



# YOUR CHILD YOUR FOCUS



PARENTS SUPERVISE – LIFEGUARDS SAVE LIVES.



# Introduction

Watch Around Water is a campaign educating the public about active supervision, and encouraging parents / guardians to take on the responsibility of this role while visiting aquatic facilities.



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# Aim

Reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal drowning incidences and associated injuries in public aquatic facilities in Victoria within the 0-14 year age group.



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# Objectives

- raise awareness of active supervision challenges
- increase the effectiveness of supervision of children
- address in-water and parental supervision levels
- reduce fatal and non-fatal drowning incidences



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# Swimsafe

**S**tructured policies  
**W**ater safety principles  
**I**ncreased communication  
**M**ulticultural awareness

**S**taff up-skilling  
**A**ctive application  
**F**acility specific  
**E**valuated formally



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# History

‘Competent lifeguards acting responsibly should provide an important safety feature, but they are not intended to, and cannot be expected to replace the close supervision of parents which is required for many children. Public awareness needs to ensure that adults in the community understand that supervision of children in the water must be direct, competent and alert.’

Coronial recommendations.



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# Target Groups

- **parents / guardians** of young children
  - Under 5 years - Under 10 years -
- informal user groups
- aquatic facility **management**
- aquatic facility **staff**



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# The Reality

Supervision requirements will vary according to:

- child's age / development
- child's swimming ability
- lifeguard knowledge / experience
- pool design / environment

“The one common denominator in child injuries, near drowning's and drowning's, no matter where, is inadequate supervision.”

## Coronial recommendations



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# Adequate Supervision

Three key elements of adequate supervision are:

**Proximity:** Physical closeness with the child being supervised.

**Attention:** Focus of attention maintained whilst supervising.

**Continuity:** Degree to which proximity and focus are maintained.

In summary, where the supervisor is:

- located nearby
- watching the child
- always present



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# Challenges

**Wandering Children:** Children are naturally inquisitive. They have an attraction to the water and often do not understand danger

**Inattentive Supervisors:** The bulk of the blame falls on those charged with supervising. This is the parent / guardian in most instances.

**Facility Design:** This may include areas where there is glare / blind spots and areas where the pool changes from shallow to deep water.



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# Common Misconceptions

There will be parents / guardians who:

- believe lifeguards are solely responsible for supervision
- assume that their children will be supervised by others
- are unaware of their obligations to supervise
- do not recognise the signs of a child in difficulty
- overestimate their child's swimming ability



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# Role of Lifeguards

Lifeguards have a legal duty of care; it is their role to act within their trained standard of care.

- provide **adequate supervision** to all facility users
- maintain **concentrated observation** of pools users
- carry out **intervention and preventative actions**



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# Role of Parents / Guardians

The responsibility to provide adequate active supervision for young children rests largely with those who enter the centre with them. They should be guided by

- proximity
- attention
- continual

Adults must be over 16 years and free from alcohol and drugs.



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# Structured Policies

## Recommended Policies

- Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 2 Children under 5\*
- Maximum 1 Parent / Guardian to 4 Children under 10\*
- Children under 5 years will not be admitted without a fee paying parent / guardian who is prepared to enter the water in line.
- All staff and all management, regardless of their position or role should complete Watch Around Water training.

*\*New GSPO SV14.6.1 comes into effect 01/09/2019*



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# Multicultural Awareness

- Over a quarter of Victorians were born overseas
- Almost half of Victorians were born, or have a parent born overseas
- Multicultural communities are overrepresented in drownings incidents
- Consider multicultural communities through:
  - Communication materials
  - Recruitment and training
  - Program, activities and memberships

Know, understand, engage, support and utilise your local communities



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# Thank You

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