into the implementation of appropriate safety services at all aquatic recreation locations

1.3.2 Promote the development and implementation of innovative preventative and rescue devices, services and operations.

Key Objective 3:

Education

To provide every Tasmanian with the opportunity to acquire a minimum standard of swimming and water safety competency.

3.1 Swimming and water safety

3.1.1 Establish and promote state competency standards for swimming and water safety education programs in 7-12 year old Tasmanians

3.1.2 Establish and promote state competency standards for swimming and water safety education programs for 13-17 year old Tasmanians

3.2 Swimming and water safety teachers, trainers and instructors accreditation/qualification

3.2.1 Monitor the swimming & water safety teachers/trainers/instructors qualifications according to nationally endorsed training package qualifications

3.3 Public Education

3.3.1 Create a public education strategy to deliver swimming and water safety information and training to target public and 'at-risk' demographics

1.7 VICTORIA

Document Title	Creating a Water Safety Culture 2003-2008:
Co-ordinating Body	Victorian Aquatic Industry Council
Timeframe of the Plan	2003-2008
Website Address	http://www.watersafety.vic.gov.au
Goal Statement	Successful implementation of the plan for improving water safety in Victoria

KEY OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Key Objective 1:

Inland Waterways

- 1.1 A series of community based education seminars be conducted throughout regional and rural Victoria to highlight and raise awareness about general water safety and in particular boating safety.
- 1.2 A major forum be held involving all land and water management agencies to standardise risk management processes relating to water safety and to coordinate signage and information being promoted to the public.
- 1.3 In areas of known high usage for recreational aquatic activity, further expand the process of zoning of activities and ensure each specific activity is clearly designated.
- 1.4 A promotional campaign be conducted to highlight the creation of child safety zones on rural properties and farms, stressing the importance of parental supervision and knowledge of rescue and resuscitation skills.
- 1.5 Aquatic education programs be provided in public and private swimming pools and at open water venues throughout rural and regional Victoria
- 1.6 Information about the risk of spinal injury in unknown waters be developed and targeted to at-risk groups.
- 1.7 Support the introduction of the Australian Builders Plate from July 2005 to enhance the safety of new recreational boats by providing essential safety information and outlining the limitations of the boat.
- 1.8 Review and amend waterway rules to facilitate the safest operating environment for navigable waters throughout Victoria.
- 1.9 A consistent system of signage be introduced for all accessible inland waterways using relevant international symbols for information and warnings.

Key Objective 2:

Swimming Pools

- 2.1 Investigate the use of technology to provide supervision and monitoring of public swimming pools.
- 2.2 Promote in-service training for lifeguards and swim teachers with an emphasis on scanning, surveillance and general supervision.
- 2.3 Develop appropriate standard signs for use in swimming pools at tourist and accommodation venues as both a warning of dangers and an indication of appropriate behaviour.
- 2.4 That support be provided to fully implement the recommendations of the Report from the Victorian Swimming Pool and Spa Working Party (2000).
- 2.5 Expand the promotion of swimming pool and spa safety to all organisations and individuals directly linked to the care of infants and young children
- 2.6 Support the development and improvement of safety guidelines related to all aspects of pool operation such as RLSSA Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation.

Key Objective 3:

Bay and Surf Beaches

- 3.1 Surf education curriculum and programs be delivered to all schools.
- 3.2 A survey be conducted of aquatic recreational activity at high usage beaches with the purpose of providing effective zoning of beach activities.
- 3.3 Television and radio broadcasters be encouraged to provide beach safety information particularly in relation to local beach conditions.
- 3.4 A consistent system of signage be introduced for all beaches with international symbols relating to warnings and information.
- 3.5 Standard water safety signage at all beaches to be in place by 2007.
- 3.6 That all patrolled beaches have signage at the major access point indicating whether the beach is patrolled or not at that time.

- 3.7 All rescue agencies to receive standard training in rescue skills and response to help to coordinate and ensure consistent standards.
- 3.8 All rescue agencies to be coordinated by a relevant coordinating body using standard search and rescue protocols.
- 3.9 Develop a 'Safe Beach Guide' for distribution to tourists, conveniently sized to fit in a car glove box.
- 3.10 Review population trends, housing growth and beach usage every 5 years to identify new beaches that should be patrolled.
- 3.11 Provide information through appropriate outlets to ensure tourists are informed about water safety at Victorian beaches and waterways.
- 3.12 A review of all volunteer rescue services be undertaken to ensure the long-term sustainability of volunteer service delivery.

Key Objective 4:

Oceans and Bays

- 4.1 That the mandatory wearing of lifejackets (Personal Flotation Devices) be introduced for all people in boats less than 6 metres.
- 4.2 That Research be undertaken into the design and function of PFD's to increase their effectiveness, comfort and ease of wearing.
- 4.3 That the recreational boat licensing system be reviewed 5 years after its introduction to ensure that the level of knowledge and skills are improved.
- 4.4 Boating safety education be integrated into all school based water safety education programs.

Key Objective 5:

Growth In Aquatic Recreation

- 5.1 That a Victorian Water Safety Consultative Group be established to meet annually to review the progress and implementation of the recommendations of the Victorian Water Safety Plan.
- 5.2 That an education campaign be conducted in schools to raise awareness about water safety signage and symbols.
- 5.3 That all Local Government authorities develop a water safety policy applicable to areas under their control.
- 5.4 That Local Government institutes a program of enforcement and compliance in relation to fencing regulations for home pools.
- 5.5 That Aquatic safety education be a mandatory component of the curriculum in Primary schools.
- 5.6 Institute a promotional program to school teachers outlining the range of educational resources available for use in both primary and secondary schools.
- 5.7 Specially targeted education programs should be provided to raise water safety awareness amongst different sectors in the community.
- 5.8 Conduct research into the effects of legal and illegal drugs in relation to aquatic accidents and drowning.
- 5.9 An adequately funded public awareness campaign on water safety be conducted on an annual basis
- 5.10 Water Safety Week be conducted on an annual basis with support from both the aquatic industry and government.
- 5.11 That the Victorian Water Safety Certificate be continued to be offered to schools and pools.
- 5.12 That all water safety educational resources be reviewed over the next four years (2003-07) to ensure they remain relevant and are current in style, format and presentation.
- 5.13 Conduct research into near-drowning to assess the prevalence of near-drowning incidents and its impact socially and financially.

1.8 WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Preamble: The non government water safety organisations and government departments within Western Australia have developed a strong working relationship. Specific government departments have been identified as custodians of particular water safety issues with clear statements defining their role. As a custodian they are responsible for pooling, analysing and reviewing information. This process works effectively in delivering appropriate water safety outcomes as it clearly delineates between the delivery of water safety strategies (responsibility of non government sector) as opposed to the review of the outcomes (government sector)

With the continued support of the Western Australian Government there is expected to be an ongoing downward trend in drowning within Western Australia during the next three years.

Timeframe of the Plan

The Western Australian Water Safety Framework is due to be launched June/July 2004.

Key State Government Departments

Department of Sport and Recreation

The Department of Sport and Recreation allocates public funds to water safety because participation in aquatic recreation should be safe as well as enjoyable.

Department of Education and Training

The Education Department ensures that all government school students understand the aquatic environment and have the water safety skills to be informed, responsible citizens as well as achieve health and well being

Department of Health

The Health Department recognises the risk of drowning and near-drowning and allocates public funds to reduce its incidence.

Department of Housing and Works

The Department of Housing and Works recognises the importance of providing public funds to establish well maintained aquatic facilities within remote indigenous communities to improve the health of local residents. It also supports the continued development and refinement of legislation, guidelines and educational strategies to provide safe home pool environments.

The Office of Multicultural Issues

The Office of Multicultural Interests recognises the risk of drowning and near-drowning among CALD communities and contributes to reducing its incidence

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) has a major role in promoting marine safety through education, training and the provision of marine safety information, and the development of legislation and marine safety policy, with the overall aim of reducing accidents and incidents in the marine environment. The DPI is also a member of the National Marine Safety Council.

Alcohol and Drug Authority

The Alcohol and Drug Authority conducts awareness raising campaigns and provides input into the Liquor Licensing Act. Considers the presence of water when issuing licences.

Department of Conservation and Land Management

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) undertakes risk management for park visitors to their parks – by inclusion this relates to water safety and drowning prevention.

Department of Fisheries

The Department of Fisheries supports programs that reduce the risk and incidence of drowning and near-drowning whilst participating in recreational fishing activities.

Co-ordinating Water Safety Bodies

Royal Life Saving Society Australia - Western Australia Branch

Surf Life Saving Western Australia

Goal Statement

To reduce drowning and near-drowning and related incidents in Western Australia

KEY OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Key Objective 1:

Water Safety Education and Awareness

- 1.1 To improve public awareness of water safety strategies
 - 1.1.1 Identify the gaps in water safety attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour in community members who use aquatic environments.
 - 1.1.2 Develop, implement and evaluate appropriate aquatic safety public awareness campaigns targeting high-risk groups
- 1.2 To encourage safe participation in aquatic activity
 - 1.2.1 Promote the development of competencies to safely participate in aquatic activity.
 - 1.2.2 Increase knowledge and understanding of what embodies safe participation.
- 1.3 Aquatic safety programs delivered by service providers through effective communication, effective partnerships and workforce development
 - 1.3.1 Re-orientate workforce development according to the needs of the community and findings of research across all strategic directions
 - 1.3.2 Increase effective partnerships between government bodies and water safety providers designed to improve the development and maintenance of water safety services

Key Objective 2:

Research and Evaluation

- 2.1 To monitor drowning, near-drowning and water-related injury to provide information that is accurate, reliable and accessible.
 - 2.1.1 Develop a comprehensive database of water-related injuries.
 - 2.1.2 Develop standardised methodologies for incident surveillance
 - 2.1.3 Develop a long-term surveillance plan that ensures consistent, comprehensive surveillance that will enable accurate, reliable trend analysis.
- 2.2 To research the underlying causes, associations and links that contribute to drownings, near-drownings and related injuries in all settings where these incidents occur.
 - 2.2.1 Encourage high quality rigour in research practice and reporting for drownings, near-drownings and related injuries.
 - 2.2.2 Develop a coordinated and comprehensive research agenda that illuminates the causes of aquatic injury and drowning.
- 2.3 To evaluate strategies and programs designed to reduce injury in the aquatic setting including the home environment.
 - 2.3.1 Identify and promote best practice in relation to water safety education and public awareness programs.
 - 2.3.2 Establish standardised evaluation methodologies and protocols for sharing, collection and analysis of data for water safety programs and initiatives.
 - 2.3.3 Establish a plan for the regular evaluation of water safety initiatives.

Key Objective 3:

Policy, Standards, Legislation and Enforcement

- 3.1 Ensure that policy, legislation and regulations maximise safety in the aquatic industry.
 - 3.1.1 Review the current status of aquatic safety policy, legislation and regulations with regard to effectiveness and appropriateness.
 - 3.1.2 Where appropriate, develop and implement new legislation and regulation
 - 3.1.3 Monitor the effectiveness of the enforcement of legislation.
- 3.2 To establish best practice water safety standards.
 - 3.2.1 Identify and review current industry standards and policies pertaining to water safety and aquatic environments.
 - 3.2.2 Develop and implement appropriate standards that are agreed with industry and that increase the safety of the aquatic environment.
- 3.3 To create safe environments in and around the water for participation in aquatic activities
 - 3.3.1 Ensure there is adequate legislation to facilitate public safety in and around aquatic environments.
 - 3.3.2 Ensure adequate supervision of young people and those with limited swimming skills and experience.
 - 3.3.3 Provide patrols and rescue services where required.
 - 3.3.4 Ensure adequate training is available in surveillance, supervision, lifesaving and rescue skills.
- 3.4 To ensure stakeholders and individuals are aware of their duty of care responsibilities
 - 3.4.1 Ensure adequate risk management planning and adoption of the required preventative controls
- 3.5 Establish an adequate response in the event of an emergency.
 - 3.5.1 Ensure stakeholders invest in appropriate infrastructure for managing emergencies.

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES OF WATER SAFETY “BEST PRACTICE”

In an effort to continuously improve water safety in Australia examples of Best Practice used in a particular State or Territory or by a water safety organisation have been highlighted throughout this Plan. This appendix takes four such examples of Best Practice and uses them to describe the rationale behind selecting water safety best practice in Australia. It is hoped that over the life of the Plan the template used below will encourage many other examples of best practice to be displayed in a consistent manner. This will allow others to use the best practice for their purposes or to use elements to continue the process of improved water safety.

Best practice comes in many forms, from programs to legislation to education methodology. The following four examples are used to highlight the adoption of best practice and were chosen at random from the best practice examples identified in the Plan.

Each Best Practice will identify the “Level of Evidence” using the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) level of evidence I-IV.¹⁶ In addition a “V” category has been added which represents “Expert Opinion”.

DESIGNATION OF LEVELS OF EVIDENCE

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE	DEFINITION
I	Evidence obtained from a systematic review of all relevant randomised controlled trials.
II	Evidence obtained from at least one properly designed randomized controlled trial.
III-1	Evidence obtained from well-designed pseudo-randomised controlled trials (alternate allocation or some other method).
III-2	Evidence obtained from comparative studies with concurrent controls and allocation not randomised (cohort studies), case control studies, or interrupted time series with a control group.
III-3	Evidence obtained from comparative studies with historical control, two or more single-arm studies, or interrupted time series without a parallel control group.
IV	Evidence obtained from case series, either post-test or pre-test and post-test.
V	Expert Opinion

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE 1:

Name	NSW Pilot Keep Watch Community Health Workers Water Safety Program
Type of best practice	Educational Program
Responsible	Royal Life Saving Society Australia
Target population	NSW Community Health Workers
Period	Start: Feb 2003 - Finish: July 2003
Description	A Keep Watch workshop and a number of resources for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in NSW were developed by RLSSA. The main objectives of the pilot program were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain a relatively high level of awareness of the Keep Watch water safety messages and water safety prevention strategies by CHWs in NSW• Distribute Keep Watch water safety resources and tips of how best to use them• The evaluation showed that the workshops increased CHWs knowledge about the Keep Watch water safety messages
Why this is considered best practice	
Level of evidence	Level IV:
Reference/s	Franklin RC, Mitchell R (2003). Evaluation of the Pilot Keep Watch Community Health Workers Water Safety Program. NSW Water Safety Taskforce Sydney [http://www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdf/Evaluation%20CHW%20Program%20Rpt.pdf]

¹⁶ NHMRC (1999). A guideline to the development, implementation and evaluation of clinical practice guidelines. National Health and Medical Council
[<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/pdf/cp30.pdf>]; Canberra

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE 2:

Name	Tasmania Boating Legislation – Compulsory Wearing of PFD's
Type of best practice	Legislation
Responsible	Tasmanian Government
Target population	Recreational Boat Users
Period	2001-Onwards
Description	In the Marine and Safety (Motor Boats and Licences) By Laws 1998 changes made were made in 2000 which came into force on the 1 January 2001 requiring the following “...Every person onboard a motor boat under 6 metres in length or a motor propelled tender must wear a personal flotation device specified in Schedule 1 while the vessel is under power, unless the person is within a deckhouse, cabin or secure enclosed space...”
Why this is considered best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of old legislation was undertaken and changes made• Provides a higher level of protection for recreational boaters• Number of boat related drowning deaths has decreased
Level of evidence	Level IV
Reference/s	Marine and Safety Tasmania (2000). Recreational Boating Safety Review. Marine and Safety Tasmania: Hobart Marine And Safety (Motor Boats And Licences) By-Laws 1998

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE 3:

Name	Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Guide
Type of best practice	Manual
Responsible	Surf Life Saving Australia and Royal Life Saving Society Australia
Target population	All manager and venue operators of aquatic locations
Period	2003-ongoing
Description	Signage plays an important role in risk management as it informs users of dangers, and safety information, offers some protection to the land manager from litigation and provide an economic alternative to that of employing a person at every access point to the aquatic location to inform people of dangers. The manual has been designed to provide a clear guide to land managers and venue operators of a best practice signage system that uses existing standards and risk management principles for aquatic and recreational signage.
Why this is considered best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This manual is based on current Australian Standards• Was developed with and by industry in conjunction with the community• Is being used by industry• Is based on a risk management approach
Level of evidence	Level V
Reference/s	Ellis B, Waters W (2003). Aquatic and Recreational Signage Manual. Style Guide. Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner Department of Justice: Melbourne

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE 4:

Name	Child Safe Play Areas on Farms
Type of best practice	Prevention activity
Responsible	Farmsafe Australia
Target population	Parents or care givers on farms who look after children 0-4 years of age
Period	2002-Ongoing
Description	As many farm injuries and fatalities occur while children are playing on the farm, it has been proposed that a child safe play area on farms be established. The safe play area is designed to restrict children from entering the farm work place without supervision and provide an environment that allows children to experience physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. A safe play area should be designed using child development principles and risk management approaches.
Why this is considered best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed in consultation with industry• Restricts children from gaining access to water hazards• Being used in Australia and internationally• Risk management approach (based on pool fencing evidence)
Level of evidence	Level IV
Reference/s	Fragar L, Gibson C, Henderson A, Franklin R (In Press). Evidence based solutions for child injury on Australian Farms. A report funded by the Financial Markets for Children. Farmsafe Australia (2003). Safe Play areas on Farms. A Resource Package. Version 1. Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing: Canberra

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE 5:

Name	Pool Fencing for preventing children from drowning
Type of best practice	Prevention activity
Responsible	Royal Life Saving Society Australia
Target population	Parents or care givers who look after children 0-4 years of age
Period	1985-Ongoing
Description	Pool fencing has been found to be an effective measure for restricting the access of children 0-4 years of age from entering an area where there is a swimming pool. An Australian standard (AS1926) has been developed to help ensure compliance. While there is a range of possible swimming pool designs, four-sided fencing ensuring access through a dynamic, secure gate (ie: self-closing and self-latching) was found to be the most effective. Enforcement of the pool fencing requirements has also been found to increase compliance and effectiveness.
Why this is considered best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed in consultation with industry• Restricts children from gaining access to swimming pools• Being used in Australia and internationally• Risk management approach• A Cochrane review has been conducted and found to be effective.
Level of evidence	Level III-2
Reference/s	Thompson, DC. Rivara, FP. (2004) Pool fencing for preventing drowning in children. [Systematic Review] Cochrane Injuries Group Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 1

APPENDIX 3: STANDING COMMITTEE ON RECREATION AND SPORT (SCORS) – WATER SAFETY WORKING PARTY 2002-03

Recommendations from the SCORS Water Safety Working Party Report presented to the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council (SRMC) – August 2003

1. SRMC notes the findings of the Working Group as detailed in this report
2. SRMC agrees to each State and Territory developing a State Water Safety Plan. State Plans to be finalised for consideration at the first SCORS 2004 meeting.

As a minimum, each plan to address the following areas:
 - Statistical and Qualitative Research
 - Public Awareness and Community Education
 - Education
 - Signage
3. SRMC recommends that the Commonwealth fund a further development of the National Water Safety Plan as a guiding document for water safety in Australia. This funding is to be in line with the proposal forwarded by the AWSC to SRMC.
4. SRMC agrees to refer consideration of the proposal by the AWSC for the development of a national plan to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth to address entity and accountability issues identified with the structure of the AWSC and work with the AWSC to review the proposal in light of adoption of Recommendation 2.
5. SRMC agrees to a cooperative approach across all jurisdictions in terms of freely sharing resources, data, legislation, information and processes with a view to avoiding duplication and reducing government costs.
6. SRMC agrees to an examination of the outcomes of the water safety feasibility trials, NSW minimum dataset, the MUNCCI pilots and any other relevant research projects by States and Territories with a view to adapting these within their jurisdictions. Victoria and NSW to report to SCORS on the outcomes of the pilots of the minimum dataset for notification of deaths with recommendations to the general adoption of the form.
7. With regard to Public Awareness and Community Education, SRMC agrees to:
 - 7.1 Each jurisdiction conducting a Water Safety Week in 2003 with a view to a national week being considered in the future.
 - 7.2 Each jurisdiction building on existing public awareness strategies implemented to reduce toddler drownings and consider the WA legislative framework for regulating domestic swimming pools.
8. With regard to the development of educational resources, SRMC agrees to:
 - 8.1 A reciprocal sharing of resources with a view to free adaptation by jurisdictions.
 - 8.2 Jurisdictions considering a consistent minimum skill level for children leaving primary school.
 - 8.3 Jurisdictions supporting the initiatives to make water safety teaching resources more accessible to the education sector.
9. With regard to Signage, SRMC agrees to:
 - 9.1 Members promoting the Standards Australia approved signs to land managers and owners within their jurisdiction with a view to facilitating adherence to the standard .
 - 9.2 Each jurisdiction considering the adaptation of the Victorian Coastal Signage Manual and the Victorian Inland Signage Manual (once completed) to provide practical guidance to the application of the standards.
 - 9.3 Each jurisdiction working with NSW in identifying new water safety symbols and proceeding with obtaining Standards Australia approval for the new signs.
 - 9.4 Each Minister writing to land management authorities and signage manufacturers in each jurisdiction seeking their cooperation in adopting a national approach to water safety signage.
10. That SRMC notes the activities occurring at state level with regard to the treatment of life saving and surf lifesaving as emergency services.

APPENDIX 4: ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ANZSBEG	Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group
ARI	Aquatic and Recreation Institute
ASCTA	Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
AUSTSWIM	The Australian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety
AWSC	Australian Water Safety Council
AWSRC	Australian Water Safety Research Committee
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
CHW	Child Health Worker
DCITA	Department of Communications, IT and the Arts
E-code	External Cause of Injury Code
FSA	Farmsafe Australia
GSPO	Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations
ICD-9	International Classification of Disease, 9th Revision
ICD-9-CM	International Classification of Disease, 9th Revision with Clinical Modification
ICD-10	International Classification of Disease, 10th Revision
ICD-10-AM	International Classification of Disease, 10th Revision, Australian Modification
IRMC	Injury Risk Management Centre
KRA	Key Result Area
MUNCCI	Monash University National Centre for Coronial Information
NCIS	National Coroners Information System
n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NISU	National Injury Surveillance Unit
NWSP	National Water safety Plan
PFD	Personal Flotation Device
PWC	Personal Water Craft
QWSC	Queensland Water Safety Council
RLSSA	Royal Life Saving Society Australia
SCORS	Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport
SLSA	Surf Life Saving Australia
SRMC	Sport and Recreation Ministers Council
UCoD	Underlying Cause of Death
VET	Vocational Education Training

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