

Royal Life Saving Annual Report 2022/23

A water loving nation
free from drowning.



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA





> OUR VISION

A water-loving nation free from drowning.

> OUR PURPOSE

To lead efforts to reduce drowning and increase swimming, water safety and lifesaving skills.

> OUR VALUES

- Leadership, Collaboration and Integrity
- Humanitarianism and Social Entrepreneurship
- Quality and Innovation
- Diversity, Equality and Respect

> CONTENTS

- 04 Message from the President
- 05 Message from the Chief Executive Officer
- 06 Royal Life Saving Strategic Framework

OUR IMPACT

- 08 Drowning Prevention Leadership
- 18 Research, Policy and Advocacy
- 28 Community Awareness and Action
- 38 Swimming, Lifesaving, Water Safety Pathway
- 54 Safer Aquatic Locations
- 64 Organisational Cohesion and Growth
- 72 People and Culture
- 74 Honours and Awards
- 76 Governance
- 79 Financial Summary
- 80 Our Partners



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, recognising their continued connection to land, waters and communities.

› MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have immense pride in commending to you the Annual Report 2023, my second as President. It is a great honour to lead the board and organisation as President. It is not something that I had envisaged when I started as a young pool lifesaver and reinforces that there are many ways that volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the Society.

Enthusiasm and a deep commitment to our vision of a nation free from drowning are two qualities that unite our Royal Life saving members, volunteers and staff as they provide community services.

The passion and commitment towards community service is the backbone of our organisation and cannot be celebrated enough. This report is full of examples of how our people are making a difference across the country.

Evacuees brush up on water safety

I was inspired by the mobilisation of RLSS Northern Territory, who answered the call when flooding hit communities in the Northern Territory. When more than 700 evacuees from Daguragu, Kalkarindji, Pigeon Hole and Palumpa were moved to the Howard Springs Centre for National Resilience in the Northern Territory, RLSS NT saw a fantastic opportunity to promote water safety.

They ensured the pool opened seven days a week and was staffed by qualified lifeguards to welcomed 150 people daily, and delivered a water safety program that provided some relief for the evacuees as they waited for the floodwater to recede so they could return to their homes and begin the process of rebuilding their communities.

It is just one example of the work that RLSS does in regional and remote areas.

Summer Water Safety Campaign

Our summer water safety campaigns are well respected, the world over and last year was no exception. The campaigns are anchored by simple and easy to understand water safety messages, and repeated often throughout media, events, and social media. Australians heading off on holidays, whether at rivers, lakes, or beaches, or simply relaxing by their backyard pool were constantly reminded by Royal Life Saving to enjoy the water safely.

Redeveloping our strategic framework

Success starts with clarity of purpose, cohesion, and alignment behind a common set of organisational objectives. I was delighted to convene a strategy workshop in Melbourne in July, with more than 25 leaders from across the organisation. I was buoyed by debates about how best to address drowning, generate and mobilise resources to reach those with the most to gain from our lifesaving work.

Life Saving World Championships

I attended the International Life Saving Federation board meetings, held as part of the Life Saving World Championships in Riccione, Italy in September 2022. The Australian teams did amazingly well, winning both the Open and Youth competitions. Congratulations to everyone involved and thank you to our sport partners Surf Life Saving Australia.

Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships

I was pleased to attend the Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships 2023, which was held at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre in January. Two things stood out. First a reminder that championship do not run without volunteer officials, and we have some of the world's most respected who work hard to ensure a smooth event. Second, I love the excitement of lifesaving competitors setting and, in most cases, achieving their event goals.

Thank you

We rely heavily on the passion and professionalism of our volunteers, employees, board members, casual trainers, officials and other key stakeholders across all states and territories. They do a wonderful job, and I thank them.

I thank Deputy President Alexandra Ash, my fellow board directors and the members of the Finance and Audit Committee. Good governance requires a team effort.

Thank you to the national office team, including our Chief Executive Officer Justin Scarr, and to Belinda Lawton and Monique Sharp for compiling this report and Linda Luu for compiling the financial statement.

After several tragic summers, our objective of a nation free from drowning has never been more relevant, and collaborative efforts at national, state and territory and local levels more needed.

DR MITCH HARTMAN

National President
Royal Life Saving Society – Australia



› MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This year we celebrate resilience, achievements, and optimism of Royal Life Saving teams nationally and across the country.

Shifting patterns of behaviour around water, workforce shortages in the aquatic industry, and changing economic conditions continue to affect our efforts to reduce drowning and ensure everyone can enjoy the water safely.

Some personal highlights from 2023 include:

Water safety campaigning

Our water safety campaigns, Keep Watch, Make the Right Call and Summer Safety to name a few are the best available. The Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 calls for alignment in messaging to avoid confusing the public, so we are focused on promoting a core set of messages, in innovative ways, at every opportunity.

Ageing aquatic infrastructure

We released the report into the State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia. Three key findings stand out. The average age of a public swimming pool is 50 years. 500 will reach the end of their functional lifespan by 2030. And more than \$8 billion is needed to replace them. The challenge is more pronounced in regional areas, and a coordinated whole of government approach is needed.

Drowning analysis

We released the 29th National Drowning Report, for the first time created in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia. It also marked the return of the official launch to Parliament House, Canberra.

We developed a twenty-year analysis of drowning trends. Progress on child drowning prevention is impressive – a 59 per cent reduction over the past 20 years. That means many hundreds of children are alive today because of prevention efforts. However, drowning in people over 55 years is now a much higher proportion of overall drowning. It is proving to be a difficult challenge, and much more work is needed.

Finding new ways to reach communities

Whether using programs like Swim and Survive, Respect the River or local water safety plans, the past year has reinforced the need to find new and innovative ways to reach communities with water safety. We are working to strengthen the impact of the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework and creating online training programs like the advanced supervision skills for pool lifeguards' course. We thank the VET and Education committees for their assistance.

Global Drowning Prevention

2023 was a pivotal year for drowning prevention. First, the World Health Assembly declared its first resolution aimed at accelerated action. Second, on World Drowning Prevention Day (25 July), the World Health Organization launched the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention. We are honoured to join the Global Alliance at its inception, joining a small group of United Nations agencies and other non-state actors.

Finally, there is real momentum being generated in our region, much of it on display at the South East Asian Drowning Prevention Forum and Workshop we facilitated in Penang, Malaysia. We are busy planning to co-host the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Perth, December 2023. We expect more than 700 delegates, and the World Health Organization is co-sponsoring the event. It is the first time the event has come to Australia.

Partnerships

We are extremely appreciative for the support of the Australian Government. We thank the Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care, the Hon Anika Wells MP for Government's strong commitment to keeping Australians safe around the water.

We acknowledge and thank Protector Aluminium and Architects Choice, a valued corporate partner, for their support of our Keep Watch campaign to keep young children safe around water and helping to fund child drowning research.

Thank you

I'd like to thank the national team for their very substantial achievements throughout the year. Thank you to our national advisors, Prof John Pearn AO RFD (Medical/Research), Dr Shayne Baker OAM (Education and Training) and Geoff Grey (Sport).

We are thankful for the support and leadership demonstrated by our President, Dr Mitch Hartman, Deputy President Alexandra Ash, and all members of the Board. We thank the Finance and Audit Committee, Honours Committee, and the State and Territory member organisation CEOs and staff for their commitment to our mission.

JUSTIN SCARR

Chief Executive Officer
Royal Life Saving Society - Australia



> Strategic Framework

Over the past century our vision has remained the same. We have always sought to reduce drowning, increase physical activity, especially in and around the water, and contribute to the creation of more resilient communities, Australia wide. **Achieving these long term goals requires a deliberate effort to promote change.**

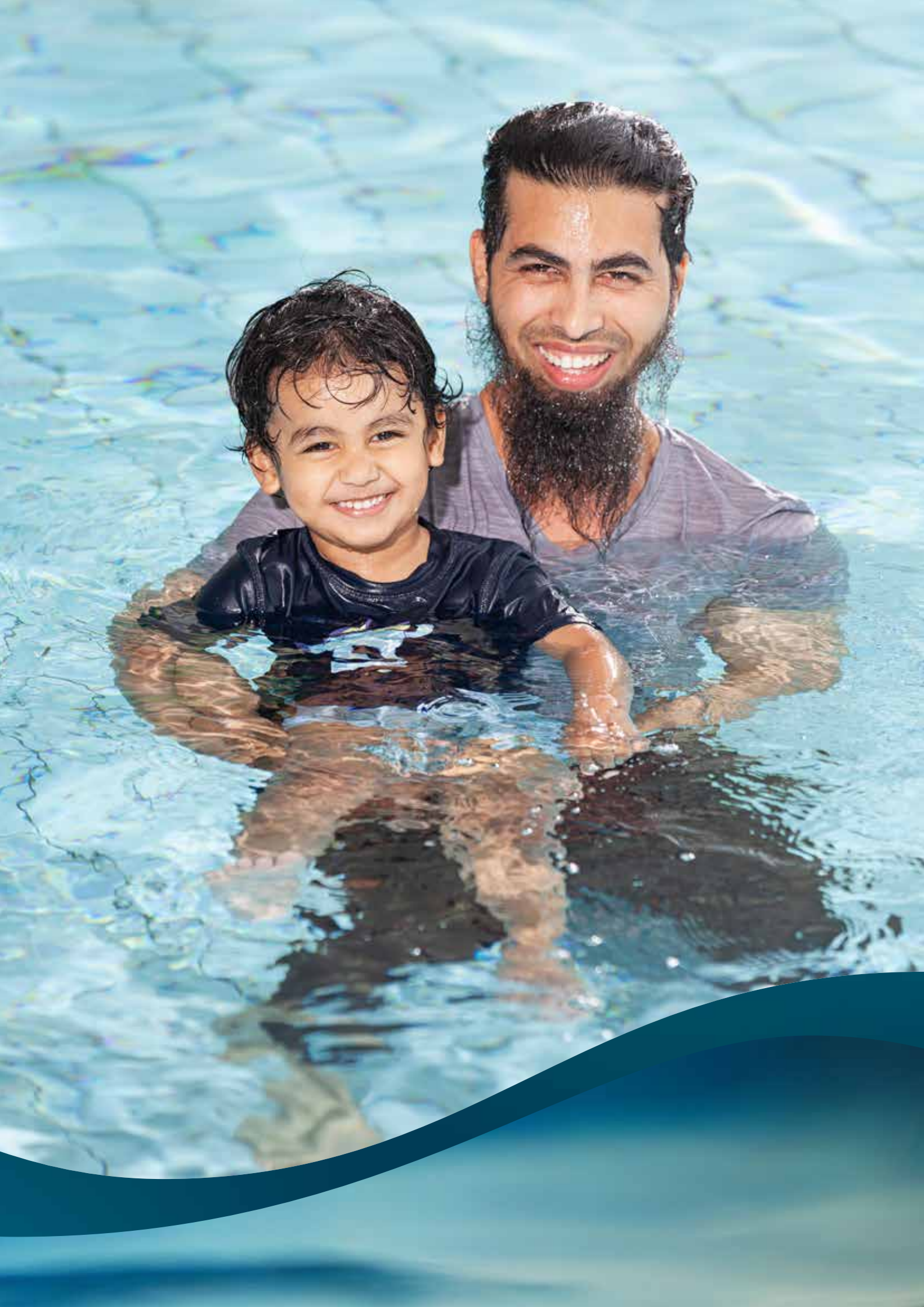
This change is best identified as:

- > Shifts in our knowledge and advances in the evidence base
- > Newly developed and adjusted policies that impact drowning prevention or that promote water safety
- > Increases in community water safety awareness and education
- > Increased adoption of the risk management systems that make aquatic environments safer
- > Shifts in individual and community behaviours, particularly among those at greatest risk

We focus on eight priority areas:

- > Drowning prevention leadership
- > Research, policy and advocacy
- > Community awareness and action
- > Swimming, lifesaving, water safety pathway
- > Safer aquatic locations
- > Drowning prevention leadership abroad
- > Organisational cohesion and growth
- > People and culture







Drowning Prevention Leadership



We are mindful of the devastating impact that drowning has on everyone affected: those who have died or had their lives forever altered by a non-fatal drowning incident, their families, friends, communities, and those who put their own lives at risk to save others.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Commitment to the Australian Water Safety Strategy
- › Management of the Summer Drowning Toll updates
- › Facilitation of the National Aquatics Symposium
- › Release of the National Drowning Report 2023
- › Hosts of the World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2023
- › Member of the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention
- › Championed new Resolution for Global Drowning Prevention
- › Facilitated the International Women's Day Webinar
- › Jointly hosted the South East Asia Drowning Prevention Forum and Workshop

Royal Life Saving Staff and Advisers are actively involved in:

- Australia NZ Safe Boating Education Group
- Australian Public Health Association
- Australian Resuscitation Council
- Australian Standards – various committees
- Australian Water Safety Council
- Australasia Injury Prevention Network
- AUSTSWIM
- Health Promotion Association of Australia
- HumanAbility
- International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities
- International Life Saving Federation
- Parks and Leisure Australia
- Parks and Leisure NSW/ACT
- Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth
- Sport and Recreation Industry Advisory Committee
- World Health Organization



› Commitment to the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

Royal Life Saving Society –Australia manages the secretariat of the Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) with the support of the Australian Government and works closely with foundation members Surf Life Saving Australia and AUSTSWIM.

Royal Life Saving directs significant resources towards the implementation of the Australian Water Safety Strategy and has project managed the development, release, and evaluation of the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030.

The Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 set the aspirational goal of reducing drowning by 50 per cent by 2030.

The Australian Water Safety Strategy plays an essential role in National, State and Territory, and community approaches to preventing drowning and promoting safe use of waterways and swimming pools.

The key activities outlined in the Strategy across research, policy, advocacy, collaboration, education, safe environments and workforce are linked to medium-term outcomes and long-term targets. It also outlines a plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

As part of this evaluation, Royal Life Saving undertook a twenty-year review, releasing the Analysis of Unintentional Drowning in Australia 2002-2022 report which found that 5,692 people lost their lives to drowning in Australia in the 20-year period.

This review provides an opportunity to evaluate both gains that have been made with decreasing rates of drowning, and areas of concern where the situation is either not improving or has worsened.



READ THE STRATEGY
[watersafety.com.au/
australian-water-safety-strategy](https://watersafety.com.au/australian-water-safety-strategy)



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
drowninginaustralia2002-2022](https://royallifesaving.com.au/drowninginaustralia2002-2022)

> Management of the Summer Drowning Toll

The Summer Drowning Toll was updated daily on the Royal Life Saving website and informed media stories, awareness updates and water safety messaging across the summer months.

Drowning toll updates included:

- Summer drowning toll launch announcement
- Summer drowning toll increases, as six people drowned on Christmas Day and Boxing Day
- Water safety warning ahead of new year's long weekend
- Surge in drowning deaths bring summer drowning toll to 43
- Water safety message sinks in, saving lives over long weekend
- Water safety plea as summer drowning toll continues to rise
- Deadly weekend: drowning deaths up
- Tragic summer as ninety drown

Media Activity
More than 6.9K media items were recorded: 52% Online, 32% Radio, 12% TV and 4% Print.



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
SummerDrowningTollReport2023](http://royallifesaving.com.au/SummerDrowningTollReport2023)

SUMMER 2022/23 – KEY INSIGHTS

90
people drowned
in Summer
2022/23

This is a
20%
decrease
from the previous
summer



25%

occurred between **Christmas Day** and **2nd January**

19%

occurred on a **public holiday**

22%

occurred during **Heatwave/Extreme weather related**

> Facilitation of the National Aquatics Symposium

A once-in-a-generation nexus of wicked problems in swimming, water safety and aquatic industry sectors brought together more than 150 experts at the National Aquatics Symposium in Melbourne on 9 and 10 March.

With children's swimming and water safety skills declining, issues with access to water safety lessons, acute challenges in hiring and retaining a skilled workforce, and a looming end-of-life pool infrastructure crisis particularly in regional Australia, there was no shortage of challenges to discuss at the Symposium.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia Chief Executive Officer, Justin Scarr said speakers and advocates from across the sector both in Australia and internationally took up the opportunity to focus on solutions, innovations and localised success stories.

"There is no question that there are some serious challenges emerging and we need to find options that allow more people, wherever they live, to be able to access the water safely," Mr Scarr said.

The Symposium developed a roadmap to guide collective strategic priorities of the national aquatic industry, governments, and water safety organisations when it comes to:

- > **Swimming skills** - ensuring that all children have access to swimming and water safety programs and achieve the National Benchmarks for Swimming and Water Safety.
- > **Workforce** - raising the profile of the industry as a career opportunity and ensuring the workforce is sustainable, supported, and capable.
- > **Infrastructure** - ensuring the availability and sustainability of fit-for-purpose aquatic facilities.



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
nationalaquatics
symposiumreport](https://royallifesaving.com.au/nationalaquatics-symposiumreport)



› Release of the National Drowning Report 2023

For the first time, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia released a single National Drowning Report.

The National Drowning Report 2023 was launched by the Hon Anika Wells MP Minister for Sport in Parliament House Canberra. The Report found there were 281 drowning deaths over the past 12 months, which is 17 per cent lower than last year (339), and returns the annual drowning toll closer to pre-pandemic levels. While the overall decline in drowning deaths has been welcomed, the growth in drowning deaths in every age group over 45 has worried water safety experts.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, Chief Executive Officer, Justin Scarr said drowning prevention efforts were saving young lives with a 33 per cent decrease in drowning deaths in children aged 0-4 years old compared to the 10-year average.

“Royal Life Saving continues to be concerned about declining swimming and water safety skills among children, and adults more generally. The impacts of missed lessons throughout the COVID-19 pandemic will have generational impacts on safety if left unaddressed.”

Federal Minister for Aged Care and Sport, the Hon Anika Wells MP said the Australian Government was determined to support organisations like Royal Life Saving Society - Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia to raise water safety awareness ahead of summer.

“Enjoying a swim has so many benefits for people of all ages, especially older adults. Some simple precautions, like having a medical check-up to ensure you are swim fit, or going to the local swimming pool to refresh your skills is a great idea ahead of the expected hot summer,” Minister Wells said.



READ THE REPORT
AND WATCH VIDEO
[royallifesaving.com.au/
NDR2023](https://royallifesaving.com.au/NDR2023)

Left: Minister Hon Anika Wells MP launching the report.
Right top: Justin Scarr, Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP and Adam Weir.
Right bottom: Hon Warren Entsch MP.



› Hosts of the World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2023

Australia has been deeply involved in global efforts to reduce drowning over many years. In recognition of those efforts, Australia has been selected to host the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Perth from 4-7 December 2023.

Hundreds of delegates from across the world will travel to Perth for the Conference including experts from World Health Organization, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, alongside representatives of governments and lifesaving organisations – all with the objective of shaping global strategy and mobilising for action.

The World Health Organization is co-sponsoring the conference. This is the first time the World Conference on Drowning Prevention has been hosted in Australia.

The World Health Organization estimates that there are 236,000 annual drowning deaths worldwide. Drowning is among the ten leading causes of death for children and young people aged 1-24 years in every region of the world.

The themes of the conference reflect the challenges and opportunities of reducing drowning in all communities, nations, and regions:

- › Measuring and mapping the drowning burden
- › Addressing drowning prevention in life stages and populations
- › Addressing drowning prevention in activities and occupational settings
- › Advancing drowning prevention through policy, partnerships and planning
- › Showcasing world leading advances in coastal safety
- › Showcasing world leading advances in aquatic industry leisure management
- › Showcasing world leading swimming and water safety education
- › Advancing the science medical treatment and issues in drowning and aquatic injury
- › Confronting the challenges of disaster and climate change
- › Advancing drowning prevention in global health and development agendas
- › Fostering innovation in response to emerging challenges and opportunities





Shaping a global strategy. Mobilising for local action.

4 - 7 December 2023

Perth Conference & Exhibition Centre
Western Australia



World Conference on Drowning Prevention



wcdp2023.com



Co-hosted by

**ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA**



Announced as member of the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention

On World Drowning Prevention Day in Geneva on 25 July, the World Health Organization launched the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention. Royal Life Saving Society – Australia is honoured to have been selected to join the Alliance at its inception.

Sadly, every year drowning is the cause of more than 236,000 deaths, 2.5 million over the past 10 years. More than 90 per cent of those drowning deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. Some countries in the Indo-Pacific region experience drowning rates 20-25 times higher than those in Australia.

A central aim of the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention is to accelerate drowning prevention efforts across UN agencies, Governments, and non-state actors.

WHO is joined by International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and UNICEF. Each brings the potential to integrate drowning prevention across sustainable development agendas.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia is pleased to join other non-state actors, Royal National Lifeboat Institution UK; the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh; the George Institute for Global Health; and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Each brings an impressive track record.

Championed the New Resolution for Global Drowning Prevention

A push to prevent drowning deaths globally was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May.

Sixty nations, led by Bangladesh and Ireland, and including Australia, championed the resolution which builds on the first United Nations Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention which was adopted in 2021.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia Chief Executive Officer, Justin Scarr said the World Health Assembly resolution builds on long term aspirations elevate drowning prevention within the global health and development agenda.

“One of the most important aspects of the resolution is giving the World Health Organization the power to assist nations, on their request, with drowning prevention efforts,” Mr Scarr said.

“We know that low- and middle-income countries are the most affected by drowning and many have yet to establish the capacity to respond.

“Requesting countries appoint a national drowning prevention focal point will make an enormous difference to the coordination of drowning prevention efforts.

“While structural change doesn’t sound exciting, on the ground it will empower communities to act on drowning prevention and provide a clear path to find solutions that work for their situation.”



Facilitated the International Women's Day Webinar

On the eve of International Women's Day in March 2023, hundreds of people from across the world joined a webinar with water safety experts for an inspiring discussion about the diverse journeys that have led them to their life saving work.

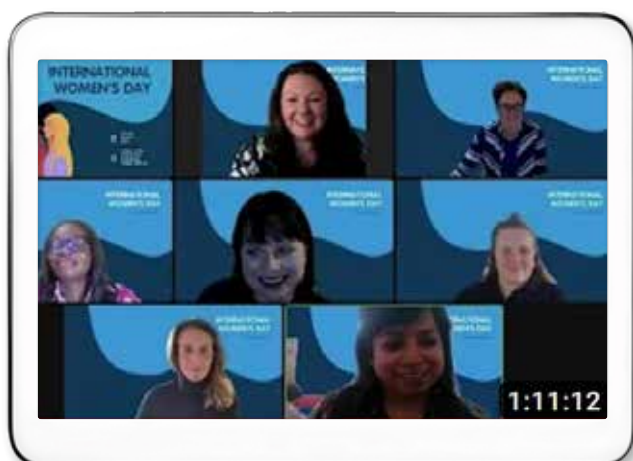
Speakers at the International Life Saving Drowning Prevention Commission webinar included:

- › Cara Aidoo, Public Health Researcher, Ghana
- › Dr Catarina Queiroga, Co-Founder at IDRA - The International Drowning Researchers' Alliance
- › Ciara Gleeson, Education Development Executive Water Safety Ireland
- › Rehana Parveen, ECD Specialist at the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB)
- › Monique Sharp, National Manager Marketing and Events, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

The webinar, which was hosted by Belinda Lawton and Dr Amy Peden discussed how the women started in water safety and drowning prevention, their advice for other women starting out and what they are most looking forward to in the future of drowning prevention.

VIEW THE WEBINAR

[youtube.com/RoyalLifeSavingAust](https://www.youtube.com/RoyalLifeSavingAust)



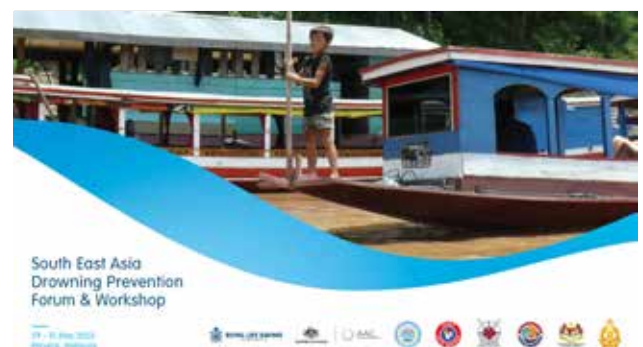
Jointly hosted the South East Asia Drowning Prevention Forum & Workshop

Delegates from countries across the ASEAN region gathered in Penang, Malaysia 29 May – 1 June 2023 for the South East Asia Drowning Prevention Forum and Workshop.

The Forum and Workshop was jointly hosted by Life Saving Society – Malaysia – Penang Branch, the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia, and Royal Life Saving Australia, and supported by the Australia-ASEAN Council.

Representatives from government and non-government organisations in ASEAN nations Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, and Viet Nam were joined by representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea and the United Kingdom to learn from each other.

Both the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Dr Justin Lee and the Malaysian Deputy Minister of Local Government Development, YB Tuan Haji Akmal Nasrullah Bin Mohd Nasir attended and addressed the group on the final day. Dr David Meddings from the World Health Organization presented throughout the conference on global initiatives to prevent drowning.





Research, Policy and Advocacy



We are bringing science and advocacy to lifesaving. Striving to know exactly who was at risk of drowning – where, when and why. Seeking and testing answers about how to eliminate it. Advocating for change, and collaborative effort to reduce the impact of drowning on the community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Research and release of the National Drowning Report 2023
- › Analysis of 20 years of Unintentional Drowning in Australia 2002-2022
- › Pool Fencing Legislation Review
- › Report on Drowning Rivers, Creeks, Lakes and Dams – 10 years
- › Research published on International Visitor Drowning
- › Yarning about Water Safety





› NATIONAL DROWNING REPORT 2023

The National Drowning Report 2023 provides an analysis of fatal drowning across Australia between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023. This year's report, the 29th edition, is the first National Drowning Report developed by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and presented in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia.

Tragically 281 people lost their lives to drowning between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023.

We conservatively estimate that several hundred additional people were directly affected by non-fatal drowning, which often requires hospitalisation and can leave people with life-limiting disabilities.



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[royallifesaving.com.au/
NDR2023](https://royallifesaving.com.au/NDR2023)

THIS YEAR'S FINDINGS SHOW THAT:

Drowning fatalities in young children continue to decrease

The number of drowning fatalities in young children (0-4 years) was 33 per cent below the 10-year average, highlighting the ongoing success of legislative changes to pool fencing regulations and water safety messages directed at the carers of young children.

Older adults are a growing concern

Adults 45 years or older represented 57 per cent of 2022/23 drowning deaths. Drowning was above the 10-year average for all age groups 45 years and older except for 65-74, where there was no change.

A range of factors contribute to drowning in adults including underlying heart or other medical conditions, especially while boating or using watercraft (including kayaking and surfing), bystander rescuer drowning deaths, and falls into water. Changing employment patterns, increased recreation by older adults, and decreased swimming fitness may all have contributed to this concerning increase in fatal drowning for older adults.

Poor swimming skills compound drowning risk

Swimming is the leading activity prior to drowning in all age groups and locations, except young children. We continue to be concerned about falling swimming and water safety skills among children and adults. The effects of missed swimming and water safety lessons throughout the COVID-19 pandemic will have generational impacts on safety if left unaddressed.

Boating deaths decline by 40 per cent

There was a marked decrease in drowning deaths associated with boating: compared to the 10-year average, boating related drowning deaths were down by around 40 per cent. We acknowledge the preventative efforts of state and territory governments, which include implementation of boating safety plans that focus on increasing lifejacket wear and targeting responsible boating.

Regional and remote communities drown at higher rates

While 59 per cent of the people who drowned in 2022/23 resided in major cities, the drowning rate was 1.77 times higher for those living in outer regional, remote, and very remote areas. Ensuring all communities have access to swimming and water safety education, as well as safe places to swim, is a key priority.

Drowning is increasingly an issue of social inequities

The drowning rate for residents of the most disadvantaged areas was 71 per cent higher than the drowning rate for the most advantaged areas. Financial barriers can have long-term consequences for children who grow up in families unable to access swimming and water safety education and skills.

281

Drowning Deaths
in 2022/23

↑ 1%
increase

279

10-Year
Average

77%

OF ALL DROWNING
DEATHS WERE MALES

57%

WERE ADULTS AGED
45 YEARS AND OLDER

44%

OCCURED IN
MAJOR CITIES

TOP 3 LOCATIONS

27%
River/Creek



27%
Beach



12%
Ocean/Harbour



TOP 3 ACTIVITIES

33%
Swimming & Recreating



15%
Fall



8%
Boating



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



➤ ANALYSIS OF UNINTENTIONAL DROWNING IN AUSTRALIA 2002-2022

Research by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia showed drowning rates in Australia have dropped by 26 per cent over the past 20 years, demonstrating the value of prevention efforts.

The Analysis of Unintentional Drowning in Australia 2002-2022 report found 5,692 people lost their lives to drowning in Australia in the 20-year period.

The Report provides a detailed understanding of who is drowning in Australia, and how, when and where they are drowning. The report analyses drowning data for the period 2002/03 to 2021/22, triangulated from data extracted from the National Coronial Information System, media reports, police reports and Royal Life Saving's state and territory member organisations.

One feature is the presentation of data in five-year intervals (2002/03 - 2006/07) to measure and report changing patterns and assess whether progress is being made.

Greatest Improvements

By far the greatest improvement was in the 0 to four year-old age group: the count of drowning deaths reduced by 51 per cent over the period, and the rate of fatal drowning reduced by 59 per cent over the period. While this improvement is something to celebrate, any number of drowning deaths is still unacceptable and should motivate further action.

Progress is credited to the introduction of pool fencing legislation across Australia, community awareness focusing on supervision, and increasing participation in water familiarisation programs by young children.

The drowning rate continues to be lowest in children 5-14 years. Reductions of 46 per cent (5-9 years) and 28 per cent (10-14 years) reinforce the importance of swimming and water safety education. More recent increases in drowning deaths in these age groups are a cause for concern.

Progress is less pronounced, but still impressive across most adults age groups ranging from reduction of 20 per cent (35-44 years) to 34 per cent (45-54 years). While rates are decreasing across all ages, there is much debate about how to accelerate progress.

Floods

The proportion of flood related drowning deaths has doubled from three to six per cent of all drowning deaths in the past 20 years.

With the increases in severe weather events, more needs to be done to protect vulnerable individuals and communities from drowning during flooding. Community education, particularly around driving through flood waters, and improved early warning systems will be critical to reduce drowning deaths.

Older people

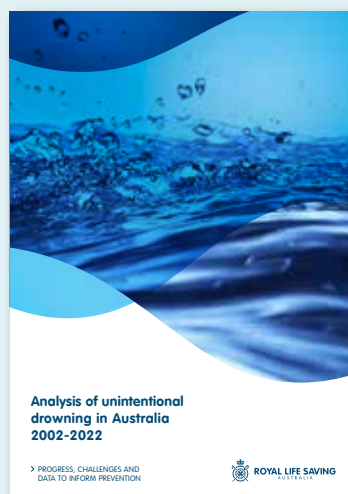
Drowning in older age groups is of particular concern. Reflecting the aging Australian population, the drowning rate among 65 to 74 years decreased by 7 per cent, however the number of drowning deaths increased by 58 per cent.

This growth in the number of fatal drowning incidents represents an emerging challenge for drowning prevention. These results reinforce the need for more prioritised interventions, and commitment to greater funding of awareness campaigns, particularly around the risks posed by swimming while using some pharmaceutical medications and swimming alone, or in unsupervised areas.

Non-fatal drowning

Perhaps of most concern is the projected rise in non-fatal drowning incidents, up by 32 per cent. While first aid and CPR can be effective in drowning incidents, the best prevention of impairment, significant disability or death is prevention of a drowning incident in the first instance.

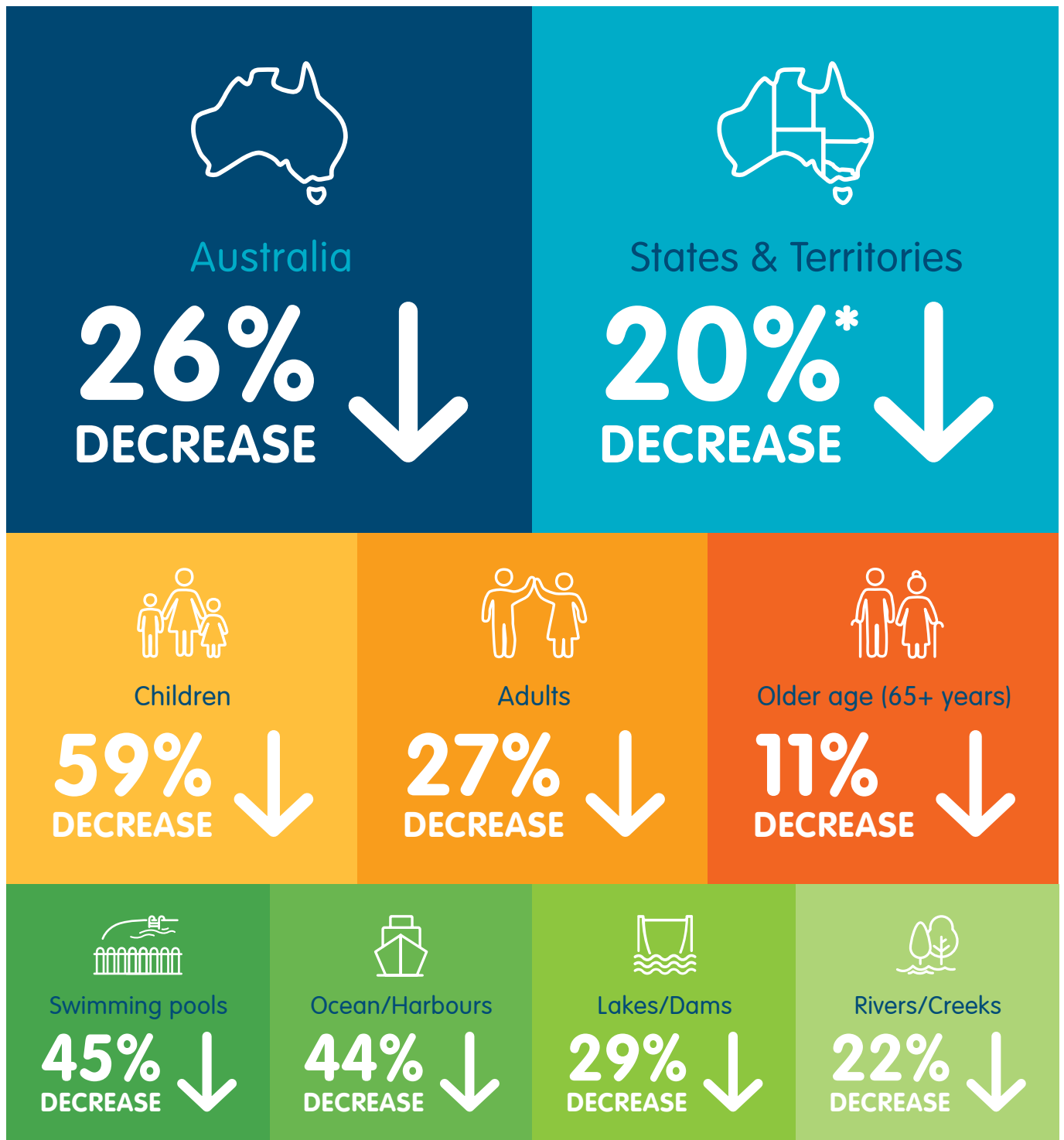
“There are still too many young children drowning every year. While we are relieved to see a decline in drowning deaths over the past two decades there is still more to be done,”
Lauren Miller, Senior Research and Policy Officer,
Royal Life Saving Society – Australia



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
drowninginaustralia2002-2022](http://royallifesaving.com.au/drowninginaustralia2002-2022)

Over the 20-year period, there has been some encouraging progress in reducing the drowning rate across all Australian states and territories. The biggest gains were in the 0-4 age group, which recorded a substantial decrease in drowning deaths. Changes to the population size and in key demographics, climate change, ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased use of waterways for recreation are all significant headwinds which must be countered if we are to maintain the progress made over the past two decades.

DROWNING RATE IN



* All States and Territories had at least a 20% decrease in drowning rate.

> POOL FENCING LEGISLATION REVIEW

A Royal Life Saving report on pool fencing legislation in Australia has found significant differences between states and territories, with fencing exemptions still applying to some pools despite the proven effectiveness of pool fences in reducing drowning deaths in young children.

The Royal Life Saving Society – Australia Review of Pool Fencing Legislation in Australia report examines the legislation in every Australia jurisdiction, finding that some still use old Australian Standards or have modified the Australian Standard.

Royal Life Saving Chief Executive Officer Justin Scarr said bringing all states and territories into alignment, and including regular inspections of all private swimming pools would save lives.

“The evidence shows a 50 per cent reduction in drowning deaths in the 0-4 age group in the past 10 years, and pool fencing legislation has played a significant role in that reduction,” Mr Scarr said.

“Bringing states and territories into alignment with their legislation would help reduce confusion about the rules that apply for fencing a backyard swimming pool.

“One of the key things we’d like to see introduced across all jurisdictions is systematic approaches to regular inspections of pool fencing.

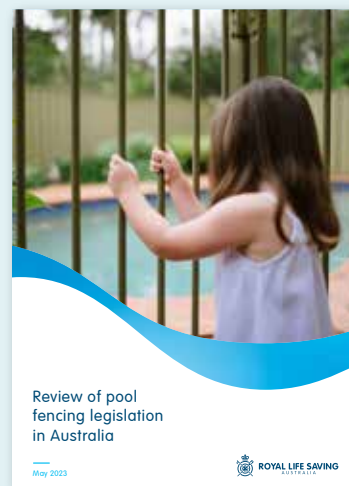
“When we look at drowning in backyard pools there are four main ways children gain access: a faulty fence or gate; the absence of a fence; the gate being deliberately propped open; and the child climbing over the fence, often using pool furniture or pot plants next to the fence to gain a foothold.

“Regular inspections would make sure wear and tear issues affecting the functioning of the fence and gate are picked up before there is a tragedy. It would also provide the opportunity to remind pool owners about keeping the gates closed at all times and removing items that can be used to climb over the fence.

“For every child who dies in a drowning incident, an estimated eight more are hospitalised as a result of a non-fatal drowning incident, often being left with lifelong effects, including brain injuries.

“While nothing takes the place of active supervision of young children to prevent drowning, we know distractions happen and a functioning pool fence and gate is an important way of keeping children safe when you are momentarily distracted.

“We urge all governments to work together to align the legislation to keep vulnerable young children safe from drowning.”



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
reviewpoolfencing
legislationaustralia](https://royallifesaving.com.au/reviewpoolfencinglegislationaustralia)

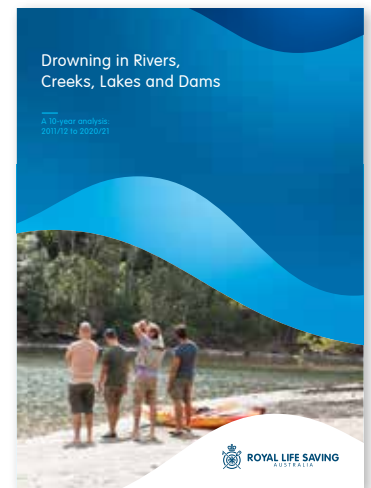
> DROWNING IN RIVERS, CREEKS, LAKES AND DAMS

More than 900 people have drowned in inland waterways including rivers, creeks, lakes and dams in Australia in the ten years to 2020/21, accounting for more than a third of all drowning deaths in Australia.

Research by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia analysing all drowning deaths for the decade found 924 people drowned in inland waterways, with males making up 80 per cent of the drowning toll.

For the first time, drowning deaths in national parks and state conservation areas have been detailed, with five per cent of deaths occurring in these popular recreation areas. A further five per cent drowned at a waterfall or swimming hole.

Rivers as a single location are the leading contributor to Australia's unintentional fatal drowning burden. This is not just an issue for people travelling and unfamiliar with local waterways; 40 per cent of those who drowned in inland waterways were within 20km of home at the time.



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
InlandWaterWays
10YearReport](http://royallifesaving.com.au/InlandWaterWays10YearReport)

924

PEOPLE DROWNED IN RIVERS, CREEKS, LAKES AND DAMS 2011/12 TO 2020/21



34%
of all drowning deaths
in Australia



92
people every year



80%
of all drowning deaths
were males

Distance travelled



40% drowned within 0 - 20km of where they lived

› INTERNATIONAL VISITOR DROWNING

Research published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health has found overseas tourists were the most likely to drown when compared to other visitors to Australia.

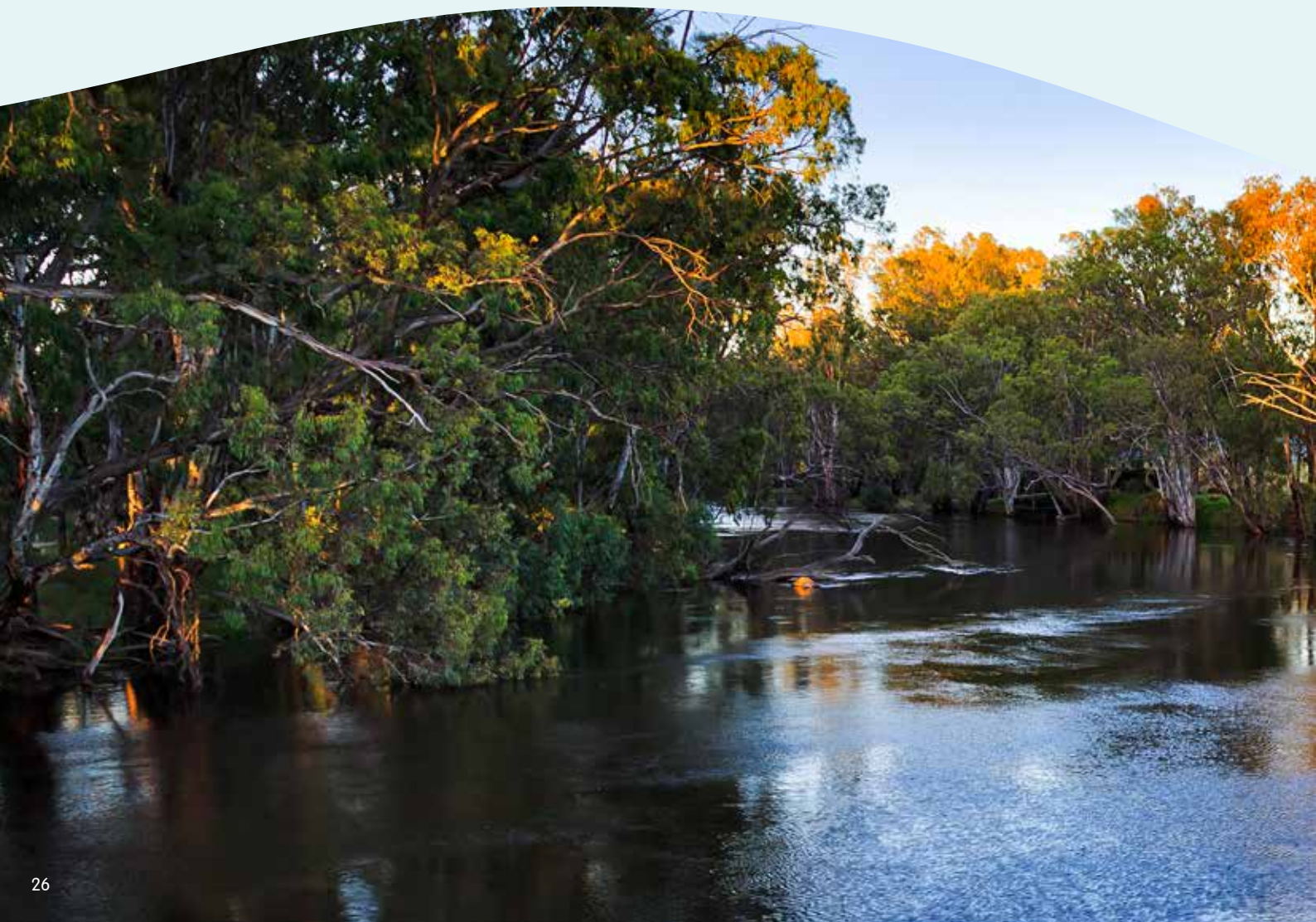
The research examined the factors in drowning deaths from 2008 to 2018 for four categories of visitor: overseas tourists, international students, work-related visitors and working holiday makers.

The characteristics of drowning among different types of international visitors to Australia and how this contributes to their drowning risk found men were overrepresented and most drowning deaths occurred in summer.

Overall, visitors from China (14.4%), the United Kingdom (11%) and the United States (9.5%) had the highest proportions of drowning deaths.

Lead author, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia’s Stacey Willcox-Pidgeon said the research found international visitors had unique safety needs based on their purpose of travel, country of origin, location they are visiting and aquatic activities they are undertaking.

These findings support the need for tailored prevention programs to increase water safety for our international visitors.



› YARNING ABOUT WATER SAFETY

New research exploring First Nations Peoples' water safety beliefs and practices in Wiradjuri Country has found family is a key source of water safety knowledge, with storytelling being critical to water safety education.

The research, which was commissioned by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, features interviews with Wiradjuri people in Wagga Wagga NSW. Wiradjuri Country has three significant rivers: Marrambidya (Murrumbidgee), Galari (Lachlan) and Wambool (Macquarie).

In particular the Murrumbidgee River was the focus of this study given it is one of the top 10 river drowning locations in Australia.

The report was co-authored by School of Population Health, UNSW Sydney academics Jasmine Williams, Dr Amy Peden and Professor Faye McMillan AM (now at UTS). Both Ms Williams and Professor McMillan are proud Wiradjuri Yinoo-galang (women) and Dr Peden grew up on Wiradjuri Country in the central west of NSW.

Lead author Jasmine Williams said she hoped the research would help prevent drowning incidents in the community.

"The community were very engaged and supportive of the research. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and knowledge," Ms Williams said.

Many agreed stories are a good way to communicate water safety to First Nations Children while also keeping culture alive. A participant shared their story about Bunyip's Corner, which aimed to highlight currents in the river:

"So you tell the story that you don't go around Bunyip Corner. That's up on Brungle mission. And so Bunyip Corner is where a rip comes, and it's not a corner. And so we teach the kids, that the bunyips in there, and he pulls you under. And I didn't know that it was actually just a rip, where you see this bunyip that lives in there. And that's our story, and it's not a myth. He's in there, and he only lives in that rip area. So that's how we teach our kids."



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
yarningaboutwatersafetyreport](https://royallifesaving.com.au/yarningaboutwatersafetyreport)





Community Awareness and Action



While we talk about its perils, we actually love the water, and we want you and your family to love it too. With just a little advice, and a few key skills it can bring a lifetime of good health, fitness and family fun.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Campaign to increase community awareness and action

We delivered community awareness campaigns across Australia to prevent drowning:

- > Keep Watch
- > Make the Right Call
- > Summer Safety Campaign
- > National Water Safety Day
- > Make Safe Decisions Around Water
- > Respect the River
- > Portable Pools – Don't Duck Out
- > Summer Drowning Toll
- > World Drowning Prevention Day

Promote the benefits of safe aquatic pursuits

We have actively promoted safe aquatic recreation to prevent drowning deaths in inland waterways, aquatic centres, and home swimming pools with programs including:

- > Respect the River
- > Keep Watch @ Public Pools
- > Swim and Survive

Engaged the community and our followers with ongoing news and events via

- > Royal Life Saving website
- > Royal Life Saving social media channels



> Royal Life Saving reminds parents to prepare for the unexpected.
ALWAYS KEEP WATCH.

Royal Life Saving's Keep Watch campaign has made significant inroads in helping to reduce drowning in children aged 0-4 since it was launched nearly 30 years ago.

Between 1 July 2002/03 and 30 June 2021/22, 549 children aged 0 to 4 years drowned in Australia. Of these, 40 per cent were just one-year old who drowned.

Most deaths in children aged one occurred in backyard swimming pools (51 per cent) and during the summer months (38 per cent).

Accidental falls into water was the leading activity prior to drowning in this age group, accounting for 77 per cent of all deaths. Almost all of these deaths were due to a lack of active adult supervision.

For every toddler drowning death approximately eight children are admitted to hospital as a result of non-fatal drowning.

Keep Watch is aimed at preventing children aged 0 to 4 years from drowning by getting parents and carers to undertake four simple actions:

- > **Supervise.** Actively supervise children around water.
- > **Restrict.** Restrict children's access to water.
- > **Teach.** Teach children water safety skills.
- > **Respond.** Learn how to respond in the case of an emergency.

As part of the Keep Watch campaign a range of resources have been developed to support the campaign including: TV Community Service Announcements and Social Media and Website Assets.

Campaign activation for 2022-23:

- > Broad Media Outreach TV, Radio, Print and Online
- > Community Service Announcements Placements – Including Channel 7, WIN and Foxtel.
- > Social Media Activation – Facebook and Instagram
- > Tribe Social Media Activation

CAMPAIGN REACH
4.5+ MILLION PEOPLE

Keep Watch is proudly supported by



Kids can't help themselves around water. **You need to.**



> Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/keepwatch

› Men Alerted to the Dangers of Risk Taking Around Aquatic Environments. **MAKE THE RIGHT CALL CAMPAIGN.**

Make the Right Call, now in its fourth year, encourages all Australians – especially males – to look after their mates to keep each other safe when recreating in, on and around water.

Men taking risks and overestimating their abilities is our greatest challenge in drowning prevention, with males continuing to account for 80 per cent of drowning deaths in Australia. This campaign tackles these issues head on by targeting men aged 25 to 45 years to raise awareness of the issues and educate them about the risks and consequences of their actions.

It advocates a commonsense approach by asking them to 'Make the Right Call' and look after themselves and their mates to keep them safe by implementing a series of simple safety measures:

- › Avoid alcohol around water
- › Wear a lifejacket when on the water
- › Avoid going alone around water

A variety of resources support the campaign including: TV and Radio Community Service Announcements; Social Media and Website Assets; and Digital Display Ads.

Campaign activation for 2022-23:

- › Broad Media Outreach TV, Radio, Print and Online
- › Media Partnership with Southern Cross Austereo and Triple M
- › Social Media Activation – Facebook and YouTube

CAMPAIGN REACH
5.9+ MILLION PEOPLE



Australia Day Push: 21 to 26 January 2023.

Royal Life Saving issued a media release leading into Australia Day warning men not to take risks around water with the Summer Drowning Toll showing that three-quarters of those who drowned since 1 December were men. Young men aged 18 to 34 the highest risk of drowning this summer.

There was an even split between inland and coastal waterways as the location for drowning deaths in this age group, highlighting the need for people visiting rivers and lakes to be aware of the risks including submerged items that can be just below the surface.

The rise in drowning deaths prompted Royal Life Saving's Chief Executive Officer Justin Scarr to issue an appeal to young men to Make the Right Call.

“Royal Life Saving research shows that 33 per cent of young men drown with alcohol in their system, with over half being intoxicated at the time of drowning. More than 40 per cent of the young men who drowned this summer were swimming at the time, but 33 per cent died after falling into water.”



› Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/maketherightcall

> Everyone enjoy the water safely. **SUMMER WATER SAFETY CAMPAIGN.**

The Summer Water Safety campaign is a brand led macro initiative, designed to support existing campaigns across a pivotal summer period with the call to action for everyone to enjoy the water safely.

The campaign targets families and communities (25-65 years old) who are out and about, enjoying swimming and recreational activities across Summer. There is a strong regional focus with specific targeting of identified high-risk locations and communities.

The campaign highlights a common-sense approach to drowning prevention and advocating simple safety tips to prevent drowning:

- > Know the conditions
- > Wear a lifejacket
- > Avoid going alone
- > Supervise children
- > Avoid alcohol around the water

A range of resources support the campaign including: TV and Radio Community Service Announcements; Social Media and Website Assets; and Digital Display Ads.

Campaign activation for 2022-23

- > Broad Media Outreach TV, Radio, Print and Online
- > Media Partnership with Southern Cross Austereo and Hit FM
- > Social Media Activation – Facebook and Instagram
- > Multicultural Media
- > Parliamentary Engagement

CAMPAIGN REACH
4+ MILLION PEOPLE

Campaign Launch

The Summer Safety Campaign was launched on Wednesday 14 December 2022, highlighting last year's record breaking summer for drowning deaths prompting an urgent warning from the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia for people to be water safety conscious in, on, and around water over the summer break.

In 20 years of fatal drowning data, last summer (2021/22) had the highest number of deaths on record, with 145 people drowning across Australia. More than a quarter of those who died were more than an hour away from home at the time.

The week between Christmas and 2nd January was the deadliest period for drowning deaths.

“The summer holidays are the time when we all like to catch up with friends and family and unwind, but sadly it's also the peak period for drowning, with too many people not making it home after a day in, on, or around the water.”

Monique Sharp, National Manager - Marketing and Events



> Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/summerwatersafety

› Keeping our community safe when swimming, fishing and boating. MULTICULTURAL CAMPAIGN

Royal Life Saving is committed to supporting diverse communities with water safety and swimming education that is culturally appropriate and accessible.

In the past decade, 725 people drowned in Australia who were born in another country. Most commonly people lost their lives at rivers/creeks, beaches or around rocks, when swimming, rock fishing or from an unintentional fall into water. Men from multicultural backgrounds may be at further risk of drowning due to limited experience and knowledge around Australian waterways, and lack of swimming and water safety skills.

The 'Make safe decisions around water' campaign aims to increase water safety among multicultural communities, promoting simple safety tips to prevent drowning when swimming, boating, and fishing:

- › Don't go alone
- › Always wear a lifejacket
- › Don't drink alcohol
- › Always watch your children
- › Learn swimming and water safety skills

The campaign was expanded in 2022/23, adding resources in Ukrainian, Farsi, Hazaragi and Pashto to make sure people in these communities, particularly new arrivals from the Ukraine and Afghanistan, have access to information so they can enjoy the water safely, wherever they are in Australia.

Visual and audio resources are freely available in 14 different languages: Arabic; Bengali; Burmese; Dari; Farsi (Persian); Hazaragi; Hindi; Korean; Kurdish (Kurmanji); Nepali; Pashto; Simplified Chinese; Swahili; Ukrainian; Vietnamese; in addition to plain English.

Royal Life Saving Chief Executive Officer, Justin Scarr said the resources were informed and co-designed by the community, to raise awareness of how to stay safe around the water when swimming, fishing and boating.

“Tragically we see too many drownings of people from multicultural backgrounds. Every drowning is a heartbreaking loss to a family and the wider community,” Mr Scarr said.

Campaign activation for 2022-23:

- › Translation of further materials/assets
- › EDM distribution to CALD peak stakeholders
- › Social media activation via CALD private and public groups
- › Radio CSA play

**CAMPAIGN REACH
1.56+ MILLION PEOPLE**



› Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/multicultural

› Life is better when we swim.
WE SWIM CAMPAIGN.

We Swim is inspiring parents across Australia to take action to ensure their children enjoy all the benefits of swimming, from the fun stuff like splashes, dives and races to the many health and safety benefits of being in, on and around the water.

Whether children are new to swimming or have dropped out too early – the aim is to ensure all children stay in lessons long enough to achieve and exceed the national benchmark for swimming and water safety, to swim continuously for 50 metres and float in deep water for two minutes by 12 years of age.

Campaign Resources include: Toolkit, Videos, Digital Displays, Posters and Social Media Assets.

From large aquatic facilities to local swim schools - the aquatic industry has gotten behind the We Swim Movement.

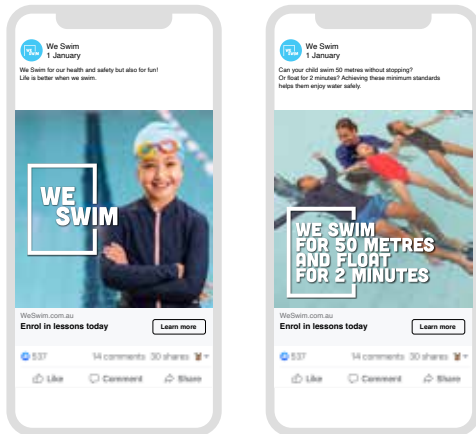
The following key partners have committed to the campaign and shared campaign resources and social assets amongst their networks:

- › Aligned Leisure
- › Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association
- › Australian Swim Schools Association
- › Belgravia Leisure
- › BlueFit
- › Jump Swim Schools
- › Kids Alive Do the Five
- › SPASA Australia
- › Swimming Australia
- › YMCA

Campaign activation for 2022-23

- › Social Media Activation – Facebook and Instagram

Social Media



Videos



Digital Displays



› Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/weswim

› Anyone can drown, no one should. WORLD DROWNING PREVENTION DAY.

As dusk fell across Australia on Tuesday 25 July, landmarks lit up in a deep blue to both remember those who have been lost to drowning, and as a reminder that “anyone can drown, no one should”.

World Drowning Prevention Day is a globally recognised day, where we all pause to think of the estimated 236,000 people lost to drowning annually as well as those who are left with life-long disability as a result of non-fatal drowning.

“World Drowning Prevention Day is a chance for everyone to reflect on what they can do to protect themselves and the people they love from drowning”
Justin Scarr, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia.

Aquatic Facilities across Australia got behind the day utilising a range of online marketing resources across their facility and social channels.

Landmarks around Australia that turned blue include:

- › ACT - National Film and Sound Archive, John Gorton Building, Old Parliament House, The National Carillon, The Treasury Building, Questacon, Ian Potter Learning Centre.
- › NT – City of Darwin Civic Centre, The Fountain on Speaker’s Green Parliament House, The Palmerston Recreation Centre and Frances Light Pole.
- › QLD – Brisbane Story Bridge, Townsville Sign, Victoria Bridge, Wharton Reef Lighthouse, George Roberts Bridge, Old Magistrates Court House, Central Park Boardwalk, Little Fletcher Bridge, Tropical Dome, Wickham Terrace Car Park, City Hall, The Redcliff Place Steam Sculptures.
- › SA – Adelaide Oval, Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide Entertainment Centre, Riverbank Footbridge.
- › TAS – Wrest Point Hotel, Hobart Waterfront, Tasman Bridge, Cardinal Lights (Mawson Place), Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre, Elizabeth Mall, Franklin Square Foundation, Kennedy Lane, the Rose Garden Bridge.
- › VIC – Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne City Baths.
- › WA – Matagarup Bridge (the new bridge crossing to Optus Stadium), Council House, Joondalup Driver Bridge,



Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/worlddrowningpreventionday

> SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS INCREASING AWARENESS AND EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT DROWNING PREVENTION AND WATER SAFETY

With a dedicated social media strategy, Royal Life Saving engaged with audiences on a range of issues and campaigns throughout 2022-2023 including:



> Keep Watch



> Make the Right Call



> Making Safe Decisions Around Water



> Summer Safety Campaign



> National Drowning Report



> Swim and Survive



> Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation



> The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia



> Workforce Survey

Social Media Snapshot 22-23

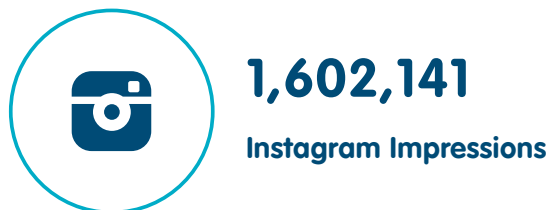
Total Impressions	14,267,021
Total Engagement	136,245

Followers Gained	4,064
Total Posts	1,470



Engagement	110,615
Views	889,574

Engagement	12,648
Views	13,351








Engagement	8,705
Views	28,179

Engagement	6,016
Views	9,397



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Swimming, Lifesaving, Water Safety Pathway



Building a nation of lifesavers, a community free from drowning. Remember the huddle position, search patterns, lifesaving sidestroke, and swimming in pyjamas. Learning lifesaving in school is as Australian as hot summer days, and gives many the skills and confidence to save a life.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Swim and Survive goes from Strength to Strength
- › Water Safety Challenge App
- › Piper Stewart Honoured
- › Strengthening Learn to Swim
- › Boost for Water Safety Frameworks Needed
- › Updates to the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package
- › National Aquatic Industry Workforce Report
- › New Course: Lifeguard Advanced Supervision Skills
- › Pool Lifeguard Challenges
- › Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships
- › Commonwealth Lifesaving Championships



> EDUCATION

AWARDS ISSUED



450,540

Swim And Survive



19,784

Bronze Community



3,942

Rescue Strand



> Swim and Survive Goes From Strength to Strength

Fresh from celebrating its 40-year anniversary, Swim and Survive has continued to go from strength to strength across Australia.

Whether you learned to swim in the 1980s or your children or grandchildren are starting lessons now, the much-loved program continues to offer the best swimming and water safety education backed by over 125 years of experience in swimming and lifesaving.

Royal Life Saving works with our Swim and Survive Partners partners right across Australia offering forums, professional development workshops and regular communication to keep them updated and upskilled.

Swim and Survive is a fun and dynamic swimming and water safety program that focuses on the development of swimming, personal survival, basic rescue and lifesaving skills.

Underpinned by research, the program continues to evolve to keep pace with new evidence on the best ways to keep children safe in, on and around the water.

Swim and Survive is closely aligned to the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework to ensure that all participants can achieve the National Benchmarks at target ages.

The program is mapped to the development milestones of the Framework to encourage regular and ongoing participation along the progression pathway.

400+
Swim and Survive Partners



Visit: swimandsurvive.com.au

PROGRAM PILLARS

Discover our program pillars that are the essence of Swim and Survive and encapsulates our program's strength, quality and unique elements.



PILLAR

01

Water safety, swimming, survival and rescue are and always will be the **key focus** of our program

PILLAR

02

Research underpins the curriculum and informs evidence-based **best practice** for quality lessons

PILLAR

03

Aligned to the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework to **achieve and exceed National Benchmarks**

PILLAR

04

Inclusive for everyone to participate along the **progression pathway** towards health, fitness, sport or career outcomes

PILLAR

05

Our holistic program develops **skills, knowledge, understanding, behaviours and attitudes** to develop a safer swimmer

› Water Safety Challenge App

To ensure all children across Australia have the chance to learn vital water safety information, Royal Life Saving has developed the Water Safety Challenge App.

The Water Safety Challenge has been specifically designed for primary school students in Years 1 and 2.

The App is an interactive 'game show' style presentation that teaches children about the dangers in and around water at home and other environments, safe places to swim, how to keep safe, how to get help in an emergency and calling Triple Zero (000).

Once they complete the Water Safety Challenge students should be able to:

- › Identify where water can be found in and around the home.
- › Identify where water can be found on rural properties (farms).
- › Identify the dangers with water in and around the home and rural properties.
- › Identify actions that keep themselves safe when in and around water.
- › Identify safe places to recreate in and around water in a range of environments.
- › Recognise safe actions when recreating in and around water in a range of environments.
- › Recognise an emergency in an aquatic environment.
- › Describe what to do in an emergency.
- › Identify who can help in an emergency.
- › Demonstrate how to call Triple Zero (000).
- › Describe information they may need to provide to an emergency operator.
- › Describe the roles and responsibilities of Police, Fire and Ambulance.



› Visit: royallifesaving.com.au/classroomresources

› Piper Stewart honoured for work to improve water safety

A young Indigenous woman who has made swimming lessons accessible to hundreds of Aboriginal children has been given top honours at the National Sports and Physical Activity Convention.

Piper Stewart, 17, not only won the Young Innovator of the Year but also the convention's most prestigious award for the highest contribution nationally to leadership in sports and physical activity.

Aged just 12, Ms Stewart formed Bambigi, which means "to swim" in Wiradjuri the Aboriginal language in Griffith and set about fundraising to give local Aboriginal children access to swimming and water safety lessons. More than 300 children have benefited so far from the program with access to lessons and equipment including swimming cap and goggles.

Ms Stewart was nominated by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia for her outstanding efforts and her tireless work to improve water safety outcomes for Indigenous young people.

Ms Stewart said she was honoured to have won the award and thanked the National Sports and Physical Activity Convention for the award and the Royal Life Saving Society - Australia for the nomination.

"By winning this award, I hope I can help raise awareness of the importance of swimming and water safety education, particularly for groups who miss out or cannot afford access, like the Aboriginal kids in Griffith," Ms Stewart said.

"Aboriginal people are four times more likely to drowning than non-Indigenous Australians, so Bambigi was established to ensure no child misses out on swimming and water safety lessons.

"I encourage governments, industry and peak bodies to work together to ensure that all kids, particularly Aboriginal kids, are able to afford and have access to swimming and water safety lessons nationwide."

Royal Life Saving's National Manager – Education Penny Larsen said Ms Stewart was inspirational. "Piper has been an inspiration not only for her local Aboriginal community but for other youth leaders and the broader aquatic industry," Ms Larsen said.



› Strengthening Learn to Swim

Towards a water-loving nation free from drowning: The role of learn to swim report was launched which assessed the delivery system of learn to swim across the Australian community. The report was prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Australia and commissioned by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia.

The report includes recommendations to maximise the potential of learn to swim and improve our nation's swimming and water safety skills, which will assist in reducing the generational risk of drowning.

Learning to swim is critical for all Australians to be safe around water, but despite the supports offered, some Australians miss out on learn to swim education or, despite participating in lessons, fail to achieve the National Swimming and Water Safety Benchmarks.

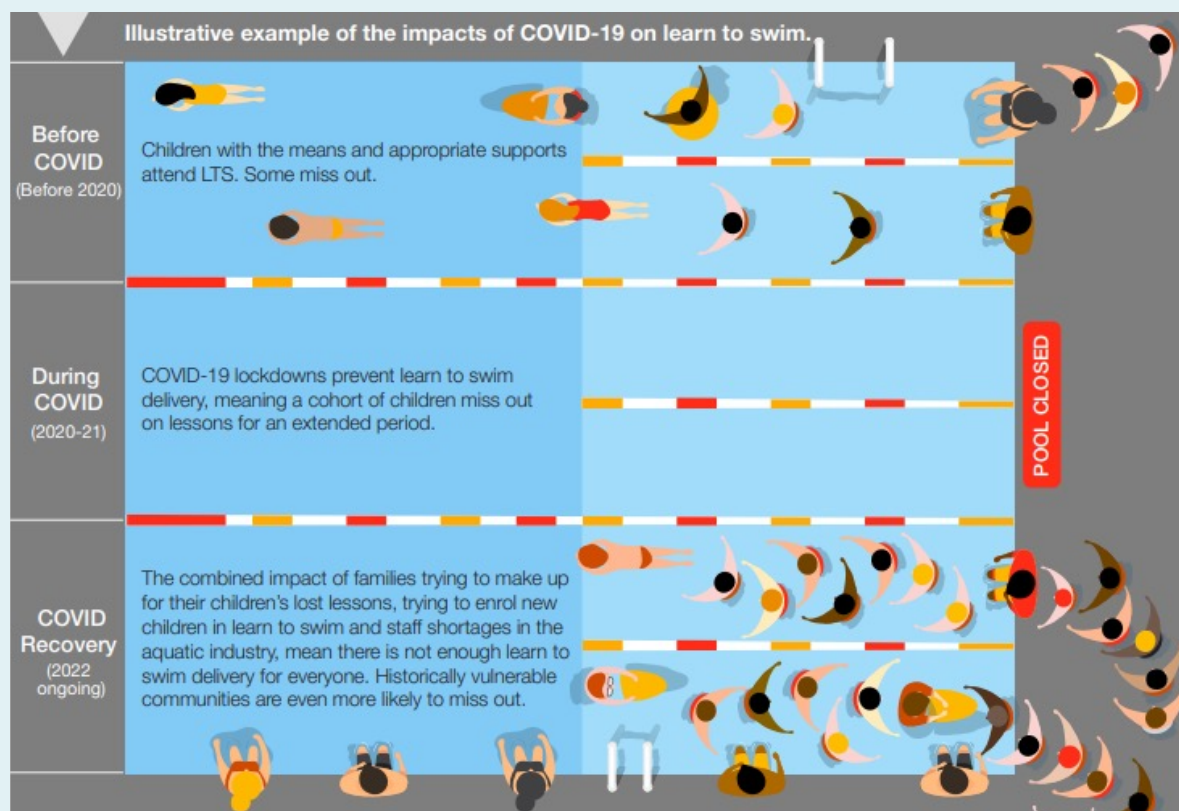
More than 40 per cent of children leave primary school unable to achieve the minimum National Swimming and Water Safety Benchmarks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded this issue, with close to two years of swimming lessons disrupted and an estimated 10 million lessons cancelled. Now, due to cost-of-living pressures and staff shortages, the return of Australians into learn to swim is slower than is necessary to facilitate a sufficient 'catch-up' of learn to swim.

Long wait lists for lessons and high cost of living pressures are current key risks to swimming skill attainment. These are likely to have long-term impacts on drowning rates, without significant intervention.



READ THE REPORT AND WATCH THE VIDEO
royallifesaving.com.au/strengtheninglearntoswim



› Boost for Water Safety Frameworks Needed

Swim schools are missing out on the benefits of aligning lessons to the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework and tracking children’s achievement against National Benchmarks, a new report has found.

The National Swimming and Water Safety Framework and Benchmarks Implementation Report found just eight per cent of swim schools are allocating equal amounts of time to water safety and to swimming stroke skills, despite that being a key part of recommendations.

The report commissioned by Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, found three-quarters of those surveyed were aware of the Framework and Benchmarks yet only 26 per cent mapped their programs to both the Framework and Benchmarks and only 14 per cent used data to track student’s achievement.

The research, which was co-authored by John Summers, Penny Larsen, RJ Houston and Dr Katrien Pickles, features survey responses from forty-five organisations which provide lessons to 825,000 children annually.

Programs aligned to the Framework provide individuals with balanced water safety, personal survival, and swimming education. Children are assessed against the same criteria across different systems, or the same system over time. This helps identify gaps in children’s swimming and water safety skills and areas for program improvement.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia National Education Manager, Penny Larsen, said the research reinforces the importance of aligning swim program curriculum with the National Framework and Benchmarks.

“If you know your program aligns with the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework and Benchmarks, it makes it easier to ensure all children are receiving high quality swimming instruction, which includes both swimming strokes and survival techniques,” Ms Larsen said.

“It was particularly concerning to see how many of the recommended skills for 14–17-year-olds were not being taught in swim schools. More than a third of the swim schools which responded are not teaching how to respond in an emergency or how to rescue a person in deep water, yet we know in the teenage years those skills are critical.”

The research found the Swim and Survive program, which is aligned to the National Framework and Benchmarks, remains the most popular and widespread swimming and water safety curriculum delivered in swim schools in Australia.



The Framework seeks to provide the following:

1. Support a structured and consistent understanding of swimming and water safety education across Australia.
2. Provide explicit learning opportunities to explore, strengthen and refine skills relating to swimming, water safety and physical activity within the aquatic environment.
3. Guide those responsible for developing, providing or selecting a swimming and water safety program.
4. Encourage participation from the early years, throughout primary and secondary school and beyond as a lifelong activity.
5. Accommodate individuals of all ages and abilities including those that have had little or no access to a swimming and water safety education.



READ THE REPORT
royallifesaving.com.au/nationalswimmingand-watersafetybenchmarksimplementationreport

> VET TRAINING AWARDS ISSUED

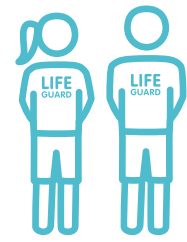


58,619
Resuscitation



30,293

First Aid



18,727
Pool Lifeguard



3,177

Bronze
Medallion



5,941
Swim Teacher



1,245

Aquatic Technical
Operator



> Updates To the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package

As a member of the Sport and Recreation Industry Reference Committee and the training package update project Technical Advisory Group, Royal Life Saving played a key role in the development of the new training products and through submission of an evidence-based discussion paper, was instrumental in the creation of an oxygen resuscitation and therapy unit contextualised to aquatic industry settings.

The updated training package includes:

- > A series of new qualifications and specialisations, e.g. Certificate III, IV and Diploma in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation. The qualifications have a range of specialisations at differing levels, e.g. Customer Service, Recreation Officer, Pool Lifeguard, Swim Teacher, and Swim School Coordination.
- > A new Inland Open Water Lifeguard skill set, including a new unit 'Perform open water rescues'.
- > A new unit in the Pool Lifeguard and Inland Open Water Lifeguard skill sets, 'Provide oxygen resuscitation and therapy in an aquatic environment'.
- > A new unit, 'Monitor and maintain inflatable aquatic equipment'.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) have a 12-month transition period in which to transition away from delivery of the superseded training products to the new products.

The updates to the sport, aquatic and recreation products within the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation training package, which includes qualifications and skill sets such as Swimming and Water Safety Teacher, Pool Lifeguard and Aquatic Technical Operator, were published in December.



> Aquatic Industry leads The Way on Employment

The Australian aquatic industry continues to lead the way in recognising the skills and experience of older workers and women, with the National Aquatic Industry Workforce Report 2023 also revealing improvements in Indigenous employment rates.

The report presents demographic information and analysis on the key roles and make-up of the workforce across Australia and builds on research previously undertaken in 2019. More than 2000 workers completed the detailed survey which informed the report.

Compared with 2019, there were more older people working in the industry, with 45 per cent of swimming and water safety teachers aged over 45. Almost 60 per cent of the workforce are women.

Encouragingly, four per cent of the workforce identify as Indigenous, higher than the 3.2 per cent of the Australian population overall who identify as Indigenous.

Royal Life Saving National Manager - Training and Workforce Development, Shaun Jackson said the passion people in the industry have for ensuring everyone can access the water safely shone through in the responses to the survey.

"Most workers reported drawing satisfaction from making a positive impact on people's lives and the community," Mr Jackson said.

"Workers who are often overlooked by other industries – older workers, people looking for their first job, people who need flexibility because of caring responsibilities – are valued in the aquatic industry.

"A lot of the skills people gain in the aquatic industry are highly transferable. Many young people in their first job as a lifeguard or swim teacher gain the communication, risk management, decision making, problem solving, teamwork, and customer service skills that they will use throughout their career."



READ THE REPORT
[royallifesaving.com.au/
aquaticworkforceresearch](https://royallifesaving.com.au/aquaticworkforceresearch)

The industry is mostly female



58%



40%



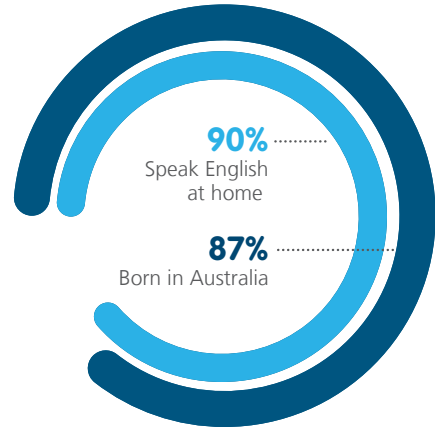
1% Non-binary



1% Prefer not to say

Most workers were born in Australia and speak English at home

27.6% of Australians are born overseas (ABS 2022)².

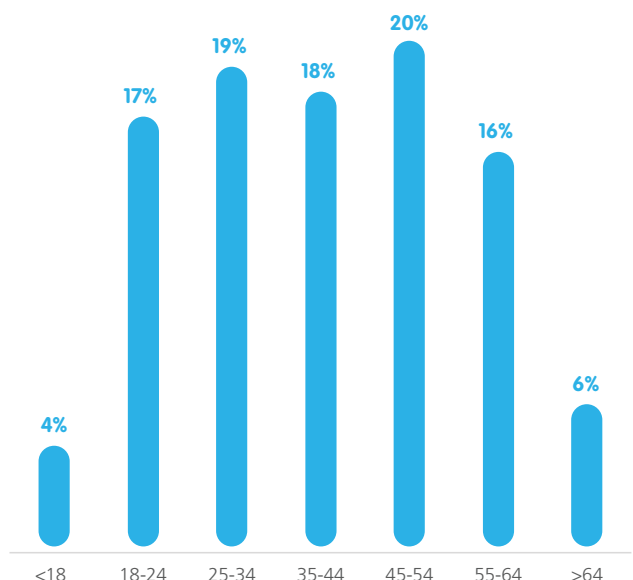


Approximately one in every 25 workers identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

3.2% of the population identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ABS 2022)¹.



The workforce has a broad and evenly spread age spectrum



62% of workers on an hourly rate are paid between \$26-\$35 per hour

The median national hourly wage across all industries is \$37 per hour, and \$31.25 in community and personal service sectors².

Lifestyle and career were important factors to taking up work in the aquatic industry



#1

User of facilities prior to employment



#2

It suited my lifestyle



#3

Career opportunity



> New Course: Lifeguard Advanced Supervision Skills

Effective supervision, both by carers and lifeguards, saves countless lives every year by stepping in when things start to go wrong rather than providing first aid after the fact.

To help lifeguards build on their existing supervision and scanning skills to take them to the next level, a new online module 'Lifeguard Advanced Supervision Skills' has been developed.

The module, which is designed specifically for pool lifeguards, makes use of the growing body of research around the visual, cognitive and physical challenges lifeguards face when supervising an aquatic environment, often in difficult circumstances.

Royal Life Saving's National Manager - Training and Workforce Development Shaun Jackson said honing supervision skills is critical for lifeguards, especially given that on average four people drown at public pools each year.

"We all know effective, vigilant supervision and scanning are critical components in ensuring patron safety," Mr Jackson said.

"Yet the complexity of these tasks and the challenges lifeguards face are sometimes overlooked.

"Scanning a pool requires a range of visual cognitive processes involving focal and peripheral vision and cue discrimination, rapid information processing, use of short-term and long-term memory, analysis, judgement, and decision-making. Often lifeguards are trying to execute these complex skills in less-than-ideal environments over extended periods. This module takes learners through a close analysis of all the components that make up effective supervision. It will particularly help lifeguards to better understand the limitations of human visual cognitive resources and processes, how these connect to supervision and scanning, and what strategies and techniques they can deploy to overcome these challenges."





> Pool Lifeguard Challenges

Pool Lifeguard Challenges are competitions run annually by Royal Life Saving Member Organisations with the aim of highlighting and celebrating the top professional pool lifeguards across a given state or territory.

The events are designed to test the abilities and knowledge of teams of professional pool lifeguards in a fun and collaborative environment.

Teams of four lifeguards are entered into the events by their employer to participate on behalf of their aquatic facility.

In order to win a podium position, a team must successfully work together to overcome various scenarios that test their teamwork, communication, fitness and lifeguarding skills and knowledge.

The events provide pool lifeguards with an opportunity to practice essential lifesaving skills under the guidance of professional industry examiners. In addition, the skills learned through participating in the Pool Lifeguard Challenge greatly assist lifeguards to create safer aquatic facilities throughout Australia.

The teams are challenged in a variety of simulated scenarios, such as managing major incidents, a theory assessment, as well as race events in the pool including rescue tows, line throws and manikin relays.

Speaking of the events, Royal Life Saving National Manager – Industry Safety Marty Moran said teams work together to overcome various scenarios that test their teamwork, communication and lifeguarding skills and knowledge.

“A podium finish at a Royal Life Saving Pool Lifeguard Challenge provides formal recognition of excellence in pool lifeguarding by winning facilities,” said Mr Moran

“The scenarios teams face are both difficult and realistic, and could easily occur at the participants’ own facilities. A variety of twists and complications are also introduced into the scenarios to make the situations even more challenging.”

> SPORT

> Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships 2023

Three days of intense competition and exciting finishes in the line throw and manikin tow finished with the Victorian State Team crowned champions of the Royal Life Saving Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships 2023.

Competitors travelled from all over Australia to the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre for the Championships, where the 'do or die' approach takes on new meaning, as every event has a real-life application and precision is as important as speed and agility.

The Victorian team edged out strong competition from the Western Australian State Team, and the NSW State Team to claim victory. NSW had held the title for five events running.

In addition to winning the overall points tally, the Victorian State Team also made a clean sweep of the CPR competition, taking home the Laerdal CPR Trophy after winning the under 16, under 19 and open divisions.

Pool lifesaving is one of the three core disciplines that make up the sport of lifesaving internationally. In addition to ocean and beach disciplines, more commonly known as surf lifesaving, pool lifesaving tests swimming, rescue skills and initiative in a still-water environment.



Lifesavers of the Meet

The Lifesavers of the Meet were Jake Smith, WA State Team (Open) and Chelsea Jones, NSW State Team (U19). It was Jake's second Lifesaver of the Meet honour in a row, having taken home the award in 2022.





Officials

The Pool Lifesaving Championships wouldn't be possible without the volunteers who ensure the event runs smoothly. Whether it's timekeeping, judging, or providing assistance to the teams, every volunteer gives their all during the Championships. We recognise the early starts, late nights and intense days and thank all the officials for their support.

Key Officials

Chief Referee - Joanne Teagle
 CPR Coordinator - Mary Collins
 SERC Coordinator - Brione Rundle
 Equipment Coordinator - Brendan Watts



Kevin Corry from Victoria was awarded Official of the Meet by Chief Referee Joanne Teagle

"Kevin jumped in to switch roles and help with equipment when he heard we were short volunteers," Ms Teagle said.

"He was a great asset to the equipment team and the first to arrive and the last to leave each day. His contribution was key to ensuring the success of the Championships."



CPR Competition

The CPR competition is an integral part of the Championships and highlights the outstanding ability of our competitors to perform efficient and effective CPR in an aquatic environment. This event is a test of resuscitation on an assumed drowning patient, using CPR training manikins. Judges are provided with live data on the competitors performance throughout the test, using Laerdal's Little Anne QCPR manikins and Skill Reporter technology.

The support of Laerdal as the CPR competition sponsor is greatly appreciated.

> Commonwealth Lifesaving Championships 2023

Australia claimed overall gold at the RLSS Commonwealth Pool Lifesaving Championships in Ontario, Canada with a dominant display which saw Australia beat teams from Canada, England, Wales, Scotland, Hong Kong, South Africa, India, Singapore, Northern Ireland and the Caribbean.

Both the National Team and the Development Team won gold in their divisions of the Championships, achieving the highest point score from individual, team and relay events across three days of intense competition where athletes had to swim both heats and finals.

By the end of the final day of competition, Australia had claimed 22 gold, 14 silver and eight bronze medals in the individual events; and 13 gold and two bronze medals in the relay team events.

On day three alone, four Championship records tumbled with Mariah Jones (Rescue Medley), Cameron Bladen (Rescue Medley), and both the women and men's 4x50m Medley Relay teams shaving time off existing records. The men's 4x50m Medley Relay team also broke the Commonwealth Record.

Australia also took out both the Men's and Women's Langford Bay Cup, which is awarded to the male and female athlete with the most points score for the overall meet. Callum Brennan took out the Men's and Chelsea Jones just edged out teammate Mariah Jones to claim the Women's.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia National Manager – Lifesaving Development Brooke Cherfils was in Canada with the Australian National Team and the Development Team.

"It was wonderful to see the countless hours of training and preparation for every member of the team pay off at the Championships with such an outstanding result," Ms Cherfils said.

"Beyond the individual excellence, these teams actively supported each other in and out of the water. That comradery helped drive their success.

Commonwealth Teams

The National Team is:

Cameron Bladen
Callum Brennan
Riley Brennan
Holly Holmesby
Harrison Hynes
Chelsea Jones
Mariah Jones
Jacob Loughnan
Jessica Oates
Summer Short
with James Petropoulos
as the Reserve.

The Development Team is:

Kirra Dale
Jemma Holt
Paige Holt
Leah Jones
Luke Lineham
Daniel Miller
Joel Piper
Kelton Rothnie
Reidel Smith
Brayden Woodford
with Nicholas Hodgers
as the Reserve.



Officials and Volunteers Lead the Way

Success at RLSS Commonwealth Pool Lifesaving Championships wouldn't have been possible without the support of our dedicated team. It truly takes a village and we're grateful to all the Officials and Volunteers who made this event a success.

Thank you to our Coaches - James Evans, Chris Petropoulos and Ethan Garland who prepared and lead our team to victory. Thank you to our Managers - Rachael Rylance and Karyn Locke who ensured the team was always at its best. From logistics to health and safety, you managed it all so wonderfully.

Thank you to our Australian Key Officials - Jo Teagle (Chief Ref SERC) who managed 180 athletes in Dry SERC and 41 Wet SERC teams in 3.5 hours. Thank you to Mary Collins (Deputy Ref) who worked extremely long hours to keep the competition running so perfectly.

Thank you to our Australian Deck Officials - Barb Morgan, Jim Morgan, Rob Reid, Jeannie Baxter-Reid, Tom Reid, Sally Bently, John Winch and Sue Baxter-Winch who ensured safety and technical accuracy was maintained throughout the event.

And lastly, thank you to the chair of the Commonwealth Lifesaving Development Committee, Anni Gardner. Your guidance and support were invaluable and helped pave the road to success.

Water Safety Key to Uniform

Leading Indigenous artist Lani Balzan's stunning artwork, *Water Journey*, was selected to feature on the Australian team uniform when they competed at the Commonwealth Pool Lifesaving Championships in Canada.

The artwork was designed to evoke the long connection First Nations communities have to waterways and their local water safety wisdom and knowledge. Royal Life Saving is eager to learn and share more about how First Nations connection and stewardship of waterways can be harnessed to help reduce drowning across Australia.

Wearing extracts of the artwork on the team uniform to the Commonwealth Games Federation sanctioned and supported event is a visual reminder of the importance of water in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres strait island communities across Australia.

The partnership between Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and Ms Balzan started with the commissioning of an artwork to represent Royal Life Saving's connection with Aboriginal culture and the journey towards its future of reconciliation.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia National Manager – Lifesaving Development Brooke Cherfils said it was important to remember that the sport of Pool Lifesaving originated in Australia as an extension of water safety and drowning prevention skills.

"We hope that people will see the uniform and think about the story behind the artwork, the knowledge of country that First Nations communities have passed through generations about local water safety," Ms Cherfils said.

"Lani is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her artwork tells the story of our reconciliation journey and connection with Aboriginal culture.

"Lani has taken the time to build a genuine connection with Royal Life Saving, and to understand our mission to prevent drowning and promote water safety across the community. We have been moved by the deep meaning she has conveyed with every brushstroke in the artwork."





Safer Aquatic Locations



We are championing safety in all aquatic environments through risk management, industry development and training initiatives.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- > Guidelines for Child Safety in Aquatic Facilities
- > State of Aquatic Infrastructure
- > Local Waster Safety Plans
- > South East Queensland Water Safety Forum
- > National Aquatic Industry Committee
- > Saving Energy at Aquatic Facilities
- > Flooding Crisis
- > National Sports and Physical Activity Convention
- > Respect the River





› Guidelines for Child Safety in Aquatic Facilities

A guideline on the management of child safety in aquatic facilities has been designed to help the aquatic industry understand and improve child safe practices.

The guideline provides owners and operators of aquatic facilities with practical guidance on how to interpret, apply and operationalise the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the 11th Victorian Principle relating to cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people.

Royal Life Saving's General Manager for Capability & Industry RJ Houston said the guideline is intended to simplify and contextualise existing principles and regulations so they can readily be put into practice in aquatic facilities and swim schools.

"The National Aquatic Industry Committee reviewed frameworks, guidance, legislation, policy and best practices across sectors to inform the new draft guideline," Mr Houston said.

"The Committee was keen to ensure strong alignment of the entire industry when it comes to child safety policy and practice by providing a national industry guideline.

In 2013, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was held. The Commission found a range of factors contributed to environments where children were able to be exploited and harmed, including tragically in some aquatic facilities and swim schools.

Following the Commission, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in 2018. However the principles are high-level and it was felt that contextualising the National Principles to the aquatic industry specifically would help compliance.

Both the New South Wales and Victorian governments have moved to legislate that all organisations working with children and young people must implement the National Child Safe Principles. Implementing the principles is legally required in those states, while in other states they remain as best practice guidance.

While developing the Guideline, the Committee was alerted to the fact that the Working with Children Check requirements vary across all eight Australian states and territories. The committee felt it was important for the National Aquatic Industry to ensure all persons working in aquatic facilities should be required to undertake the Working with Children Check as a matter of principle.

Brad Low, Chief Executive Officer at AUSTSWIM and National Aquatic Industry Committee member said the Child Safety Guidelines were important in providing clarity to the industry in how they can apply the National Principles and provide education programs and activities in a safe environment for children and young people.



> State of Aquatic Infrastructure

The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia – Rebuilding our Aging Public Swimming Pools found that significant investment is required to replace, renew or upgrade pools nearing the end of their useful life.

The report's findings showed that in the next 10 years, up to 40 per cent of public aquatic facilities that local governments own will need serious refurbishment or outright replacement at a cost of more than \$8 billion. Aquatic facilities are essential for the provision of learn-to-swim, water therapy, leisure, physical activity and swimming, which are activities that over 5 million Australians regularly attend. They are an essential service for communities.

The research found that:

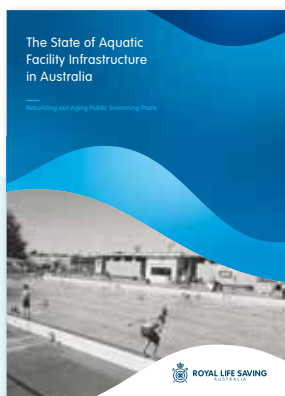
- > The average life expectancy of a pool is 50 years
- > The average Australian public pool was built in 1968
- > 500 (40%) of public pools will reach the end of their functional lifespan by 2030
- > \$8 billion is needed to replace those 500 aging public pools
- > A further \$3 billion will be needed to replace facilities ending their lifespan by 2035

The social health and economic cost of not replacing even 10 per cent of aquatic facilities by the end of this decade could approach \$1 billion per year according to multipliers from previous research by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Royal Life Saving.

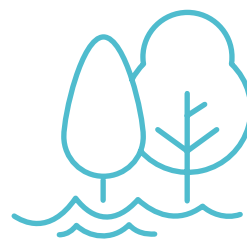
Royal Life Saving National Manager – Aquatics, RJ Houston said that while the health, social and economic benefits of swimming pools are now very clear, sadly some community pools are were no longer operational or safe to remain open.

“Even a basic outdoor swimming pool can cost \$10 million to replace in 2022 due to rising costs of labour and materials,” said Mr Houston.

“Local governments are the primary funder of aquatic facilities and are under extraordinary budgetary pressure currently, so the way in which public pools are funded and maintained needs re-examined systematically and across all layers of government.”



READ THE REPORT AND WATCH THE VIDEO
royallifesaving.com.au/stateofaquaticfacilityinfrastructure



Regional and remote communities are most at risk of missing out on updated or new aquatic facilities.



Rising energy costs and labour shortages pose a serious threat to the ongoing availability and sustainability of aquatic facilities across Australia.



Closing community pools is inherently very unpopular and consistently aggravates community sentiment and mobilises communities towards involvement in the political process.

> Local Water Safety Plans

One of the key themes identified in the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 is for every community to develop a Local Water Safety Plan.

A Local Water Safety Plan outlines existing and future community-based drowning prevention actions tailored to individual community contexts.

The approach emphasises the role of evidence-based solutions, multisectoral collaboration and the capabilities and needs of varying stakeholders, including community and government organisations and vulnerable groups.

The benefits of developing local water safety plans include:

- > Preventing future drownings and saving lives.
- > Taking leadership on an important social, health and economic issue.
- > Reducing the negative social, health and economic impacts of drowning in your community.
- > Gaining local data and research into drowning issues and risk factors.
- > Understanding and profiling drowning issues and risk factors.
- > Facilitating a common understanding of local drowning and water safety issues specific to the region.
- > Developing stronger ties to community groups and like-minded agencies.
- > Spotlighting key research and data relevant to the area to interested parties and those with a responsibility for water safety.
- > Supporting a commitment to working together on a collective strategy for the region.
- > Working towards evidence-based solutions/ actions that could be collated into a local water safety drowning prevention plan.
- > Demonstrating positive actions on drowning prevention in line with international and national frameworks.

In 2022-23, Royal Life Saving has been working to develop local water safety plans across the country including in:

South East Queensland

City of Gold Coast, QLD

Tambourine Mountain National Park, QLD

Maningrida, NT

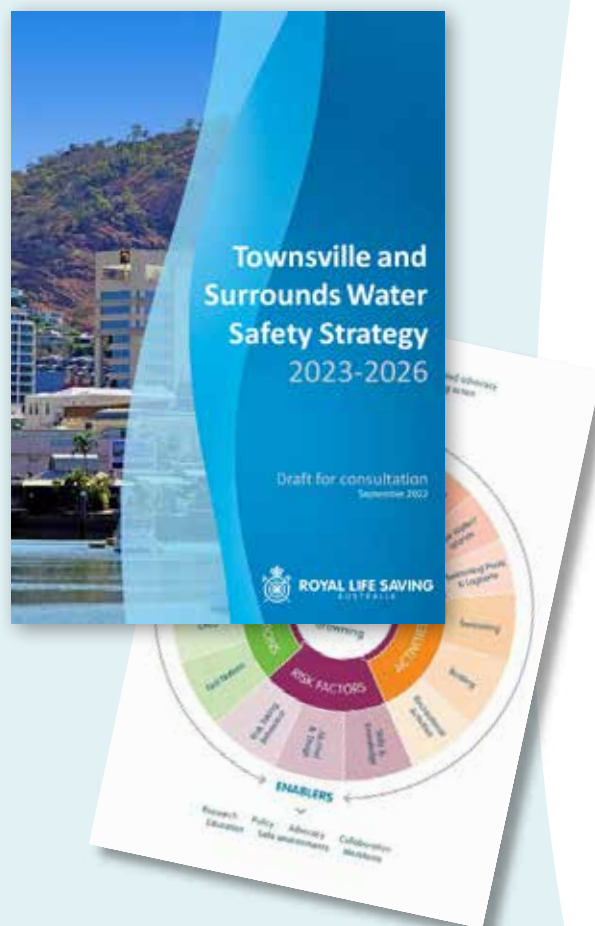
North Coast, NSW

Tasmania

Australian Capital Territory

Loddon Mallee, VIC

Shepparton, VIC



LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL WATER SAFETY PLANS
royallifesaving.com.au/localwatersafetyplan

➤ South East Queensland Water Safety Forum

Senior leaders from across government, local government, academia and water safety organisations gathered at a two-day forum in May to target the causes of drowning in South East Queensland.

New research showing 366 people had drowned in the past 10 years just in South East Queensland, making it a drowning blackspot, prompted the Royal Life Saving Society to convene the forum.

Hon Mark Ryan, Queensland Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services was joined by senior government department representatives, local government leaders, aquatic facility managers, and water safety organisations at the forum.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia General Manager – Capability & Industry, RJ Houston, said the variety of recreational areas in the region, including home pools, public pools, rivers, lakes, creeks, dams, and the ocean create significant benefits, but also carry significant risk.

“More work is needed to be done to coordinate drowning prevention activities and standards across all waterways,” Mr Houston said.

The forum was delivered by the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia with support from the Australian Government under the inland waterways drowning blackspot reduction program. It was hosted by the City of Gold Coast Council.



[READ THE STRATEGY](#)



> National Aquatic Industry Committee

The National Aquatic Industry Committee had a busy 2022/23, with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing and three critical challenges: workforce; rising costs of business; and contemporary safety challenges.

Contemporary safety challenges include psychosocial safety, child safety, safety culture, occupational violence and aggression. Royal Life Saving thanks committee members for their advice and counsel as well as the contribution of member organisations to the data and research processes.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Committee is continuing its work on Managing Mental Health and Wellbeing for the Aquatic Facility's Workforce. An expert psychologist working with Aquatics and Recreation Victoria has been engaged for peer review. The committee will explore further in 2023/24 what resources or projects it can support the aquatic industry with to help manage psychosocial risks.

Child Safety Guidelines

The Child Safety Guidelines for the Aquatic Industry were approved by the Committee in 2023 after extensive consultation, and will come into effect as at 1 July 2024.

Single Guideline for Aquatic Industry Training and Qualifications

Drafts of a single set of training and qualifications guideline have been presented to the National Aquatic Industry Committee for feedback, with a final draft being considered for adoption ahead of summer 2023/24. The guideline will come into effect 1 July 2024.

Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation

Several requests for minor updates to the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation are being examined. A series of working groups have been established to review and update guidance for: diving, teaching platform design, pool lighting specifications and lifeguard use of wearables. These recommendations will be tabled in 2023/24.

National Aquatic Industry Committee

RJ Houston (Chair) General Manager - Capability & Industry Royal Life Saving Australia
Matthew Simpson - Swimming Australia
Bradley Low - Australian Council for Swimming and Water Safety Teachers (AUSTSWIM)
Gary Toner - Australian Swim Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA)
Wayne Pollock - Australian Swim Schools Association (ASSA)
Kathy Parton - Aquatics and Recreation (ARV)
Stan Wall - Aquatic Recreation Institute (ARI)
Steve Good - Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics (LIWA)
Lindsay McGrath - Swimming Pool and Spa Association Australia (SPASA)
Amanda Locke - City of Greater Geelong, VIC
Jake Boerema - City of Norwood, SA
Brad Page - Logan City Council, QLD
Matt Howes - Sunshine Coast Council, QLD
Liam O'Brien - Aligned Leisure
Mel Atkins - Bluefit
Liz Van Deventer - Belgravia Leisure
Greg Jennings - YMCA VIC
Alek Olszewski - Life Saving Victoria
Les Mole - Royal Life Saving Queensland
Nick Au - Royal Life Saving New South Wales
Bec Gawne - Royal Life Saving Northern Territory



> Saving Energy at Aquatic Facilities

The Federal Government's Community Energy Upgrades Fund was welcomed by Royal Life saving as a means for aquatic facilities to improve their energy efficiency.

The program will provide \$100 million to co-fund energy upgrades with local councils and has the potential to unlock over \$200 million in high-impact energy upgrades to save community facilities on bills over the medium and long term.

The program could include upgrades like replacing energy-intensive heating in council pools with heat pumps and energy efficient lighting and battery storage.

Local government, particularly in regional and remote areas, has struggled to find the funding to keep up with increasing energy costs and facility upgrades.

> Flooding Crisis

The flooding crisis in November 2022 had a devastating impacts on lives, families, communities, property and our colleagues in the aquatic industry.

The scale of impact was difficult to quantify as it varied community by community, but some communities (and aquatic facilities) have been deeply impacted.

Around 125 local government areas were affected across New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. There were 384 aquatic facilities located in designated disaster zones, some of which are already under water, or have been under water recently.

Photo: Aquamoves Shepparton, Shepparton City Council



> National Sports & Physical Activity Convention

An excellent debate was held at the National Sports & Physical Activity Convention on the ongoing relevance of the 50m pool facilitated by our CEO Justin Scarr.

Arguing in favour of the 50m pool, Joanne Love, President of Swim Coaches and Teachers Australia, provided a passionate discussion about the inspiration provided by Olympic athletes to young swimmers and reinforced the importance of equitable access to training facilities for young athletes. Nadine Kemp Regional Executive Manager from the Y Victoria argued that 50m pools can be more versatile than other pools if they embrace technology enhancements such as submersible swim walls and moveable floors.

Arguing in favour of alternative bodies of water (leisure, program, 25m, water parks): Todd McHardy, CEO of BlueFit, argued that 50m pools are energy intensive, can be more expensive to staff and are for the most part under-utilised, especially in reference to their footprint.

Simon Bryson, General Manager – Operations at Aligned Leisure, argued that more diverse water spaces such as warm water pools and learn to swim pools allow a more diverse user base to participate in aquatic activities. Simon also argued that 50m pools are generally deeper, contributing to fear and/or safety concerns, and that a more progressive approach to provision would include a gradual journey through different water bodies based on life stage.

Royal Life Saving was pleased to be a collaborative partner to the National Sports & Physical Activity Convention 2023.



Respect the River is a Royal Life Saving program of activities which operates in every State and Territory in Australia with the support of the Australian Government.

Australia has many beautiful inland waterways including rivers, lakes, dams, lagoons, channels, and creeks however they can pose safety risks. It's important to be aware of the dangers and always take care around water. Remember that water conditions which may have been suitable one day can change hourly with the current.

This year member organisations focused on groups at most of risk of drowning, providing tailored water safety skills and information to stay safe in, on, and around the water.

From Renmark in South Australia to Bendigo in Victoria, Pilbara in Western Australia, the Derwent Valley in Tasmania and Rockhampton in Queensland, the importance of water safety around inland waterways was emphasised throughout the year.

Across Australia, hundreds of thousands of people engaged with the Respect the River campaign through face-to-face events, specialist training programs and water safety messages.



Western Australia

The Aboriginal Swim and Survive and Bronze Medallion Inland Waterway Project was developed as a response to research showing half of all children who fatally drowned in Western Australia were Aboriginal, with many drowning deaths occurring in inland waterways.

Throughout the course, children in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Southwest, and Midwest developed skills to stay safe at their local waterway, where currents, undertows and submerged objects can make even tranquil looking rivers potentially dangerous.

The children learn the Aqua Code which includes: 'Go together' – always go with someone, family or big friends; 'Float and wave' – when you're tired, float on your back and wave for help; and 'Reach to rescue' – grab a stick and reach out to help.

In 2022/23 Royal Life Saving Western Australia also conducted a series of community consultations to facilitate the development of a local water safety plan for the Kimberley, Midwest, Southwest and Pilbara.



Respect the River
Saving lives in Australian Rivers



Australian Capital Territory

A Day at the Lake was again a roaring success in the ACT, with more than 500 people coming to Black Mountain Peninsula on the edge of Lake Burley Griffin.

A Day at the Lake provides practical demonstrations and skills sessions, giving participants the chance to practice important safety skills such as how to safely assist someone who needs help, how to read conditions and spot any risks in open waterways.

South Australia

With children with Autism at higher risk of drowning, Royal Life Saving South Australia focused on offering specific classes to provide critical water safety skills.

More than 1000 lessons were provided to the 120 participants aged between three and 18 years old. Programs were conducted as either 1:1 programs, or small group sessions to maximise engagement where possible. Fourteen swimming instructors received specialised training to upskill them to work with people with Autism, gaining skills they will continue to use at their local swim centres.

Tasmania

Royal Life Saving partnered with high schools in low socio-economic areas to provide critical water safety skills to students. Children from kindy to year six participated in five day programs to given them skills to stay safe in, on and around the River Derwent.



Queensland

Royal Life Saving Queensland worked not just across the State, but across the ages, with programs starting with early childhood centres and reaching all the way to seniors.

In 2022/23, the Water STAARS program was again popular with participants, with 82 people aged between five and 21 years old participating in the course at Currimundi Lake.

Water STAARS (Support To Access Aquatic Recreational Spaces) is targeted towards individuals with a disability. Over the course of the four sessions, each session focuses on water and personal safety within and around aquatic spaces.

New South Wales

Royal Life Saving NSW delivered the Northern NSW Drowning Prevention Workshop in June 2023 to develop an Action Plan to reduce drowning in the region.

The North Coast of NSW has some of the most beautiful waterways in the world to enjoy, recreate and socialise in. However, it is one of the country's leading locations for drowning incidents with more than 600 fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents in the past 15 years.

Key local organisations including local government, the aquatic industry, NSW Water Police and Marine Rescue were involved in the forum.



Northern Territory

With floods affecting many communities in the Territory, Royal Life Saving Northern Territory promoted the "If it's flooded forget it" river safety campaign using local talent to reach vulnerable people during the wet season.

The Branch was again very active at community events right across the Territory from the Tennant Creek Show to the Darwin 4WD, Boating and Camping Expo, sharing key river safety messages relevant to Top End communities.

Victoria

A program to reach people from multicultural communities was the highlight for Victoria, with a ten-week program offered at Golden Square and Gurri Wanyarra Pools.

To help with the longer-term sustainability of the program, four women from Karen, Dinka and Turkish backgrounds completed water safety and swim teaching accreditation, becoming important role models for their communities in the process.

For team at Life Saving Victoria, the highlight was watching one 82-year-old participant, Mya, from Myanmar grow in confidence in the water. Despite needing to rely on Ma Paw to interpret instructions to her, Mya didn't let the language barrier get in the way of gaining water safety skills and having a great time in the water.



Organisational Cohesion and Growth



Royal Life Saving is continually building upon our 129-year history, our national network and our collective commitment to the Australian community.

With our focus firmly on the future, Royal Life Saving State and Territory National Board Members, Members and CEOs gathered to discuss the strategic priorities through to 2030. The development of a strategic framework to act as umbrella strategy for Royal Life Saving is being undertaken to create alignment for our people and entities.

Across Australia, our State and Territory Member Organisations have worked hard to help their communities access critical water safety information.

Whether it is increasing accessibility and inclusion for priority populations, partnering with community organisations or working on local water safety plans, all of our staff and volunteers are working together to deliver a healthy, strong and safe community through water safety, education and training.

The reports from our State and Territory Member Organisations demonstrate the diverse groups of people Royal Life Saving is proud to serve in communities from Maningrida to Melbourne, Paringa to the Pilbara, Queenstown to Queanbeyan, and Woorabinda to Wollongong.

Our goal is for everyone, wherever they live in Australia, to enjoy the water safely.





TEACHER

› Royal Life Saving Strategy and Member Workshop, Melbourne, 28-29 July 2023

Royal Life Saving State and Territory National Board Members, Members and CEOs met in Melbourne to focus on the strategic priorities through to 2030. The workshop objectives included to celebrate achievements, and discuss future opportunities, to develop a strategic framework that can act as umbrella strategy for Royal Life Saving, and to create alignment for our people and entities to a Royal Life Saving Strategy 2030.

External speakers helped to frame the challenges and opportunities. Eliane Miles, Social Researcher, Curious Co delivered a keynote address titled Changing times, emerging trends: Responding strategically to the megatrends. Eliane outlined some demographic, economic, generational, and consumer change that is evident and demands adaptability from not-for-profit leaders.

Nicky Sloan, City Venue Management, and Liz Van Deventer, Belgravia Leisure then picked up these themes in a discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing the aquatic and leisure sectors. Topics included keeping people happy and healthy, the workforce of the future, risk and litigation, and what venues look like in five to ten years.

Dr Amy Peden, UNSW and Royal Life Saving Research Fellow, and Dr Hannah Calverley, Life Saving Victoria Research and Evaluation Manager discussed the challenges and opportunities facing drowning prevention, water safety and the role of research and policy in solving complex problems. Topics included the big research questions, how hard is it going to be to reduce drowning by 50 per cent, risk taking behaviours, and the role of the research and researchers.

Daniel Gerrard, Water Safety New Zealand CEO, and Dr Mitch Hartman, Royal Life Saving President, Chief of Staff, Telethon Kid's Institute and then discussed working communities, the power and opportunity of culture, setting an agenda across complex stakeholders, working with government and donors, and everything else that came up in conversation or from audience questions.

Brand Council, led by Trudi Cassin facilitated a strategy workshop where stakeholders were challenged to rethink our beliefs, values and strategic behaviours. Using innovative techniques, tables paced through the activities debating and reflecting on the opportunities for Royal Life Saving to strengthen its commitment to our long term mission of reducing drowning. The workshop provided great input into the next strategic framework, which is expected to be released in late 2023.



› Evacuees Water Safety At The Centre For National Resilience

In March 2023, a new water safety program was deployed to help the 700 evacuees from flooded communities at Daguragu, Kalkarindji, Pigeon Hole and Palumpa stay cool and enjoy the water at the Howard Springs Centre for National Resilience in the Northern Territory.

The program, which sees the pool opened seven days a week and staffed by qualified lifeguards, welcomed 150 people through on its first day of operation. Operated by the Royal Life Saving Society – Northern Territory, the pool program provides some relief for the evacuees as they wait for the floodwater to recede so they can return to their homes and begin the process of rebuilding their communities. Royal Life Saving Society – Northern Territory Executive Director Floss Roberts said the 25m, six-lane pool was proving very popular, especially the after-school sessions.

“The children were really excited that the pool was open. We thought we’d do a soft launch on the first Sunday and 150 people showed up, which was wonderful,” Ms Roberts said.

“We all want the community to return home with more swimming and water safety skills, more lifesaving skills in particular. So that’s our focus now.”

“None of the affected communities have pools, so this is an opportunity to run these programs, do some swimming assessments and make it fun and engaging. Their water access at home is the Victoria River and the creeks that flow from it, so we are offering programs that help in that environment: rope rescue, wearing a life jacket and recognising people in difficulty in a fast flowing creek.

“They are so far away from home, which is difficult for the whole community. The Government Emergency Services Department is doing a great job working with community leaders and setting up access to education, sport, and other activities to keep them active, engaged and having fun.

“We are very proud to be involved in the relief effort, and we hope that we’re making it a little easier for all three communities, who are missing home. There’s a lot of rebuilding to be done, and critical infrastructure to be reinstated over the weeks ahead.”



› South Australian Governor’s Multicultural Awards

Royal Life Saving Society – South Australia has been recognised in the Governor’s Multicultural Awards, winning the Community Sector Award for their Multicultural Swimming Instructors program.

The Governor’s Multicultural Awards recognise and celebrate outstanding South Australians who promote multiculturalism and increase understanding of the benefits of cultural diversity in our community. Royal Life Saving Society – South Australia Chief Executive Officer Jayne Minear was presented the award by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia in a ceremony at Government House in March. The inaugural eight-week course in 2021 provided free water safety lessons for more than 50 participants. The tailored water safety strategies used clear messaging that was both culturally sensitive and educational.

Judges were especially impressed by efforts to encourage greater cultural diversity among those working in the aquatic industry in Australia, to better engage multicultural populations in water safety. Ms Minear said the organisation was humbled to be recognised at the prestigious awards.

“This program was developed in response to the fact that people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are at higher risk of drowning. That cultural understanding and shared experience makes all the difference. The program also provides opportunities for people to gain meaningful, fulfilling employment,” Ms Minear said.



> STATE AND TERRITORY MEMBER ORGANISATIONS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Australian Capital Territory

Swim 4 Life

The Swim 4 Life was founded on the belief that every child should learn water safety skills regardless of their financial background.

The free two-week intensive Swim and Survive training sessions run during the school holidays.

Swim 4 Life's curriculum isn't just about safety in the pool; it extends to vital river and lake safety education, ensuring children are equipped to navigate various aquatic terrains with confidence.

More than 160 participants took part in the program from across the ACT.

Aquasafe Program

This year, Royal Life Saving ACT revitalized the Aquasafe program, a crucial water safety initiative for Year 2 students.

Despite staffing challenges arising from the aftermath of COVID-19, the collective efforts of the team, in collaboration with the ACT Government Education Directorate, have been nothing short of exemplary. Partnerships with key ACT public pools rejuvenated the program, ensuring that the young students in ACT remain equipped with critical water safety knowledge.

Infant CPR Awareness

The Infant CPR Awareness program was designed to help new parents learn about and practice skills. The topics covered included: Infant CPR, choking recognition and management, basic water safety including bath time safety, pool safety and information regarding right time to start swim lessons. More than 100 participants were involved in the program across 21 sessions.

New South Wales

Outback Lifesaver

Life Saving NSW successfully conducted the Outback Lifesaver Program across three regional locations - Scone, Wagga Wagga, and Inverell. More than 90 children eagerly participated, gaining essential knowledge and skills in swimming, lifesaving, and water safety pertinent to inland waterways. The comprehensive program covered rescue techniques, board paddling, CPR, survival swimming, safe entries and exits, first aid, and emergency management.

This education not only equips these young lifesavers with the skills needed for a lifetime of safe enjoyment of aquatic environments but also boosts their social skills and confidence, enabling them to respond effectively in emergencies. Our sincere thanks go to the team at Oasis Aquatic Centre Wagga Wagga and Community Aquatics Scone, as well as Katina Johns, for their invaluable knowledge, passion, and support in launching these life-changing programs within their communities.

Urban Plunge

Royal Life Saving NSW has recently engaged in a fruitful partnership with Sydney Water to support their innovative Urban Plunge initiative, which aims to enhance Sydney's cultural identity by reconnecting people with their local aquatic environments. As part of a global movement to foster a closer relationship between communities and their urban waterways, Sydney Water seeks to create more opportunities for swimming and recreational activities in the city's rivers, creeks, lakes, and inlets.

A key highlight of this initiative in 2022 was the establishment of a pop-up pool at Prospect, which served as a local hotspot for residents to cool off and enjoy their summer holidays. The initiative significantly increased community engagement, initiating conversations about the need for additional local swimming and water recreation options. Royal Life Saving NSW played a critical role in ensuring the safe and smooth operation of the Urban Plunge project providing risk management support, appropriate signage, and crucial lifeguarding services throughout the summer.



Northern Territory

Remote Swim, Survive & Strive

Royal Life Saving Society Northern Territory was proud to deliver the Indigenous Advancement Strategy - Remote Swim, Survive & Strive again this year.

The Remote Swim, Survive & Strive Project delivers the Swim and Survive program, Indigenous employment, AUSTSWIM Mentoring program, lifesaving education and recreational sporting programs, Indigenous aquatic training, VET in schools and the establishment of learn to swim business models in remote communities.

More than 1500 people took part in the program across the Territory in 21 remote communities. This included 821 students in remote locations, with 21 achieving the national swimming and water safety benchmark of a level 7 or above. Three hundred and fifty-five people were trained and are now qualified with range of qualifications. Two Indigenous people gained employment as a direct result of the project.

Water Safety Strategy for 2030.

The Northern Territory Water Safety Strategy for 2030 was developed by the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council. The Council is administered by Royal Life Saving.

Statistics show Territorians are three times more likely to drown than other Australians, with more than half of these fatalities occurring in rivers, creeks, waterholes, or dams.

The NT Water Safety Strategy 2030 provides a strategic framework and clear direction for the Members to remain committed to the vision of a Territory free from drowning. The impact of fatal and non-fatal drowning on families and community is front and foremost in our approaches to help Territorians be safe in, on and around water.

Queensland

Woorabinda Lifeguards

Ensuring communities have access to trained lifeguards is a critical part of Royal Life Saving Queensland's mission. Woorabinda in central Queensland relies on the local swimming pool especially during the scorching summer months.

Last year it was forced to close due to a lack of lifeguards. Royal Life Saving Queensland stepped in to train and employ three residents who completed lifeguard training and obtained their Bronze Medallion certification. These new lifeguards not only ensure the pool's operations but also provide employment opportunities and inspiration for others in the community.

Adult Learn to Swim

Royal Life Saving Queensland in conjunction with Ipswich City Council offered adults aged over years free water safety and swimming lessons in a five-day program held at Orion Lagoon. The program gives adults fundamental water safety skills, including safe water entry, as well as life jacket experience, floating and basic freestyle lessons.

One of the previous participants, Carol, said that the program had built her confidence in the water.

"The instructors broke every step down so it was easy to follow and allowed each participant to take their own time. I was so scared on the first day and with gentle encouragement and support on that day I gained more confident as the week progressed. The instructors were also a credit in how they communicated with us older generation too!"



South Australia

The Oaks Swim Centre

After a three-year closure, Royal Life Saving Society – South Australia took over the operations of The Oaks Swim Centre to provide swimming and water safety lessons to those most at risk of drowning.

Children with autism and members of the multicultural community in Adelaide’s north-east suburbs will benefit from upgraded facilities at The Oaks Swim Centre. The pool is located on the Seeing Differently with the Royal Society for the Blind site at Gilles Plains.

The pool operations focus on programs including: the Inclusive Swim for the Autism and Autistic Community; Multicultural Swimming Lessons and Water Safety Education; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Safety and Swimming Lessons; and the Active Ageing Program. Royal Life Saving Society – South Australia will also partner with Seeing Differently with the Royal Society for the Blind to deliver water therapy to Australian Defence Force Veterans as part of the Operation K9 (OPK9) program. Funding for the pool upgrade was provided by the South Australian State Government.

Lifeguard Challenge

South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre’s Team C were the 2022 Royal Life Saving Society - South Australia Pool Lifeguard Champions, beating a highly competitive field of lifeguards in an impressive display of lifeguarding skills and teamwork at Marion Outdoor Pool.

The teams were challenged in a variety of simulated scenarios, such as managing major incidents, a theory assessment, as well as race events in the pool including rescue tows, line throws and manikin relays.

The scenarios were designed not only to test the technical skills of the individual team members, but also their overall teamwork, communication and incident response capabilities.

Tasmania

Hydro Tasmania Assessments

Royal Life Saving Tasmania has conducted five Aquatic Safety Assessments for Hydro Tasmania, providing advice on best practice for water safety in, on and around the Hydro lakes and dams. These assessments were based upon existing standards and risk management principles. Through our Aquatic Risk Services Team, we assessed Hydro’s inland lakes and dams that are utilised by the local communities and visitors for recreational aquatic and land-based activities.

By conducting these Safety Assessments, we aim to mitigate potential loss and provide recommendations to ensure public safety in, on, and around Hydro Tasmania’s inland waterways.

Royal Life Saving Tasmania thank Hydro Tasmania for the assistance provided in identifying the assessed sites, together with the Tasmanian State Government funding that has made these assessments possible.

Swim Teacher Course

The Royal Life Saving “Swim Teacher Course” has been a highlight for Tasmania with seventy-six candidates completing the course in the past year.

In November a group of courageous participants from Queenstown, on the far West Coast of Tasmania braved the snow, wind and rain in order to gain their qualifications. Financial support from the West Coast Council helped these participants to take part in the course.

Having more qualified Swim Teachers in this remote location will increase access to vital swimming and water safety lessons for both the public education and private sectors, together with supporting Queenstown Amateur Swimming Clubs’ Learn to Swim Program.



Victoria

Inland Waterway Model

The Life Saving Victoria Inland Waterway Model for Local Drowning Prevention and Water Safety project received a vital funding boost through the National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction (NPA).

The program, which will be delivered in partnership with Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and Greater Shepparton City Council builds on previous blackspot projects. It will develop a holistic framework to plan for, prevent and respond to local water safety concerns and incidents.

This framework will be the first of its kind within an inland waterway context and will be conducted within the Greater Shepparton area, with a focus on the Goulburn River.

200,000 Participants

Life Saving Victoria's diversity and inclusion team reached a new milestone, hitting the 200,000 participant mark for its culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), seniors and disability programs.

Targeting at-risk communities is with 42 per cent of drowning deaths attributed to the CALD community over the last decade.

Not only do the programs emphasise water safety knowledge, including visiting patrolled locations and identifying aquatic risks and signage; they also provide training and employment opportunities.

This creates much needed influential leaders and role models within the CALD community, taking valuable learnings back to help more Victorians learn to enjoy the water safely, become more socially included within the wider community and gain employment in a new country.



Western Australia

Goldfields Spirit Swimming and Lifesaving Carnival

The second annual Goldfields Spirit Swimming and Lifesaving Carnival saw 85 children from Kalgoorlie and Kambalda take part in swimming races, lifesaving activities and giveaways.

Royal Life Saving WA research shows that more than half of Western Australia's drowning deaths happened outside the metro area in 2021-22, with people 1.8 times more likely to drown in regional and remote areas. Royal Life Saving is working hard to address these statistics, by focusing attention on swimming and lifesaving programs for children in regional and remote areas.

The interactive carnival included swimming and relay races as well as lifesaving activities, and offered children an opportunity to meet and interact with students from other local schools.

The Carnival was made possible thanks to funding provided by Principal Community Partner BHP.

Multicultural women unite to Swim and Survive

Multicultural women from across Perth are breaking down barriers and learning vital swimming and water safety skills through culturally sensitive swimming lessons. As part of Royal Life Saving WA's Women's Only Swim and Survive program, classes exclusive to women are held throughout Perth, providing a culturally appropriate and accessible option for water safety education.

With supportive funding from Lotterywest and the Department of Health, Royal Life Saving WA is able to provide these valuable lessons in partnership with the City of Canning, City of Stirling as well as The Swim School of Wangara.

Multicultural communities are overrepresented in the Western Australia drowning data, making up 37 per cent of all drowning deaths. The Women's Only swimming lessons actively combat these drowning statistics by providing culturally appropriate and safe environments for women who would otherwise miss out.



People and Culture



Our people are our most essential asset. They bring commitment, energy, skills and reach into communities across the nation. Investing in them, bringing clear purpose, the resources they need, building partnerships and fostering innovation, will all amplify their impact.

Recognising our valued members as part of the Australian and Commonwealth Honours and Awards.



44

LIFE MEMBERS



01

NEW LIFE MEMBER





> HONOURS AND AWARDS



Pene Snashall Makes History

Pene Snashall has become the first woman in 130 years outside the Royal family to become an officer of the prestigious Commonwealth Royal Lifesaving Council.

Ms Snashall is the only female on the 12-member council and one of only three people recognised under the Royal Charter with the authority to make financial, management and strategic decisions on behalf of the Commonwealth Royal Lifesaving Society.

Pene was elected as President of Royal Life Saving Society Australia Tasmania in 2013, and is currently only the second woman to hold the position in the organisation's 107-year history. Just two years later, she was elected as the National President; currently just the third female to hold the position in the 87-year history of the national association and only the second Tasmanian.

Pene served three years as President, then a further three years as Deputy President.

Marion Price Appointed Life Member

Marion Price has been actively involved in the teaching of swimming and water safety skills to children in Western Australia for more than 40 years. A long-term member of the organisation, Marion has made an enormous contribution to Royal Life Saving, as well as the broader aquatic recreation industry.

Marion's work directly benefited thousands of children in regional areas, particularly in the Wheatbelt region. Over the years she has held awards including Bronze Medallion, Pool Lifeguard, Aquatic Technical Operator, CPR, First Aid, Swim Teacher, Examiner, and Aquatic Trainer. We congratulate Marion on becoming a Life Member of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia.



Frances Evans Awarded Order of Merit

Ms Frances Evans OAM was awarded Order of Merit, by His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd) in King's Birthday Honours and Awards.

Frances has made an outstanding contribution to lifesaving missions at three levels: in her community, at state and national levels, and internationally across executive management, and as a volunteer in sport and community lifesaving. She has demonstrated this commitment with integrity, leadership, and good humour. She is well respected by her many peers, including staff and volunteer members of the local, state and national organisation.

Her career in lifesaving started at South Melbourne Life Saving Club in the early 1970s. She volunteers to assist the club at club fundraising events, officiating at pool and beach carnivals. She has acted as the clubs returns officer at successive annual general meetings and assisting with club administration. She was a volunteer with Royal Life Saving Society – Victoria Branch, before taking on a role in Administration. Her volunteer roles included being the Examiner and Metropolitan District Liaison Officer 1979-83.

Frances was employed by Royal Life Saving Society – Victorian Branch, and later at Life Saving Victoria for more than 25 years, in various roles including as Manager for Lifesaving and Sport, and Executive Assistant. During this period, she contributed to centenary celebrations for RLSS-V, numerous events organising committees, and provided tireless assistance to successive Presidents and Chief Executive Officers.

Frances is passionate about lifesaving sport, particularly the volunteer official component where she is much loved and respected by her peers across Victoria, Australia and internationally. Ms Evans has volunteered at the Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships, including making valuable contributions to event management and planning.

She held the role of CPR coordinator (2009-13) and took her passion for pool lifesaving sport to the World Lifesaving Championship Pool Competitions in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016, and as a technical judge and initiative judge at Royal Life Saving Commonwealth Championship level.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

Life Governors

2015 John McClelland AM (QLD)
2015 Alan B.Swinton OAM QPM (TAS)
2018 Daphne Read AO (NT)
2022 Terence Higgins AO

Life Members

1995 Neville Bayfield OAM (NSW)
1995 Gerald Brameld OAM (QLD)
1998 Victor John Dennis (WA)
1998 Ian Mackie AM (NAT)
1998 Gwendolyn Welford
BEM(C) (QLD)
1999 Alan B. Swinton OAM
QPM (TAS)
2000 V.J Forde AM (SA)
2000 John McClelland AM (QLD)
2002 Heather MacGowan OAM (WA)
2004 Theresa Leopold (SA)
2004 Faye Trevor (SA)
2005 Lesley Bartlett (SA)
2005 Professor John Pearn
AO RFD (QLD)
2005 Patricia Quick (SA)
2006 Jan Burton (SA)
2006 C Dedman (SA)
2006 David Dewar (SA)
2006 Raymond M Martin OAM (SA)
2006 Vincent McStraw (SA)
2006 Mark Needham (SA)
2006 Ann Price (SA)
2007 John Kew (SA)
2007 Hayden Lamshed (SA)
2007 Faye Milham (SA)
2008 Dorothy E Brown OAM (NSW)
2009 Rod Welford (QLD)
2010 The Hon.Terence Higgins
AO QC (ACT)
2010 Dianne Montalto ESM (VIC)
2010 Barbara Morgan OAM (VIC)
2010 Karen Freak (SA)
2011 Robyn Pryce-Jones (TAS)
2013 Anne-Maree Gardiner AM (VIC)
2013 Gary W Kearney (TAS)
2013 Sandra Vander Pal (VIC)
2014 Les Mole JP (QLD)
2014 Daphne Read AO (NT)
2016 Ernita McGrath (NSW)
2016 Glenda Bowen Pain AM (SA)
2017 Dr Shayne Baker OAM (QLD)
2018 Tom Ballantyne (WA)
2019 Randall Cook (NT)
2020 Pam Neenan (NSW)
2021 Kevin Burrowes OAM (SA)
2022 Marion Price

Past Presidents

1934-1951 Sir Thomas W White
1951-1977 Justice Percy Joske
1977-1979 Sir Percy Joske
1979-1987 Sir Basil Osborne CBE
1987-1994 Neville Bayfield OAM
1994-1997 Heather MacGowan OAM
1997-2003 Chief Justice Terence
Higgins AO QC
2003-2009 Dr Shayne Baker OAM
2009-2011 Chief Justice Terence
Higgins AO QC
2011-2012 Les Mole JP
2012 -2015 Dianne Montalto ESM
2015-2018 Penelope Snashall
2018-2021 Cameron Eglington

Royal Life Saving Society – Commonwealth

Honorary Life Governors

1977 Baden Pattinson (SA)
1981 W Blakeney (NSW)
1981 George Turnbull (NSW)
1984 Francis Henry (NSW)
1999 Kevin Burrowes OAM (SA)
1999 Barry Stanton (SA)
2004 John Kew (SA)
2004 Raymond M Martin OAM (SA)
2004 Ann Price (SA)
2011 Lesley Bartlett (SA)
2011 Theresa Leopold (SA)
2011 Patricia Quick (SA)
2011 Faye Trevor (SA)
2012 Alan B.Swinton OAM QPM (TAS)

Honorary Life Members

1977 Francis Henry (NSW)
1977 George Turnbull (NSW)
1983 P Margaret Stevens (VIC)
1988 Stanley Blanks (VIC)
1988 Cam Fitzgerald (VIC)
1990 Jack Farmer (VIC)
1993 James Burrowes (VIC)
1994 Norman Farmer AM ESM (Nat)
1995 Kevin Burrowes OAM (SA)
1995 Phillip Rice (VIC)
1995 Ken Southgate (QLD)
1995 Barry Stanton (SA)
1999 Dr Mervyn Allen (SA)
1999 John Coles (SA)
1999 V J Forde (SA)
1999 Raymond M Martin OAM (SA)
2000 John Kew (SA)
2000 G H Krueger (SA)
2000 Margaret Krueger (SA)
2001 Ann Price (SA)
2003 Gerald Brameld OAM (QLD)
2003 John McClelland AM (QLD)
2004 Bruce Campbell (QLD)
2004 Anita Eifler (WA)
2004 Ross Williams (QLD)
2005 Alan B.Swinton OAM QPM (TAS)
2006 Theresa Leopold (SA)
2006 Faye Trevor (SA)
2007 Lesley Bartlett (SA)
2007 Theresa Leopold (SA)
2007 Patricia Quick (SA)
2007 Faye Trevor (SA)
2008 David Dewar (SA)
2009 Barbara Morgan OAM (VIC)
2011 Faye Milham (SA)
2018 Anne-Maree Gardiner AM (Nat)
2018 Gary Kearney (TAS)
2020 Roz Grey OAM (NSW)

> GOVERNANCE

The National Board is the governing body of Royal Life Saving Society - Australia comprising of the President and Directors. Each State and Territory Member Organisation elects a Director to represent them. In addition, the Board has three Independent Directors. The National President and Deputy President are elected from the National Board membership to serve a one-year term of office. The National Board is responsible for the transparent, accountable governance of Royal Life Saving and for policy making and setting strategic direction.

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable
David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General
of the Commonwealth of Australia

National Board of Directors

DR. MITCHELL HARTMAN B Sc; MBBS; GAICD
President

Mitch was appointed as an Independent Director to the Board in February 2018 and was elected as National President in October 2021.

ALEXANDRA ASH MBA, GAICD
Deputy President

Alexandra was appointed as an Independent Director to the Board in March 2022 by Royal Life Saving Society Australia National Board. Alexandra was appointed Deputy President in October 2022.

PENELOPE SNASHALL B.Bus

Penelope was appointed as a Director in November 2013 by Royal Life Saving Society- Tasmania Branch. Pene concluded term as Deputy President in October 2021 and has remained as Director.

PAUL REYNOLDS

Paul was appointed as a Director in November 2019 by Royal Life Saving Society-Australia, Australian Capital Territory.

JIM WHITESIDE

Jim was appointed to the Board in October 2016 by Royal Life Saving Society of Australia, New South Wales.

ROD WELFORD

Rod was appointed as a Director in December 2019 by Royal Life Saving Society Queensland.

MARK SCOTT ESM

Mark was appointed as a Director in November 2019 by Royal Life Saving Society Australia, Victoria.

DAVID DEWAR PHF FACEL

David was appointed to the Board in November 2019 by Royal Life Saving Society Australia, South Australia.

JAMES SHERIDAN B.Bus, MTcchMgt (RiskMgt)

James was appointed as a Director in October 2021 by Royal Life Saving Society Australia, Northern Territory.

DR. ERICA DAVISON DEd, MSc, Post Grad Dip Hlth Promo, BEd, GAICD, FCHSM, CHE

Erica was appointed as a Director in March 2022 by Royal Life Saving Society, Western Australia.

PROF. RICHARD FRANKLIN PhD, FACTM, FPHAA, FAR

Richard was appointed as an Independent Director to the Board in March 2022 by Royal Life Saving Society Australia National Board.

Company Secretary

JUSTIN SCARR MBA B.Ed

Justin has been a senior executive for the past 24 years, and was appointed as Chief Executive Officer, and Company Secretary in January 2013.

> ADVISERS AND COMMITTEES

Royal Life Saving relies on the support of various committees and advisers. The committees span our areas of interest and enable us to capture the energy and enthusiasm of our network.

National Advisers

Dr Shayne Baker OAM - Education and Training
Geoff Grey - Sport
Professor John Pearn AO RFD - Medical

National Finance and Audit Committee

Anthony Bandle (Chair)
Jim Whiteside
James McClelland BM OAM

Honours Committee

Roz Grey OAM (Chair) - NSW
James McClelland BM OAM - QLD
Brione Rundle - SA
Dianne Montalto ESM - VIC
Belinda Lawton – National

CEO Working Group

Justin Scarr (Chair) – National
Michael Ilinsky – NSW
Floss Roberts AM - NT
Paul Barry - QLD
Jayne Minear – SA
Catherine Greaves - VIC
Peter Leaversuch – WA

Sport Committee

Geoff Grey (Chair) - National Sport Advisor
Andrew Bowden - ACT / NSW / TAS
Laura Withers - NT
Ben Jimmieson - QLD
Kelly Maidment - SA
Joanne Teagle - VIC
Jen Jones - WA
Roz Grey - Official Representative
Ethan Garland - Athlete Representative
Jeannie Baxter-Reid - Coach Representative
Anni Gardiner - International Delegate
Dr Shayne Baker OAM - ALT Chair - Selections Panel
Penny Hodggers - ALT Collaborative Panel
Brooke Cherfils - National Office

Marketing and Communications Committee

Monique Sharp (Chair) - National
Belinda Lawton – National
Sophie Monk – National (to July 23)
Craig Roberts - NSW
Louise Magee - NSW
Floss Roberts - NT
Holly Jones – QLD (to February 23)
Tenisha Gamble - QLD
Felicity Green – QLD (from May 23)
Jessica Wozniak – VIC (to December 22)
Cristabel Gigena - SA (from August 23)
Paige Voss – VIC (until September 23)
Andrew English – VIC (from February 23)
Lisa Hind - VIC (from July 23)
Lauren Nimmo – WA (returned from leave February 23)
Laura Shack – WA (parental leave from April 23)
Becca Osborn - WA
Blanche Marchant – WA
Tiana Cull - WA

Water Safety Education Committee

Penny Larsen (Chair) - National
Renee Amidy - NSW/ACT/TAS
Laura Withers - NT
Ben Jimmieson - QLD
Michelle Williams - SA
Jacqui Taylor - VIC
Bree Forbes - VIC
Trent Hotchkin - WA
Amy Benjamin (nee Vearing) - WA

> INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES

International Life Saving Organisations

Committee Membership

Justin Scarr

Drowning Prevention Commission Chair,
ILS Asia-Pacific Secretary General

Professor John Pearn AO RFD

Medical Committee

Dr Amy Peden and Stacey Pidgeon

Drowning Prevention Commission

Dr Shayne Baker OAM

Rescue Commission

Anne-Maree Gardiner AM and Jonnine Rowe

Sport Commission

Caitlin Turner (to Feb 23)

Brooke Cherfils (from Mar 23)

Sport Education and Sport For All Committees

Jake Smith

Athletes Commission

Commonwealth Royal Life Saving Society

Committee Membership

Pene Snashall

Board of Trustees

Anne-Maree Gardiner AM

Portfolio Director Development
through Sport

Caitlin Turner (to Feb 23)

Brooke Cherfils (from Mar 23)

Roz Grey OAM

Mary Veal

Sport Development Committee

Dr Shayne Baker OAM

Portfolio Director Capacity Building

James McClelland BM OAM

Heritage Working Group

Australian Lifesaving Team

Penny Hodgers

Collaborative Panel

Dr Shayne Baker OAM

Chair of Selectors

Andrew Bowden

Pool Coach

Rachel King

Assistant Pool Coach

> NATIONAL OFFICE

Chief Executive Officer

Justin Scarr

Marketing and Events

National Manager Marketing and Events

Monique Sharp

**National Manager - Strategic Communications
and Partnerships**

Belinda Lawton

Content and Digital Communications Executive

Sophie Monks

Event Co-ordinator –

World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2023

Maria Matheos (from May 2023)

Operations

General Manager – Capability & Industry

RJ Houston

National Manager Training and Workforce Development

Shaun Jackson

National Manager Education and Training

Penny Larsen

Project Officer - IT

Chris Groneman (until December 22)

IT Manager – National Projects & Integration

Manik Khanna (from June 23)

National Manager – Lifesaving Development

Brooke Cherfils (from Feb 23)

Senior Project Officer – Lifesaving Sport and Development

Caitlin Turner (until Feb 23)

Senior Project Specialist – Safer Aquatic Locations

Brooke Cherfils (until Feb 23)

Research and Policy

National Manager Research and Policy

Stacey Pidgeon

Principal Research and Policy Officer

Alison Mahony (until February 23)

National Manager – Drowning Prevention Strategy

William Koon (from July 23)

Senior Project Officer – Research and Policy

Dr Katrien Pickles

Senior Research and Policy Officer

Lauren Miller (from February 23)

Senior Research Fellow

Professor Richard Franklin

Dr Amy Peden

Dr John Lippman OAM

Finance and Administration

National Manager Finance

Linda Luu

Administration and Accounts Officer

Sunny Fung (until May 23)

Yazmin Jaime (from May 23)

> FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The National Board of Directors for Royal Life Saving Society – Australia continues to maintain a sound and secure financial position.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue	4,630,319	4,901,501
Fundraising	-	35,000
Other Income	88,906	9,294
Total Income	\$4,719,225	\$4,945,795
Expenses		
Management and Administration expenses	629,822	642,855
Fundraising	35,000	35,000
Media Meeting and Promotional Expenses	744,581	780,882
Programs and Program Support	3,203,910	3,366,378
Amortisation and Depreciation	46,855	42,000
Total Expenses	\$4,660,168	\$4,867,115
Total Comprehensive income attributable to the Members of RLSSA	\$59,057	\$78,680

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	2,996,846	3,004,479
Receivables	87,961	97,850
Inventories	67,766	54,856
Other	140,677	43,779
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$3,293,251	\$3,200,964
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	1,613,982	1,630,558
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$1,613,982	\$1,630,558
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,907,233	\$4,831,522
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and borrowings	2,246,174	2,161,843
Provisions	429,871	497,549
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$2,676,045	\$2,659,392
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and borrowings	0	0
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$2,676,045	\$2,659,392
NET ASSETS	\$2,231,188	\$2,172,130
RETAINED FUNDS		
Retained surplus	1,695,412	1,636,356
Asset revaluation reserve	535,776	535,776
TOTAL RETAINED FUNDS	\$2,231,188	\$2,172,132

A copy of the audited financial statements for Royal Life Saving Society – Australia are available upon request.

> OUR PARTNERS

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia would like to thank the following organisations for their continued support.

Australian Government



Australian Government

International Organisations



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AUSTRALIA

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Email info@rlssa.org.au

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