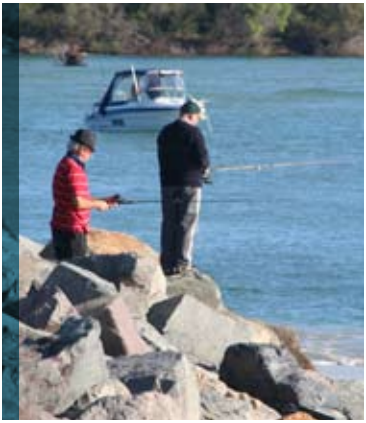
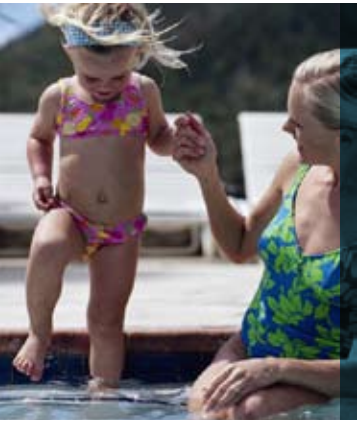
A GUIDE TO

Australian Water Safety Council

Water Safety Essentials for Local Governments





Australian Government
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- Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA)
- Industry representatives
- Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

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The Australian Water Safety Council is comprised of:
The Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA); Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA); AUSTSWIM; Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association (ASCTA); Australian Swimming Incorporated; Kidsafe Australia; Farmsafe Australia (FSA); Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG); Australian Local Government Association (ALGA); Surfing Australia; Aquatic and Recreation Institute (ARI); Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS).

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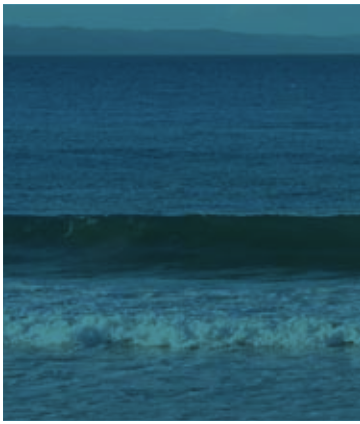
How to use this Guide



THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN CREATED TO POINT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF ESSENTIAL REFERENCES WITH RESPECT TO WATER SAFETY IN ALL AQUATIC LOCATIONS. A BEST PRACTICE APPROACH HAS BEEN TAKEN IN THIS DOCUMENT, WHICH AIMS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DEATH AND INJURY AT ALL AQUATIC LOCATIONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF LOCAL COUNCILS.

While this guide includes information on risk management, including the hierarchy of control, it is by no means a comprehensive document in the area of risk management or water safety and as such the resources identified should also be consulted when putting together a comprehensive risk management plan.

This document is broken down into a number of sections for ease of use. The sections are as follows:

- Risk Management (including the hierarchy of control)
- Safety considerations across all aquatic locations
- A selection of specific bodies of water that may exist within a local council area and some safety issues that these bodies of water may present
- Resources that readers can access to gain more information on water safety issues including contacts

The safety issues for each aquatic location in this guide are organised in alphabetical order and the measures to address these safety issues have been loosely arranged in the order outlined in the hierarchy of control.

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Introduction

Water safety in Australia is everybody's responsibility, from the lifesaver on the beach to the councillor in local government making decisions about funding in their local area. As a country, Australia has a climate and culture conducive to aquatic activity and many Australians enjoy spending time in the water. Australia has an estimated 11, 011 beaches [1], 1,885 public swimming pools [2] and a large number of other aquatic locations accessible to the public including home swimming pools. The other aquatic locations also used for recreational (and occasionally competitive) activity include rivers, creeks, and dams. Each body of water has its own hazards and risks.

During the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2007, an average of 264 people drowned in Australian waterways each year (National Drowning Report 2007) [3]. In 2006-07, drowning deaths occurred in a range of locations. 128 people drowned in rivers / oceans / harbours, 58 at a beach, 39 in swimming pools and 18 (respectively) at lakes / dams / lagoons and in bathtubs (National Drowning Report 2007) [3].

The Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) formed in 1998 as a consultative forum consisting of major water safety and related government agencies.

The AWSC's major role is to present key water safety issues to government, industry and the community [4].

The National Water Safety Plan (NWSP) was established to provide a coordinated and cooperative approach to water safety throughout Australia (pg 5) [4]. This guide has been created in response to Recommendation 18 of the NWSP 2004-07, which states that "…a guide to water safety for local government authorities be produced that contains information about legislative requirements and best practice" (pg 6) [4].

Scope

This guide to water safety is for people in local government who are involved in the decision making process about water safety or funding, or would like to know more information about water safety. This user-friendly guide includes a list of different bodies of water that may exist within a local government area.

An example list of hazards that each body of water may present is included as well as information about resources that should be consulted for further information on how to improve safety at these locations. Resources included are those that are currently (2008) readily available, however there may be other useful reference documents which have not been included.

Development and Improvement

A reiterative approach was undertaken with the preparation of this document which will see it reviewed and updated over time and as more resources and information become available.

This 'Guide to Water Safety Essentials for Local Governments' was presented to industry, water safety and government representatives, in early December 2007. These representatives provided feedback on this guide and offered advice that helped improve the document. While consultation was undertaken, the authors of this guide acknowledge that not all people who may have an interest in water safety have had an opportunity to provide feedback.

The authors would like to encourage feedback.
Any comments can be provided to:
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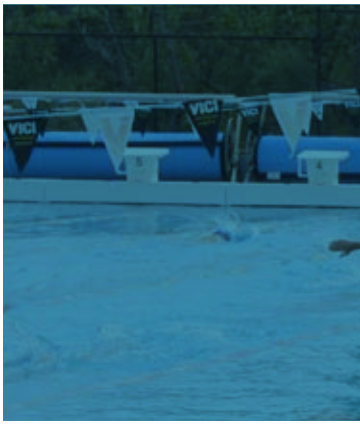
8 Risk Management



REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION OR ACTIVITY BEING CONDUCTED, A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH SHOULD ALWAYS BE ADOPTED. THIS GUIDE UTILISES BROAD RISK MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES. SOME LOCATIONS MAY NEED A RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE RISKS PRESENT.

What is a hazard?

A hazard is defined as a source of potential harm[5], that is, any factor that could cause harm or injury. Examples of hazards that may be present at aquatic locations include: large swells, rips and strong currents at beaches, submerged hazards such as pumps, murky water and steep banks for dams and changing conditions, cold water and motor boats for lakes and lagoons.

What is a risk?

Risk refers to "...the probability that a hazard will cause harm..." [6]. Risks in aquatics may include death, injury (such as brain damage from prolonged submersion or spinal injuries and paralysis) or illness (such as Legionnaire's disease and Cryptosporidiosis).

What is risk management?

The Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (GSPO) define risk management as "...the process of identifying, assessing and controlling risks to people, to an organisation, or to an asset"(GSPO: APP4) [7]. What this means is that you need to think about the hazards and risks associated with a particular location or activity and then work towards removing them.

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Where it is not possible to remove the hazards and/or risks, measures should be implemented to reduce/control the risks. A risk management approach should also include the establishment of an appropriate infrastructure and culture within an organisation or at a location. A risk management approach should be taken for all decisions and activities concerning bodies of water, to ensure water safety is maintained. A risk management approach is also taken with this guide.

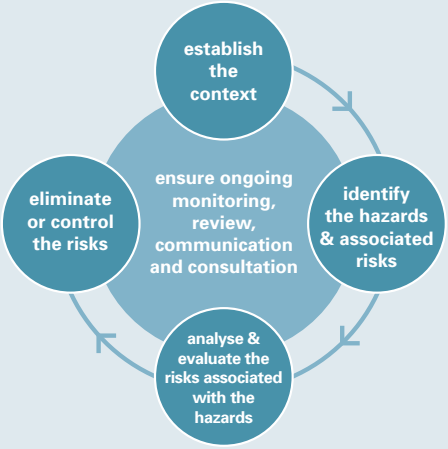
What is the risk management process?

A risk management process is communicated in the chart below (Figure 1). The first step in the risk management process should be to establish the context of the activity being undertaken or of the location being used. The next step should be to identify the hazards and the risks associated with those hazards. These risks should then be analysed and evaluated using such tools as likelihood and consequence tables and risk assessment matrixes. Risks should then be treated through the implementation of relevant strategies. The whole risk management process should be made open to consultation from those affected by it and to be effective, it should be communicated to all involved.

A range of stakeholders should be consulted throughout the risk management process because different users of aquatic locations will identify different hazards and risks and can propose solutions to eliminate or control the risks.

It is important for all who undertake a risk management approach to regularly monitor and review the assessment process. Elimination or control of risk can be achieved through the use of a hierarchy of control approach (Figure 2) which is discussed in the next section of this guide.

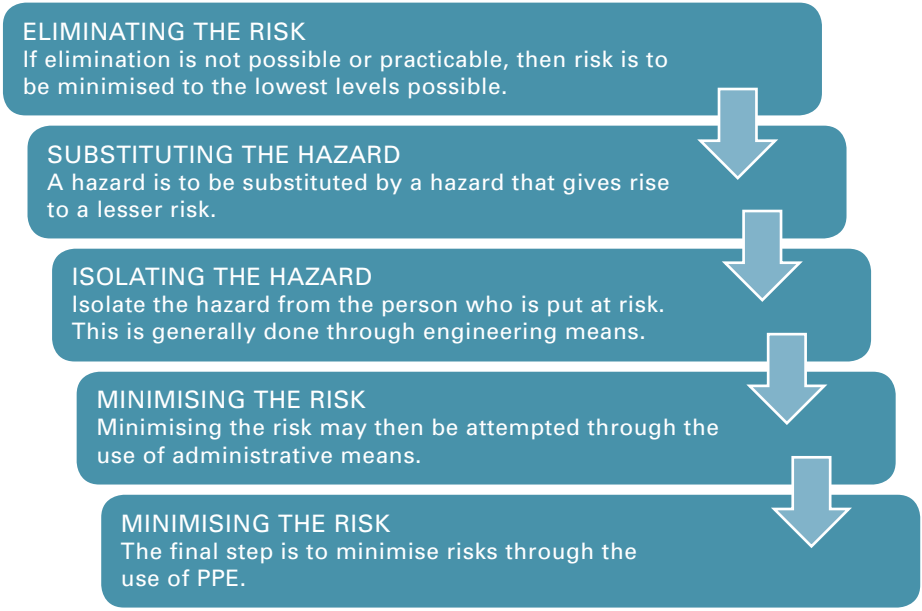
Figure 1: Risk Management Process



What is the hierarchy of control?

A local government, as an employer, has a legal duty to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety to the extent that it is reasonably practicable. In many instances local governments also have a legal obligation under duty of care principles to address hazards and risks in environments under their control. Local governments must ensure that they fulfil their legal obligations in order to minimise the likelihood of prosecutions for failure to comply with occupational health and safety legislation or litigation based on breaches of duty of care (negligence).

Figure 2: Hierarchy of Control for an Aquatic Location



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There is an approach to reducing or eliminating risks called the 'hierarchy of control'. This approach which is recognised as best practice focuses on making the environment safe as opposed to relying on behavioural controls such as use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The hierarchy of control that should be followed when addressing the safety risks at an aquatic location is displayed in Figure 2. If no single measure is sufficient in eliminating the risk, a combination of measures may be used.

How does a risk management approach to water safety work?

A risk management approach to water safety involves identifying the hazards at each aquatic location. These may include physical entities, conditions, activities or behaviours. The risks associated with these hazards are then identified by considering the likelihood of the hazard causing harm, such as death and injury.

A strategy for eliminating or minimising these risks should then be determined. Minimisation can be achieved through substituting the hazard for one that poses a lesser risk or isolating the hazard through fencing.

Factors influencing hazards and risks that may need to be addressed include the number of users, their ages and abilities, the types of activities being undertaken and the different environments that the activity is taking place within.

Following (page 12) is an example of a risk management approach that may be utilised at a beach. This example demonstrates the risk management process using the hierarchy of control principles and a risk assessment matrix. Undertaking a risk management approach to water safety ensures that all possibilities are considered in a logical and methodical manner.

Risk Management for Beaches - An Example

This example is intended to illustrate the process of identifying hazards and assessing risks in public aquatic environments under local government control. Risk assessment matrixes can assist with this process.

Establish the context

An unpatrolled beach in Australia surrounded by cliffs, with one designated access point.

Identify the hazards and associated risks

The first step is to identify all hazards and consider possible adverse outcomes associated with those hazards. Think about what could go wrong, how it might happen, and what the consequences might be. Some examples on an unpatrolled beach might include:

Figure 3: Hazards and health and safety outcomes table

Hazards (factors that could cause injury)	**Possible adverse health and safety outcomes for people**
Large swells, rips and strong currents	Drowning from being pushed under the surf or dragged out to sea, minor injuries from hitting the ground or other people
Cliff	Falls resulting in injury or death while trying to access the beach via the cliff or when near the edge of the cliff
Submerged Rocks	Minor injuries from contact with the rock (eg abrasions, bruising, minor cuts). Serious injuries from diving onto rock or hitting rock during aquatic activities.

Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with the hazards

Once the hazards have been identified, an assessment of the risks associated with the hazards can be undertaken. Consequence and likelihood tables can assist with this process.

Figure 4 provides a scale for determining the likelihood of a hazard resulting in various adverse outcomes [8]. Figure 5 provides a scale for determining the consequence of a hazard resulting in various adverse outcomes [8].

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Figure 4: Likelihood scale

Category	Probability / Description
A	Almost certain, common - is expected to occur in most circumstances
B	Likely, has happened - will probably occur in most circumstances
C	Possible, could happen - might occur at some time
D	Unlikely, not likely - could occur at some time
E	Rare, practically impossible - may occur only in exceptional circumstances

Figure 5: Consequence scale

Category	Consequence (Harm) / Description
1	Catastrophic - fatalities
2	Major - serious injury, such as permanent disability
3	Moderate - medical treatment or lost time injury
4	Minor - minor injury, such as first aid
5	Insignificant - no injury

The likelihood and consequence scales are then used to determine a risk score that indicates whether the hazard and associated risks are high, medium, or low. This can then guide decisions on which hazards require control measures to be implemented and which should be treated as high priorities.

The following figures (figures 6 and 7) provide scales for assessing likelihood and consequence to determine a risk score which can be interpreted as high risk, medium risk, or low risk. In addition to using risk scores to decide whether hazards and risks require control measures, factors such as the number and type of people exposed to the hazard and risks should be considered. A hazard without a high risk score might still warrant priority attention. For example, if large numbers of people are sustaining minor injuries from submerged rocks, implementing control measures might be regarded as a high priority even if the risk score does not rank it as a high risk.

Figure 6: Risk Assessment Matrix

Probability assessment					
A	B	C	D	E	
1	2	4	7	11	1
3	5	8	12	16	2
6	9	13	17	20	3
10	14	18	21	23	4
15	19	22	24	25	5

Consequence (Harm)

Figure 7: Risk Score Table

Risk score	Interpretation
1-6	High risk - immediate correction required, consider discontinuing
7-15	Medium risk - attention needed, correction required
16-25	Low risk - perhaps acceptable as is

Figure 8 provides some examples of how the consequence and likelihood of various adverse outcomes associated with hazards at an unpatrolled beach can be assessed to determine a risk score using the risk assessment process outlined in this section. The risk assessment identified three high risks (risk scores under 6) indicating that control measures for addressing these hazards should be treated as priorities.

Figure 8: Risk assessment matrix

Hazard and outcome severity		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk score
Large swell, rips and strong currents	No injury	5	C	22
	Minor injury	4	B	14
	Moderate injury	3	B	9
	Major injury	2	C	8
	Fatal injury	1	C	4
Cliff	No injury	5	A	15
	Minor injury	4	B	14
	Moderate injury	3	B	9
	Major injury	2	C	8
	Fatal injury	1	C	4
Submerged rocks	No injury	5	A	15
	Minor injury	4	B	14
	Moderate injury	3	B	9
	Major injury	2	C	8
	Fatal injury	1	C	4

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Eliminate or control the hazards and associated risks

Measures for eliminating or controlling the identified hazards and associated risks should be considered using the risk scores to determine which hazards should receive priority. The hierarchy of control approach should be used to inform this process. The text below provides an example of how the hierarchy of control approach might be used to address the hazards and risks associated with cliffs and large swells, rips and strong currents on an unpatrolled beach.

Eliminate risks. It is not possible to eliminate the cliffs or large swells, rips and strong currents. In some instances, it may be possible to remove submerged rocks.

Substitute for a lesser risk. Create a safe entrance to the beach. Encourage visitors to use beaches that are patrolled and do not usually have large swells, rips and strong currents.

Isolate the hazard. It is not possible to isolate large swells, rips and strong currents. Cliff edges could have barriers installed to prevent people accessing the beach from the cliff and/or falling from the cliff. Barriers could also be used to prevent people from diving into areas where they may hit submerged rocks.

Minimise the risk through administrative controls. Administrative controls may include education and public awareness strategies (such as campaigns) to encourage swimmers to swim at patrolled beaches and warn of the dangers associated with cliffs, swells, rips and strong currents, and submerged rocks.

Safety signage may be utilised to identify safe areas for accessing the beach and/or warn people against accessing the beach from cliffs. Signage that can be changed as conditions change can be used to warn of swells, rips, and strong currents and could even prohibit entering the water under these conditions. Safety signage can also warn of hazards such as submerged rocks and can prohibit activities such as diving where submerged rocks are a hazard.

Regular patrols of the beach could also be implemented in addition to an emergency access point to call for help when no lifeguards are present. Officers can also monitor and/or enforce compliance with signage.

Minimise the risk through PPE. Appropriate public rescue equipment could be placed at the unpatrolled beach to assist people in the event of an emergency or situation where someone is injured.

Figure 9 provides a summary of the three hazards considered in this example and measures that could be implemented to control the risks associated with these hazards.

Figure 9: Hazards and control measures table

Hazard	Risk Control Measures
Large swells, rips and strong currents	• Encourage visitors to use beaches that are patrolled and do not usually have large swells, rips and strong currents. • Signage to warn of swells, rips, and strong currents and/or prohibit entering the water under these conditions. • Education and public awareness strategies • Regular patrols of the beach. • Provision of rescue equipment.
Cliffs	• Install barriers such as fences to prevent people accessing the beach from the cliff and/or falling from the cliff. • Signage to warn people against accessing the beach from cliffs • Education and public awareness strategies • Provision of rescue equipment.
Submerged rocks	• Safety signage to warn against submerged rocks and/or prohibit activities such as diving. • Lifesavers or council officers to monitor and/or enforce compliance with safety signage. • Education and public awareness strategies • Provision of rescue equipment.

Finally, it is important to regularly review and monitor the risk assessment process, ensure it is communicated to all relevant persons and ensure they are involved in the consultation process.

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Safety Considerations

THERE ARE SOME SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS THAT APPLY TO ALL AQUATIC LOCATIONS. WHILE SOME ARE NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO WATER SAFETY, OPERATORS AND LAND MANAGERS SHOULD STILL BE AWARE OF THE ISSUES. THESE INCLUDE THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES, CAMERAS, VIDEO CAMERAS (PRIVACY AND DECENCY ISSUES) AND ISSUES INCLUDING LEGISLATION ASSOCIATED WITH WORKING WITH CHILDREN. THESE ISSUES ARE EXAMINED FROM A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE.

Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol can greatly increase the risk of drowning and is a major cause of mortality and morbidity in Australia. Consumption can impair judgment, vision, coordination and muscle function, inhibit reflexes and can create disorientation and dilation of the blood vessels which can accelerate loss of blood and drastically increase the risk of hypothermia.The consumption of alcohol in public places is largely the responsibility of local governments to manage and should form part of a risk management approach to water safety. Education campaigns and signage regulating the consumption of alcohol at aquatic based locations may be utilised by local governments to address this serious safety concern.

Education

Education on water safety is an important risk management measure for local governments to consider. Members of the Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) produce a large and varied range of educational resources, many of which can be accessed for free or modified for your particular organisation. This information can be accessed via the AWSC website: www.watersafety.com.au

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Means of access to known hazardous aquatic locations

The means of access to known hazardous aquatic locations such as tracks, roads and paths, is an issue that local governments should also take into consideration. Relocating, redesigning or discontinuing these means of access should be considered as measures to address risks to public health and safety.

Provision of change rooms and public toilets

Operators of public swimming pools or other aquatic based locations that are utilised by the public should provide an adequate number of change rooms and public toilets. There are also issues around child protection related to the provision of change rooms and public toilets and local governments should consider the installation of family change rooms and private change cubicles for parents with children.

Security

Security at aquatic locations is another important issue for local governments to consider. Depending upon the location, operators and managers may need to ensure the security of people, their possessions and their cars.

The provision of securable lockers and other security measures should be considered by local governments.

The use of mobile phones, cameras, video recorders and other recording devices

Privacy laws have recently been amended to include privacy protection for people against the use of mobile phones in areas such as toilets and change rooms in gyms, aquatic centres and at beaches. This is an important issue for local governments to be aware of in all environments, particularly as legislation in this area is often outstripped by the rate of technological change.

Working with children

Local governments, including operators of public swimming pools, and other aquatic locations where staff may be charged with working with children, should ensure that all staff undertake a 'working with children' check. This background check ensures that those staff working with children, have not been convicted of a serious criminal offence. Local governments should be aware of the content and the application of State and Territory based Child Protection Acts and other relevant legislation.

Beaches

What is a beach?

A BEACH IS DEFINED BY THE AUSTRALIAN COASTAL PUBLIC SAFETY GUIDELINES AS THE "…PEBBLY OR SANDY SHORE OF A SEA, LAKE ETC. WHICH IS WASHED BY THE TIDE OR WAVES"(PG 501) [1]. THE BEACH IS OFTEN THE HIGHEST USE AREA ON THE COAST FOR PUBLIC RECREATION AND "…AN AREA THAT PROVIDES A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING"(PG 15) [1].

What are some of the safety issues associated with beaches?

Safety issues associated with beaches that local governments need to be aware of include:

Beach hazards. Hazards that visitors may encounter at the beach include: large surf, rough surf, strong tides, rips, submerged rocks and sand bars.

Varied activities. Local governments may also have to manage high numbers of beach users and regulate the different kinds of activities that may be undertaken at a beach. These may include: swimming, surfing, body boarding, rock fishing, jet skiing and kite surfing.

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How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Activity Zones. As beaches can be accessed by a wide variety of users, for a number of different activities, separating the users may reduce hazards and risks that can be encountered by beach users. This can be achieved through the use of appropriate signage and flags.

Flags. The provision of flags on beaches is another initiative that needs to be understood with respect to beach safety. As beaches can often be very large, the use of designated flags is important to distinguish safe swimming areas, minimise risk to the public and maintain manageable areas for lifeguards/ lifesavers to supervise. The use of flags on beaches can also alert users to closed beaches and deter them from swimming in dangerous conditions.

Safety Signage. As beaches are accessible at all times of the day and night and supervision cannot be provided at all times, the use of safety signage is especially important. The large number of hazards that a visitor may encounter at a beach is another reason why signage should be provided.

Supervision. Due to the large number of people that can potentially visit a beach, the provision of adequate supervision is an important water safety issue. Providing an adequate number of trained lifeguards, or designating authority to a surf life saving service is important to reduce any risks to health and safety that visitors may encounter whilst swimming or undertaking aquatic activity at a beach. Local governments should also ensure that lifeguards or designated surf life saving services, are provided with the required rescue equipment and/or resource support to ensure they can carry out their duties.

Education. Supporting education programs and informing beach users of the hazards they may encounter, is an important part of a local governments hazard management approach to water safety and a means of reducing risks to visitor's health and safety. Education on rock fishing and the associated safety issues may reduce risks to health and safety.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Dams

What is a dam?

A DAM MAY BE AN ENCLOSED BODY OF WATER WITH BANKS OR BARRIERS ON ALL SIDES. DAMS MAY ALSO HAVE ONE WALL AND USE GRAVITY OR WATER FLOW TO ENSURE THE WATER REMAINS CONTAINED. DAMS MAY VARY IN SIZE AND DEPTH, WITH RECREATIONAL DAMS CAPABLE OF BEING LARGE AND FARM DAMS GENERALLY BEING SMALLER IN SIZE.

What are some of the safety issues associated with dams?

Safety issues associated with dams that local governments need to be aware of include:

Access. Preventing unauthorised access of users to dams is an important safety issue for local governments.

Hidden hazards. Dams on both private property (such as farms) and on public property may be used for aquatic activity. Dams may have submerged hazards such as pumps that are difficult to see due to the unclear conditions of the water and this may impact upon the safety of those engaging in aquatic activity in the dam.

Cold, murky water and steep banks.
Dams can be very large and may hold cold water which can pose a hazard to users as "...sudden immersion in cold water can result in shock or distress" (pg 15) [9].

Farm dams may also be very deep, with unclear water and may have muddy, rocky, slippery or steep banks which increases the risk to health and safety.

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Supervision. Farm dams are a particular risk for toddlers who live on farms or who may visit the farm household. The unsupervised or unintentional wandering of toddlers into dams is a priority child safety issue for farms.

How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Fencing. Regardless of where the dam is located, fencing is an important risk management measure. Installing barriers around dams that are accessible to people, may prevent unauthorised access, especially by children and reduce the rate of drowning deaths in dams.

Safe Play Area. A securely fenced house yard or "safe play area" should be encouraged on farms to prevent toddler drowning. A safe play area is an "isolation" control, and operates like the reverse of a pool fence. Though there is no legislation requiring fenced play areas at present, local governments can raise awareness of and encourage fenced safe play areas on farms.

Safety Signage. Safety signage may also be provided to alert users to hazards, such as pumps, and provide advice on safe behaviours.

Education. Users should take care when entering and exiting the water and be educated on the dangers of swimming and undertaking recreational activity in a dam.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Home Swimming Pools

What is a home swimming pool?

A HOME SWIMMING POOL IS DEFINED BY THE NSW SWIMMING POOLS ACT OF 1992 AS BEING A "...SWIMMING POOL THAT IS SITUATED, PROPOSED TO BE CONSTRUCTED OR INSTALLED ON PREMISES ON WHICH A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IS LOCATED" (S6) [10]. AS THE MAJORITY OF HOUSES THAT HAVE A HOME SWIMMING POOL FALL UNDER A LOCAL COUNCIL'S CONTROL, THE ISSUE OF HOME SWIMMING POOL SAFETY IS IMPORTANT.

What are some of the safety issues associated with home swimming pools?

Safety issues associated with home swimming pools that local governments need to be aware of include:

Access. Preventing the unauthorised or unregulated access of people, especially children, to home swimming pools is a key safety issue. Backyard swimming pools are the most common location of drowning deaths for children under five years of age.

Home pool fencing. Ensuring that home pool fences are installed and maintained are safety issues associated with home swimming pools and issues that local governments may have responsibility for within their local area.

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How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Fencing the Pool. Ensuring home pools are fenced addresses the safety issue of access. Correctly installed and functioning safety fencing around home pools "…has been shown to reduce the risk of a child under five drowning in that pool"(pg 37) [11]. Home pool fencing also contributes to a reduction in injuries related to immersion in water such as brain damage [12].

Regular Inspections. Fencing of home pools is now mandatory in Australia and there are uniform standards in place for the construction of new pool barriers. Regular inspections ensure that home pool fencing is adequately maintained to ensure effectiveness and thus safety [12].

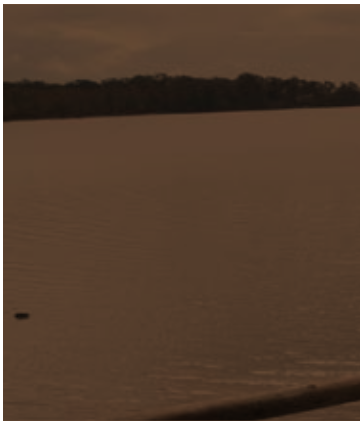
Education. Local governments may also wish to provide education on home pool safety. This may include providing information for prospective home buyers on the requirement to fence the home pool, thus making properties without a fenced pool an unattractive option. The same can be done to motivate home owners to fence their pool. This could be achieved by promoting awareness of pool fencing issues amongst real estate agents.

Swimming Lessons. Local governments could provide information on the importance of swimming lessons for young children.

CPR. Learning CPR should be promoted to parents and other pool owners as an added water safety measure.

Keep watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Lakes/Lagoons



What is a lake or lagoon?

A LAKE IS A BODY OF EITHER FRESH OR SALT WATER WHICH IS OF CONSIDERABLE SIZE AND SURROUNDED BY LAND [13].

A LAGOON IS A SMALL, POND LIKE BODY OF WATER, ESPECIALLY ONE THAT MAY BE CONNECTED WITH A MAJOR BODY OF WATER. A LAGOON MAY ALSO BE AN AREA OF SHALLOW WATER SEPARATED FROM THE SEA BY LOW SANDY DUNES [14].

What are some of the safety issues associated with lakes or lagoons?

Safety issues associated with lakes or lagoons that local governments need to be aware of include:

Changing conditions. These can pose a hazard and increase the risks to health and safety for people using lakes or lagoons for aquatic activity.

Cold water. Cold water can be present in lakes or lagoons, especially at high altitudes. A sudden immersion in cold water can cause distress or shock.

Diverse usage. The different activities that may be undertaken at a lake or lagoon is a safety issue that local governments need to assess. People engaging in boating or water skiing for example will need to undertake their activity safely and away from recreational swimmers. Behaviour can be regulated through the use of activity zoning. Activities may include: powerboats, swimming, fishing, canoeing and rowing.

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Hidden hazards. Submerged objects can be hazardous and are often difficult to see from the water's edge as well as when in the water.

How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues include:

Supervision. If local governments are aware of lakes or lagoons in their local area being used for recreational water-based activity, the provision of trained supervisors such as lifeguards may be considered to reduce risks from hazards.

Safety Signage. Providing safety signage can alert lake and lagoon users to potential hazards such as changeable currents and submerged hazards. Signage can also help to regulate behaviour and reduce the safety risks that different types of behaviour and activities may pose.

Education. Educating lake or lagoon users on the hazards and risks may result in safer behaviours being adopted.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Open Drains and Irrigation Channels

What is an open drain or an irrigation channel?

AN OPEN DRAIN IS A MAN MADE STRUCTURE THAT FACILITATES THE MOVEMENT OF STORM OR OTHER 'WASTE' WATER FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER.

AN IRRIGATION CHANNEL IS ALSO A MAN MADE STRUCTURE THAT FACILITATES THE MOVEMENT OF WATER FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER, FROM A SUPPLY AREA (EG RIVER OR DAM), TO BE DISTRIBUTED FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

What are some of the safety issues associated with open drains and irrigation channels?

Safety issues associated with open drains and irrigation channels that local governments need to be aware of include:

Access. Open drains and irrigation channels are often accessible to people and can be very dangerous. Large volumes of water can flow at high speed through these drains /channels, with no warning and there may be little safety signage or few protective barriers in place to prevent unauthorised access.

There have been recent reports of children playing in open drains and drowning or suffering serious injury.

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Hidden Hazards. Irrigation channels can also have submerged pumps or locks that are used to regulate water flow, which can generate strong currents and water pressure in the immediate vicinity of the pump / lock. These can be very hazardous for anyone in the water when in operation.

How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Protective Barriers. Enclosing the drain or irrigation channel or restricting access will help.

Safety Signage. Safety signage should be put in place around open drains and irrigation channels that are accessible.

Education. Education for parents and children on the dangers of playing in open drains may also be utilised by local governments for open drains within their jurisdiction in an attempt to address any safety concerns.

RLSSA produces 'Guidelines for Water Safety in Urban Water Development' that provides water safety information that may be adapted for use with open drains.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Public Swimming Pools

What is a public swimming pool?

A PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL IS DEFINED BY THE WA CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF AQUATIC FACILITIES AS A "…PUBLIC…MAN MADE STRUCTURE CAPABLE OF BEING FILLED WITH WATER, AND INTENDED TO BE USED FOR SWIMMING, DIVING, WADING OR PADDLING, THAT CANNOT BE EMPTIED BY A SIMPLE OVERTURNING OF THE STRUCTURE. THE DEFINITION DOES NOT INCLUDE INDIVIDUAL THERAPEUTIC TUBS OR BATHS USED FOR CLEANSING OF THE BODY..." (PG 9) [15].

What are some of the safety issues associated with public swimming pools?

Safety issues associated with public swimming pools that local governments need to be aware of include:

Adequate supervision. Local governments should be aware of the need to provide adequate supervision of pool patrons in general as well as maintaining specific supervision ratios for classes and programs.

Diving. Diving into shallow water put people at risk of serious injuries such as head and spinal injuries.

Sun protection. A lack of adequate shade for outdoor pools.

Unsafe behaviours. Local governments (including pool managers and operators) need to ensure that behavioural hazards and subsequent risks are minimised by regulating the behaviour of pool patrons. For example, by ensuring people adhere to pool rules and prevent unsafe behaviours from being undertaken.

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Water clarity. Water clarity, filtration and chemical testing must be undertaken to avoid the spread of diseases and infection. Maintaining water clarity will also improve visual safety for lifeguards and pool users.

How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Management. Maintaining patron numbers at safe levels and ensuring that maximum bather loads are not exceeded. Local governments also need to ensure that any barriers to line of sight are removed or negated through the use of additional lifeguards to patrol affected areas.

Lifeguards. Use of lifeguards to supervise pool users utilising international best practice procedures and policies. An effective ratio of lifeguards to patrons should also be maintained.

Safety Signage. Signage such as depth markers and advisory signage should be provided at public swimming pools to warn people of potential hazards. Pool depth markings are provided to alert patrons and staff to the depth of the water in the pool at any particular point.

Advisory signage such as CAUTION SHALLOW WATER and NO DIVING signs should be displayed to reduce the risk of spinal and other injuries being sustained by patrons. Occupational signage such as HAZCHEM, dangerous goods signage, first aid and emergency signage must also be displayed. This signage is an important safety measure for both staff and patrons using the facility.

Promoting Parental Supervision. Local governments have a key role to play in promoting parental supervision throughout the pool area. This will also help reduce the burden on lifeguards and ensure that risks to health and safety are reduced.

Supervision. Supervision ratios for learn to swim and other classes should be maintained to ensure that there are adequate teacher to student ratios. These ratios will be dependant upon the number of people in the class, the skill level of participants, the environment of the facility as well as the type of activity being taught.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Rivers/Creeks

What is a river or a creek?

A RIVER IS A NATURAL WATERWAY THAT MAY BE FED FROM OTHER RIVERS OR BODIES OF WATER DRAINING WATER AWAY FROM A "CATCHMENT AREA", TO ANOTHER LOCATION DOWNSTREAM. RIVERS CAN VARY IN WATER FLOW, LENGTH, WIDTH AND DEPTH.

A CREEK IS A WATER BODY THAT MAY BE FED BY RIVERS AND OTHER CREEKS. A CREEK IS GENERALLY SMALLER IN SIZE THAN A RIVER AND IS OFTEN CHARACTERISED BY INTERMITTENT WATER FLOW. CREEKS CAN BE PRONE TO MORE EXTREME CONDITIONS OF STASIS IN DROUGHT AND FLASH FLOODING AFTER RAINFALL.

What are some of the safety issues associated with rivers and creeks?

Safety issues associated with rivers and creeks that local governments need to be aware of include:

Activities. Rivers and creeks may be used for a number of different activities, including swimming, boating and fishing among others. These each present their own hazards and risks to participants and local governments need to be aware of these.

Changing banks. Crumbling banks, banks that move between tides and unsafe or uneven beds are safety issues that may exist at both rivers and creeks. Crumbling banks can cause people to accidentally fall into the water and unsafe or uneven beds can make swimming and wading difficult and dangerous (pg 14) [9].

Strong or unpredictable currents. Rivers and creeks may present a number of different hazards and risks for users. Strong or unpredictable currents are hazards that those using rivers and creeks may encounter. Conditions can change without warning.

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Submerged hazards. Submerged hazards such as tree branches and rocks are a safety issue that users may encounter.

Turbidity and visibility. Muddy rivers create turbidity issues which can reduce visibility of children and submerged objects such as rocks, logs and reeds.

Variable water levels. Another hazard that river and creek users may encounter, which can be especially problematic for those areas currently experiencing low rainfall, drought or flooding, or where water is released from storage, is variable water levels. In all areas changeable water levels are an issue that local governments need to take into consideration.

How can these issues be addressed?

Examples of how to address these safety issues are:

Supervision. If rivers and creeks are being used regularly by significant numbers of people for aquatic activity, local governments may consider providing trained supervisors or a lifeguard at peak times as an added protection for users. Patrols may also be instigated to regularly reduce or remove hazards that may be present.

Safety Signage. As activities in rivers and creeks are very rarely supervised, provision of safety signage is extremely important. Risks to health and safety may be minimised by the provision of information on the changing nature of hazards such as currents.

Education. Educating people on the safety issues they may encounter when using a river or creek is an important facet of a risk management approach to water safety and may reduce the likelihood of any issue occurring.

Users should be encouraged to check the water depth and the strength of the current prior to entering the water each time they visit a river or creek. Water depth and current can vary significantly each time. River and creek users should also be educated on the safety risks posed by submerged objects, turbidity, crumbling or overhanging banks and even snakes after a flood.

Keep Watch. Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are in, on or around the water. This means that parents should be within arms reach and engaged with their child.

Safety Signage in Aquatic Environments

WATER SAFETY SIGNAGE IS AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF REDUCING RISKS TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF VISITORS AND PATRONS OF AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS WHEN USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH.

THE PROVISION OF WATER SAFETY SIGNAGE PROVIDES INFORMATION TO VISITORS ON THE HAZARDS AND RISKS A BODY OF WATER MAY HAVE AND CAN INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS AND BEHAVIOURS OF VISITORS.

There are many different forms of water safety signage that can be provided. These include:

Advisory Signage. This signage aims to regulate behaviour by providing information on the hazards and risks that may affect personal health and safety.

Beach Flags. These are defined as "…an item of coloured fabric or synthetic material, of an oblong or square shape, attached by one edge to a pole or rope and used to give a safety message..."(pg 501) [1]. Beach flags can guide visitors to safe areas to swim, for example swimming between the flags ensures the water they are swimming in is patrolled.

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Depth Markers. Depth markings are used to indicate "…maximum and minimum water depths and designate water depths at all major changes in shape for irregularly shaped bodies of water..."(pg 14) [15]. They should be provided in metric units. Numerals and letters are to be at least 100mm in height and should be placed in a position where they are able to be seen from the pool side as well as from in the water [7].

Permissible Behaviour Signage. This signage outlines permissible behaviour at a particular location.

Regulatory Prohibition Signage. This signage takes the form of a red annulus over an image of a prohibited behaviour such as NO DIVING signs [16].

Warning Signage. This signage typically features a yellow background with a black image such as BEWARE DEEP WATER [16].

Occupational safety signage is also an important consideration for the management of public pools, aquatic facilities and other bodies of water that may require such signage.

Occupational safety signage can include:

- Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances signage
- First Aid signage - location of equipment, location of first aid rooms – information for both staff and pool users
- HAZCHEM signage - for hazardous substances and/or dangerous goods
- Manual Handling signage - safety measures, safe lifting techniques
- PPE signage - details what is to be worn and identifies the areas where it is to be worn. It may also identify the location where the equipment is stored

Qualifications and Training

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ENSURE ANY STAFF EMPLOYED AT AQUATIC LOCATIONS ARE CORRECTLY ACCREDITED. A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH WOULD INCLUDE A SYSTEM TO ENSURE THAT RELEVANT AND CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS ARE HELD BY ALL STAFF.

Beach Lifeguards. A beach lifeguard should hold as a minimum a qualification that is consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework: Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue) – PUA21004 (ensuring the surf rescue competency component is completed); or Certificate III in Public Safety (Aquatic Search and Rescue) – PUA31304 [1]. A probationary lifeguard should also hold a Bronze Medallion qualification, an Advanced Resuscitation Certificate and Senior First Aid Qualification [1].

There are varying qualifications required for the different grades of lifeguard such as senior lifeguard and lifeguard supervisor. Further information on these requirements can be found in the Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines consultative version.

Employees and Responsible Persons. All employees and responsible persons should be trained in the nature and location of first aid facilities and kits at a particular site. The GSPO outlines that all staff should hold an appropriate and recognised First Aid Certificate as required by the relevant State and Territory legislation [7].

All first aid qualifications should remain current and any information provided to staff or people at a location on first aid should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure responses, facilities and equipment are adequately resourced and efficient.

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Pool Lifeguards. Pool lifeguards should hold a RLSSA Bronze Medallion or SLSA Bronze Medallion as a minimum. If the surf medallion is held, an employee's skills in still water should be assessed. Lifeguards are to hold the RLSSA Pool Lifeguard Award "...within 4 weeks of their employment..."(SU5) [7].

The pool lifeguard qualification includes rescue techniques and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Councillors and managers must also ensure that pool lifeguards "...maintain appropriate levels of health and fitness to ensure they are capable of conducting rescues..."(SU6) [7].

Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety. Those in charge of teaching programs should hold as a minimum, a current AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate[7]. Those teaching specialist groups such as young children or people with disabilities should hold an extension certificate. Swimming teachers should also hold a "...safety and rescue qualification appropriate to the environment and venue within which they teach..." (PR3) [7].

Resources

There are a number of information resources and training programs provided by many different organisations throughout Australia and these include AUSTSWIM swimming teacher training, CPR and First Aid courses, and the Bronze Medallion.

AUSTSWIM. AUSTSWIM training is vital for swimming education teachers. The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate is the "... recommended minimum qualifications for swimming teachers..."(pg 46) [8].

CPR and First Aid. Swimming teachers and staff at aquatic locations and facilities require emergency and safety qualifications such as CPR and first aid. Courses teaching both of these can be accessed through RLSSA State and Territory Branches, as well as other organisations.

RLSSA Bronze Medallion. The aim of the Bronze Medallion is to develop the level of knowledge, judgement, technique and physical ability required to carry out safe water rescues.

Those who successfully achieve the Bronze Medallion are recognised as "...having gained the minimum standard as a qualified lifeguard..." (pg 4) [17]. People from the age of 14 years may undertake the Bronze Medallion course.

SLSA Bronze Medallion. The aim of the SLSA Bronze Medallion is to provide participants with the knowledge of basic patrolling and surf awareness to enable them to participate in lifesaving operations. People who achieve their Bronze Medallion through SLSA also receive their Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue). People from the age of 15 years may undertake the SLSA Bronze Medallion.

Legal Duties

IN MANY INSTANCES LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO ADDRESS HAZARDS AND RISKS TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PEOPLE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS THAT SHOULD BE CONSULTED AND ADHERED TO BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LOCAL COUNCILS OR MANAGERS WITH RESPECT TO WATER SAFETY AND AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS.

The legislative documents relevant to the issue of water safety for the States and Territories are listed below and should be consulted as a source of information for determining legislative requirements with respect to water safety:

- Occupational Health and Safety Acts
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations
- Dangerous Goods Acts
- Dangerous Goods Regulations
- Hazardous Substances documents
- Codes of Practice
- Public Health Guidelines
- Land Management Acts
- Swimming Pool Acts

Relevant codes of practice such as the National Code of Practice for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances [NOHSC:2007(1994)] and the National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets 2nd edition [NOHSC: 2011(2003)] may also be consulted, particularly by pool and aquatic facility operators in order to gain further information and assistance in meeting their legislative requirements.

Codes of Practice can be accessed through the relevant WorkCover authority or website in each State and Territory or from the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC).

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Resources

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON THE ISSUE OF WATER SAFETY. THESE INCLUDE STATE AND TERRITORY BASED LEGISLATION, AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS, NSW DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTICE NOTE NO. 15 ON WATER SAFETY, THE GSPO AND A NUMBER OF BEST PRACTICE MANUALS.

Readers should utilise their own resources within council or their relevant organisation first as expertise on this issue may already exist within the organisation. However the additional resources described below should be consulted for further information.

AUSTRALIAN COASTAL PUBLIC SAFETY GUIDELINES (CONSULTATION VERSION)

The Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines have been designed to assist coastal and beach managers and operators in providing a safe aquatic environment for all users. The Guidelines have been developed over a period of more than 2 years using research, best practice, and relevant reference to guidelines, standards and regulations from around Australia and overseas. The categories covered in the consultation phase of the Guidelines are: 1) Safer Environments, 2) Signs, 3) General Operation of Beaches, 4) Coastal Lifesaving Services, 5) Lifesaving and Lifeguarding Equipment, 6) Emergency Management, 7) Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods, 8) Coastal Tourism Safety.

The Guidelines can be used as a benchmark for public safety in the coastal environment and accessed and used in their entirety, as a section, or as individual guidelines for use in specific scenarios. For a copy of the guidelines, please visit www.coastsafe.org.au

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AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS

Australian Standards (AS) are prepared by committees. There are a number of AS produced that are relevant to the issue of water safety and these are important sources of information that local governments should consult. Though AS are not legislative documents, they may be referenced in State and Territory legislation and used in a court of law as evidence that an operator is not adhering to their legislative requirements. Australian Standards has produced two documents on home pool fencing: AS 1926.1 – 2007 Swimming pool safety Part 1: Safety barriers for swimming pools and AS 1926.2 - 2007 Swimming pool safety Part 2: Location of safety barriers for swimming pools. Australian Standards has also issued AS 2416 – 2002: Design and Application of Water Safety Signs which aims to regulate the use of water safety signage throughout Australia.

AS/NZS 4360 – 2004: Risk Management' and the accompanying guidelines HB 436 are also produced by Australian Standards. These present a generic guide to managing risk and the information presented within these documents may need to be modified for use in aquatic environments.These standards and others relevant to water safety are available through the Australian Standards website
www.saiglobal.com/shop

FARMSAFE AUSTRALIA SAFE PLAY AREAS ON FARMS – A RESOURCE PACKAGE

This booklet and accompanying pamphlet provides information for creating safe play areas for young children, as a key risk management tool for preventing toddler drowning in dams, troughs, creeks and other waterways. A rationale for a securely fenced house yard (or safe play area) is provided, as well as practical information on fencing types and ways to make the play area an interesting place for children to play. A securely fenced house yard, is not meant to replace supervision, but can help keep children safe.

A DVD produced by Farmsafe WA featuring Shane Gould demonstrating the construction of a safe play area, is also available.

Information on safe play areas on farms can be provided by local governments to support farm families and help prevent drowning of children on farms.

Resources produced by Farmsafe can be accessed via their website:
www.farmsafe.org.au

NATIONAL WATER SAFETY PLAN 2004-2007

The National Water Safety Plan (NWSP) 2004 – 2007 was established by the Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) which is comprised of major water safety and related government agencies. The NWSP aims to provide a coordinated and cooperative approach to water safety in Australia by identifying and prioritising major water safety issues and establishing water safety standards and policies to be applied and regularly monitored across the country [4].

The Plan and a number of other resources can be accessed via the AWSC website: www.watersafety.com.au

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE POOL OPERATION (GSPO)

The RLSSA Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation (GSPO) are voluntary guidelines that are intended to act as a guide for operators on the safe operation of swimming facilities. Whilst they have no formal, legal or regulatory status, these guidelines represent industry best practice whilst also satisfying an operator's legislative requirements [7].

The GSPO was established in consultation with industry and other expert personnel and are subject to ongoing review and formal evaluation. Operators are also encouraged to provide feedback [7]. The GSPO covers such topics as: General operations, technical operations, first aid, facility design, supervision, programs and low patronage pools.

The GSPO is available for purchase through the Royal Life Saving Society Australia website www.royallifesaving.com.au

NATIONAL AQUATIC AND RECREATIONAL SIGNAGE STYLE MANUAL 3RD EDITION

The National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Manual 3rd edition was established by the AWSC in cooperation with SLSA and RLSSA. The signage style manual gives a clear guide to land managers and venue operators of a system for providing signage. It uses existing international and Australian Standards for aquatic and recreational signage. Such a system is designed to give a clear and uniform message to users so that they can make informed decisions knowing the risks associated with particular reserves and parks.

The signage style manual can be accessed from the Member Admin and Resources Library on the SLSA website www.slsa.com.au

NSW DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTICE NOTE NO. 15 – WATER SAFETY

The NSW Department of Local Government Practice Note No. 15 on Water Safety is regularly revised to encompass current knowledge, training standards and legislative requirements. The Practice Note is primarily concerned with swimming pools on public land and beaches, however "…the water safety information presented within the document is also relevant to other waterways under council control such as rock pools, sea baths, estuaries and lakes…"(pg 1) [18].

Practice Note No. 15 can be accessed via the Publications section on the NSW Department of Local Government's website www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

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RLSSA - GUIDELINES FOR WATER SAFETY IN URBAN WATER DEVELOPMENTS

The Guidelines for Water Safety in Urban Water Developments have been produced by RLSSA and are relevant to purpose-built water environments, near or around areas which the general public may frequent. These include residential developments in both urban and rural settings and commercial developments such as hospitality and shopping venues [19].

This resource includes information on maintaining water quality, safety signage, emergency considerations and the means of establishing safe access and egress to water areas and crossings over water areas.

These guidelines can be accessed from the RLSSA website: www.royallifesaving.com.au

RLSSA – GUIDELINES FOR WATER SAFETY IN COMMERCIAL LEARN TO SWIM AND SCHOOL POOLS

The Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools have been produced by RLSSA to provide water safety information for "...swimming pool and facility operators, managerial personnel, industry bodies and staff..."(pg 7) [8]. This publication includes first aid and emergency information, supervision guidelines and safe water entry including diving. There are also specific guidelines provided for disability aquatic programs and preschool aquatic programs, including guidelines for the teaching of students from 12 months of age [8].

These guidelines can be accessed from the RLSSA website: www.royallifesaving.com.au

STATEWIDE MUTUAL SIGNS AS REMOTE SUPERVISION – BEST PRACTICE MANUAL

The Statewide Mutual Signs as Remote Supervision - Best Practice Manual includes information on a general approach for determining the appropriate signage for use at local governments facilities.

It includes identifying the facilities and level of development, the population and frequency of use (including seasonal fluctuations), calculating the facility visitation rate and the selection, production and location of the appropriate sign [20].

The Statewide Mutual Signs as Remote Supervision - Best Practice Manual can be accessed from the Statewide Mutual website www.statewide.nsw.gov.au under the Publications section.

SWIMMING AND LIFESAVING: WATER SAFETY FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS 5TH EDITION VERSION 2

The Swimming and Lifesaving: Water Safety for all Australians 5th edition is produced by RLSSA as an easy to use manual which includes up to date and informative text, images and diagrams about water safety and life saving techniques. Information is included on such topics as: water safety, the Swim and Survive Program, swimming and lifesaving strokes, lifesaving skills, rescue techniques, resuscitation and emergency care.

This manual can be accessed from the RLSSA website: www.royallifesaving.com.au

Glossary

AS - Australian Standards

AS 1319 - Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment

AS 2342 - Development, testing and implementation of information and safety and symbolic signs

AS 2416 - Design and Application of Water Safety Signs

AS/NZS 4360 - Risk Management

ASCC - Australian Safety and Compensation Council

AS/NZS - Australia Standard/New Zealand Standard

AWSC - Australian Water Safety Council

Beach - The pebbly or sandy shore of a sea, lake etc. which is washed by the tide or waves [1]

Codes of Practice - Documents prepared for the purpose of advising employers and workers of acceptable preventative action for averting occupational deaths, injuries and diseases in relation to workplace hazards [21]

CPR - Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation

Creek - A creek is a water body that may be fed by rivers and other creeks. A creek is generally smaller in size than a river and is often characterised by intermittent water flow. Creeks can be prone to more extreme conditions of stasis in drought and flash flooding after rainfall

Dam - A dam may be an enclosed body of water with banks or barriers on all sides. Dams may also have one wall and use gravity or water flow to ensure the water remains contained. Dams may vary in size and depth, with recreational dams capable of being large and farm dams generally being smaller in size

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Depth Markers - Depth markings are to indicate maximum and minimum water depths and designate water depths at all major changes in shape for irregularly shaped bodies of water [15]

DLG - Department of Local Government

GSPO - Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation

Hazard - Any agent or situation capable of potentially injuring or compromising the health and safety of a person or causing damage to plant or premises [21]

Home Swimming Pool - A swimming pool that is situated, proposed to be constructed or installed on premises on which a residential building is located [10]

Irrigation Channel - An irrigation channel is a man made structure that facilitates the movement of water from one location to another, from a supply area (eg river or dam), to be distributed for agricultural purposes

Lagoon - A lagoon is a small, pond like body of water, especially one that may be connected with a major body of water. A lagoon may also be an area of shallow water separated from the sea by low sandy dunes [14]

Lake - A lake is a body of either fresh or salt water which is of considerable size and surrounded by land [13]

Local government – In this document the term refers to a number of different people with different legal responsibilities. Local government includes local councillors and land managers employed as local government employees, with duties conferred under OHS legislation. The term may also refer to individuals or groups that a local government may outsource operations to, e.g. pool manager, facility operator or contractor

NSW - New South Wales

NWSP - National Water Safety Plan

OHS - Occupational Health and Safety

Open Drain - An open drain is a man made structure that facilitates the movement of storm or other 'waste' water from one location to another

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

Public Swimming Pool - A public man made structure capable of being filled with water, and intended to be used for swimming, diving, wading or paddling, that cannot be emptied by a simple overturning of the structure. The definition does not include individual therapeutic tubs or baths used for cleansing of the body [15]

Regulatory Prohibition Signage - This signage takes the form of a red annulus over an image of a prohibited behaviour such as NO DIVING signs[16]

Risk - An event or circumstance that may have positive or negative consequences on such things as work practices, profits and losses and products or services for example [5]

Risk Management - The process of identifying, assessing and controlling risks to people, to an organisation, or to an asset [7]

River - A river is a natural waterway that may be fed from other rivers or bodies of water draining water away from a "catchment area", to another location downstream. Rivers can vary in water flow, length, width and depth

RLSSA - Royal Life Saving Society Australia

SLSA - Surf Life Saving Australia

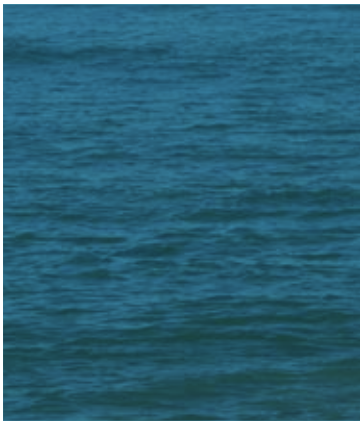
Supervision - Adequate and constant surveillance of persons in the water

VIC - Victoria

WA - Western Australia

Warning Signage - Warning signage typically features a yellow background with a black image such as BEWARE DEEP WATER [16]

References



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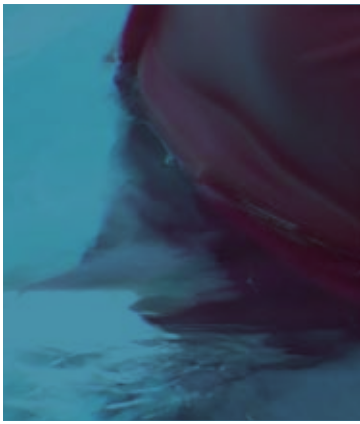
Useful Contacts



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS AND AREAS WHERE INFORMATION CAN BE ACCESSED. BELOW IS A LIST OF USEFUL CONTACTS, PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITE ADDRESSES THROUGH WHICH YOU CAN ACCESS FURTHER INFORMATION ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES.

Contacts

Aquatic and Recreation Institute (ARI)

Ph: (02) 6352 5409
Email: Please see website
Website: www.aquaticinstitute.com.au

Australia and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG)

Email: boating.safety@amsa.gov.au
Website: www.safeboating.org.au/ANZSBEG/

Australian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety (AUSTSWIM)

Ph: 1300 885 666
Email: info@austswim.com.au
Website: www.austswim.com.au

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

Ph: (02) 6122 9400
Email: Laura.Ford@alga.asn.au
Website: www.alga.asn.au

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Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA)
Ph: (03) 9556 5854
Email: mail@ascta.com
Website: www.ascta.com

Australian Swimming Incorporated
Ph: (02) 6219 5600
Email: swim@swimming.org.au
Website: www.swimming.org.au

Australian Water Safety Council
Ph: (02) 8217 3111
Email: Please see website
Website: www.watersafety.com.au

Farmsafe Australia
Ph: (02) 6752 8210
Email: Please see website
Website: www.farmsafe.org.au

KidSafe Australia
Email: Please see website for state branch details
Website: www.kidsafe.com.au

NSW Department of Local Government
Ph: (02) 4428 4100
Email: dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA)
Ph: (02) 8217 3111
Email: info@rlssa.org.au
Website: www.royallifesaving.com.au

Standards Australia
Ph: 131 242
Email: sales@sai-global.com
Website www.saiglobal.com/shop

Standing Committee on Recreation and Sports (SCORS)
Ph: (08) 8416 6706
Email: crisp.michelle@saugov.sa.gov.au
Website: www.ausport.gov.au/scorsresearch/contacts.asp

Surfing Australia
Ph: (02) 6674 9888
Email: info@surfingaustralia.com
Website: www.surfingaustralia.com

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA)
Ph: (02) 9300 4000
Email: info@slsa.asn.au
Website: www.slsa.com.au

Department of Local Government Contacts

NATIONAL CONTACT

Australian Local Government Association
Ph: (02) 6122 9400
Email: Laura.Ford@alga.asn.au
Website: www.alga.asn.au

STATE AND TERRITORY BASED

ACT

ACT Government
Ph: 13 22 81
Email: See website
Website: www.act.gov.au

NSW

NSW Department of Local Government
Ph: (02) 4428 4100
Email: dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

NT

Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport
Ph: (08) 8999 5511
Email: communications.dlghs@nt.gov.au
Website: www.dlghs.nt.gov.au

QLD

Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation
Ph: (07) 3234 1870
Email: enquiries@dlgpsr.qld.gov.au
Website: www.lgp.qld.gov.au

SA

Office for State/Local Government Relations
Ph: (08) 8204 8700
Email: localgov@saugov.sa.gov.au
Website: www.localgovt.sa.gov.au

TAS

Department of Premier and Cabinet – Local Government Office
Ph: (03) 6233 6758
Email: lgo@dpac.tas.gov.au
Website: www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgo/

VIC

Department of Planning and Community Development – Local Government Victoria
Ph: (03) 9208 3430
Email: local.government@dpcd.vic.gov.au
Website: www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au

WA

Department of Local Government and Regional Development
Ph: (08) 9217 1500
Email: info@dlgrd.wa.gov.au
Website: www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au

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Work Health Authority Contacts

NATIONAL CONTACT

Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC)
Ph: (02) 6121 5317
Email: info@ascc.gov.au
Website: www.ascc.gov.au

STATE AND TERRITORY BASED

ACT

ACT WorkCover
Ph: (02) 6205 0200
Email: workcover@act.gov.au
Website: www.workcover.act.gov.au

NSW

WorkCover NSW
Ph: 13 10 50
Website: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

NT

NT WorkSafe
Ph: 1800 019 115
Email: ntworksafe.deet@nt.gov.au
Website: www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

QLD

WorkCover QLD
Ph: 1300 362 128
Email: info@workcoverqld.com.au
Website: www.workcover.qld.gov.au

SA

SafeWork SA
Ph: 1300 365 255
Email: help@safework.sa.gov.au
Website: www.safework.sa.gov.au

TAS

WorkCover Tasmania
Ph: 1300 366 322
Email: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au
Website: www.workcover.tas.gov.au

VIC

Victorian WorkCover Authority
Ph: 1800 136 089
Email: info@workcover.vic.gov.au
Website: www.workcover.vic.gov.au

WA

WorkSafe WA
Ph: 1300 307 877
Website: www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

My Local Water Safety Contacts

AUSTSWIM: .....

Local Government: .....

RLSSA: .....

SLSA: .....

Work Health Authority: .....

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