

Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

Peter Leaversuch - Royal Life Saving Society

Australian Water Safety Council

"Committed to drowning prevention in Australia and is a collective voice for Australia's leading water safety organisations."

- Royal Life Saving Australia
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- AUSTSWIM
- Australian National Sports Fishing Assoc.
- Australian and NZ Safe Boating Education Group
- Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Assoc.
- Australian Leisure Facilities Assoc.
- Australasian Diving Safety Foundation
- Farmsafe Australia
- Surfing Australia
- Swimming Australia
- Kidsafe Australia

History of the Australian Water Safety Strategy



AUSTRALIAN WATER
SAFETY STRATEGY 2030

Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

Aspirational Aim: to reduce drowning by 50% by 2030

The Process:

- Workshop - October 2019
 - Government, Australian Water Safety Council members, NGO's, academia and international water safety organisations
- Consultation Draft Feedback
- Strategy launched - March 2021



AUSTRALIAN WATER
SAFETY STRATEGY 2030

Towards a nation free
from drowning



AUSTRALIAN WATER
SAFETY STRATEGY 2030



Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

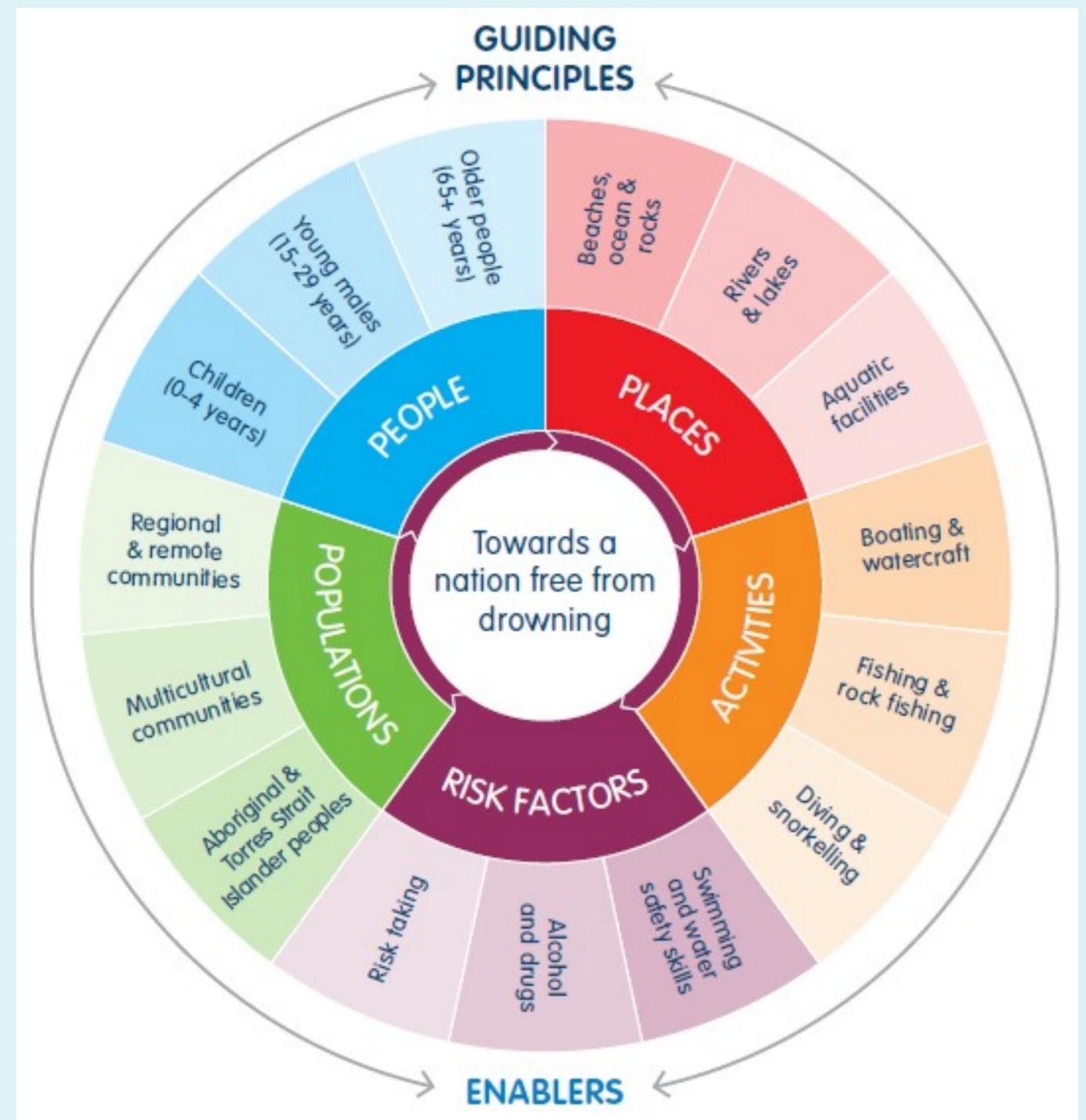
Vision:

- Towards a nation free from drowning

Priority Areas:

- People
- Places
- Activities
- Risk Factors
- Populations

Supported by Guiding Principles and Enablers



Guiding Principles

Inclusion

Safe Participation

Targeted Advocacy

Empowering Communities

Taking Action

Enablers

Research

Policy

Advocacy

Collaboration

Education

Safe Environments

Workforce

Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030

Key Themes:

- Drowning and other injuries
 - Full burden of drowning
- Community based action
 - Local water safety plans
- Swimming and water safety skills across the community
 - Equity in the renewal of skills
- Frontline services
 - Support for lifesavers, lifeguards, instructors
- Infrastructure
 - Development that promotes safe access



**PRIORITY AREA:
POPULATIONS**

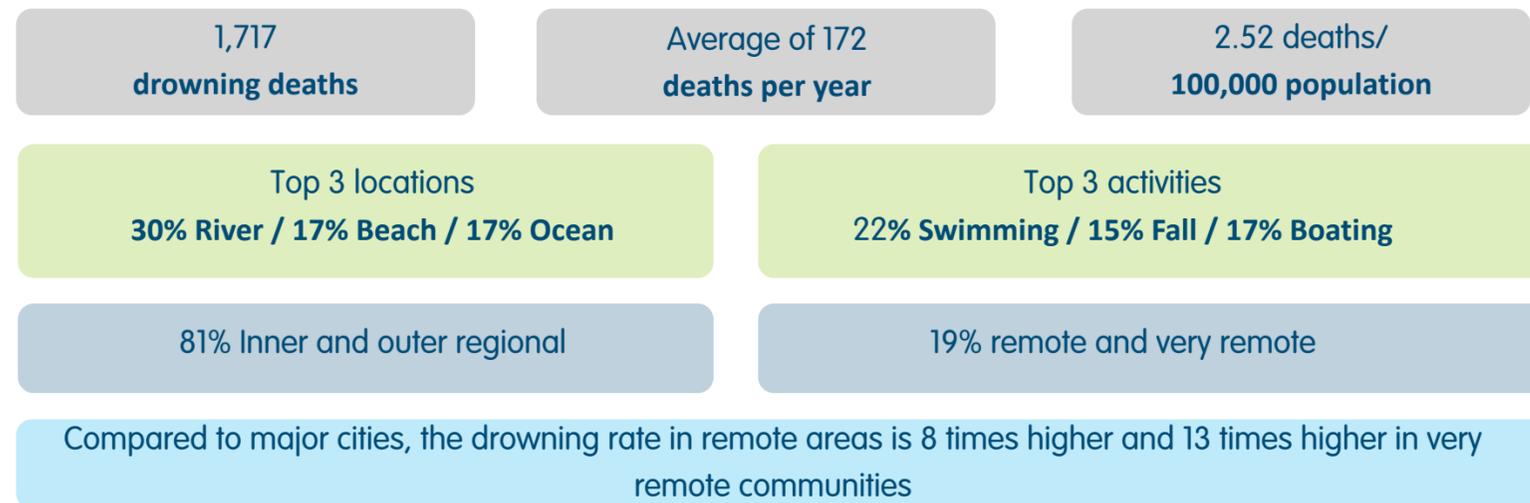
**FOCUS:
Regional and remote communities**

Why is this an area of focus?

One third of the Australian population live in regional and remote communities, outside major cities. Regional and remote communities are diverse and pose unique challenges for drowning prevention. These areas are known to have low levels of population density, which means that lifesaving services are limited, emergency response times are longer, and program availability is lower. This coupled with extensive river systems that flow out into coastal waters provide for a complex range of risks.

Communities in regional and remote areas are often considered to be somewhat disadvantaged due to limited access to services and lower socioeconomic status. Regional and remote children spend more time outdoors but also experience lower developmental outcomes which has been linked to supporting risk reduction. They also have higher levels of alcohol consumption and undertake more activities around water closer to home. Water Safety strategies, including drowning prevention, designed for major cities are not necessarily relevant for regional and remote communities. Appropriate strategies require community-specific approaches to engage stakeholders.

Key data (2009/10 to 2018/19)



Risk factors

- Geographical remoteness
- Increased response times
- Increased exposure to environmental hazards
- Lower socioeconomic status
- Increased accessibility to water bodies on properties
- Limited telecommunication access, facilities and range
- Alcohol consumption
- Limited access to swimming and water safety programs

Example Strategies

- Targeted public awareness campaigns focussed on specific risks in regional and remote locations
- Workplace Health and Safety legislation
- Delivery of swimming and water safety programs in regional and remote communities
- Community first aid and CPR training



Key activities 2021-25

- Research**
 - Conduct studies to understand water exposure in regional and remote areas
 - Evaluate new and existing interventions (e.g. signage, media campaigns and education programs)
 - Work with coroners to increase the number of rural drowning deaths that are investigated
- Policy**
 - Reinforce risk management plans, including alcohol management at recreational locations
 - Develop local water safety plans that are embedded into policy and practice
 - Strengthen drowning prevention policies for use by local governments, water authorities and National Parks
- Advocacy**
 - Advocate for policies and funding that support sustainability of aquatic infrastructure
 - Deliver campaigns targeting risk-taking behaviour in regional and remote waterways
 - Promote safe play areas for children on rural properties and agricultural land
- Collaboration**
 - Strengthen partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, health and education agencies
 - Strengthen partnerships with Local Government, and local land and water management agencies
 - Promote partnerships to develop and implement local water safety plans
- Education**
 - Expand the delivery of tailored swimming and lifesaving programs
 - Disseminate safety, rescue and CPR information through community groups and tourism operators
 - Explore and use online and new media to educate local communities
- Safe Environments**
 - Conduct risk assessments to identify and mitigate environmental hazards
 - Establish feasibility of public rescue equipment and telecommunication infrastructure
 - Improve strategies to reduce driving through floodwaters
- Workforce**
 - Ensure professional development for aquatic workforce in regional and remote areas
 - Provide training for emergency services, land managers and community organisations

Creating medium term changes in



Targets 2030

Expansion in availability of programs and services in regional and remote areas
Drowning rate in regional and remote locations reduced by 50%