



MEDIA RELEASE

RE: Australian Water Safety Council's 2016-2020 Strategy

Tuesday 24 May 2016

AUSTSWIM LIMITED

The Australasian Council for the Teaching
of Swimming and Water Safety
ACN 097 784 122

HEAD OFFICE

8/21 Howleys Road
Notting Hill, Victoria 3168

PO Box 139
Mulgrave, Victoria 3170

TOLL FREE 1300 885 529

T +61 3 9562 7900

F +61 3 9562 6450

E info@austswim.com.au

The Australian Water Safety Council's 2016-2020 Strategy was launched on April 28 by the federal Minister for Health, Aged Care and Sport, Sussan Ley, at the Coffs Harbour Surf Life Saving Club.

The strategy continues the Council's goal of reducing fatal drowning by 50% by the year 2020 and outlines the priority areas in which Australian peak water safety bodies - Royal Life Saving, Surf Life Saving and AUSTSWIM - must work together to prevent drowning.

AUSTSWIM is a key member of the council and CEO Jennifer Schembri-Portelli (JSP) was among those who attended the launch.

She said it highlighted the importance of collaboration between the bodies and the natural synergies that existed between them.

"We are intrinsically bound together by our love of the water," JSP said. "We are all concerned with looking after the safety of Aussies in, on and around water. And we each have a valuable part to play in achieving that objective," JSP said.

"Water activities play such an important part in the Australian way of life and our youngsters introduction to aqua activity so often begins with AUSTSWIM trained teachers. They then move on to beach-based activities like Nipper programs but often head back to the AUSTSWIM realm when they see the opportunities of becoming licensed and accredited teachers of swimming and water safety...and so the cycle continues."

Data released by the Water Safety Council showed that 3116 lives were lost to drowning in the 11 years from 2004/05 to 2014/15 – an average of 283 deaths a year.

The impact was greatest in children under five; coastal and inland waterways; and those from cultural linguistically diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Alcohol and/or drugs is known to be a factor in 34% of drowning deaths and males are four times more likely to drown than females.

The strategy identifies 11 goals across three priority areas where action is needed to achieve a 50% reduction in drowning by the year 2020.

You can download a copy of the strategy at www.watersafety.com.au

For further Information please contact:

Jennifer Schembri Portelli

AUSTSWIM CEO

jsp@austswim.com.au

