



# Western Australian Aquatic Recreation Industry Report

2021/22

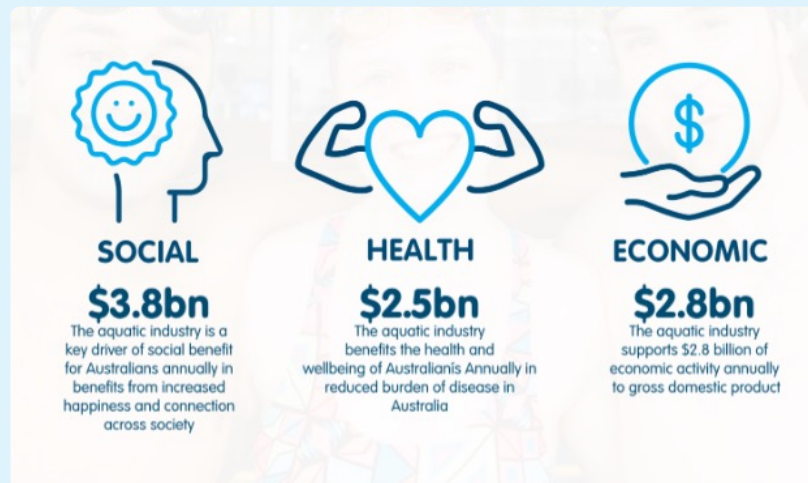


**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



## INTRODUCTION

A recent Royal Life Saving Society Australia & PwC Report<sup>1</sup> estimated the economic, health and social impact of the aquatic recreation industry across Australia totalled \$9.1 billion.



This report extends on this national research and seeks to summarise the state of the industry in Western Australian for the year 2021-2022.

### The key objectives of the report are to:

1. Calculate the quantify key outputs as an evidence base for advocacy and future investment,
2. Inform workforce planning and development,
3. Provide an insight into patron incidents and injuries,
4. Report on compliance to industry benchmarks and standard operating procedures,
5. Be a catalyst for discussion and the development of a strong, sustainable and responsive aquatic recreation industry.

The Royal Life Saving Society WA and Leisure Institute of WA Aquatics have collaborated for 16 years on this unique annual research project. We thank the public aquatic centres across the state who provided data as well as key information from the Water Corporation, Austswim, and Swim Coaches and Teachers Australia.



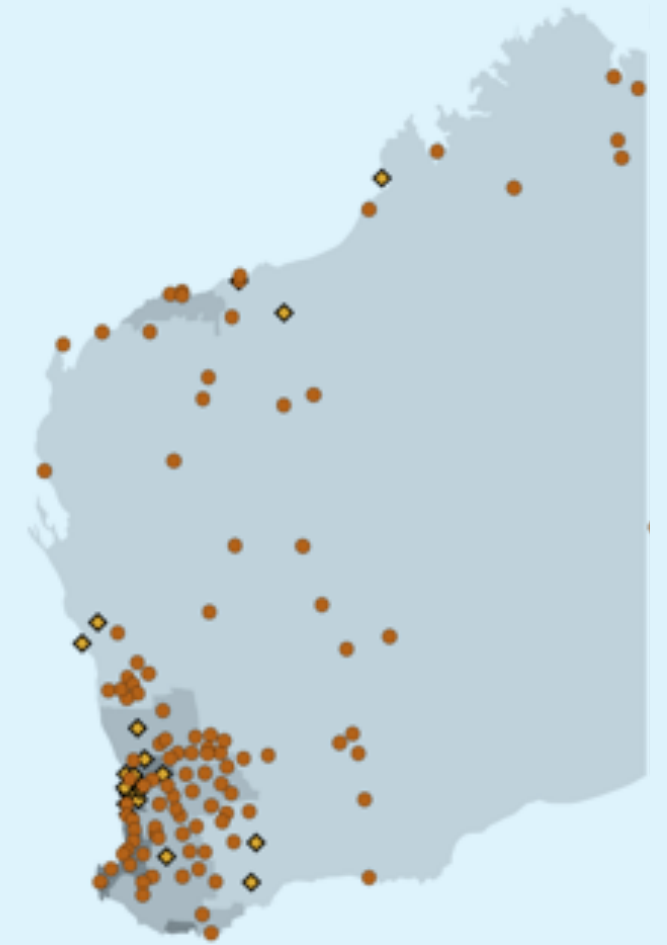
<sup>1</sup> PwC Australia. 2021. The Health, Social and Economic Value of the Australian National Aquatic Industry. Prepared for Royal Life Saving, Melbourne, Australia. [https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/56588/127083216\\_Royal-Life-Saving-Au\\_Report-v11\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/56588/127083216_Royal-Life-Saving-Au_Report-v11_DIGITAL.pdf)

## INDUSTRY PROFILE

There are 129 public aquatic recreation facilities across Western Australia with 30 in the metropolitan areas and 99 in regional, rural and remote communities.

The vast geographical spread creates issues pertaining to the planning and operating of aquatic recreation centres. These include, but not limited to:

- The attraction of suitably qualified and experienced staff.
- The provision of suitable housing for staff in regional and remote areas.
- The appropriate level of remuneration of these staff. If the aquatic centre is to fulfill it's potential (appropriate planning and programming) in acting as a community hub for all cohorts of the population, staff need to be well qualified and experienced.
- The maintenance costs due to many being in rural and remote areas of the state.
- To be fit for purpose, the cost of refurbishment / replacement is daunting for many centres and at times beyond the capacity of a local government.



### State & Federal Government funding announcements in 2021/22

#### 2022 Federal Election

- > **\$25 million**  
Alkimos Aquatic Centre
- > **\$8 million**  
Kalgoorlie Pool
- > **\$20 million**  
South Perth Aquatic Facility
- > **\$10 million**  
Ellenbrook Swimming Pool  
(50:50 state/federal contribution)

#### Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)

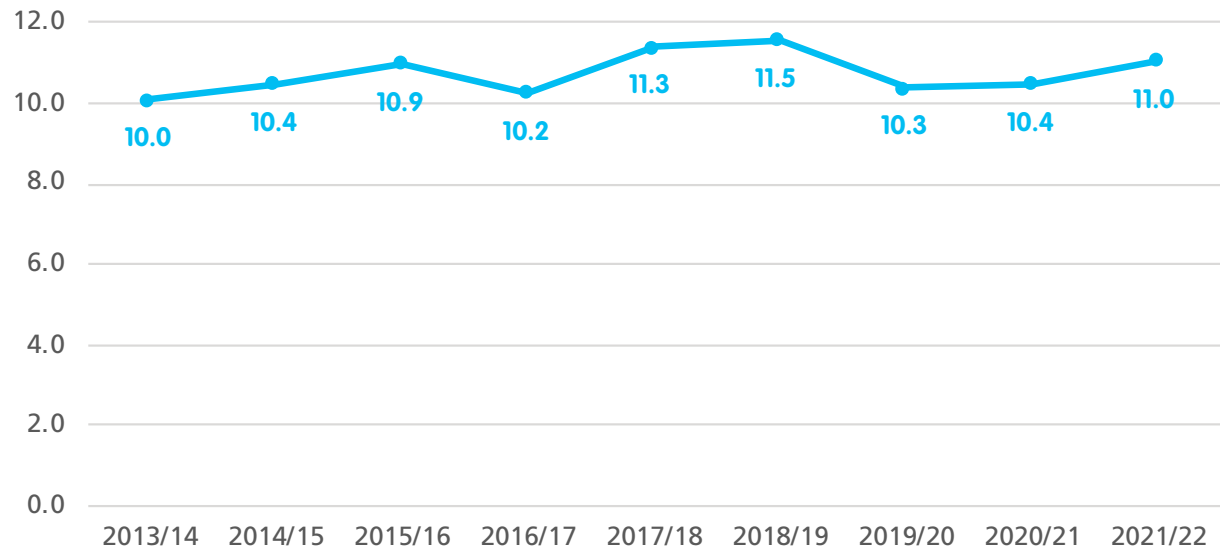
- > **\$750,000**  
- refurbishment of Geraldton Aquarena Pool
- > **\$750,000**  
- redevelopment of Paltridge Memorial Swimming Pool, Exmouth
- > **\$374,183**  
- redevelopment of the Mount Barker Memorial Swimming Pool



PATRONAGE 2021/22



Patronage trend



Regional comparison

Region	Total visits	Average visits per person	Health outcome benefit*
Goldfields	264,395	6.9	\$6,977,384
Great southern	200,484	3.3	\$5,290,773
Kimberley	177,926	4.9	\$4,695,467
Mid-west	409,011	6.6	\$10,793,800
Pilbara	364,880	5.8	\$9,629,183
South-west	727,844	2.7	\$19,207,803
Wheatbelt	307,733	3.1	\$8,121,074
Perth	8,556,341	4.0	\$225,801,839
Total	11,008,614	4.6	\$290,517,323

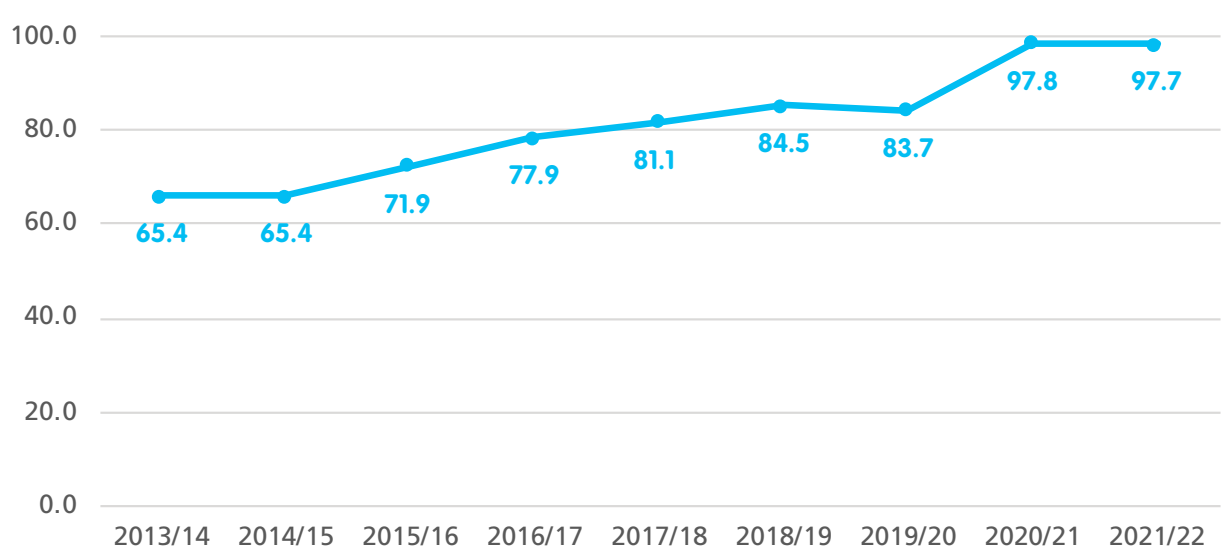
\*The average pool visit generates benefits of \$26.39 in improved health outcomes and consequent reductions in health spending.<sup>2</sup>

2 Barnsley, P. Peden, A. Scarr, J. (2017) Economic Benefits of Australia's Public Aquatic Facilities, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, Sydney. [https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/37563/RLS\\_IndustryBenefits\\_LR.PDF](https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/37563/RLS_IndustryBenefits_LR.PDF)

EXPENDITURE 2021/22



Expenditure trend



Regional comparison of expenditure across WA regions, including the 'Social Return on Investment' (SROI)

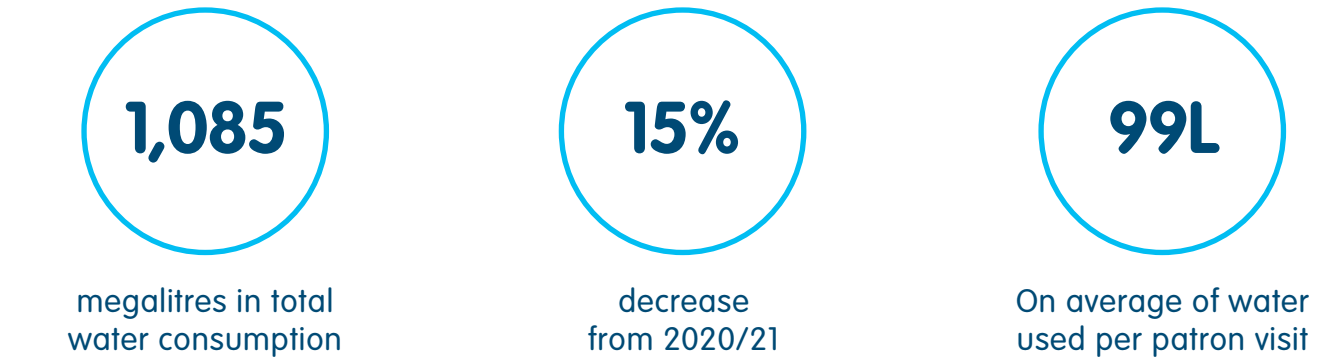
Region	Expenditure per region \$	Average expenditure per pool visit	SROI benefit*
Goldfields	\$2,799,221	\$10.60	\$6,102,300
Great southern	\$2,809,518	\$14.10	\$6,124,750
Kimberley	\$3,317,604	\$18.64	\$7,232,376
Mid-west	\$5,235,282	\$12.79	\$11,412,915
Pilbara	\$6,929,129	\$18.99	\$15,105,500
South-west	\$8,691,725	\$11.94	\$18,947,960
Wheatbelt	\$5,825,068	\$18.92	\$12,698,650
Perth	\$62,131,911	\$7.26	\$302,582,406
Total	\$97,739,460	\$8.87	\$380,206,857

\*The social return for every \$1 spent operating aquatic facilities in capital cities and regional Australia is \$4.87 and \$2.18 respectively.<sup>3</sup>

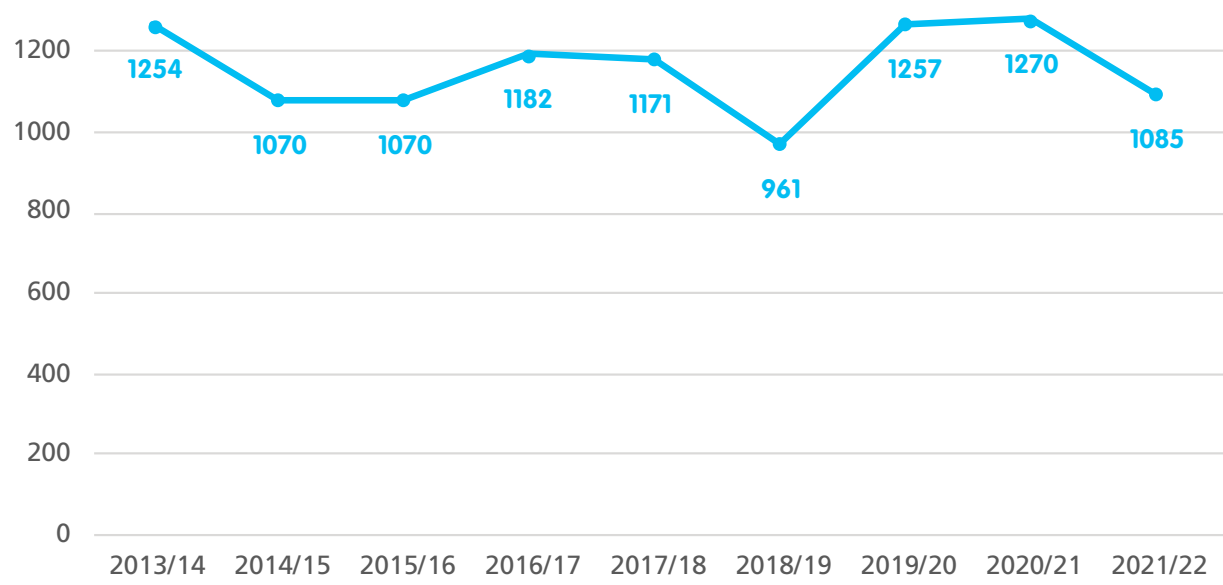
3 PwC Australia. 2021. The Health, Social and Economic Value of the Australian National Aquatic Industry. Prepared for Royal Life Saving, Melbourne, Australia.



WATER CONSUMPTION 2021/22



Water consumption trend



The downward trend aligns with initiatives supported by the Water Corporation and investment in water efficiency in the design and operations of aquatic centres.

Regional comparison of water consumption

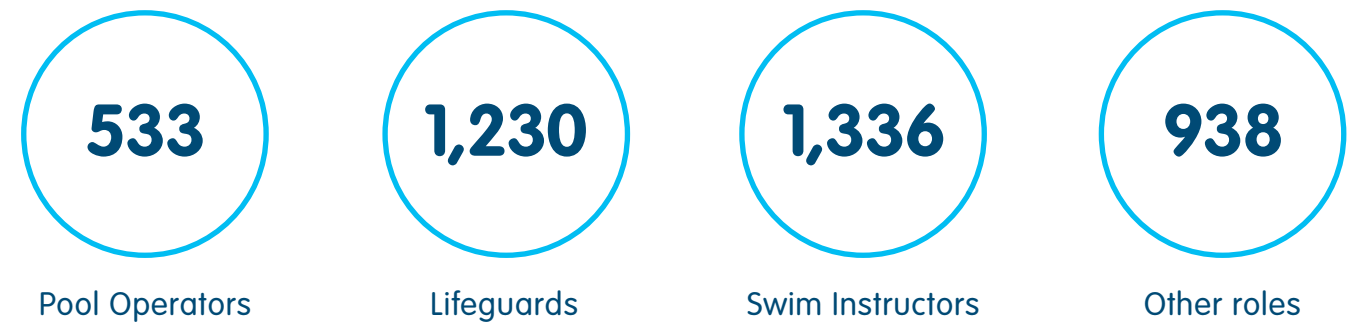
Region	Total visits per region	Total water consumption per region (kL)	Water consumption in Litres per patron visit (L)
Goldfields	264,395	56,127	200
Great southern	200,484	35,442	177
Kimberley	177,926	66,974	376
Mid-west	409,011	90,263	221
Pilbara	364,880	196,216	538
South-west	727,844	60,761	83
Wheatbelt	307,733	174,383	567
Perth	8,556,341	404,890	47
TOTAL	11,008,614	1,085,056	99





### Employment

4,037 staff are employed by the aquatic recreation industry.  
Consisting of:



The number of employees increases by **43%** during the peak summer season.

The number of Swim Instructors does not include the **1,200 employed** in the Department of Education interm and vacswim programs.

#### Type of employment

	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	Total
Pool Operator	241	103	189	533
Lifeguard	55	122	1,053	1,230
Swim Instructor	128	66	1,142	1,336
Other	189	215	534	938
Total	613	506	2,918	4,037

#### Regional v Metropolitan Comparison

	Regional	Metropolitan	Total
Pool Operator	265	268	533
Lifeguard	387	843	1,230
Swim Instructor	460	876	1,336
Other	187	751	938
Total	1,299	2,738	4,037

#### Diversity

	Trainees	First Nations	CaLD
Pool Operator	5	8	22
Lifeguard	20	26	29
Swim Instructor	5	36	31
Other	8	10	24
Total	38	80	106

### Qualified Workforce in 2021/22

#### Pool Operators

- > **529 qualified Pool Operators**
- > **44%** identify as female
- > **20% decline** is the number of qualified pool operators (654 in 2020/21)
- > **282** live in the metropolitan area
- > **47%** live in regional areas
- > **433** maintained their qualifications
- > **96** new qualifications
- > **221** did not renew their qualification

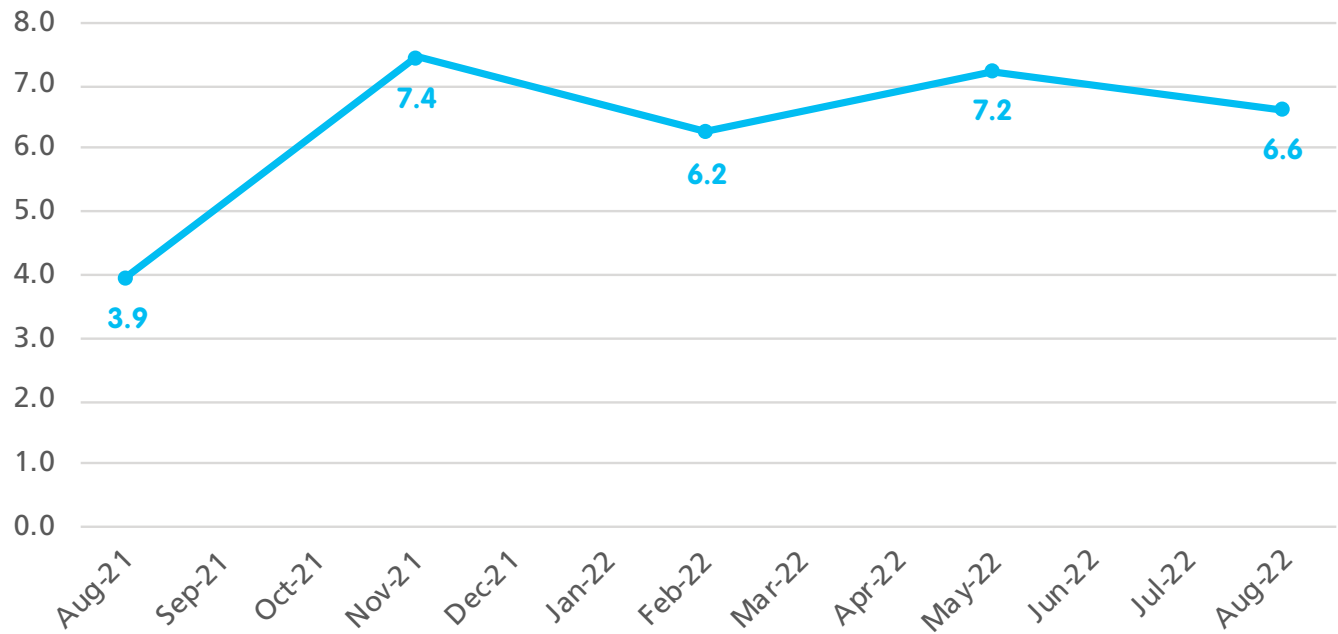
#### Pool Lifeguards

- > **2,216 qualified Pool Lifeguards**
- > **47%** identify as female
- > **2%** are First Nations
- > **3%** have a disability
- > **Average age 27** (range 16 to 72)
- > **1% increase** in the number of qualified pool lifeguards (2,193 in 2020/21).
- > **1,527** live in the metropolitan area
- > **689** live in regional areas
- > **1,461** maintained qualification
- > **755** new qualification
- > **732** did not renew their qualification

#### Swim Instructors

- > **4,570 qualified Swim Instructors**
- > **79%** identify as female
- > **Average age 30** (range 16 to 78)
- > **76%** live in the metropolitan area
- > **24%** live in regional areas
- > **3,434** x current/requalification
- > **1,136** new qualification

#### Job Vacancies in Australia - Arts and Recreation Services (,000)



Incident and Injury



pools provided  
incident/injury data



injury reports  
were reported



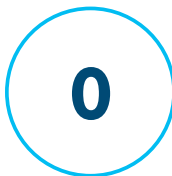
injuries per 100,000  
patron visits

Types of rescues  
and/or treatments

Breakdown of 1,937  
injury reported:

- > Vast majority were minor first aid treatments.
- > 76 x in-water rescues.
- > 3 x CPR performed.
- > 157 x oxygen administered.
- > 91 x Emergency services contacted.
- > 3 x defibrillator used.

Drownings



Fatal  
drownings



Non-fatal  
drownings

Safety Assessments

- > 26 x total
- > 8 x metropolitan
- > 18 x regional/rural
- > 12 seasonal pools
- > 14 x all year pools.

Royal Life Saving collaborates with the Local Government Insurance Service (LGIS) to provide an independent safety assessment of public aquatic recreation centres. All pools in WA are assessed at least once every four years.

Safety Improvement

- > 184 x items for improvement were identified.
- > 72 x items were rectified via support/expertise from Royal Life Saving.
- > Remaining items being rectified by the individual centre.
- > All participating facilities are provided a 12-month subscription to the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation.

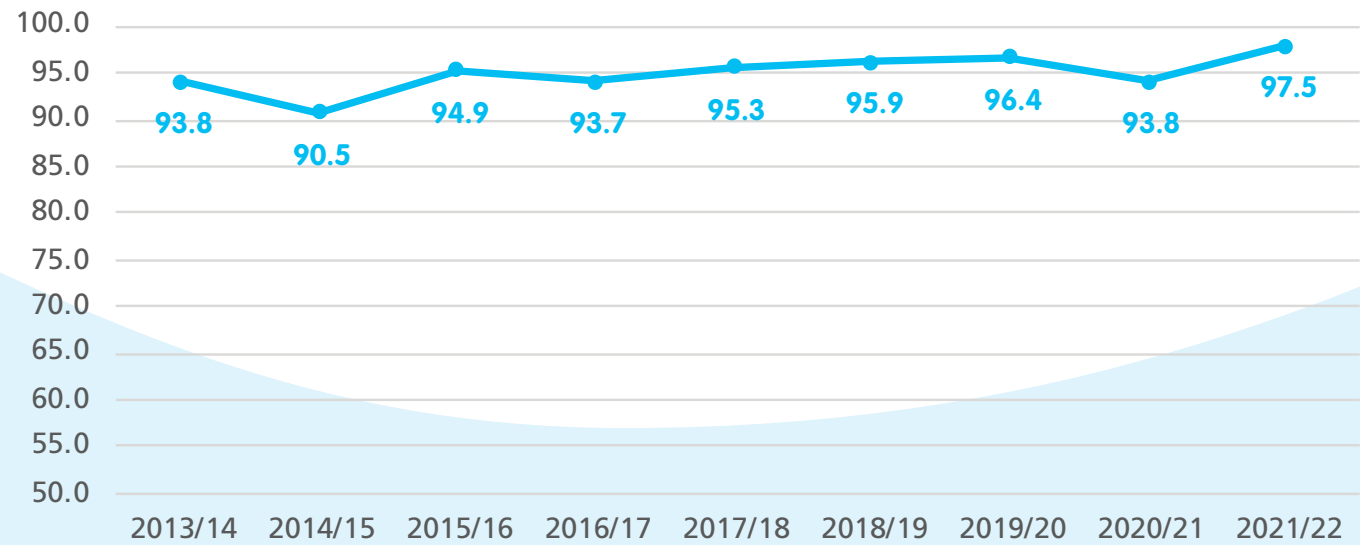
Operational areas where most faults found – Top 5

Rank (most faults)	Operation Area
1	Pool Design and Construction
2	Chemical Safety
3	Spray parks
4	Water slides
5	Administration

Most common faults – Top 55

Most common faults – Top 5	Operation Area
1	Pool Design and Construction
2	Chemical Safety
3	Spray parks
4	Water slides
5	Administration

Safety Assessment Scores







> Health, Social and Economic Value of the Australian National Aquatic Industry  
<https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/Aquatic-Risk-and-Guidelines/aquatic-research/Health-Social-and-Economic-Value-of-Aquatic-Industry>



> National Aquatic Industry Workforce Research  
<https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/Aquatic-Risk-and-Guidelines/aquatic-research/Workforce-Research>



> Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation  
<https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/Aquatic-Risk-and-Guidelines/guidelines/GSPO>





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### Appendix 3: Reported significant renewal works/upgrades in recent 10 years

- › Bio Fuels system
- › 25m Lap Pool tiled, Leisure pool half tiled, Hydrotherapy Pool tiled, Plant control board replace, Boiler replacements, Heat Exchanger replacements.
- › DE filter replacement, VSD installed, Solar Panel system installed.
- › 50m pool, grandstand, outdoor playground, outdoor change room refurbishment.
- › Hydrotherapy pool, spa, steam room, sauna refurbishment.
- › 25m pool and indoor grandstand refurbishment, indoor toilet refurbishment
- › 2 x indoor disabled/family change room refurbishment
- › 1 x new disabled facility (MLAK Key) 1 x hydrotherapy
- › Disabled/family change room refurbishment, new lighting around Wave pool.
- › Plant room refurbishment. Change room refurbishment.
- › Plant was upgraded, additional pumps, VSD, building management system, extra filter, dosing systems, chlorine gas system. Solar replacement of pool solar heating system, dedicated solar plant room.
- › Pools major demolition, redesign, wet deck, access ramp, replace complete circulation system. Complete rebuild of leisure pool with beach entry and separate leisure pool circulation. Tiled pools. Repaved facility
- › New outdoor children's pool was constructed, Heating System installed for the main 25m Swimming Pool, New Shade Sail erected, New gym area constructed in swimming pool facility to encourage multipurpose usage.
- › Full aquatic refurbishment. Works included reconstruction and upgrade to aquatic plant room, bulk heads pool deck and surrounds reconstructed including upgrades to lighting. New spray features added to pool and in pool spa repaired and operational.
- › Pool deck toilets and change rooms refurbished
- › Spa plant room upgrade, Pool blankets upgrade, Grandstand seating upgrade, Chlorine gas upgrade.
- › 50m pool shell painted. Buildings, kiosk, changerooms painted. Plant upgrade. 50m pool shell painted.
- › Geothermal upgrades, plant room upgrade. Leisure playground renewal. Slides renewal.
- › New dosing pumps, repairs to makeup water valves and water meter. Lifted tiles replaced and expansion joints replaced. New design plans drawn for total refurbishment of whole area with estimated costs for works
- › All Circulation Pumps Replaced. Dosing System Upgrades. Filter Refurbishments. Chlorine Gas Management System. Spa Pool Gas Boiler Replacement. Relining of 25m pool balance tank. Relining of 50m pool scum gutters.
- › Upgrade Spa Pool jets. Steam Room and Sauna Refit. Additional Saunas. Indoor Changeroom flooring replacement. Outdoor Changeroom flooring replacement. Water Play Park Surface refurbishment. Leisure Pool retiling. Electrical Switchboards. Various Filter Refurbishment. LED Lighting and ventilation system. Chlorine Gas upgrade. Hot water system upgrades. Solar System upgrades.
- › New shade sails above half of 25m pool and grassed areas
- › 50m & 25m pools wheelchair access ramps installed wet decks tiling bulkheads return lines concourses Play pool beach entry tiling play features.
- › Gym extension. Admin enhancement. Full pool retiled.
- › Refurbishment of plant room, separate plant for LTS pool. Upgrade change rooms -hot water showers, doors and roof. LTS pool extended, solar heating, shade sails, tiled, features. 50 meter pool -overhaul of shell, expansion joints, water proofed, tiled, inclusive ramp, side wall nibs removed, landscaping/reticulation, shade sails, signage. Kiosk refurbished, commercial kitchen upgraded, security cameras, PA system, new fence and gate entry, portable tables. Locks changed, signage.
- › Windows, Shade Structures and New Pool Cleaner. Repaint of 50m Lap Pool. Chemical Dosing System. Replacement Pump, new roof and store modifications to plant room. Pool Blankets. Defib, PA and Computer Equipment. Shade Sails, Swimming Lane Tension, playground, lift and power upgrade, ramp and paving.
- › Complete retile and repaving of the concourse. Pool concourse expansion, additional change rooms, training room and offices. New plantrooms to all new ablutions and disabled facilities. New family changerooms 50m pool outdoor with boom to split 2x25m Indoor- Toddler pool - Pirate playground with slide and tipping bucket - Free form Leisure pools with beach entry, 4 x 25m lanes and learn to swim area. - 25m x 8 lanes. Wellness area- spa and sauna.
- › Replacement of pool water heating system. Replacement of HVAC system. Installation of water feature. Painting to all internal walls. Installation of solar panels. Replacement of POS and member management software.
- › New buildings and change rooms. Repainted pool. New circulation pump.
- › Redevelopment included conversion of 50m pool to a leisure pool and 25m lap pool, all new plant equipment and water treatment system.
- › Replaced circulating pumps.
- › Change room renovation. Pools boiler unit upgrade. Lap and Leisure pool renovation. Built on Family change rooms and gym.
- › Expansion joints. Replacement of PIG filters. Re-lining of pool guttering.
- › Refurbishment to bowls of both 50m lap pool and small toddler pools. Refurbishment of balance tanks. Installation of solar panels. Refurbishment of pump pipe works. Repaint of entire facility. Re-roof of changerooms, kiosk and office area.





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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Royal Life Saving Society Western Australia Inc  
12 McGillivray Road, Mt Claremont WA 6010  
PO Box 28, Floreat Forum WA 6014

Call **08 9383 8200**  
Email **[info@royallifesavingwa.com.au](mailto:info@royallifesavingwa.com.au)**  
Visit **[royallifesavingwa.com.au](http://royallifesavingwa.com.au)**

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