

# SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- > Current, and appropriately accredited AUSTSWIM Teachers
- > A positive welcoming environment
- > A program that includes you as part of the learning process
- > A child-focused program that embraces swimming and water safety and includes:
  - > Water familiarisation
  - > Personal water safety
  - > Survival knowledge and skill
  - > Steps toward stroke swimming development

## WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO START LEARN TO SWIM AND WATER SAFETY CLASSES?

The bath at home is a great place to start water familiarisation, it allows your child to experience:

- > The buoyant effect of water
- > Movement and force of water
- > Splashing, showering feeling of water over the body

At 6 months of age your child can join formal classes at the local pool. AUSTSWIM do not advocate formal class participation before 6 months of age. The guideline is based on information from medical and child development experts who identify that not all infants under 6 months are physically or developmentally ready to be in a formal aquatic education program.

## WHAT ROLE DOES A PARENT PLAY?

You are an essential and vital part of the learning process, as you learn, so does your child.

## WHAT SHOULD CLASSES INCLUDE?

AUSTSWIM recommends swimming and water safety classes are 30 minutes in duration and include a variety of activities, songs, games and equipment to enhance the learning experiences of swimming and water safety skills.

For further information on AUSTSWIM guidelines for classes visit [www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au)

## HOW QUICKLY WILL MY CHILD LEARN?

Learning is a continuous personal process unique to each individual and evolves over time. Ongoing consistent participation aids the learning process.

## HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL BE IN THE CLASS?

AUSTSWIM recommends class ratios that vary according to the age and competency of students and the venue being utilised.

For further information on class ratios visit [www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au)

## HOW DO I KNOW MY CHILD'S TEACHER HOLDS AN AUSTSWIM LICENCE?

It's important to ensure that your child's teacher holds a current and appropriate AUSTSWIM Teacher Licence according to the aquatic education programs being taught.

Look for the AUSTSWIM platypus logo and current AUSTSWIM recognised swim school certificate when you visit an aquatic facility to ensure that only accredited AUSTSWIM Teachers are provided.

To find an AUSTSWIM recognised swim school in your area visit [www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au) or call AUSTSWIM on 1300 885 666.

## HOW CAN I BECOME AN ACCREDITED AUSTSWIM TEACHER?

If you would like to find out more about becoming an accredited AUSTSWIM Teacher call 1300 885 666 or visit [www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au)



## AUSTSWIM THE AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL FOR THE TEACHING OF SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROVIDES

- > Accredited training and licensing of teachers of swimming and water safety.
- > Industry standards, advice and support services.
- > Teacher advice and support services.
- > Community advice for specialist groups including parents.

**AUSTSWIM BELIEVES THAT ALL AUSTRALIANS SHOULD HAVE APPROPRIATE AND RELEVANT SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY SKILLS AND UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF WATER SAFETY.**

EVERY AUSTRALIAN WILL BE TAUGHT TO SWIM BY AN ACCREDITED AUSTSWIM TEACHER, ENABLING THEM TO SAFELY ENJOY AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS AND ACTIVITIES.

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AUSTSWIM AMBASSADOR  
BROOKE HANSON



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The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSW Government.

**TO FIND AN AUSTSWIM RECOGNISED SWIM SCHOOL IN YOUR AREA CONTACT AUSTSWIM TODAY.**

TOLL FREE 1300 885 666  
[www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au)



The Australasian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety

# SURVIVE

LEARNING SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY IS A SKILL FOR LIFE



TOLL FREE 1300 885 666  
[www.austswim.com.au](http://www.austswim.com.au)



The Australasian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety

# 284

## THE NUMBER OF DROWNING DEATHS IN AUSTRALIA IN 2011/12

During this time 33 of these drowning deaths were people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This figure was up from 21 in 2010/11. Between 2004 and 2012 36% of all coastal drowning deaths were people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds\*. While the 3 year average is 57 drowning deaths of culturally and linguistically diverse people nationally\*\*.

Did you know that these drowning deaths were preventable? Swimming and Water Safety knowledge and skills are an important part of life in Australia. Learning these skills could help save your life or the life of your family and friends.

**SO DON'T WASTE ANOTHER MINUTE!  
LEARN SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY SKILLS NOW!  
LEARNING SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY IS A SKILL FOR LIFE – ALWAYS ASK FOR AN ACCREDITED AUSTSWIM TEACHER.**

### GENERAL WATER SAFETY TIPS

**THESE ARE GENERAL WATER SAFETY TIPS WHENEVER SWIMMING OR ENJOYING ANY BODY OF WATER (POOLS, LAKES, PONDS, QUARRIES, RIVERS OR OCEANS & BEACHES):**

- › Never swim alone.
- › Read and obey all rules and signs.
- › If you see someone in danger don't try to swim and rescue them.
- › Swim in areas that are supervised by lifeguards.
- › Take extra precautions such as wearing an approved life jacket.
- › Set water safety rules for your family (for example, never enter the water without approval from your parents).
- › Know how to prevent, recognise and respond to emergencies.
- › Never dive, use a feet first entry when entering the water.
- › Do not mix alcohol with swimming or boating. Alcohol impairs judgement, balance and coordination, affects your swimming and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- › Pools should be enclosed completely with a fence that has a self-latching gate and vertical bars to prevent climbing.

\* Surf Life Saving National Coastal Safety Report 2011  
\*\* Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2012



## IMPORTANT WATER SAFETY QUESTIONS

### BEACHES

#### Q: WHERE SHOULD I SWIM AT THE BEACH?

The red and yellow flags mark the safest part of the beach to swim, and it is also the area constantly under surveillance by the lifeguards.

#### Q: WHAT IS A RIP?

A rip is a seaward-moving water current. After waves have broken and run to the shore, the accumulated water then moves away from the shore through a pathway of least resistance – usually the deepest point. This moving pathway is called a rip.

#### Q: WHERE DO RIPS OCCUR?

Rips occur along almost all stretches of beach and in and around rocks, breakwalls or any permanent fixture in the ocean. The larger the waves, the stronger and larger the rips. Most seaward-running rips normally end not far beyond the level of the breaking waves.

#### Q: WHAT DO I DO IF I GET CAUGHT IN A RIP?

Side currents can cause people to be washed off swimming areas where waves break on sandbars. Staying calm is essential. Not swimming directly against the rip is important and strong swimmers only should swim at an angle across the rip. At patrolled beaches it is best to request assistance by raising a straight arm and calling out for help. Floating and conserving energy is important until help arrives. Struggling against a rip is a quick way to exhaustion and a step closer to panic and tragedy.

### YOUNG CHILDREN AND WATER SAFETY

#### Q: DO I NEED TO SUPERVISE MY CHILD IN THE POOL CONSTANTLY?

Yes. Tragically, many drownings happen in the few seconds that parents are distracted. Supervision means your child is being continually watched by you or an appropriate adult. Supervision should be constant, not the occasional glance whilst you read a book or relax. Regardless of what you are doing, always keep watch when children are in, on or around water. Take your child with you whenever you leave the swimming pool or bathtub. Never under any circumstances leave them alone!

#### Create a checklist:

- › Is your child being supervised?
- › Have you emptied the bathtub?
- › Is the lid on the nappy bucket?
- › Can your child gain access to the pool or spa?
- › Have you checked for other water dangers such as open drains, garden ponds, creeks or dams?

#### Q: SHOULD MY CHILD USE FLOTATION AIDES?

The use of flotation aides should only be used where appropriate. The child should not develop a dependency on the flotation aide. Children should be able to master the water environment on their own. Flotation aides are no substitute for constant supervision when infants and children are in the water.

### BOATING

#### Q: WHEN AND WHY SHOULD I CHECK THE WEATHER CONDITIONS BEFORE I GO OUT BOATING?

A thorough check of weather conditions is vital every time one goes boating. This includes having an appreciation of how the conditions may change throughout the day. A forecast change in weather for example may result in relatively calm conditions in the morning turning into dangerous conditions in the afternoon. Make sure your vessel is appropriate for the conditions and that you have the necessary experience to handle the forecast conditions. Remember if in doubt, don't go out.

#### Q: I'VE BEEN BOATING FOR YEARS AND CAN SWIM OK, DO I STILL NEED TO WEAR A LIFE JACKET?

Life jackets or PFDs are an important safety item on any boat and there should be one on board for each person. Waterways recommends that children and poor swimmers wear one at all times when afloat. Make sure that your life jacket is in good condition, accessible and ready for use because a life jacket stowed under an anchor chain will not do the job it was designed for and that is to help save a life.

#### Q: IS IT OK TO HAVE A FEW BEERS WHEN OUT ON THE WATER IN A BOAT?

The combination of wind waves and weather can multiply the effects of alcohol and collectively are known as 'boater fatigue'. Persons with 'boater fatigue' are at a greater risk of drowning should they fall into the water and that goes equally for skipper, crew or passenger. The blood alcohol limits are the same on the water as on our roads. A person in charge of a vessel must keep under the 0.05 blood alcohol limit and for commercial vessel operators and persons under the age of 18, the lower blood alcohol limit of 0.02 applies.

### ROCKFISHING

#### Q: IS ROCKFISHING SAFE?

Rock fishing is probably the most dangerous sport in Australia. Every year people are killed when rock fishing in NSW. If you want to rockfish, learn how to minimise the risks.

#### Q: HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISKS OF ROCK FISHING?

The three main ways to reduce the risks of rock fishing are:

1. Check and understand the weather conditions and tides before you leave home
2. Never fish alone
3. Wear the right fishing gear.

#### Q: WHAT IS THE BEST TYPE OF GEAR TO WEAR WHEN ROCK FISHING?

Wear gear that stops you from slipping into the water or reduces problems if you do go into the surf. Wear shoes with non-slip soles or cleats. Rock plates or cleats are essential on wet, weedy rocks. Wear lightweight clothing and a flotation jacket, so that if you're swept off rocks, you are buoyant and your clothes don't drag you down. Also, wear head protection. Evidence suggests that many people who have drowned received some sort of head injury.

#### Q: HOW DO I KNOW IF A SPOT IS SAFE FOR ROCK FISHING?

No place is perfectly safe for rock fishing. To minimise risks, fish only with others in places where experienced anglers go. Spend at least half an hour watching the wind and wave action before deciding whether a place is suitable. Think – what will your fishing spot be like in a few hours time with different tides and weather?

YOU ARE AN ESSENTIAL AND VITAL PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS, AS YOU LEARN, SO DOES YOUR CHILD.



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