



Curtin University

**KEEP WATCH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM  
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY WA  
2022 EVALUATION REPORT**

COLLABORATION FOR EVIDENCE, RESEARCH & IMPACT IN PUBLIC HEALTH



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## COLLABORATION FOR RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND IMPACT IN PUBLIC HEALTH

The Collaboration for Research, Evidence and Impact in Public Health (CERIPH) (formerly the Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research) is a multi-disciplinary research group within the School of Population Health at Curtin University, operating since 1986.

### Vision

CERIPH seeks solutions that promote health, prevent disease and protect populations from harm. We build individual and organisational capacity through our partnerships, applied research, education and workforce training. In recognition of the complexity of health and its determinants, our multidisciplinary collaboration provides leadership and evidence to support action across educational, organisational, socio-economic, environmental and political domains to improve population health in our region.

### Function

The team has expertise in the development, implementation and evaluation of formative and longitudinal intervention research in key areas such as: early childhood health and nutrition; physical activity and nutrition; alcohol and other drug use; seniors' health; mental health; drowning prevention; HIV and sexual health. CERIPH is a unique research group in that all core staff hold front-line research and teaching positions. The group aims to foster the practice of health promotion by encompassing the nexus between research and practice.

CERIPH has built and demonstrated high-level expertise and research strength in:

- Building sustained partnerships and collaborations with vulnerable and most at risk communities and relevant community, government and private sector organisations
- Health promotion approaches using community and settings-based interventions, peer and social influence, social marketing, advocacy, community mobilisation and sector capacity building
- Promotion and dissemination of evidence-based practice and building practice-based evidence
- Provision of research training and capacity building techniques to undergraduate and Postgraduate students, allied health promotion professionals and community workers.

# KEEP WATCH PARENT AMBASSADOR REVIEW

## WHAT WE DID



5

PARENT  
AMBASSADORS

6

RLSSWA  
REPRESENTATIVES

### RESEARCH PURPOSE

- Explore the impact of Ambassador stories
- Identify how the Keep Watch Parent Ambassador Program may be improved

## WHAT WE FOUND



LIVED  
EXPERIENCE

### AMBASSADORS DISCUSSED

- The drowning event
- After event: hospital & inquests
- Effect on relationships & mental health
- Ambassador experience

There was a lot of, and there's still a lot of unanswered questions that are still unanswered today - A1



MOTIVATION  
& BENEFITS

### MOTIVATION

- Make a difference
- Child's memory
- Give & receive support
- Deal with grief
- Align with respected organisation

... it [involvement in the Program] wills me to get up and keep going and keep talking about it - A3

### BENEFITS

- Satisfaction
- Extrinsic value
- Building networks
- Influence RLSSWA effectiveness



SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

### SUPPORT FROM RLSSWA STAFF & OTHER AMBASSADORS

- EMOTIONAL - affection, encouragement, listening
- INFORMATIONAL - advice & feedback
- SOCIAL - promote belonging
- ESTEEM - validation
- TANGIBLE - resources

She's [another parent ambassador] been very outspoken, and very forward in, you know, how she approaches things... [she's] been amazing - A4



AMPLIFY  
VALUE

### MORE INVOLVED AND MORE CONNECTED

- Ambassadors are interested in enhancing their participation across not only the program but the organisation

Ambassadors want to be involved, be kept up to date and understand the Program - A5

## RECOMMENDATIONS



1  
ORIENTATION  
KIT



2  
AMBASSADOR  
HUB



3  
MEDIA  
TRAINING



4  
EXTEND  
RELATIONSHIPS



5  
COMMUNICATE  
ABOUT  
PROGRAMS



6  
LEADERSHIP &  
ADVOCACY  
TRAINING



7  
HIGHLIGHT  
EVIDENCE



8  
INVOLVEMENT  
BEHIND THE  
SCENES



9  
SMALL  
GROUP  
OPPORTUNITIES



10  
SHOWCASE  
PROGRAMS

# KEEP WATCH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

## BACKGROUND

Public health organisations use ambassadors and other personal influence-based roles such as champions and peers across various health issues. Organisations recruit them as they have power or influence because of a high-profile public role, their celebrity or lived experience relevant to a particular cause. The premise is that the social influence of such ‘popular opinion leaders’ can be harnessed to spread ideas and practices within and between groups, communities and populations.

Royal Life Saving Society Western Australia (RLSSWA) have used ambassadors as part of its program delivery for the past 20 years. Currently, there are eight ambassador stories included on the RLSSWA website, covering a range of drowning events that took place between 1999 and 2019. Ambassador stories include the age range of the children (1 year and 2 months to 4 years and 11 months), outcomes of the drowning event (fatal to non-fatal, full recovery), location (home pool, friend's house, while on vacation) and waterways (pool, natural waterways). There is currently one male Keep Watch ambassador; all other Ambassadors are female.

To better understand the role of ambassadors in the drowning prevention context, a review of the RLSSWA Keep Watch Ambassador Program (the Program) was undertaken. The review of the Program aimed to:

- Assess the impact of using ambassador stories when promoting toddler drowning prevention; and
- Identify how RLSSWA’s relationship with ambassadors may be improved.

To meet these objectives, a mixed method approach was undertaken:

1. Review of the literature (completed previously);
2. Summary of ambassadors’ stories and messages on RLSSWA website (completed previously);
3. Analysis of media monitors and current involvement of ambassadors in news and media (completed previously); and
4. In-depth, semi-structured interviews held with ambassadors (n=8) and organisational representatives (n=6).

This report includes step 4 (Phase 2). The research findings form the key research output for the Keep Watch Program in 2021-2022.

**Throughout this review, the children and the incidents that led to their parents’ involvement in RLSSWA programs are remembered. We thank their parents for sharing their stories to advance our understanding of the lived experience of toddler drowning prevention and the Keep Watch Parent Ambassador Program. Whilst the children’s names are not mentioned in this report, for the purposes of anonymity, they have always been at the forefront of the researchers’ minds.**

## METHODS

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### Participants

All current and former ambassadors involved in the Program were invited to participate (n=8). Organisational representatives (n=6) were chosen to reflect aspects the RLSSWA hierarchy.

### Recruitment

Participants were sent an email invitation to take part which included an information sheet and consent form. Telephone calls from research staff were sent if no response was received from email communication. Six ambassadors agreed to be involved; one withdrew before their interview. Two ambassadors did not respond to the invitation to participate. Participants could ask questions about their involvement in the research before their interview. Interviews were conducted with current and former ambassadors (n=5) and RLSSWA organisational representatives (executive, senior management and project staff) (n=6).

### Research Methods

DEEP team members conducted in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews (see domains of enquiry below) with parent ambassadors; most interviews were face-to-face (n=4). One ambassador lived outside Perth and had difficulty accessing online meeting software requirements; thus, the interview was conducted by phone (n=1). Organisational representative interviews (n=6) were conducted online using Microsoft Teams.

Figure 1: Domains of enquiry

Domain 1	Explore the person, the family structure and their characteristics
Domain 2	Explore the lived experience of the drowning event
Domain 3	Intrinsic &/or extrinsic factors that influence people to become ambassadors
Domain 4	The organisational and ambassador relationship
Domain 5	Challenges and or opportunities

The Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval (HRE 2021-0665). Protocols for the management of adverse events were established, given the sensitive nature of the discussion. Interviews were conducted by experienced mixed-methods researchers (MDB and JT). MDB is a drowning prevention researcher with expertise in conducting qualitative interviews, and in community and primary health programs. JT is a public health researcher with expertise in conducting qualitative interviews on various health issues and is a registered mental health nurse.

Interviews took place between November 2021 and March 2022 and were transcribed using Otter.AI automated transcribing service and checked for accuracy. Interviews were between 17 and 64 minutes long. Field notes, including tone and non-verbal cues observed during the interviews, were added to the transcripts. Analysis was undertaken by one researcher (MDB) using inductive thematic analysis. Initially, each ambassador interview was analysed. Once the individual analysis was completed, the cases were grouped to analyse themes based on the domains of enquiry. Organisational interviews were used to identify similarities and differences in organisational and ambassadors' perceptions of the Program. Thematic areas were reviewed and refined by other researchers (GC and JL). Descriptive quotes illustrate the main findings. Quotes are included without identifying features where possible to ensure the anonymity of participants.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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Ambassadors had been involved in the Program for between two and 20 years. Organisational staff had worked for RLSSWA for over 10 years on average. No other demographic information has been included in the results to preserve anonymity. The focus of the results is on thick, rich description of the lived experience of ambassadors and RLSSWA staff in delivering the Program. Results are themed as follows:

- The lived experience
- Motivation and benefits
- Social support
- Amplifying value

### The lived experience

The story and the details of the drowning event were significant across multiple time points, including at the time of the incident, during inquests and in subsequent sharing through their ambassador experience and these interviews.

Ambassadors shared their participant narratives in a variety of ways. Some ambassadors chose to share broader details surrounding the circumstances of the drowning event, whilst some recalled the actual event in detail. One participant focused on how they became a parent ambassador, discussing their experiences after the drowning event. Ambassadors who were not present during the drowning incident expressed the difficulties of not knowing exactly what happened:

There was a lot of, and there's still a lot of unanswered questions that are still unanswered today – A1

Ambassadors discussed the process of the coronial inquest, including the length of time involved and the impact. Support and information from other parents who had experienced a similar process were considered invaluable in their journey through the coronial inquest:

...that was one of the things...recommended...that we write to the coroner, ASAP, because it's not a given that an inquest would have happened...expressing the fact that it's in the interest of public safety, we were more likely to have it follow through – A5

Those who shared their story were asked about the impact the drowning event had on them. Most discussed the impact on relationships with their partner, other children, extended family, and their relationship with water. For some, the events brought them closer together, while for others, it was a point of conflict. The experience of sharing stories and participating as an ambassador mirrored these experiences, sometimes helping the family through their grief, “.....it's easier for us to cope as a family, when I know so much more about drowning”.

Conversely, participation was also reported as a challenge:

It [advocacy] was just something he originally didn't think he could do, and then sort of lost interest in and wanted to move on... that's just who we became – A5

Several of the ambassadors spoke about the lasting impacts of the drowning event on their mental health. Very few indicated that they took up professional counselling, despite offers from multiple sources. Those who did utilise formal mental health services spoke about the difficulties finding the right help and their negative experiences when accessing inappropriate

services for their condition. Several of the ambassadors showed signs of or mentioned the need for further counselling or support through their grief.

### Motivation and benefit

Participant narratives reflected a range of motivations and benefits to their participation in the Program for the individual (ambassadors and the Program staff) and the organisation.

Ambassador motivation to act appeared intrinsically motivated, with actions tied to a sense of altruism, self, grief and loss, background and values. Ambassadors described their initial introduction to RLSSWA and their memory of events surrounding the introduction. For all ambassadors, the *'need to know more'* led them to seek out information from RLSSWA. A range of reasons emerged for becoming a parent ambassador: making a difference, keeping their children's memory alive, giving and receiving support, dealing with their grief, and aligning with a respected organisation. Importantly, all ambassadors mentioned the increase in childhood drowning incidents in WA over the summer and their desire to help.

Ambassadors indicated they wanted their story to make a difference and to see what their story could do and how it could help:

...you've gone through something so traumatic yourself and you're trying to make them [other parents] understand just how serious things can be – A3

They highlighted their need to do more about the issue of childhood drowning *'to reduce and prevent it happening to other parents and carers'*. Some emphasised their community-minded approach and need to act, while others indicated the role provided an outlet to sustain their child's memory or to help them through their grief and, for some, guilt:

I think it's part of the healing to feel like you're possibly having an impact – A2

Ambassadors remembered the support they received when *'hearing stories of others'* during the early days of their loss and wanting to do the same for others.

I know that in the process of losing [child]... it was just really good to have that person to relate to; so, I've extended my hand out in that sense too – A3

Some of the ambassadors recognised that aligning themselves with RLSSWA as *'a platform of credibility'* helped them to reach more people and gave them an avenue to discuss the features of drowning prevention they were passionate about:

It just gives me that, that safe place to, that I'm not just talking about [specific water safety topic]. I'm also talking about water safety... and Keep Watch and everything involved with it...things that parents should know – A3

Participants were also clear on the tangible and less tangible benefits of participating in the Program for both ambassadors and for RLSSWA. Some of these benefits were reported as immediate, while some reflected longer-term impacts and included a personal sense of satisfaction, extrinsic value, building networks and influencing strategic direction and organisational effectiveness. Despite the reported emotional toll, participants reported that they were *'really proud'* of the opportunity and the work they do as ambassadors:

... it [involvement in the Program] wills me to get up and keep going and keep talking about it – A3



Participants also reflected on the important role that participation played in building social support, networks and capital, “it’s helped me meet a lot of parents...connect with a lot of resources”. The ambassadors highlighted the role they played as mentors over time, especially for new ambassadors:

I’ve been in touch with a few parents over the time who have lost little ones as well... they like to know what the journey is that you go on. – A1

Organisational representatives also acknowledged this important role:

It’s a nice feeling for them... to get to know others that are in that sort of space” – O5

Some ambassadors reported the inherent value of the skills they have developed, including advocacy and engagement, both in their role at RLSSWA or other action taken post drowning event, reporting these areas as something they would like to explore as a career. They noted that their ‘experience’ in multiple facets of drowning prevention, including policy, consultation and consumer protection, had given them unique insights into the drowning prevention space.

Organisational representatives demonstrated a profound respect for the work that the ambassadors do for RLSSWA and spoke about feeling ‘grateful’ for their contribution of time, expertise and knowledge:

I think they’re part of the foundation of who we [RLSSWA] are and what we do and the work that we do, but we would not be as, I think, impactful, as an organisation without them being involved – O6

Organisational representatives also talked about the personal and professional impact of their involvement with the ambassadors. Many spoke of a pivotal ‘ah-ha’ moment where ambassadors opened their eyes to gaps in systems or services, both at RLSSWA and in drowning prevention in general:

I feel reasonably close with [ambassador] because it was actually the period that drove a lot of change within the organisation for us in terms of motivated us to do that [work in the non-fatal drowning space] – O2

The ambassadors all agreed on the benefits of media launches and getting the message to a broader audience, with their stories ‘breaking through the noise’ of other messaging to parents and daily news events. Organisational representatives reflected that ambassadors had played a ‘really important role’ at ‘major events’ like the Bravery Awards and in determining the focus of campaigns or media launches:

We select one of the ambassadors to be the voice and the story – O2

Organisational representatives indicated in addition to the media launches and links to parents in the community; ambassador stories played an important role in fundraising, message creation and community impact.

Over the years, their stories inspired the strategic direction of RLSSWA:

The Health Grants largely were created because of the conversation with [ambassador]. And telling [their] story. We actually developed a fundraising campaign, and then as a result of that the Health Grants – O2

## Social support

Ambassadors and organisational representatives described their relationships, and ambassadors described their relationships with other ambassadors. Participants spoke about levels of social support provided and received. Broadly narratives indicated examples of both directive and non-directive support, including emotional (affection, encouragement, listening), informational (advice and feedback), social network (actions to promote belonging), esteem (validation) and tangible (physically providing resources).

Organisational representatives noted the importance of key timepoints in establishing relationships and providing support. Meaningful relationships between RLSSWA staff and ambassadors appeared to be established through early interactions, during the coronial inquest, their first meeting at RLSSWA or during the initial interviews to film their story for the RLSSWA website.

For example, for the relationship to be mutually beneficial, it was reportedly important that initial contact should come from potential ambassadors, as organisational representatives were acutely aware of the emotional burden on ambassadors to share their stories:

...one of the massive challenges with ambassadors has always been just how personal ... the stories are with a toddler – O1

Participants indicated mutual respect between the ambassadors and the organisation. For example, some ambassadors indicated they would be available to RLSSWA in any capacity and were enthusiastic about sustaining their involvement:

If they [RLSSWA] said tomorrow, they needed me at a function, or they'd invited me to something. Yeah, for sure. And I definitely would like to stay with them – A1

This was partly because ambassadors aligned with RLSSWA values and activities and because there appeared to be a high level of trust in the organisation. The relationship was recognised as reciprocal, helping Ambassadors to find a platform and an outlet for advocacy, grief and healing and RLSSWA to gain support for the drowning prevention cause:

...it's a far more powerful voice [parent ambassador], and... if we can... activate it and use it to... communicate more broadly with the community, then we just think it's far more effective [than a program message alone] – O1

Ambassadors spoke warmly about RLSSWA and its staff. Ambassadors compared RLSSWA with other organisations they had contact with:

They're more supportive and more about water safety. And I think that does help me relate with them on a different level than, than other organisations – A3

Ambassadors had more robust relationships with some staff members than others. Still, all talked about 'kindness' and 'support', which was often personal and sustained, '*Me and [RLSSWA staff member] try to speak on a regular basis. We like to stay in touch*'. These one to one, close relationships helped to keep ambassadors engaged with RLSSWA over time and demonstrated social network support:

Because yeah, people can be quite vulnerable in telling their stories and having to tell their stories again, and again, so, I think that level of familiarity helps for them – O3

Most ambassadors felt comfortable speaking to the media and in public about their stories. They described feeling 'nervous', especially the first time they shared their story, but felt well supported and briefed by RLSSWA staff. Tangible and informational support was described by organisational representatives who highlighted the ad hoc, informal training provided to ambassadors before they told their stories publicly:

[we would] give them a rundown of what we're doing and what we're hoping to achieve...whether they're likely to get calls from media, or we need them to come and be part of a meeting or opportunity, that sort of thing... what our messaging is, so that their messaging is along the same lines. Just let them know what's expected. And then obviously follow up after to make sure that they're happy with how it's gone – O4

Esteem support was also evident. For example, when sharing ambassador stories as part of media events, RLSSWA staff reported care to ensure ambassadors are comfortable with the parts of stories that are shared. Ambassadors are briefed on ways to control of their narrative and deal with the media's questions:

[We speak to the ambassadors about] what they're comfortable talking about not talking about. And we really base the quote in the [media] release about what they're comfortable talking about... We asked them about their level of comfort with providing some photos or video footage that they've got on their phones and just have that pre prepared so that they don't have to worry about that on the day... we try to have those conversations on the phone or face to face just because I think it makes it a little bit more personal – O5

Some ambassadors had formed close relationships with one or two other ambassadors; however, they all appeared to have seen each other's videos or heard their stories. Most indicated they did not know the other ambassadors well. Those that did have a relationship with other ambassadors saw them as inspiring and a resource for dealing with their grief. For example:

She's [another parent ambassador] been very outspoken, and very forward in, you know, how she approaches things... [she's] been amazing – A4

RLSSWA participants highlighted the strength and resilience of the ambassadors and reflected on the vital role that the organisation held in providing sufficient levels of support:

it really gets to the core, which was 'hang on, that's really not good enough' [the lack of support for non-fatal drowning]... that we actually just go well 'what can we do?... could we actually help? did we want to help? is this actually in our remit? Clearly, it's not in anyone else's remit... and so it also led to one other key area which was... how do we support these families that not just from a financial point of view, but also from counselling, emotional support. – O2

### Amplifying value

Participant narratives reflected how ambassadors could be more involved in activities or where the Program supporting their participation could be enhanced. Suggestions centred on communication, training, role expansion and shared goals.

Whilst all ambassadors indicated awareness of Keep Watch messages and media campaigns, it was clear some were less aware of the breadth of activities undertaken by RLSSWA. For one

ambassador, this was a source of frustration. They felt that RLSSWA could be doing more, though many of the strategies they recommended that RLSSWA implement were already part of the suite of services:

Ambassadors want to be involved, be kept up to date and understand the Program – A5

There was some acknowledgement at the Program level that some structure or formal communication with ambassadors might be helpful:

I think that's something we don't do that well... we have a lot of informal communication with our ambassadors, but we don't really have a formalised ongoing type of thing... because it might just prompt them for something that they want to get involved with or that they'd like to do – O5

However, organisational representatives also indicated events involving all the ambassadors were challenging to arrange. RLSSWA was aware of issues around the time commitment asked of parent ambassadors due to the 'volunteer' nature of their involvement and an acute awareness of the circumstances under which they are involved in RLSSWA:

...that's something that I've sort of struggled with... how to manage that balance of keeping them engaged and feeling like they are... part of the organisation or have an important role to play with... without being too demanding on their time – O3

Those involved for some time recognised their changing role, something which could impact their ability to maintain their desired level of involvement:

...obviously as the years go by, they've had brand new ambassadors and each year... they change and bring the new ambassadors in so yeah, it's dropped off a little bit [own involvement]. But you know, it's nothing that I wouldn't expect to happen as they bring new people in – A2

Participants also reported risks related to information loss and changing relationships. For example, ambassadors' relationships with RLSSWA were reportedly vulnerable when staff were away, when they moved to different roles or moved on from RLSSWA:

...We've been very good at this one-on-one build relationships, understanding and rapport. But when those people aren't there, who's the next person to step in? And how do we navigate the transition to a new, a new sort of person – O5

At times, participant narratives revealed disconnection between messages promoted by ambassadors (e.g. pool gate and surface alarms) and evidence-informed strategies for drowning prevention. RLSSWA reflected a need to seek balance and manage expectations:

...it's probably more a case of... redirecting, almost that energy or that message by providing '*here's some other things that we might focus on*' – O3

Several participants were involved in other aspects of RLSSWA beyond their roles as ambassadors. They described how this broader involvement had strengthened their understanding of RLSSWA priorities; and built their skills and knowledge. For example:

The knowledge about drowning, water safety and prevention helps... So, I've done a few of those... [online training courses] child drowning, child CPR, risks and dangers are around the house – A3

All ambassadors indicated they would like to be more involved in the RLSSWA and the Keep Watch Program but were often unsure what they could do:

So yeah, I don't know. I don't know what else. I'm sure they do a lot that I probably don't know as well. – A2

Ambassadors noted that while they were proud to use their stories to reach parents, they were also interested to see the *'behind the scenes'* program impacts. This was highlighted as potentially a less emotional activity to be involved in while providing insights into RLSSWA efforts in drowning prevention:

...you might be surprised by the number [of ambassadors] that want to come in and just even just see what's going on, not necessarily getting involved, but just like, the work and the things that we share. How that's impacting the projects that are going on – A5

Ambassadors who understood RLSSWA activities indicated they were interested in learning more about parent training, Heartbeat Club, the potential for involvement in Swim and Survive messages and events, parent or school-focused small group session, and generally speaking find out more about what RLSSWA do. Other ambassadors thought some *'structure in place of things they can be involved with'*, including examples, may better help them understand the opportunities available as ambassadors for RLSSWA.

Organisational representatives reflected that they are always *'striving to get the balance right'* concerning what they ask of the parent ambassadors. This is always at the front of their mind. However, one ambassador pointed out that given RLSSWA frame opportunities in *'the right way'*, they should not feel bad for asking for more input. Participants felt there was an opportunity for ambassadors to be more involved and *'more visible'*, particularly to support parents who have recently gone through something similar:

...the whole ambassador thing isn't something that's really well known. So maybe there might be something there about... parents that struggle or parents that have been through something that they want to reach out, be involved, educate other parents' stuff like that – A5

This was also top of mind for organisational representatives:

[It's] a really important role ... that peer to peer conversation. I know that the ones [parent ambassadors] that I know, if they can have a conversation with someone, and that makes them feel better about themselves and deal with this – O2

Most ambassadors indicated the importance of, and their interest in, small group interactions with parents or interested service providers. For some, this would be easier than the larger media launches *'in front of cameras'*. Participants reported that this was an under-utilised opportunity to engage with the ambassadors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following recommendations are made based on the combined findings of parent ambassadors and organisational interviews. Introducing these strategies can ensure the Program builds enough structure to allow ambassadors to get the most out of their interaction with RLSSWA whilst allowing for the flexibility and personal relationships that are so important to the Program's historical and current success.

1. Develop an **orientation kit** which outlines RLSSWA structure and supports to ensure Ambassadors are aware of the scope of work done by RLSSWA and the Keep Watch Program. This resource will ensure they have the documents to refer to when ready and not overwhelm ambassadors at their initial introduction to the Program.
2. Consider the development of an **ambassador hub** within the organisational intranet which could also include opportunities for regular communication, building a sense of community and social support.
3. Offer **media training** to ambassadors to ensure they feel comfortable sharing their stories.
4. Work on **extending relationships** between ambassadors and a range of RLSSWA staff to negate negative consequences if staff are away or move on.
5. Develop a **regular formal interaction** with ambassadors to ensure they are **kept abreast of program direction and opportunities**. This may ensure they are more aware of each other and provide opportunities for ambassadors to know each other. This should utilise contemporary strategies in **co-creation** for community involvement.
6. Provide opportunities for ambassadors to **undertake training** in leadership, advocacy and governance.
7. Provide opportunities for ambassadors to **observe the work of RLSSWA** and get involved in behind-the-scenes aspects of program delivery both within Keep Watch and across the organisation.

## CONCLUSION

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The Keep Watch Parent Ambassador Program has grown from one ambassador sharing their story 20 years ago to eight ambassadors from across Western Australia. All ambassadors recounted a positive experience during their participation in the Program and identified their involvement as supporting them through their grief and helping to add purpose to their lives after a traumatic event. The impacts of the Program have been felt throughout RLSSWA, from the executive to the Program staff. RLSSWA treat the stories shared by the ambassadors with care and respect, an essential factor acknowledged by both ambassadors and staff.

Whilst personal relationships between ambassadors and RLSSWA are one of the Program's strengths, there is an ongoing challenge to ensure that ambassadors' engagement is sustained, not only with Program staff but through a range of opportunities at the organisational level. This would appear to provide opportunities for future direction to amplify the value of using ambassadors both for parents as individuals and for RLSSWA more broadly.

## Contact

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