

Royal Life Saving ACT

Annual Report

2023–24

ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Welcome to the 2023–2024 Royal Life Saving ACT Annual Report

This past year marked another milestone in our longstanding commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of aquatic enthusiasts across the Australian Capital Territory. With a legacy that spans more than 49 years, our vision is as relevant today as it was when we first began. We continue to evolve our services to meet the demands of an ever-changing society, diverse population, and the shifting needs of our environment.

Our focus on the future is unshakeable. The shape of our services is set to develop in exciting new directions that echo the aspirations and challenges of our diverse communities. We are passionate about providing programs and services that not only meet the needs of our ever-growing community but also foster safe, enjoyable, and fulfilling aquatic pursuits.

We recognise the strength in unity and are tirelessly working with our vast network of partners to explore and implement best practice principles and strategies. These collaborations increase safe participation across all aquatic environments and serve as a testament to our adaptability and innovation.

As a peak body for water safety, we leverage our robust structure and reputation to foster healthy and engaging aquatic options, both now and in the future. With new initiatives on the horizon and crucial investments with our collaborative partners, we are confident in our ability to meet our organisational objectives.

Through a shared vision and unwavering commitment, we are making significant strides towards key drowning prevention benchmarks. We are expanding our engagement across all waterways, creating safer environments for our community, and educating people about the importance of water safety.

While we celebrate the progress we have made, we acknowledge that our journey is far from over. Our commitment to enhancing the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people, partners, and communities is as strong as ever.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are making a difference.



Our Vision

More Australians enjoying the water safely.

For all of time, Australia's rivers, creeks and lakes have been essential…for life.

And for close to 50 years, Royal Life Saving ACT has been educating and inspiring Australians to enjoy the water…for their entire lives. We've helped millions of Australians learn to swim. We've taught the swim teachers, trained the lifeguards and championed CPR. We've led essential research and safety assessments and we continue to deliver innovative programs, products and services to ensure those we love…are happy, healthy and safe. Royal Life Saving is behind every splash, stroke, kick and paddle, behind every breath of life…to ensure we all enjoy a water way of life.

Watch the video



Reflecting on our Past

Since our establishment, Royal Life Saving has consistently embodied a culture of learning, innovation, and resilience. The contributions we've made have played a significant role in moulding the aquatics community and facilitating safe water pursuits. We've grown with our communities, earning their trust and forging an identity embedded in safety, knowledge, and community engagement.

An increase in population growth, greater access and utilisation of clean waterways, cultural diversity, and a surge in domestic and international arrivals has catalysed our drive for advancement. Coupled with an elevated interest in healthy and active aquatic pursuits, these changes necessitate continued, focused investments in our communities to safeguard the future of aquatic engagements.

Navigating the Challenges

We understand that community and market changes can present their own set of challenges, which demand our agility and adaptability. However, we also recognise that these changes are a breeding ground for opportunities and expansion. To maintain our influence and relevance, we must stay abreast of industry and sector developments.

While our unique offerings may sometimes limit our adaptability, we remain steadfast in our commitment to innovation and modernisation. As the custodians of water safety, our challenge is to advocate our prevention messages while also fostering a culture where Australians can enjoy our aquatic environments safely.

Our Future Journey

As we look towards the future, we understand the need to rapidly adapt to changing political, stakeholder, and community circumstances and opportunities.

We aim to engage communities more strategically and consistently, leveraging data to understand community patterns – from population trends and aquatic usage to public policy. We are committed to being innovative, investing in our future, and developing our people to build a safe and vibrant aquatic community.

Our journey thus far has prepared us for the challenges ahead, and we are confident that we will navigate them with the same resilience and dedication that has been our hallmark for the past 49 years. Our future is promising, and we are excited about the opportunities it holds.

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Board of Directors

Mr. James Whiteside (President)

Ms. Anita Collins BApp Sc (OT) AccOT

Ms. Melissa Tooke BA, MIntS, GradCert RiskMgt, GradDipOHS, FGIA, AMIIA

Acknowledgement to Country

Royal Life Saving ACT acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands where its office is located, on Ngunnawal Country, and pays its respect to all Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect First Nation People's connection to land, waterways and community and make a commitment to reconciliation.



01 / Achieving Together

Message from the President



Jim Whiteside

President

It is my pleasure to present the 2023–2024 Annual Report for Royal Life Saving ACT. This year, our organisation has worked tirelessly to support key water safety and drowning prevention agendas. We have implemented crucial initiatives and programs aimed at enhancing aquatic proficiency and ensuring the safety of our communities.

In these challenging times, many of our communities continue to be burdened by cost of living pressures. Recognising this, we have prioritised the development of innovative water safety solutions to ensure all Territorians have access to essential swimming and water safety education. Our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility remains at the forefront of our efforts as we strive to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve.

Over the last 12 months, we have continued to make significant contributions to the aquatic proficiencies of our children across the Territory. Thousands of school-aged children participated in our highly valued Aqua Safe program in partnership with the ACT Education Department. This initiative remains crucial in preparing future generations with the skills and knowledge to safely enjoy our aquatic environments.

During 2023–2024, we have focused on enhancing operational efficiencies to ensure our future objectives are met. The increased utilisation of our technology platforms and collaborative developments with key partners have enabled us to provide high-quality training, education, and advocacy solutions.

The upcoming 12 months promise to be an exciting and pivotal phase for Royal Life Saving ACT. We recognise the immense value and potential of our territory's aquatic environments, both as recreational spaces and vital natural assets. We are deeply committed to implementing a robust Drowning Prevention Plan in close consultation with the ACT Government. Our mission is not only to ensure the safety of every individual engaging with these water bodies but also to resonate with the broader community vision.

Our plan aims to harmonise with existing government strategies, ensuring that conservation initiatives are not just respected but actively integrated. We believe that our waterways are treasures to be enjoyed and protected, and through our collaborative plan, we aim to strike this delicate balance.

We are dedicated to aligning our strategies with the ACT Government's priority participation agendas. We support initiatives that promote increased aquatic participation outcomes, ensuring that everyone, irrespective of background or ability, can safely experience the joy and benefits of aquatic activities.

Moreover, our plan will actively support women's empowerment and leadership strategies. We envision a community where all Territorians not only feel safe in aquatic environments but are also empowered to take on leadership roles, fostering a culture of inclusion and respect.

Royal Life Saving ACT is poised to bridge the realms of safety, conservation, community participation, and empowerment. By collaborating with the ACT Government and the wider community, we seek to craft a Drowning Prevention Plan that truly reflects our shared vision for a vibrant, safe, and inclusive aquatic future.

At the heart of our endeavour is the core belief that every life is invaluable and that every moment spent in our waters should be one of joy, enrichment, and safety. The development of the ACT Drowning Prevention Plan is not just a strategy but a commitment to protect and empower every individual who interacts with our aquatic environments.

Understanding the unique needs of the ACT communities is fundamental to our mission. Whether addressing the challenges faced by multicultural groups, providing specialised programs for individuals with disabilities, or ensuring access for economically disadvantaged families, Royal Life Saving ACT remains committed to inclusivity and accessibility in all our initiatives.

Acknowledgements

Our team, with its relentless passion and determination, has been instrumental in achieving our high-quality outcomes. I would like to express my gratitude to Ashley Kaltz and the entire ACT staff for their unwavering dedication and commitment. Their efforts have truly made a difference. I also extend my appreciation to our sector partners who consistently deliver critical swimming, water safety, and lifesaving programs.

Special Thanks

I would like to extend special thanks to the ACT Government, specifically Ms. Rebecca Kelley, Executive Branch Manager at ACT Sport and Recreation Services, and her team, for their continued support. Finally, I recognise and thank our ACT Directors for their dedication to the ideals and values of Royal Life Saving. Their contributions greatly enhance our collective efforts.

With a shared vision, we look forward to a successful year ahead, making strides in our mission of creating safer and more inclusive aquatic communities. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Michael Ilinsky

Chief Executive Officer

This past year has been one of growth, resilience, and opportunity for Royal Life Saving ACT. We are proud to report on a year that has witnessed ongoing progress, as we adapted to meet the evolving needs of our community. Despite facing challenges, including the impacts of the rising cost of living and a competitive operational environment, our focus remained clear: to enhance water safety, swimming skills, and lifesaving knowledge across the ACT.

Our commitment to this mission has driven us to new heights. We successfully adapted to the dynamic post-pandemic landscape by embracing digital advancements and technology-based solutions. These improvements not only increased our productivity but also ensured continuous support for the communities we serve. The integration of these digital solutions has allowed us to maintain our essential services and programs, ensuring that water safety education remains accessible to all, even in the most challenging times.

This year, we placed a significant emphasis on expanding our engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Recognising the importance of local water safety initiatives, we broadened our service offerings and launched several new initiatives tailored to the unique needs of these diverse groups. Our proactive communication strategy, including targeted social media campaigns leading into summer, has been vital in raising awareness and promoting critical water safety messages across the region.

The invaluable support of the ACT Government and Sport and Recreation ACT has been instrumental in our ability to increase active participation in our programs, particularly among children and disadvantaged communities. These partnerships continue to strengthen, allowing us to invest in the people of the ACT and further our shared vision of safe and enjoyable aquatic experiences for all.

The ACT Drowning Report highlights the critical importance of our work. Over the past 22 years, there have been 45 fatal drownings in the ACT, underscoring the ongoing need for vigilance and prevention efforts. While challenges such as the reduced availability of swim teachers have impacted some programs, we remain committed to collaborating with our aquatic partners to ensure that swimming and water safety remain top priorities.

Looking to the future, we are excited about the opportunities ahead. Our focus will be on deepening our engagement with priority communities and stakeholders, further strengthening our water safety platform, and continuing to provide safe and enjoyable aquatic experiences. We will expand our reach, ensuring that all people in the ACT have access to the life-saving skills they need.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our facilitators, sector partners, and especially to our dedicated staff, whose passion and commitment have been the foundation of our success this year. A special thank you to Ashley Kalz and the team for their unwavering support and tireless efforts. To the Board of Directors and President Jim Whiteside, your guidance and leadership have been invaluable throughout this journey.

As we move forward, Royal Life Saving ACT remains steadfast in its mission. We are optimistic about the future, confident in our ability to make a meaningful impact, and determined to continue promoting water safety and lifesaving skills across the ACT for years to come.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Our Organisation

Royal Life Saving ACT

Since time immemorial, Australia's rivers, creeks, and lakes have been vital to life. These natural water bodies are an integral part of our nation's identity and heritage, a source of sustenance, recreation, and profound connection. Royal Life Saving ACT has been an unwavering guardian of these waters, educating and inspiring Australians to safely enjoy them, fostering a harmonious and enduring relationship between our communities and the water.

We have been instrumental in helping millions of Australians learn to swim, ensuring they are equipped with the vital skills to enjoy and respect the water while prioritising their safety. Our efforts extend to nurturing the next generation of swim teachers and training lifeguards, creating a robust network of professionals dedicated to maintaining a safe and inclusive aquatic environment.

Our commitment to water safety is also evident in our championing of CPR, an essential skill that can save lives in critical moments. Through our various training programs, we empower individuals to be first responders when every second counts.

Beyond training, we actively engage in essential research and safety assessments, constantly striving to enhance our understanding of water-related risks and develop more effective prevention strategies. We continually innovate, delivering groundbreaking programs, products, and services designed to ensure the safety of those we love, promoting a culture where happiness, health, and safety go hand in hand with enjoying the water.

Every splash, stroke, kick, and paddle, every breath of life taken near or in the water, has Royal Life Saving ACT standing vigilant behind it. We are there in spirit, backing every water enthusiast, every casual swimmer, every child taking their first dip, and every elderly person relishing a soothing swim. We are committed to ensuring that we all enjoy a water way of life, safely and joyfully.

Royal Life Saving ACT is more than just an organisation – we are a pledge to our communities, a promise to protect and educate, a testament to the profound bond between Australians and their waters. As we look ahead, our mission remains steadfast – to stand behind every moment in the water, ensuring it's safe and enjoyable for all, for their entire lives.







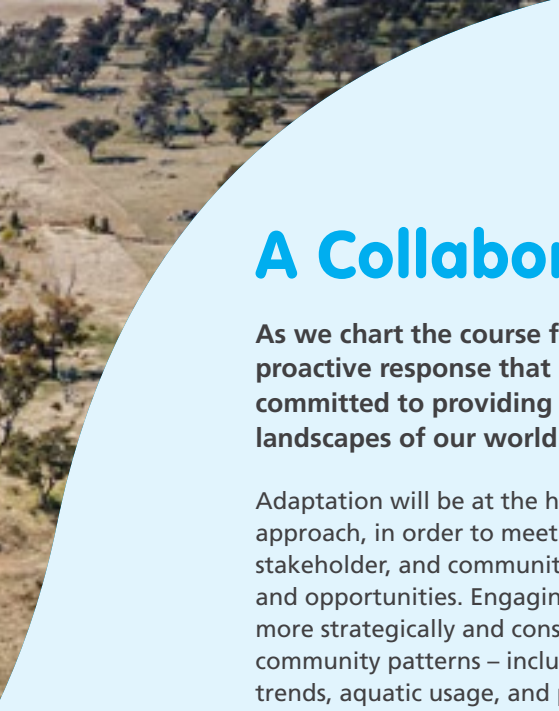
Adhering to our Values

Royal Life Saving ACT is unequivocally committed to delivering exceptional quality service to our communities, relentlessly seeking to enhance and enrich lives through our diverse range of lifesaving programs and initiatives.

Our guiding principles are deeply embedded in honesty, respect, confidentiality, and compliance, providing a firm foundation for all our operations. We value transparency and integrity in our interactions, and we honour the trust placed in us by demonstrating uncompromising honesty in all our undertakings. Our respect for each individual in our community is reflected in our inclusive approach to service delivery, with an understanding of the unique needs and experiences of every person we serve.

We ensure the highest level of confidentiality in our dealings, respecting the privacy and dignity of all members of our community.

Moreover, we are committed to strict compliance with legal and ethical standards, prioritising safety, quality, and reliability in all our endeavours. At Royal Life Saving ACT, we are more than a service; we are a promise to uphold these core values as we strive for a safer and better community.



A Collaborative Future

As we chart the course for our future, Royal Life Saving is dedicated to fostering a proactive response that builds capacity and resilience in our communities. We are committed to providing the necessary resources and support to navigate the shifting landscapes of our world.

Adaptation will be at the heart of our approach, in order to meet changing political, stakeholder, and community circumstances and opportunities. Engaging communities more strategically and consistently, analysing community patterns – including population trends, aquatic usage, and public policy – and fostering innovation are crucial elements of our roadmap.

In an increasingly complex and dynamic post-pandemic world, collaboration with our industry partners becomes more important than ever. By enhancing consultation and engagement, we can build a common voice that advocates for better outcomes for the communities of ACT.

We remain committed to our partnerships and will continue to work towards greater humanitarian outcomes. We are particularly mindful of those burdened by socio-economic disadvantage, isolation, or prejudice, and will strive to provide them with the support and assistance they need.

Royal Life Saving's stakeholder investment strategy is designed to raise awareness through strong advocacy and provide practical solutions to address water safety priorities. By understanding the triggers and causal patterns of fatal drownings, we can develop interventions that change behaviours, build resilience, and enhance skills.

Technology is a crucial enabler of our strategy. We are leveraging digital technology, data, and automation to improve our products, processes, and systems to better meet community needs. Our key priorities include maintaining business safety and resilience in the face of ongoing challenges and increasing cybersecurity threats.

We aim to architect our technology for the future, making our systems more efficient and flexible. We will harness the power of data, digital, and automation to create personalised and seamless customer experiences. Lastly, we will focus on transforming our ways of working, building internal capabilities and leveraging our technology and business process partners.

In essence, we envisage a future where Royal Life Saving, together with our key partners, builds a safer and more resilient aquatic community through our concerted, collaborative efforts.

By the end of our strategic plan, Royal Life Saving ACT will be recognised as the leading facilitator for swimming and water safety as an integral part of the Australian way of life. Our employees will feel energised by their roles, experiencing fulfilment in their career aspirations.

At-risk communities, irrespective of who they are, will be well educated and skilled to enjoy our waterways safely. Human networks, serving as a crucial part of our mission's success, will feel supported and celebrated. Governments will demonstrate a committed investment in the growth of swimming and water safety through Royal Life Saving ACT.

Our partners will share our commitment to unite and inspire others, witnessing significant value in their investments. Risk sector and land managers will acknowledge our profound expertise in maintaining the safety of our aquatic communities. Finally, the aquatic industry will align with our commitment to collaboratively grow the sector so that our waterways can be enjoyed by all.

At the culmination of our strategic plan, Royal Life Saving ACT will stand as a symbol of safety, collaboration, and enjoyment for aquatic activities across all Australian communities.

As we move towards our envisioned future, we anticipate a transformative shift in our public pools, aquatic participation, and the way we service our communities' ever-changing needs concerning water-based activities.

2023–2024 Highlights

Key achievements made by Royal Life Saving ACT during the 2023–24 period.

- 3,084 Vocational outcomes issued.
- 251 new Swim Teachers accredited.
- 2,248 accredited in CPR & First Aid.
- 467 Pool Lifeguard accreditations.
- 118 Bronze Medallions.
- 973 Children in the Aqua Safe program.
- 178 Students in the Ngadyung Swim and Survive program.
- 127 Children in the Swim 4 Life program.
- 6 public pools under the Keep Watch @ Public Pool program.
- 5 Aquatic Risk Audits. Mean Compliance Score of 80.6%.
- 26 Mystery Guest assessments. Mean compliance score of 80%.

This list serves to reflect the immense progress and success achieved by Royal Life Saving ACT in advancing water safety and swimming competence across the territory.





A copy of the report can be found at www.royallifesaving.org.au

National Fatal Drowning Report 2024

The National Drowning Report 2024, published by the Royal Life Saving – Australia in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia, found there were 323 drowning deaths over the past 12 months, 16 per cent higher than the ten-year average (278).

The National Drowning Report 2024 insights include:

- 92 adults 65 years or older drowned (28% of the total), the largest number ever
- 15 children under the age of 5 drowned. This was down by 25% on the 10-year average
- 25% were born overseas, with the highest countries being India, China, Nepal and the UK. Long term data shows this figure is higher (34% over ten years)
- People from disadvantaged and regional areas drowned at a higher rate than those from higher advantaged areas, particularly in children aged 5 – 14 years
- 46% occurred in coastal locations (150), including 84 drowning deaths (26%) at beaches
- 34% at inland waterway locations (110), including 80 drowning deaths (25%) at rivers
- 11% occurred in swimming pools (35 deaths), half (51%) were backyard pools
- December and March recorded the highest numbers of drowning deaths
- Drowning rates increase ten-fold from age 10 to age 20, likely due to increases in risk taking, and a lack of swimming, water safety and lifesaving skills across youth and young adult populations.

Summer Report

The Royal Life Saving Summer Drowning Toll recorded 99 drowning deaths across Australia between 1 December 2023 and 29 February 2024. Tragically this is a 10% increase on the 90 drowning deaths recorded last summer and 5% increase on the 5-year average of 94 drowning deaths.

We remain ever mindful of the people whose lives have been lost or impacted by drowning, including the many families affected by the loss or long-term injury of a loved one.

The highest number of drowning deaths were recorded in New South Wales (30, a 17% decrease from last summer), Victoria (27, a 23% increase from last summer) and Queensland (22, a 57% increase from last summer).

Males remain over-represented, consistent with annual drowning trends. Over a quarter of all summer drowning deaths were among people aged 55 years and over. Ten children (0 -14 years) drowned this summer, up 66% from the same time last year.

Similar to previous years, drowning deaths most commonly occurred at beaches and rivers/creeks. Compared to last summer, drowning deaths at ocean/harbour locations increased, whereas drowning at swimming pools decreased.

2023/24 Summer drowning trends:

- 26% of all drowning deaths occurred during the week between Christmas and New Year.
- 26% of people who drowned were older adults aged 55 years and over.
- 10% were children aged 0–14 years.
- 7% were flood-related (Queensland and Victoria).
- All States/Territories reported an increase in drowning compared to last summer except New South Wales, ACT and SA.
- 10% were reported as being overseas tourists on holiday in Australia.
- Many drowning deaths occurred at unpatrolled, isolated locations, including beaches, rivers, lakes and dams.

Sustained patterns of drowning deaths at unpatrolled open water locations including rivers, lakes and at beaches underscore just how important swimming skills are. The summer has again highlighted that children who miss out on lessons, become teenagers and adults at increased risk of drowning.

While the Summer Drowning Toll numbers are helpful for timely tracking of drowning deaths, Royal Life Saving cautions against relying only on data from one summer to make important decisions regarding drowning prevention policy, funding, or programs.

Royal Life Saving is advocating for long-term investments to ensure everyone in the community has access to safe places to swim year-around, including at community swimming pools, especially at a time when many pools are closing and community infrastructure is being lost.

Royal Life Saving wants everyone to enjoy the water safely, follow these five safety tips to stay safe:

01 Always supervise children around water
02 Avoid alcohol around water
03 Wear a lifejacket when boating and fishing
04 Know the conditions
05 Avoid going alone.



A copy of the report can be found at www.drowningprevention.org.au

Miller L, Koon W, Pidgeon S. (2024) Summer drowning report 2023/24: An investigation into drowning in Australia between 1 December 2023 and 29 February 2024, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia. Sydney.



02 /

Our Achievements



Leadership and Collaboration

Leading and coordinating an aquatic community.

Strengthening our Position

Our long history and investment in drowning prevention has ensured our status as a peak entity. Our leadership responsibilities position us to develop and support key sector policy, plans and agenda. Building sector and community intelligence via our actions ensures safer aquatic communities.

Goal

We will engage with government, community, corporates, and industry to ensure high quality outcomes and aquatic prosperity. We will lead and drive our collective agendas to ensure our communities have genuine access to aquatic solutions and services no matter where they reside or visit.

Actions

- Increase visibility of the organisation's brand.
- Strengthen and broaden our partnerships with purpose-driven organisations that support our vision and goals.
- Solidify our position as the lead agency for the aquatic industry advocacy and engagement.

Increasing Visibility of Brand, Core Message, and Protection of Integrity

As a highly valued and trusted brand, Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to planning and coordinating strategies that increase sector awareness and articulate our organisational intent. Our reputation brings trust to our messaging and advice, and we continuously strive to partner with key stakeholders to maximise exposure and acceptance.

Australia's affinity with water, from our local pools, lakes, and rivers to our beaches and bays, is an integral part of our national identity. However, many of us overestimate our skills in and around the water, resulting in hundreds of drownings each year and countless more close escapes. This discrepancy between perceived and actual aquatic competence presents a significant risk to ourselves and others.



The significant influx of migrants and refugees has added to these risks, as many recent arrivals are unfamiliar with our aquatic environments and associated behaviours. Additionally, it is estimated that millions of lessons have been missed due to the pandemic and rising cost of living, potentially leading to tragic consequences for many and creating a generation of non-swimmers now and in the future. Given our lifestyle, swimming is not just a recreational activity but a vital life skill. Lack of swimming proficiency diminishes the enjoyment of life and puts lives at risk.

As custodians of water safety, Royal Life Saving ACT acknowledges its responsibility to leverage its brand and reputation to ensure all communities have access to vital swimming and water safety programs. Our mission continues to be to safeguard lives and create a safe, enjoyable aquatic environment for all.

By increasing the visibility of our brand and core message, we aim to reach wider audiences and reinforce the importance of water safety. Protecting the integrity of our brand is essential in maintaining the trust and confidence of the public, enabling us to effectively deliver our life-saving programs and initiatives. Our strategic role in this endeavour is critical, as it helps us navigate the evolving landscape of water safety and ensures that we remain a leading authority in the sector.

Royal Life Saving ACT will continue to advocate for water safety education, promote the value of swimming as a life skill, and collaborate with key stakeholders to address the challenges and risks faced by our communities. Together, we can make a significant impact in preventing drownings and fostering a culture of safety and awareness around water.



CASE STUDY

Are you Summer Ready?

The summer months are the most lethal when it comes to fatal drowning incidents, making it critically important for communities to be well-prepared to avoid aquatic accidents. Recognising this, Royal Life Saving NSW & ACT launched the "Are You Summer Ready?" campaign during the summer of 2023–2024. This initiative aimed to equip communities with the knowledge and tools needed for a safer summer.

As part of the campaign, Royal Life Saving NSW & ACT developed a series of simple, Summer-Ready Checklists, offering practical tips for staying safe around water. These resources were tailored to a variety of aquatic environments, including pools and rivers, and provided specific information for families and individuals over the age of 65—a group particularly vulnerable to drowning incidents.

To ensure broad accessibility, a range of social, digital, print, and translated resources were created and distributed. These materials emphasised the importance of preparation before visiting an aquatic location or participating in an aquatic activity, underscoring the fact that taking simple precautions can significantly reduce the risk of drowning.

The "Are You Summer Ready?" campaign is a vital part of Royal Life Saving NSW & ACT's ongoing commitment to promoting water safety and preventing drowning across all communities. By providing clear, actionable guidance, we aim to make every summer a safer one for everyone.





Strengthening and Broadening Partnerships to Fulfil Our Vision

Royal Life Saving ACT places great importance on collaboration to effectively address the water safety agenda. Our working relationships with government and strategic entities enable us to influence change, develop policy, create guidelines, and provide vital services. We lead and assist in identifying priority water safety agendas, establishing strategies based on evidence and expert opinion.

The fiscal year 2023–2024 was marked by significant challenges. The rising cost of living impacted many families and communities, affecting our capacity to deliver services and meet priority objectives with key partners. However, these challenges underscored the importance of our strategic role in fostering and expanding partnerships that further our organisational vision and goals.

Looking ahead, increasing healthy and active aquatic participation will remain a priority for both Royal Life Saving ACT and our community and government partners. Many of our organisational goals depend on a robust aquatic sector, capable of engaging directly with communities across the ACT. Yet, this sector has faced substantial burdens, including a lack of community confidence, service reductions, and broad workplace employment issues.

Moreover, we have noticed that many children and disadvantaged communities have not returned to swimming and water safety programs. This gap could have significant future consequences for their aquatic proficiency and abilities. As we move forward, our collaborations with the community and government will need to adapt to the changing expectations of our communities and devise tailored solutions to meet their needs.

Despite the complexities over this period, Royal Life Saving ACT maintained a key leadership role, resulting in newly implemented policies to assist with community engagement and workforce development. This highlights our commitment to adapting and overcoming challenges, underpinning our ongoing mission to ensure the safety and well-being of all those engaging with our aquatic environments.

By strengthening and broadening our partnerships, we can continue to make significant strides in promoting water safety, supporting community engagement, and developing a skilled and resilient aquatic sector.

CASE STUDY

ACT Children & Young People Death Review Committee

The collaboration between Royal Life Saving ACT and The ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee has been pivotal in promoting water safety and preventing fatal and non-fatal drownings among children in the ACT. The Committee, established under legislation, brings together experts in fields such as paediatrics, education, social work, and child safety, with a particular focus on the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Each year, approximately 23 children and young people in the ACT die from various causes, including prematurity. By reviewing these deaths, the Committee aims to identify ways to prevent similar tragedies in the future. As part of this collaborative effort, water safety information has been developed and widely circulated to parents and carers across the region. This initiative not only aligns with the Committee's mission but also supports Royal Life Saving ACT's ongoing efforts to eliminate drowning incidents and create safer aquatic environments for children in the ACT.



CASE STUDY

Aqua Safe – 1,000+ Children

The Aqua Safe Water Safety and Awareness Program is a vital initiative aimed at equipping Year 2 students across ACT public schools with essential water safety skills.

Developed through a partnership between Royal Life Saving ACT and the ACT Government's Education Directorate, the program spans two weeks, combining 10 days of pool-based sessions with five 40-minute classroom sessions. Royal Life Saving ACT oversees the organisation and facilitation of the pool sessions, including transportation for all participating schools, ensuring students can safely engage in this critical learning experience.

Complementing the in-water sessions, online resources have been developed for teaching staff to support swimming proficiency testing and the classroom delivery of water safety lessons.

Over the past 12 months, the program has been successfully implemented at the following schools:

- Arawang Primary School
- Duffy Primary School
- Forrest Primary School
- Gilmore Primary School
- Hawker Primary School
- Isabella Plains Early Childhood School
- Kaleen Primary School
- Kingsford Smith School
- Macquarie Primary School
- Majura Primary School
- Maribrynong Primary
- Mawson Primary School
- Mount Rogers Primary School
- Namadgi Primary School
- North Ainslie Primary School
- O'Connor Cooperative School
- Sacred Heart School
- Southern Cross Early Childhood School
- Taylor Primary School
- Telopea Park School
- Torrens Primary School

The Aqua Safe program not only enhances water safety knowledge but also builds the confidence needed for students to navigate aquatic environments safely, contributing to Royal Life Saving ACT's mission of preventing drowning and promoting safe aquatic participation.



Implementing Initiatives Aligned to Core Agenda and Community-Supported Priorities

Implementing targeted and tailored solutions that address key water safety priorities is central to our mission at Royal Life Saving ACT. Through awareness campaigns, education initiatives, training programs, and other bespoke solutions, we strive to ensure long-term benefits and outcomes for our communities.

The past 12 months have presented significant disruptions to traditional swimming and water safety education for our children and vulnerable communities. Financial constraints and workforce losses have profoundly affected the timing and availability of essential services. Moving forward, we will increase our emphasis and support to ensure children have access to comprehensive swimming and water safety programs. The collaboration of the aquatic and education networks, along with community support, will be instrumental in addressing gaps and disadvantages that may have arisen due to these disruptions.

Royal Life Saving ACT has remained steadfast in our focus on increasing participation opportunities in water safety, swimming, survival, and water safety programs. We strive to equip those without aquatic proficiencies with the skills and resilience they need to understand the risks and dangers around our aquatic environments, while simultaneously ensuring they can enjoy aquatic activities and experiences now and in the future.

Furthermore, we have directed resources towards our community and aquatic industry network and key partners to enable them to provide programs and services that consider health, social, and wellbeing factors. By prioritising these initiatives and investing in our communities, we aim to build a safer and more informed aquatic environment for all.

Our strategic role in implementing initiatives aligned with our core agenda and community-supported priorities ensures that we remain responsive to the evolving needs of our communities. By continuously evaluating and adapting our approaches, we can effectively address the challenges and opportunities that arise, reinforcing our commitment to water safety and drowning prevention.

CASE STUDY

ACT Drowning Prevention Plan

At Royal Life Saving ACT, we believe in the power of communities coming together to create safer aquatic environments. Towards the end of 2023, we had the privilege of hosting our Drowning Prevention Workshop. This event brought together government representatives, emergency services, the aquatic industry, and local community members under a common cause: to reduce drowning incidents in the region.

The workshop, delivered by Royal Life Saving ACT as part of the Inland Communities Water Safety Program, was made possible with the support of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and the Australian Government. Drowning prevention is not just an issue; it is a critical concern that demands a collaborative and holistic approach. Together, we are working towards building safer and more inclusive water environments.

Our Event Objectives:

- Address complex problems that require an adaptive and systematic approach within the support of a strong legal framework.
- Motivate individuals and communities to change their behaviour through context-appropriate information.
- Present research, policy, and practice that aim to provide insights and address the issues.
- Facilitate the setting of a collective agenda and action plan for the ACT.
- Engage, collaborate, and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders.

As we plan our events for 2024, Royal Life Saving is committed to continuing these critical workshops to engage with communities and key stakeholders on inland water safety and drowning prevention initiatives. Through these efforts, we aim to foster a culture of water safety that resonates across all levels of society, ensuring that every individual, regardless of where they live, can enjoy aquatic environments safely.





MEASURE

2024–2027 Strategic Plan – Leadership and Collaboration

Royal Life Saving ACT has made tremendous strides in achieving its vision of becoming a vibrant, collaborative organisation with a focus on community safety and wellbeing. We have championed strategies that facilitate healthier, more active, and skilled communities, delivered through our innovative, reliable, and quality solutions, and supported by our partnerships with the Government, the Community, the Aquatic Industry, and the Corporate Sector.

Our strategic relationships have seen continued growth and expansion, enabling us to meet community needs and water safety priorities effectively. These partnerships have been crucial in our mission to spread awareness, enhance safety measures, and promote aquatic participation, thereby contributing to healthier and safer communities across ACT.

Our expansive array of programs and services has reached and benefited communities across Australia, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and wide-scale impact. From life-saving training to water safety education, our diverse initiatives have catered to varied community needs and have significantly boosted safety and enjoyment in and around water.

Moreover, our organisational influence and presence amongst priority audiences have seen a remarkable increase. By focusing on strategic communications, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement, we have managed to extend our reach and resonate with key audiences. This has not only raised awareness about our cause but also mobilised resources and support towards achieving our mission.

Through steadfast commitment and strategic action, Royal Life Saving ACT has successfully embodied its goal of becoming a sector leader that prioritises community safety and wellbeing. Our accomplishments over the last 12 months are a testament to our dedication and effectiveness, and we look forward to building upon these achievements.

As we embark on our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, we are committed to further strengthening our leadership and collaboration efforts. We will continue to innovate, engage, and expand our reach, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of water safety and community wellbeing initiatives. Our future success will be built on the strong foundation of our past achievements, driven by our unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities across ACT.

Participation Growth

Promoting greater participation in safe aquatic pursuits.

Supporting Active Communities

Our waterways provide significant health and well-being benefits. They enable opportunities to engage and recreate with family, friends and for personal solace. They also provide for active and sporting pursuits that enhance our lifestyles and livelihoods.

Goal

Inspire and support the growth of opportunities for all Australian to participate and engage with water. We will ensure that our actions consider everyone's life journey and ensure appropriate and accessible opportunities to build their capabilities and participate safely.

Actions

- Champion inclusive aquatics with a particular focus on our diverse, regional & vulnerable communities.
- Lift the communities swimming and lifesaving benchmarks.
- Accelerate programs that focus on adult swimming skills and swimming in open waterways.
- Drive participation in lifesaving programs resulting in a more prepared community.



Championing Inclusive Aquatics & Maintaining and Expanding Our Health and Community Developments

At Royal Life Saving ACT, we are dedicated to supporting community priorities by collaborating with strategic organisations and partners to develop and implement novel strategies addressing community water safety needs. Our focus remains on reaching out to those often overlooked, ensuring balanced water safety education is accessible to all. Through partnerships with research institutions, we develop high-quality, evidence-based platforms to guide our influence and priorities, with water safety remaining paramount, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

It is known that migrants and refugees typically have less robust swimming skills and water safety knowledge compared to those who have grown up in Australia. With the recent increase in new residents from various countries and cultures, it is essential to adapt our drowning prevention strategies to keep everyone safe around Australia's waterways.

On average, 274 people drown in Australia each year, with about one in four being born overseas. Most of these overseas-born deaths were men who drowned in rivers while swimming, often with alcohol being a significant risk factor. These trends mirror those of Australian-born individuals. However, our research reveals unique risk factors among people born overseas, highlighting the need for specific approaches to drowning prevention for different subgroups such as residents, overseas visitors, and international students.

Although the number of drowning deaths was highest among people from the United Kingdom and New Zealand, the drowning rates for migrant populations were highest among those born in Korea, Taiwan, and India. This underscores the need for tailored water safety strategies targeting multicultural communities with clear, culturally sensitive, and educational messaging. This strategy should cater to overseas transient populations such as tourists, seasonal workers, or short-term business visitors, as well as new permanent residents and international students.

One aspect of this targeted approach is fostering greater cultural diversity among those working in the aquatic industry in Australia, which can help engage multicultural populations. By maintaining and expanding our health and community developments, Royal Life Saving ACT aims to address the unique challenges faced by diverse communities and ensure that everyone, regardless of background, has access to life-saving water safety education and resources.

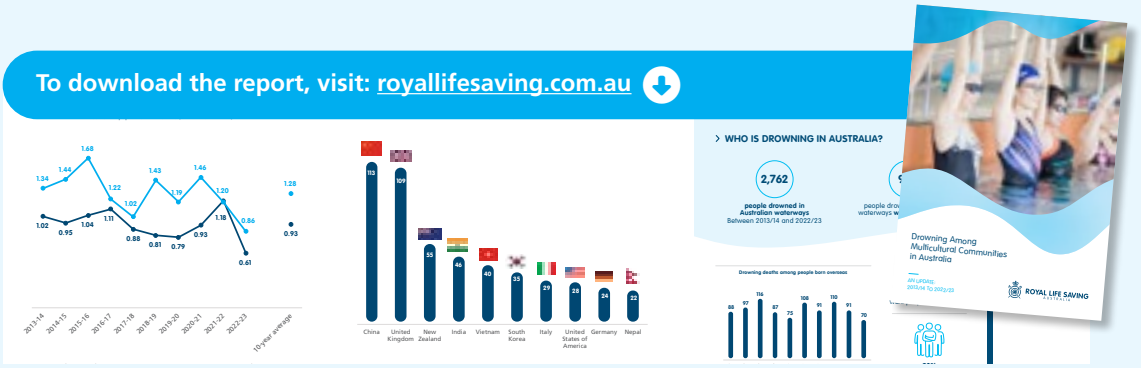
Our strategic role in collaborating with community partners, government bodies, and research institutions ensures that our initiatives are relevant, impactful, and inclusive. We remain committed to developing and implementing strategies that support the health and wellbeing of all community members, prioritising those most at risk, and fostering a culture of safety and awareness around water.

CASE STUDY

CALD Initiatives

Royal Life Saving – Australia and Life Saving Victoria hosted a Multicultural Water Safety forum in Melbourne recently in response to a tragic summer where it is estimated that 25% of drowning deaths involved people born overseas.

Over 60 delegates from across Australia, including multicultural community leaders, government officials, academics, and the water safety sector, gathered for a two-day, nationally focused workshop to prioritise high-level solutions for addressing drowning among Australia's multicultural communities. Community leaders who attended the Forum made it clear to policy makers and water safety agencies that multiple solutions are needed that go beyond signage, learning to swim and translated resources. Community leaders emphasised that initiatives need to be co-designed with community and tailored to community needs in order to make a difference. A highlight of the Forum was hearing from young community role models from multicultural backgrounds who learnt to swim in Australia and are now teaching their own communities, as one example of successful solutions that address both water safety and settlement outcomes, such as employment and social networks.



The forum highlighted several key areas that require future discussion and action to improve water safety and reduce drownings in diverse communities. Some of these include:

01

Partnerships and collaboration among water safety organisations, swim program providers and multicultural agencies and community leaders to drive community level change, including working with university sectors to prioritise strategies for international students.

02

Sustained, expanded investment for the ongoing implementation of programs and initiatives aimed at reducing the drowning toll in vulnerable communities across the country.

03

Robust communication of water safety messages that go beyond translation and signage, co-designed with community leaders to ensure education campaigns and safety messages are understood and have greater reach into communities.

04

Removing barriers to participation and increasing access to appropriate swimming and water safety education programs for people of all ages, from all backgrounds and abilities.



Together, we can expand our engagement and educate people about the importance of water safety

Driving Participation in Lifesaving Programs for a More Prepared and Resilient Community

At Royal Life Saving ACT, we are committed to rejuvenating our active recreation pursuits by providing a series of unique options that build on our swimming and water safety experiences. Our connections with the aquatic and education sectors offer a distinct opportunity to expand and breathe new life into our active recreation endeavours. Our strategies have led to an increase in participation opportunities and promoted inclusion.

Sport and active recreation are crucial elements in rural, regional, and remote Australia. They unite communities, contribute positively to community identity, foster a sense of belonging and place, encourage social interaction and inclusion, and provide opportunities for physical activity, thus enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes.

By driving participation in lifesaving programs, we aim to create a more prepared and resilient community. Our initiatives not only enhance individual skills and safety but also foster a culture of inclusivity and active participation across all regions. Royal Life Saving ACT remains dedicated to supporting and expanding these opportunities, ensuring that every community member has the chance to develop vital lifesaving skills and contribute to a safer, healthier society.

CASE STUDY

Ngadyung Swim and Survive

The Ngadyung Swim and Survive program is more than just a curriculum; it's a testament to the spirit of inclusivity and representation.

Catering exclusively to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth of Canberra, this program embodies Royal Life Saving ACT's commitment to diversity and equality. The program saw an outstanding enrolment of 178 students throughout 2023–2024.



CASE STUDY

Swim 4 Life

Amidst the number of community initiatives rolled out this year, the Swim 4 Life program gleams brilliantly, asserting its commitment to leveling the aquatic playground for all. Born from the understanding that every child should be fluent in the language of water safety regardless of their financial backdrop, the program has risen as a champion of inclusive aquatic education in ACT.

A dive into its fabric reveals free, two-week intensive Swim and Survive training sessions during the school holidays. But Swim 4 Life's magic isn't just in teaching kids how to swim; it delves deeper. Its curriculum extends to vital river and lake safety education, ensuring children are equipped to navigate various aquatic terrains with confidence.

With arms open wide, the initiative beckoned children and families from diverse backgrounds, holding sessions across North and South Canberra. The program's allure was undeniable, drawing 127 young participants over the year.

The Swim 4 Life initiative stands tall as a beacon, ensuring every child, regardless of their circumstances, can meet the waters with knowledge, skill, and a profound respect for its power.



CASE STUDY

Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships (APLSC)

The APLSC is a prestigious event that brings together athletes, teams, volunteers, and staff from across Australia for three days of intense competition, both in the water and out. The event features speed events in the pool and tests of initiative and CPR skills out of the water. While many compete for Championship titles, the APLSC also serves as a unique gathering for Royal Life Saving members to celebrate their contributions to the lifesaving movement and the friendships formed along the way.

Competitors, ranging from Under 14 to Masters divisions, vie for prestigious Championship trophies, each named after a pivotal member of Royal Life Saving (UK and Australia) who has significantly contributed to the lifesaving community. These trophies honour individuals who have played a crucial role in teaching and supporting others in learning the rescue skills that are still practiced today.

The APLSC draws a diverse group of lifesavers from across Australia, including first-time pool lifesavers, lifeguards, 'clubbies,' and members of the Australian Lifesaving Team. To participate in the championships, competitors must hold a Bronze Star (for those 15 years and under), a Bronze Medallion, or an equivalent lifesaving award (such as a Surf Rescue Certificate or Surf Bronze) and be a current financial member of Royal Life Saving or Surf Life Saving Australia.

The 2024 Australian Pool Lifesaving Championships were held at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre from 18–20 January 2024. This year's event saw the Western Australia State Team crowned champions, ending a 22-year drought since their last title win in 2002. The Western Australian State Team edged out strong competition from the Victorian and New South Wales State Teams to claim victory, winning both the Interstate Overall Championship and the Sir Percy Joske Trophy.

The APLSC continues to be a hallmark event that not only showcases the best in pool lifesaving skills but also fosters a sense of community and camaraderie among lifesavers across Australia.



Accelerating Programs that Focus on Adult Swimming Skills

Royal Life Saving ACT is strategically focused on accelerating programs that enhance adult swimming skills, addressing the unique needs of our ageing population. Australia's older adults are living longer, healthier lives than previous generations, and the low-impact nature of aquatic activity makes it an ideal form of physical activity and recreation for them. However, reduced physical ability and pre-existing medical conditions increase the drowning risk in this demographic.

Reducing drowning among older adults (65+ years) is a priority because Australians are remaining more active into their later years and are well placed to realise the benefits of fun, fitness, and recreation in and around the water. Yet, they need appropriate water safety education to stay safe.



CASE STUDY

New Program – Active Adults

At Royal Life Saving, we want every Australian, no matter their age, experience, or background, to enjoy a water way of life. Aquatic recreation in, on, or around the water is a fantastic way to stay fit throughout life and enjoy our Australian waterways. The Active Adults campaign encourages older Australians to participate in, and enjoy, a water way of life throughout their entire life.

Research from the Australian Sports Commission into the exercise patterns of older adults has shown that the majority of adults over 55 years of age are insufficiently active.

59%
of adults between 55–64 years of age
are not meeting recommended
activity levels for their age.

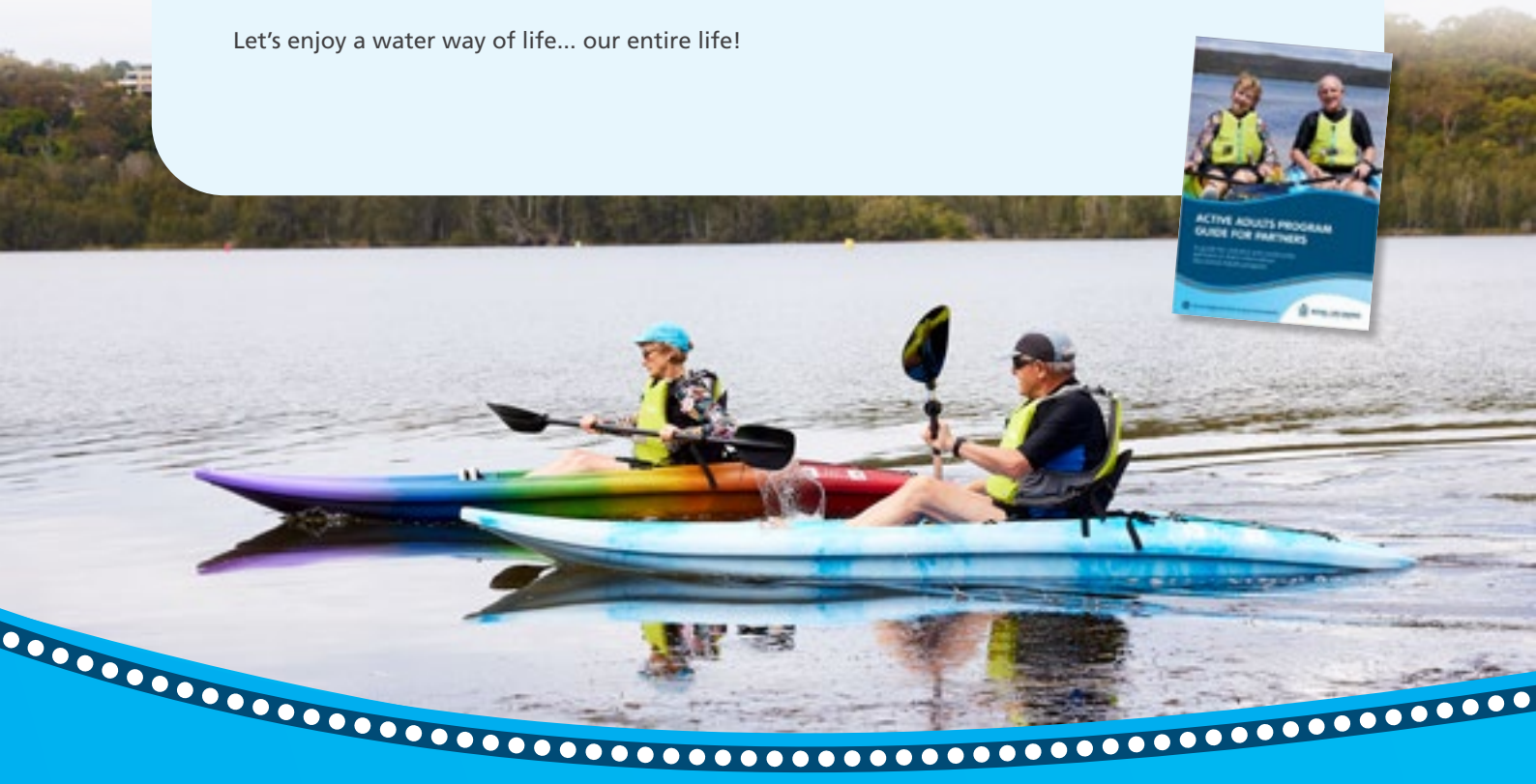
75%
of adults 65+ years of age
are not meeting recommended
activity levels for their age.

With a large proportion of our older adults not meeting suggested activity levels, Royal Life Saving ACT is promoting the benefits of participating in recreational activity in, on, or around the water. Whether it's swimming, aqua aerobics, kayaking, cycling, tai chi, or walking by the water, the physical, mental, and social health benefits of exercise are vital for good health throughout life.

Unfortunately, the drowning statistics for adults over the age of 65 have been steadily increasing in recent years, with approximately 60 Australians losing their lives each year. Falls into water are one of the main contributing factors to these statistics. Maintaining a good level of physical fitness reduces the risks of falls by the water that could result in a fatal incident.

It's never too late to start enjoying the benefits of physical activity in, on, or around the water. Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to ensuring that every adult can safely enjoy aquatic activities and the numerous health benefits they offer.

Let's enjoy a water way of life... our entire life!



MEASURE

2024–2027 Strategic Plan – Participation Growth

Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to elevating standards and adopting innovative approaches to ensure enjoyable and safe experiences in the aquatic realm. With a strategic focus on quality and impact, we have accomplished our goals and surpassed our priorities, making a significant difference in communities across the region.

Since 2020, we have succeeded in engaging thousands of individuals in our training, community, and education programs. This achievement showcases our commitment to fostering a culture of safety and enjoyment around water, equipping people with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive.

We have also seen an uptick in participation in our lifesaving agenda, with an increasing number of individuals recognising the value and excitement of aquatic recreation and lifesaving activities. This development reflects our efforts to promote and popularise these pursuits.

In parallel, our community development programs have expanded and flourished, reaching more communities than ever before. We have worked tirelessly to ensure these programs cater to diverse needs, focusing on inclusivity and relevance. These efforts have had a demonstrably positive impact on community engagement and safety around water.

Royal Life Saving ACT has not only met but surpassed its goals and priorities over the last 12 months, effectively advancing our mission of creating safer and more enjoyable aquatic experiences for all. Our commitment to continual improvement and innovative solutions remains strong as we look forward to making even greater strides in the years to come.

Our strategic initiatives have been instrumental in fostering a resilient and prepared community. By prioritising innovation and community-centric approaches, Royal Life Saving ACT is poised to continue its leadership in water safety and aquatic enjoyment. We look forward to the future with a steadfast dedication to excellence and a commitment to creating lasting positive impacts across ACT.

Safe Environments

Creating safer and more inclusive aquatic environments.

Creating Safer and More Inclusive Environments

To benefit from our urban and natural aquatic environments opportunities to engage and be supported by a skilled and knowledgeable sector are vital. A strong, intelligent network ensures quality outcomes and successful aquatic experiences.

Goal	We will build a skilled and resilient workforce and sector capable of providing broad aquatic opportunities safely and confidently.
Actions	> Drive investment in aquatic infrastructure to enhance the community's ability to enjoy the water. > Aquatic safety policy and plans for swimming pools and inland waterways are embedded through government and industry. > Aquatic locations and workplaces are equipped with necessary lifesaving equipment and resources.



Drive Investment in Aquatic Infrastructure to enhance the Enjoyment of Water

Royal Life Saving ACT is dedicated to creating safer and more inclusive aquatic environments. As leaders in the planning and coordination of risk minimisation strategies, we work closely with the aquatic and government sectors to provide high-level advice to aquatic practitioners. Our goal is to maximise the aquatic experience for the community while also helping to meet legislative and best practice demands.

Australia's public aquatic facilities generate substantial economic benefits for their patrons and the Australian healthcare system. Increased physical activity, primarily in the form of swimming and other aquatic exercises, contributes to significant health outcome improvements. Furthermore, these facilities offer Australians a safe environment to familiarise themselves with the water, with the support of lifeguards, clear visibility, and marked depths. This facilitates the development of aquatic survival skills in a low-risk environment, inspiring confidence in water before exposing individuals to more hazardous open water aquatic recreation. We actively encourage the provision and utilisation of suitable public aquatic facilities for all Australians, given the benefits they offer for exercise and improved aquatic safety.



With the significant costs associated with building public swimming pools, land managers are carefully assessing the utilisation of inland waterways to provide access to communities across the ACT. These natural environments offer substantial social, mental, and physical benefits, contributing to overall community well-being. However, their utilisation requires considerable thought and planning to ensure safety and maximize these benefits. By strategically managing these resources, we can create inclusive, enjoyable, and safe aquatic experiences that enhance the quality of life for all community members. Our commitment to creating safer and more inclusive aquatic environments is unwavering. Through our strategic partnerships, innovative solutions, and dedicated risk management services, Royal Life Saving ACT continues to lead the way in promoting safety and inclusivity in aquatic settings across the region. We strive to ensure that every individual, regardless of background or ability, can safely enjoy the many benefits of aquatic activities.

CASE STUDY

New Inland Waterway Guidelines

Inland waterways such as rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, dams, and lagoons provide significant social and economic value to Australia and require comprehensive consideration in waterway planning and management. However, the use of any water body introduces a level of risk to the public. Inland waterways are the most prominent location for unintentional fatal drownings to occur in Australia. In the summer of 2021/22, 51% of all drowning deaths occurred in inland waterways. Twenty-eight percent of drownings involved swimming and recreation, 13% involved boating, and 13% involved an unintentional fall into water.

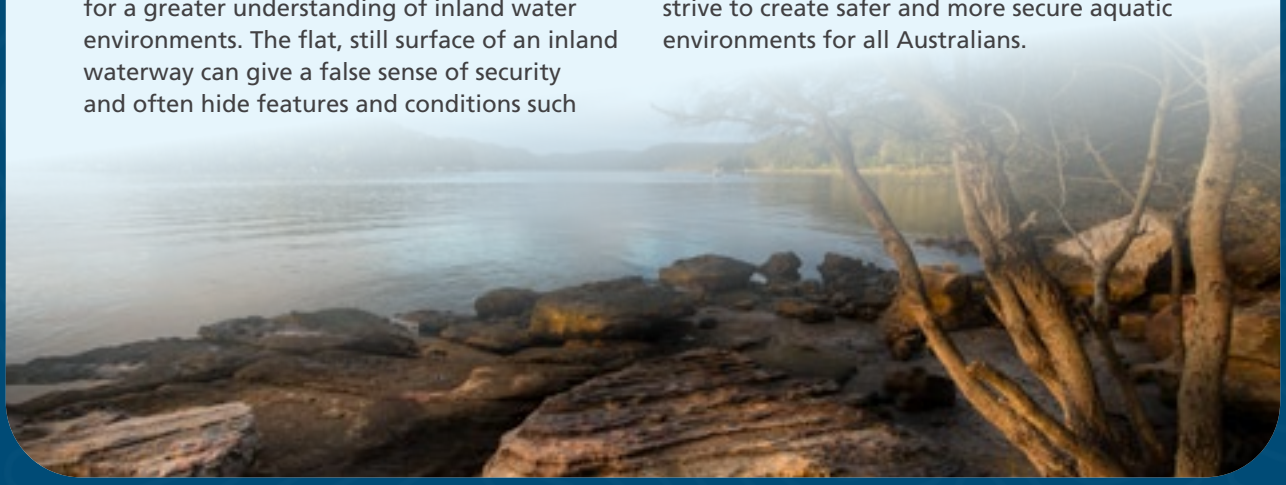
In response to this risk, the Royal Life Saving Society Australia has developed the Guidelines for Inland Waterway Safety. These guidelines provide practical guidance to assist inland waterway owners and operators, as well as statutory authorities, in determining how best to manage the risk of drowning and serious injury resulting from the use of or access to inland waterways and their waterfronts.

Royal Life Saving ACT, a specialist service provider in the field of aquatic risk management since its inception in 1894, has worked to harness the strengths of the communities we work with to reduce drowning and aquatic-related injuries in, on, and around water. Throughout Australia, inland water environments continue to experience a dramatic increase in patronage. Climate change and rising temperatures during summer periods have driven people to seek out aquatic locations. The global push for the responsible use of natural resources and environments has also led to an increase in the use of natural inland recreational locations.

These contributing factors highlight the need for a greater understanding of inland water environments. The flat, still surface of an inland waterway can give a false sense of security and often hide features and conditions such as currents, undertows, or submerged objects, making them potentially dangerous. Conditions in our inland water environments can change unexpectedly, and for the unprepared, it can lead to severe consequences. Therefore, the formulation and implementation of risk management strategies are essential to maintaining an efficient and safe aquatic environment for the community.

Through its Aquatic Risk Services Team, Royal Life Saving ACT can assess inland water environments such as lakes, rivers, and dams that are proposed or currently utilised by the community for recreational activities and assist in the development of risk management strategies. In doing so, Royal Life Saving aims to mitigate potential loss and provide recommendations for best practices for public safety in inland waterways.

The deployment of these new Inland Water Guidelines underscores our commitment to safeguarding lives and promoting the responsible enjoyment of Australia's inland waterways. By working closely with waterway owners, operators, and statutory authorities, we strive to create safer and more secure aquatic environments for all Australians.



CASE STUDY

Risk Management Services

In the field of Aquatic Risk Management, Royal Life Saving ACT has distinguished itself as a specialist service provider since 1894. Our services focus on harnessing community strengths to mitigate aquatic related injuries and drownings. We strive to provide a multidisciplinary approach to manage aquatic venues and facilities effectively, aligning with evolving business management practices, legislative compliance, and industry best practices.

In the past year, we have supported numerous facilities in crafting risk management strategies, with dual objectives of loss prevention and the promotion of safety best practices for employees and customers. These comprehensive services form the backbone of successful and sustainable operations of any aquatic venue or facility.

Our extensive range of services caters to the varied needs of the ACT Aquatic Industry. We have consistently aimed to provide cost-effective solutions that maximise patron safety and promote safe aquatic environments.

These services include:

- Local Water Safety Planning: Designed to customise safety measures according to the local needs.
- Safety Equipment: Provision of essential safety gear to ensure patron protection.
- Aquatic Facility Safety Assessment: Evaluation of the overall safety measures and procedures in place at aquatic facilities.
- Facility Design Assessment: Review of facility design from a safety and compliance perspective.
- Mystery Guest Assessment: Anonymously assessing the facility's adherence to safety protocols.
- Supervision Validation Assessment: Evaluating the effectiveness of supervision within the facilities.
- Signage Assessment: Checking compliance and effectiveness of safety and informational signage.
- Emergency Action Plans: Crafting robust emergency response strategies.
- Operations Manuals: Comprehensive guides for facility operation and safety procedures.
- Aquatic Consultancy: Expert guidance for aquatic facility management and safety protocols.
- Incident Investigation: Thorough exploration of incidents to improve future safety measures.
- Inland Waterway Safety Assessment: Ensuring the safety of activities in inland water bodies.

Through these services, Royal Life Saving ACT continues its dedication to creating safer aquatic venues.

Achievements

- 6 public pools under the Keep Watch @ Public Pool program.
- 5 Aquatic Risk Audits. Mean Compliance Score of 80.6%.
- 26 Mystery Guest assessments. Mean compliance score of 80%.

MEASURE

2024–2027 Strategic Plan – Safe Environments

Royal Life Saving ACT has long been recognised as the service provider of choice for assessing the use of our vast waterways for recreational utilisation. Our strong investment in guideline development and consultation, backed by thorough research and data analysis, provides land managers and operators with a professional and comprehensive approach to building risk management solutions.

Our waterways are undergoing significant changes, from climate change impacts to the identification and utilisation of inland waterways as aquatic recreation options. These changes present new challenges that must be addressed to ensure the safe participation of our diverse communities.

We have witnessed an increasing demand for our services across all aquatic environments, necessitating continued development of our workforce to ensure their knowledge remains relevant to sector needs. Our comprehensive approach to identifying, evaluating, and mitigating aquatic risks has garnered widespread appreciation and use, demonstrating our leadership in this critical aspect of aquatic safety.

By maintaining our commitment to safe environments, we aim to provide secure and enjoyable aquatic experiences for all. This strategic focus not only enhances community well-being but also supports the sustainable and safe use of our precious water resources.

Skilled Community

Developing the capability of individuals to swim, survive and supervise.

Ensuring Aquatic Competency

To acquire aquatic growth and prosperity our communities and learners need access to trained and professional practitioners, highly skilled supervisors, risk experts, policy makers and educational developments and solutions.

Goal

We will develop networks with supporting tools and resources to provide our communities with high quality training, education, advocacy and risk solutions. These developments will be supported by underpinning evidence and data to ensure relevance and appropriateness.

Actions

- Strengthen our support to the swimming and lifesaving workforce.
- Expand our training solutions to ensure a strong network of highly skilled community members.
- Expand our education platforms to strengthen community awareness in aquatic safety.
- Embed innovative education campaigns to support community awareness.



Strengthening the Swimming and Lifesaving Workforce

Royal Life Saving ACT plays a pivotal role in strengthening the swimming and lifesaving workforce, with a particular focus on the development and support of swim teachers. Swim teachers are critical in developing aquatic proficiencies, especially among young children, equipping them with the skills needed to engage safely and confidently with aquatic environments, providing a lifetime of positive experiences.

The swim teacher sector consists of 85% females, with 72% working casually. Research highlights the need to provide heightened support for this sector, particularly in offering career development opportunities and professional engagement to ensure the most modern learning and teaching principles are available. Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to playing an increasingly critical role in the development and support of swim teachers across the state, ensuring all communities have access to highly skilled and well-trained individuals.

In recent years, there has been a shortfall in swim teachers, leading to cancellations of services. This shortfall underscores the need to provide increased support, meaningful communication, and engagement to ensure an adequate number of swim teachers is available. This need is further complicated by the increased demand for swim teachers who can teach adults, particularly from CALD backgrounds.

With adults making up the vast majority of fatal drowning incidents each year, it is vitally important that swim teaching services are available and meet the needs of this demographic. Royal Life Saving ACT's efforts in developing and supporting the swim teacher workforce are essential in addressing this demand and ensuring that both children and adults can benefit from life-saving aquatic education.



CASE STUDY

Swim Teachers

Celebrating the Ongoing Development and Support of Swim Teachers

Swimming and water safety teachers play a vital role in saving lives by educating Australians on swimming and water safety. They help people become confident swimmers, contribute to the creation of safer communities, and engage with individuals to teach the essential principles and practices of water safety. Swimming teachers provide students with water familiarisation activities, water safety education, skill acquisition, and parent involvement/education.

Key findings from our recent 2023-2024 reports indicate that fifty-five percent are over the age of 45, and 25 percent are under the age of 25. This age distribution may be attributed to the flexibility of swim teaching hours, which suit students and parents with caring responsibilities. The peak periods for swim lessons are in the early evenings and on weekends. Swim teachers most value making a positive impact and helping people be safe around water. However, they often leave the industry due to insufficient hours and poor pay. Additionally, the percentage of swim teachers who participate in sufficient in-service training is much lower than the minimum recommended safety standard in the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations.

We are thrilled to celebrate the monumental success of the broadened implementation of Royal Life Saving ACT's Swim Teacher Training Program. Over the past year, more than 250 dedicated individuals have been trained, marking a significant milestone in our continuous efforts to enhance water safety. These newly trained swim teachers are now serving as vital cogs in the machinery of education, playing a crucial role in the development and acquisition of essential swimming, water safety, and survival skills amongst our children. Their commitment and expertise are forging a safer future where our young ones can enjoy the water with confidence and competence.

Here's to the remarkable success of our program, the hard work of our staff, and the safer future they're helping to create. Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to the ongoing development and support of swim teachers, ensuring that they continue to play a pivotal role in promoting water safety and saving lives across the state.



Expanding Training Solutions to Ensure a Strong Network of Highly Skilled Community Members

Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to providing state-of-the-art training solutions across various sectors, maintaining our status as a leading institution. Our core focus revolves around crafting solutions to tackle water safety priorities, bolster sector resilience, and prepare the community. We offer innovative solutions tailored to the diverse needs of our communities, employing flexible and modern methods to ensure relevance and appropriateness. We emphasize access, equity, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Despite the challenges encountered in the past year, Royal Life Saving ACT has remained dedicated to granting communities access to high-quality education and training solutions. The upheavals in the sector in recent years have necessitated the delivery of top-tier programs and services to ensure that our communities are catered for by skilled and accredited sector employees. In FY2023–2024 alone, Royal Life Saving ACT fulfilled over 3,000 vocational outcomes, with an average customer satisfaction and quality outcome rate of 98%.

Royal Life Saving ACT remains committed to furthering these opportunities to secure a highly skilled workforce that supports the professional services and programs offered at swimming pools across ACT. Our dedication ensures that the aquatic sector continues to thrive with well-trained and competent professionals. Critically important is the significant investment Royal Life Saving ACT has made in the vast network of first aiders across ACT. We appreciate and understand the critical role that our community lifesavers make in our workplaces, sporting fields, and across our local communities. Each community lifesaver serves as a reminder of the genuine commitment people in our community make to ensuring help is available whenever required.

By expanding our training solutions, we aim to build a robust network of highly skilled community members ready to address water safety and other essential needs, reinforcing our mission to create safer and more resilient communities.



CASE STUDY

Training Outputs

We firmly believe in empowering our diverse communities with the knowledge and skills to confidently respond to incidents and emergencies.

Our vocational training agenda plays a vital role in providing community members and sector professionals with the necessary skills, cultivating a community-wide readiness that can potentially save lives. Furthermore, our training programs provide professionals within the aquatic sector with a comprehensive understanding of operational responsibilities within aquatic facilities. This knowledge base ensures that our facilities across the state are managed to the highest standard, optimising safety and efficiency for all users.

In addition to providing key skills training, Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to fostering career development pathways for sector professionals. By offering a clear route for growth and progression, we aim to not only attract but retain the best talent within the sector, enhancing the quality of service and safety provided at our aquatic facilities. The year 2023-2024 marked a significant milestone for our vocational training initiatives, recording noteworthy outcomes and further reinforcing our commitment to community safety and professional growth. We continue to focus on expanding our training programs, strengthening our communities, and supporting our sector professionals, confident that this investment will drive lasting, positive change.

- 3,084 Vocational outcomes issued.
- 251 new Swim Teachers accredited.
- 467 Pool Lifeguard accreditations.



Embedding and Utilising Social Media for Community Engagement and Safety

Royal Life Saving ACT recognises the significant benefits of embedding and utilising social media for broad community messaging and engaging specific demographics. Social media platforms provide extensive reach and accessibility, enabling precise targeting and real-time interaction. They are cost-effective and support various engaging content formats like videos and infographics, fostering a loyal and trusting community.

To ensure drowning prevention messages are widely distributed, Royal Life Saving ACT has utilised a range of social media options to support educational campaigns with engaging visuals and shared real-life stories to create emotional connections. These platforms have also been used to provide regular updates on key drowning prevention agendas, ensuring our community remains informed and vigilant.

A key part of our continued investment lies in the monitoring of analytics and providing multilingual content to enhance effectiveness. This ensures that our messages resonate with diverse audiences and contribute to a safer community.

CASE STUDY

Social Media Activations





MEASURE

2024–2027 Strategic Plan – Skilled Community

Royal Life Saving ACT has solidified its role as a leading provider of training and education solutions. More than 3,000 individuals participated in vocational training and associated professional development programs with Royal Life Saving ACT across the last 12 months. We have ensured our training solutions are of high quality and relevant to the needs of the sector. Our high satisfaction rate amplifies our resolute commitment to preparing highly skilled individuals to undertake key swimming, water safety, and lifesaving roles.

Our collaborations with the industry and education sector remain strong and provide for a positive future. Through our unwavering commitment to promoting safe and enjoyable aquatic experiences and our ceaseless efforts in providing impactful education and training, we have reaffirmed our position as a leading voice and trusted authority in the sector.

We have also succeeded in expanding our co-branding and recognition with key stakeholders. By collaborating with government bodies, community organisations, the aquatic industry, and the corporate sector, we have forged meaningful alliances that have bolstered our efforts and broadened our impact.

We have invested in modern communication solutions to ensure our training and key messaging is appropriate and accessible across all our communities. Our trainer workforce remains a strong pillar of our commitment, and their professional application and dedication are to be highly commended.

Training and education are the means by which we engage and support our communities, developing their resilience and capacity. A range of new initiatives are planned for the coming year, which will provide further examples of the highly trusted and supported solutions we offer. Royal Life Saving ACT remains steadfast in our mission to build a skilled, resilient community capable of enjoying and safeguarding our aquatic environments.

Sustainable Future

Building organisation growth and prosperity.

Long Term Organisational Capacity

To ensure long-term organisational growth and sector vibrance there is a need to build a cohesive and secure Royal Life Saving. Our priorities centre on establishing appropriate information, business process and financial models through a strong team that makes our vision a reality.

Goal

We will diversify and broaden revenue streams to support increased community and organisational investment. We will utilise our influence to strengthen our social impact and environmental sustainability of aquatic settings and we will support our staff, organisation and membership to grow and mature.

Actions

- Embed a business model that is diversified, cost efficient and forward thinking.
- Leverage our collective data sources to optimise our solutions and future investments.
- Enhance our humanitarian, social, and environmental impacts through our engagements and networks.
- Attract and retain the best talent with a workplace that supports our strategic direction and values.
- Grow our membership base, satisfaction and recognition.



Ensuring Long-Term Growth and Prosperity

Royal Life Saving ACT is committed to ensuring our long-term growth and prosperity, a priority that is essential for our continued success. By acquiring and supporting a team of dedicated professionals, we are strongly positioned for the future. It remains vital that we seek to diversify our traditional program and service offerings to ensure ongoing relevance and financial stability. As the needs of our communities change, it is imperative that our agenda and support reflect these evolving needs. This is particularly evident with the increasing utilisation of inland waterways as aquatic recreational locations.

While being conscious of financial stability, we must maintain our focus on our humanitarian and social importance. As leaders in our sector, we often play a crucial role in ensuring that our disadvantaged communities are adequately serviced and supported. One of our strengths over the past 12 months has been our capacity to remain fiscally responsible. Despite facing many challenges, including rising supplier, utility, and insurance costs, we have been very reluctant to increase our fees for service, understanding the financial struggles faced by many community members.

Our commitment to balancing financial prudence with our social mission underscores our dedication to serving all members of the community. The future is bright, and our team is well-prepared for strong engagement across ACT. We will continue to innovate and adapt, ensuring that Royal Life Saving ACT remains a vital and trusted presence in promoting water safety and community well-being.



CASE STUDY

Gender Equality

At Royal Life Saving NSW.ACT.TAS, we proudly uphold a strong commitment to gender equality, ensuring a fair and inclusive environment for all our employees. Our workforce composition reflects this commitment, with 64% female and 34% male employees, and women holding a significant number of leadership positions—12 out of 21 managerial roles, demonstrating our efforts to maintain a balanced gender representation across various roles.

In response to the recent legislative changes to the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, passed by the Federal Parliament in March 2023, we have taken proactive steps to align with these reforms and further enhance our gender equality practices. These changes, which include the requirement for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) to publish gender pay gaps for individual employers, have inspired us to strengthen our strategies and actions to ensure equity and transparency.

Our organisation-wide gender pay gap is within the neutral range (+/-5%), with a slight bias of 0.76% in favour of males. This minimal gap, within normal business fluctuations, highlights our strong focus on gender equality. We believe that this indicates a fair and equitable workplace, where all employees are valued and rewarded without gender bias.



Strategies and Actions

Gender Composition of the Workforce and Governing Bodies

Equitable Recruitment and Promotion Processes: We have established unbiased recruitment and promotion processes to provide equal opportunities for all genders, aiming for a balanced representation within our workforce and leadership.

Career Development and Mentorship Programs: We actively support the career advancement of women through targeted programs and mentorship, fostering a diverse and inclusive leadership team.

Equal Remuneration between Women and Men

Regular Pay Audits: Annual comprehensive pay audits help us identify and address any gender pay disparities, ensuring fair remuneration practices.

Transparent Remuneration Practices: We maintain clear criteria for salary decisions and promotions, promoting transparency and understanding among all employees regarding how remuneration is determined.

Employment Terms and Practices Relating to Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements: We promote flexible working options to accommodate diverse needs and responsibilities, making them accessible to all employees, regardless of gender.

Consultation with Employees on Workplace Gender Equality Issues

Employee Engagement and Feedback: We regularly conduct feedback sessions to understand employees' experiences and needs related to pay equity, continuously improving our policies and practices.

Sex-Based Harassment and Discrimination

Education and Training: Ongoing education and training on gender equality and pay equity are provided to all employees, fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace culture that discourages sex-based harassment and discrimination.

Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan

Leadership Commitment and Accountability: Our leadership team is committed to gender pay equity, with clear targets and accountability measures integrated into our organisational strategy and action plan.

By implementing these actions and strategies, Royal Life Saving NSW.ACT.TAS is dedicated to achieving and maintaining gender equality within our organisation. We are committed to creating an environment where all employees are valued and rewarded fairly, reflecting our core values of inclusivity and fairness.





CASE STUDY

Humanitarian

The International Life Saving Federation's World Conference on Drowning Prevention (WCDP) was held at the Perth Conference and Exhibition Centre, Western Australia from 4–7 December 2023.

The globally significant event focused world attention on drowning prevention. WCDP 2023 gathered experts in drowning prevention, lifesaving and water safety with the goal of Shaping Global Strategy and Mobilising for Action.

The conference was held at a time of great momentum for drowning prevention.

- United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention in 2021.
- World Health Assembly will debate a draft resolution on Drowning Prevention.
- World Health Organization has announced plans to develop the first ever Global Status Report on Drowning Prevention.
- World Health Organization has announced plans to establish a Global Partnership for Drowning Prevention in 2023.

The conference themes reflected 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.

This was the first time a World Conference on Drowning Prevention has been hosted in Australia. Co-hosts, the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia (RLSS) and Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) were immensely proud and eager to welcome the global community to Perth, embracing them with everything that is impactful about Australian approaches to water safety and drowning prevention.

A Call to Action

WCDP2023 delegates were invited to co-design this call to action via an interactive activity. Delegates first brainstormed ideas to advance global strategy and to mobilise local action. Then, these ideas were clustered into themes, matching ideas, and contexts to create a framework of actions.

As a result of this process, the delegates of WCDP2023 call for global strategy and local level action to reduce the impacts of drowning, specifically by:

01 Prioritising justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all drowning prevention efforts from governance and priority setting to program implementation and evaluation.

02 Recognising that no one organisation or sector can effectively own or control drowning prevention, efforts must be inclusive at all levels.

03 Facilitating leadership and positioning of more voices from Africa, Central and South America, and small island nations in the global effort to prevent drowning.

04 Establishing youth-led initiatives to build, empower, and engage young people in governance and decision making, policy advocacy, research, and program design.

05 Creating national platforms and community coalitions to enhance coordination and collaboration so all interested parties can be empowered to join drowning prevention efforts.

06 Engaging enthusiastically in the policy making process with data, advocacy, and a deep commitment to ensuring that drowning prevention exists in all pertinent policies.

07 Strengthening research efforts through prioritisation, coordination, capacity building, and supporting the role of communities affected and practitioners in research at all levels.

08 Investigating drowning in men and adolescents, including deepening understanding on the role of risk taking in higher rates of drowning in males, and the opportunities for prevention.

09 Investing in research aiming to deepen understanding of the relationship between vulnerability, exposure, and hazards in all contexts to inform drowning prevention measures.

10 Strengthening system-level capacity for implementation research to enhance understanding of intervention delivery and inform evidence-informed scale-up in real-world settings.

11 Investing in south-south partnerships (i.e., technical cooperation among developing countries) focused on sharing knowledge, skills, expertise, and resources.

12 Enhancing multisectoral engagement and advocacy by identifying synergies between sectors and stakeholders, investing in development, and facilitating mutually beneficial initiatives.



Royal Life Saving NSW staff at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention

13 Investigating opportunities to embed interventions within existing large-scale health and sustainable development efforts, including early childhood care and development, disaster risk reduction and climate agendas, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

14 Reinforcing the importance of swimming and water safety skills and knowledge, and expanding research into water competency, evaluation of swimming and water safety program implementation, and effective policies.

15 Expanding development and implementation of evidence-informed interventions across the spectrum of prevention, including addressing health, social and economic determinants.

16 Increasing investment and sustainable funding for coordination, addressing research priorities, scaling up of effective interventions, and building technical and community capacity.

17 Ensuring communities affected are central to all drowning prevention decision making and initiatives related to governance, implementation, and evaluation.

18 Strengthening implementation and evaluation of targeted, evidence-informed campaigns that seek to raise awareness and support community and individual drowning prevention action.



CASE STUDY

Research – Summaries

Safe Places To Swim

Houston, R., Moran, M., Miller, L., & Crockford, M. (2023). State of the National Aquatic Industry Report 2024, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, Sydney, Australia.



Aim

This State of the Aquatic Industry Report aims to provides a snapshot of the public and public-access pool industry covering developments, achievements, challenges and opportunities for the sector.

Critically, the report serves to inform stakeholders of the need to invest in the ongoing safety, sustainability and viability of the industry, which provides significant benefits to the Australian community.

1. Identifying risk and benchmarking safety conformance

Owners and operators of publicly accessible aquatic facilities (including swim schools and communal pools such as hotel, resorts and caravan parks) should undertake routine safety assessments to identify and mitigate risks. Additionally, this can enable local, regional, state and national benchmarking of the implementation of safety standards and guidelines and improve safety practices at these facilities.

2. Incentivising safety improvements

State and territory governments should develop and implement programs which incentivise pool owners and operators to undertake assessments, with the Victorian funding-model proposed as a good benchmark for other states and territories.

3. Ensuring safety best practice

To ensure local government venues are being managed in accordance with national lifesaving guidelines and industry best practice, local governments should ensure that their facilities undertake routine assessments and build this requirement into annual budgets and management contracts (where applicable).

4. Ensuring safe design from the outset

Once a pool is designed and built, it is in place for over 50 years. Key decisions involved in the design can have a large bearing on the safety and efficiency of the operations, such as lifeguard deployment. To ensure aquatic facilities are designed in line with guidelines and standards, pool designers and architects should ensure Royal Life Saving Design (Safety) Assessments are undertaken early in the pool design and prior to construction to ensure venues have safe design at the centre from the outset.

5. Preventative education programs

Swimming and water safety lessons are vital in equipping individuals with the skills they need to be safe in and around water. These must be expanded at all levels and in all communities, particularly targeting vulnerabilities and those who miss out.

6. Parent / guardian supervision programs

A concerted effort is needed to ensure that parents and guardians understand their critical role in supervising their children at public pools, in accordance with programs such as Keep Watch @ Public Pools. All publicly accessible pools should adopt a recognised industry program for child supervision and ensure consistency of messages nationally.

7. Staff training and professionalisation

An industry-wide system which supports enhancements across the aquatic workforce in safety capability, ongoing professional development and assurance is recommended.

8. Public awareness campaigns

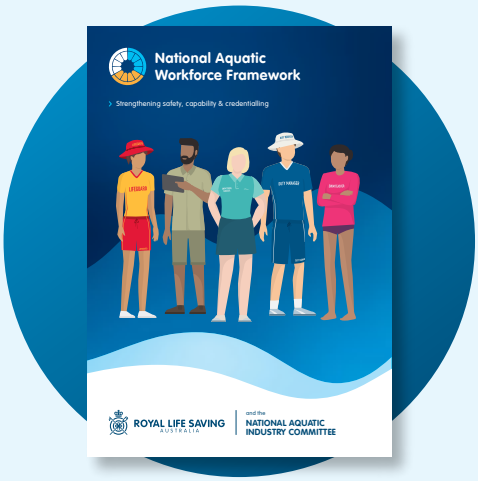
Stakeholders should work to align public awareness campaigns to reduce clutter and reinforce the importance of nationally consistent water safety messages and the role of the community in the prevention of drowning and aquatic injury.

For a copy of the report, visit: royallifesaving.com.au

Research – Summaries

National Aquatic Workforce Framework

Houston, R, Craigie T & Jackson, S. (2024) National Aquatic Workforce Framework, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, Sydney.



Aim

Building on earlier industry work, the concept of a workforce framework as an initiative that could serve to improve attractiveness to the industry and retention of talent became more clear at the National Aquatics Symposium 2023.

The discussions also centred on the need to better articulate the many career opportunities available in the sector and to bring clarity to the competencies and capabilities required for key roles. Its goals include promoting aquatic careers, defining clear pathways for professional growth, establishing quality assurance systems for safety outcomes, and supporting the sector in effective workforce planning. The framework aims to not only attract and retain talent but also to foster a learning culture and improve leadership within the industry, ultimately enhancing community trust and safety.

For a copy of the report, visit: royallifesaving.com.au

MEASURE

2024-2027 Strategic Plan – Sustainable Future

Royal Life Saving ACT has made significant progress in achieving its goal of continued stability and growth, with a firm focus on building a sustainable, secure organisation that ensures long-term cohesion and scope.

Our commitment to engaging with the community has been highlighted by an increase in community activations. We have successfully launched and sustained various initiatives that have elevated awareness about water safety and fostered a closer connection between Royal Life Saving ACT and the communities we serve.

Our strategic focus on risk analysis and management has further strengthened the organisational stability. By diligently identifying and managing potential risks, we have ensured the ongoing resilience and security of our organisation, even in the face of unexpected challenges.

We have ensured ongoing compliance with legislative requirements and organisational excellence, adhering to the highest standards of governance, transparency, and ethical conduct. This has fortified our reputation as a trusted, accountable organisation committed to the highest standards of excellence.

Through dedicated efforts and strategic planning, Royal Life Saving ACT has met and exceeded its goals and priorities, cementing our place as a cohesive, sustainable, and secure organisation committed to the safety, health, and wellbeing of our communities. We remain dedicated to continuing this journey of growth and excellence in the years to come.

03 / Our Celebrations



Honours

Royal Life Saving deeply appreciates and acknowledges the tireless efforts and invaluable contributions of the numerous individuals, organisations, and entities who dedicate themselves to promoting the ideals of water safety and lifesaving.

These invaluable partners share our mission, working relentlessly in the face of challenges and extending their support in various capacities, be it through financial aid, provision of resources, volunteering, or sharing expertise.

Year after year, their efforts play a crucial role in helping us accomplish our objectives, reach out to more communities, and create a safer and more inclusive aquatic environment for all.

Their commitment goes beyond simple contributions; they are the lifeblood of our cause, shaping our journey and reinforcing our mission.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions and relentless pursuit of our shared objectives, we honour them through our Honors System. This system is designed to acknowledge and celebrate their significant impact and the difference they make in the lives of countless people.

The honour is not merely a token of appreciation, but a testament to their dedication and commitment to our cause. By recognising their efforts, we hope to inspire others to join us in our mission and further the reach of our lifesaving work. We remain forever grateful to our honourees for their unwavering support and shared vision of a safe and engaging aquatic environment for all.

Commonwealth Honours

Service Medal

The Hon. Terrance John Higgins AO QC
Mr. Kenneth Aplin
Mr. Peter Granleese
Mr. Kevin Graham
Mr. Lyal Holley
Mr. Tony Bandle
Mr. Greg Bowler
Mr. Harold James Hird OAM

Australian Honours

Fellow of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

The Hon. Terrance John Higgins AO QC
Mr. Geoff McGibbon
Mr. Kevin Graham
Mr. Ian Cocks
Mr. Anthony Bandall
Mr. Peter Granleese

Service Order of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia

Mrs. Christine McGibbon
Mrs. Diane Cocks

Meritorious Service Award

The Hon. Terrance John Higgins AO QC
Mr. Harold James Hird OAM

ACT Bravery Awards

Commendation for Bravery

Mr. P. Zori
Mr. D. McCaskill
Mr. G. O'Neill
Mr. M. Gilet
Ms. N. Ballenden
Mr. N. Hansford
Constable R. Quilty, Australian Federal Police

Bravery Cross

Mr. Neil Maher
Miss Emily de Gier

Rescue Medal

Ms. Elise Waser
Mr. Barton Waser
Mr. John Waser
Mr. Kevin Nash
Mr. William Nash

Resuscitation Club Medal

Mr. Neil Maher
Mr. Paul Reynolds
Mr. Alexander Mackie
Ms. Brooke Smyth
Mr. Samuel Murphy

Life Members

The Hon. Terrence John Higgins AO QC
Mr. Geoff McGibbon
Ms. Christine McGibbon
Mr. Harold Hird OAM
Mr. Lyal Holley
Mr. Peter Castle
Mr. Peter Macaulay
Mr. Michael Higgins
Mr. Anthony Bandle

ACT Staff

Australian Service Order

Minimum 5 Years Service

Wayne Groeneweg

Nick Whalley

Lisa Dunlop

Ashley Kalz

Supporters

Our Thanks

ACT Education
ACT Sport and Recreation
Ainslie Primary School
Amaroo Primary School
Aqua Harmony Swim School
Aquatots Swim School
Aranda Primary School
Arawang Primary School
Big Splash Water Park
Bonython Primary and Pre-School
Brindabella Christian College
Burgmann Anglican College
Calwell Primary School
Campbell Primary School
Canberra Christian School
Canberra Christian School
Canberra Girls Grammar School
Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre
Capital Chemist
Caroline Chisholm School
Chapman Primary School
Charles Weston Primary School
Charnwood Dunlop Primary School
Club Lime ANU
Covenant Christian School
Curtin Primary School
Dickson Aquatic Centre
Duffy Primary School
Evatt Primary School
Fadden Primary School
Farrer Primary School
Fitness First, Deakin
Forrest Primary School
Franklin Early Childhood School
Fraser Primary School
Garran Primary School
Gilmore Primary School
Giralang Primary School
Gold Creek School
Gowrie Primary School
Harrison School
Hawker Primary School
Kaleen Primary School
Kingsford Smith Primary School
Latham Primary School
Lyons Early Childhood School
Macgregor Primary School
Macquarie Primary School
Majura Primary School
Manuka Swimming Pool
Maribyrnong Primary School
Mawson Primary School
Miles Franklin Primary School
Monash Primary School
Namadgi School
Narrabundah Early Childhood School
National Capital Authority
National Zoo and Aquarium
Neville Bonner Primary School
Next Gen
Ngunnawal Primary School
North Ainslie School
Ochre Health
O'Connor Cooperative School
Palmerston District School
Radford College
Richardson Primary School
Sacred Heart School
Southern Cross Early Childhood School
St Bede's Primary School
St Claire of Assisi School
St Thomas Aquinas Primary School
St Thomas the Apostle Primary School
St Vincent's Primary School
Taylor Primary School
Telopea Park School
Theodore Primary School
Torrens Primary School
Trinity Christian School
Turner School
Viva Leisure
Wanniassa Hills Primary School
Wanniassa School
Weetangera Primary School
Yarralumla Primary School
YMCA NSW, Canberra Olympic Pool
YMCA NSW, Gungahlin Leisure Centre
YMCA NSW, Lakeside Leisure Centre
YMCA NSW, Stromlo Leisure Centre



Royal Life Saving ACT Branch

Address Unit 1, Royal Life Saving House
26-28 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600

PO Box PO Box 266
Deakin West ACT 2600

Tel (02) 6260 5800
Fax (02) 6260 5900
Email act@royalact.com.au

ABN: 18 340 694 038