



AUSTSWIM AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE NOMINATION GUIDELINES 2026





About the Awards

Do you want to recognise an outstanding teacher or swim school in your state, territory or country?

You can celebrate their achievements by nominating them for an AUSTSWIM Award!

What started as three national award categories in 2004 has now grown to cover the AUSTSWIM community on a national and international level. The Awards acknowledge individuals, organisations and programs for their contribution to aquatic education and water safety through leadership, innovation, and community spirit - helping teachers and communities to save lives.

Nominating is an opportunity to reflect on an individual or organisation's achievements and praise those who go above and beyond for students and their community every day.

This guide provides information on how to nominate, the judging process, and each award category.

Teacher Award Categories



- AUSTSWIM New Teacher of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Swimming and Water Safety Teacher of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Infant and Preschool Aquatics Teacher of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Access and Inclusion Teacher of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Adults Teacher of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Towards Competitive Strokes and Coaching Teacher of the Year

AUSTSWIM Swim School Network Award Categories



- AUSTSWIM Small Swim School of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Large Swim School of the Year

Industry & Community Award Categories



- AUSTSWIM Trainer of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Aqua Exercise Instructor of the Year
- AUSTSWIM Innovation Award
- AUSTSWIM Community Impact Award

Key Dates



Nominations open

Friday 10 July



Nominations close

11.45pm AEST
Sunday 9 August



Selection of finalists & Judging

August to October



Announcement

November

Why nominate?

The AUSTSWIM Awards are an exciting opportunity to celebrate the contributions of teachers, Trainers, organisations and programs.

AUSTSWIM teachers are the backbone of the aquatic and recreation industry and teach thousands of people across Australia and beyond each week. The impact and influence of our AUSTSWIM licensed teachers go beyond the 30-minute lesson each week.

Recipients and nominees have often been inspired by their own role models in swim schools or the industry. Now, these recipients are inspiring their own students, colleagues, and communities - sharing their motivation and passion while guiding and assisting those around them to achieve their best.

Who can nominate?

The good news is that anyone who is an AUSTSWIM licensed teacher or is connected to AUSTSWIM through their swim school can nominate AUSTSWIM licensed teachers or a swim school who make valuable contributions to the wider community and/or industry.

Celebrating the people and programs behind safer aquatic communities.

The awards celebrates teachers, Trainers, organisations and programs whose work creates long-term benefit for students, colleagues and communities.



About the Awards

The awards are open to teachers, Trainers, swim schools, organisations, programs and initiatives who meet the criteria of the award categories. Recipients and nominees from previous years are eligible for nomination.

Individual Award Categories

- To be eligible for an award, nominees must demonstrate excellence across the relevant selection criteria for their award category. Nominators are encouraged to work with the nominee to ensure all information submitted is accurate, complete, and supported by appropriate evidence where applicable.
- Nominees must hold a current AUSTSWIM Licence to be eligible for consideration for an award.

AUSTSWIM Swim School Network Award Categories

- To be eligible for an award, nominated swim schools must demonstrate excellence across the relevant selection criteria. Nominators are encouraged to work with the nominated swim school to ensure the information provided is accurate, complete, and reflects the school's achievements and impact.
- Please note for the 2026 AUSTSWIM Awards, all Swim Schools that employ at least one AUSTSWIM Teacher are eligible for nomination.

As of 2027, registered and paid membership of the AUSTSWIM Swim School Network will be required for eligibility.

Industry & Community Impact Award Categories

- To be eligible for an award, nominees must demonstrate significant experience, knowledge, and contribution across the relevant selection criteria. Nominators are encouraged to work with the nominee to ensure the information provided is accurate and reflects their achievements, impact, and contribution to the aquatic industry and/or wider community.
- Nominees for the AUSTSWIM Innovation Award can be an individual, swim school, aquatic facility or organisation. For facilities or organisations to be eligible, their initiative or program must engage at least one (1) AUSTSWIM Licensed Teacher or Swim School Network member.

How to nominate

Thank you for taking the time to recognise excellence within the aquatic industry. Nominating is an opportunity to acknowledge individuals, organisations and programs that have made an outstanding contribution to swimming and water safety.

Before submitting a nomination, please read the eligibility and category criteria carefully to ensure the nominee meets the requirements. Complete all required sections of the nomination form and provide clear examples that address the selection criteria. The stronger the evidence provided, the better the judges will be able to assess the nominee's achievements and impact.

The nominations will be taken on a community level and you are welcome to nominate more than one individual per category by submitting additional nominations on a separate form.

Need some help? If you have any questions about the process or need help, please email: awards@austswim.com.au

What happens next?

1

Selection Process

Once nominations are submitted, they will be assessed to confirm they are eligible to proceed.

2

Nominations Panel

Nominees will be reviewed by an internal nominations panel, with each submission evaluated against the award criteria using a weighted scoring system. A select number of finalists will then be determined for each award category before progressing to the next stage of the judging process.

3

Finalists

After the conclusion of the nomination process, finalists will be contacted to confirm their participation.

Further supporting information may be required including responses to additional questions and the submission of a short video.

4

Judging Process

Once all finalist applications have been received, a judging panel will be convened. The panel will use a weighted criteria to review all finalists submissions.



Award Selection Criteria



AUSTSWIM Swimming and Water Safety Teacher of the Year

The **AUSTSWIM TSW Teacher of the Year Award** celebrates the commitment, contribution and professionalism to the education and safety of individual teachers. Teachers in this category must be accredited in teaching swimming and water safety to students. They may also hold additional AUSTSWIM teacher accreditations.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must hold a current AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety accreditation.
- Must reside in the region they are nominated in.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

- How does the nominee engage, influence, motivate and inspire their students?
- What activities and strategies does the nominee use to share vital swimming and water safety knowledge and skills?
- How does the nominee ensure every student has the opportunity and is able to participate in activities at their own level of knowledge, skill and understanding?
- Please outline any relevant professional development the nominee has undertaken in the past 12 months and share examples of how they have applied this to their teaching.



AUSTSWIM New Teacher of the Year

The **AUSTSWIM New Teacher of the Year Award** identifies the commitment, contribution, professionalism, and passion of emerging AUSTSWIM Teachers who are making a positive impact on swimming and water safety education.

Eligibility Criteria

- The AUSTSWIM Teacher must be newly accredited and licensed within the 12 months of eligibility (1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026).
- Must reside in the region they are nominated in.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

- How does the nominee engage, influence, motivate and inspire their students?
- On the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course, candidates learn about inclusive teaching practices. Please share examples of how the nominee has applied this to their lessons.
- On the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course, candidates learn about using problem-solving and discovery. Can you share how the nominee, in their lessons, encourages students to problem-solve and make decisions to safer in, on and around water?



AUSTSWIM Specialist Teacher of the Year Categories

The **AUSTSWIM Specialist Teacher of the Year Award** categories are an opportunity to acknowledge the expertise, passion and dedication to education and safety, of individual teachers who hold an AUSTSWIM extension accreditation or qualification.

Eligibility Criteria

- The AUSTSWIM Teacher must be accredited or qualified in the category named in the title of the award;
 - Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics (Australia and International)
 - Teacher of Aquatics - Access and Inclusion (Australia and International)
 - Towards Competitive Strokes and Coaching (Australia and International)
 - Teacher of Adults (Australia and International)
- Must reside in the region they are nominated in.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

- How does the nominee engage, influence, motivate and inspire their students?
- What activities and strategies do the nominee use to share vital swimming and water safety knowledge and skills?
- How does the nominee ensure every student has the opportunity and is able to participate in activities at their own level of knowledge, skill and understanding?
- Please outline any relevant professional development the nominee has undertaken in the past 12 months and share examples of how they have applied this to their teaching.



AUSTSWIM Swim School Network of the Year Categories

(Australia only)

The **AUSTSWIM Swim School of the Year Award** spotlights swim schools demonstrating excellence in aquatic education and water safety. This award honours a swim school that creates outstanding learning experiences, fosters a safe, inclusive and supportive environment, and plays a leading role in developing confident swimmers while promoting lifelong water safety skills within its community.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must operate in the region they are nominated in.
- Must employ at least one AUSTSWIM Teacher.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

As of 2027, registered and paid membership of the AUSTSWIM Swim School Network will be required for eligibility.

Selection Criteria

- Please detail what being nominated for this award means to the swim school.
- Please provide an overview and share examples of how the school mentors, supports and assesses AUSTSWIM trainees. How does this improve the student learning experience?
- Commitment to building a strong teaching workforce through effective onboarding, mentoring, professional development, and career pathways.
- Please indicate the range of population groups the school provides programs for. Please give examples of these programs.
- Please detail any initiatives the school implements to engage and interact with their community for safer aquatic participation in recreational, vocational, sporting, leisure, wellness and educational activities.



AUSTSWIM Aqua Exercise Instructor of the Year

(Australia only)

The **AUSTSWIM Aqua Exercise Instructor of the Year Award** celebrates instructors who deliver high-quality aquatic exercise experiences while making a positive impact on participant wellbeing, engagement, and the broader aquatic community.

Eligibility Criteria

- The AUSTSWIM Aqua Exercise Instructor must hold a statement of attainment issued by AUSTSWIM.
- Must reside in the region they are nominated in.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

- How does the nominee engage, influence, motivate and inspire their students?
- What activities and strategies does the nominee use to pass on vital health or exercise messages to participants?
- How does the nominee ensure every student has the opportunity and is able to participate in activities at their own level of knowledge, skill and understanding?
- Can you share any unique instructing methods that the nominee uses to encourage students to participate and practice skills?
- Please outline any relevant PD the nominee has undertaken in the past 12 months (prior to the current award nomination closing date) and share examples of how they have applied to this their teaching.



AUSTSWIM Trainer of the Year

The **AUSTSWIM Trainer of the Year Award** recognises the dedication, expertise, and impact of AUSTSWIM Trainers who inspire, guide, and educate current and future Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety and Aqua Instructors. **Finalists for this category will be chosen internally by the AUSTSWIM State Management team and community nominations cannot be submitted.**

Eligibility Criteria

- Instill in students a desire to learn and achieve, they recognise and understand the needs of individual students; they encourage talent and foster self-esteem.
- Demonstrate thorough knowledge of the subject matter and have the ability to share it effectively with students.
- Foster cooperative relationships with their colleagues and the aquatic community.
- Demonstrate outstanding leadership.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be a current and active AUSTSWIM Trainer.
- Must reside in the region they are nominated in.
- Must have delivered AUSTSWIM courses within the last 12 months, prior to the date of 30 June 2026.
- Must be able to demonstrate considerable experience and/or knowledge in all areas of the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

- What techniques does the AUSTSWIM Trainer use to maximise the quality of learning for each student?
- Feedback from candidates who were trained and/or mentored by the nominated AUSTSWIM Trainer will be considered.
- Trainers that have undertaken professional development and applied these learnings to improve the experience for AUSTSWIM candidates will be considered favourably.



AUSTSWIM Innovation Award

The **AUSTSWIM Innovation Award** recognises an individual, swim school or organisation that has developed and implemented an innovative approach, initiative, program or practice that has advanced aquatic education, water safety or swimming participation. The award celebrates creativity, leadership and measurable impact that enhances the aquatic industry and improves outcomes for participants.

Eligibility Criteria

- Nominees for the AUSTSWIM Innovation Award can be an individual, swim school, aquatic facility or organisation. For facilities or organisations to be eligible, your initiative or program must engage at least one (1) AUSTSWIM licensed Teacher or Swim School Network member.
- The innovation, initiative or program must have been implemented within the past two (2) years or demonstrate ongoing development and measurable outcomes.

Selection Criteria

Please address the following:

- **What does being nominated for this award mean to you or your organisation?**
- **Describe the innovation, initiative or program.**
 - What challenge or opportunity was identified?
 - What makes this approach innovative or different from existing practices?
- **Implementation and Impact**
 - Explain how the innovation was developed and implemented.
 - Provide evidence of the outcomes achieved, including benefits for participants, staff, the community or the aquatic industry.
 - Include any measurable results, feedback or success stories where possible.
- **Sustainability and Transferability**
 - Explain how the innovation can be sustained over time.
 - Describe how it could be adapted or replicated by other swim schools, aquatic facilities or organisations to improve aquatic education and water safety outcomes.
- **Contribute to the Aquatic Industry**
 - Describe how the innovation promotes safer aquatic participations, improves learning experiences, increases accessibility or inclusion, enhances operational practices, or contributes to the ongoing development of the swimming and water safety industry.



AUSTSWIM Community Impact Awards

The **AUSTSWIM Community Impact Award** recognises an individual, swim school, aquatic facility or organisation that has made an outstanding contribution to their community through aquatic education, water safety and swimming programs. The award celebrates initiatives that improve access, foster inclusion, build community connections and create lasting positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

Eligibility Criteria

- Nominees for the AUSTSWIM Innovation Award can be an individual, swim school, aquatic facility or organisation. For facilities or organisations to be eligible, your initiative or program must engage at least one (1) AUSTSWIM licensed Teacher or Swim School Network member.
- Must have demonstrated a significant commitment to improving community outcomes through aquatic education, water safety or swimming initiatives.

Selection Criteria

Please address the following:

- **What does being nominated for this award mean to you or your organisation?**
- **Community Contribution**
 - Describe the initiatives, programs or activities you have delivered that have positively impacted your community.
 - Explain how these initiatives address community needs or barriers to participation.
- **Access and Inclusion**
 - Provide examples of how your programs have increased access to swimming and water safety education for diverse or underrepresented communities, including (where applicable) people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations communities, people with disability, regional or remote communities, or those experiencing financial disadvantage.
- **Partnerships and Engagement**
 - Describe how you have worked with local organisations, schools, community groups or other stakeholders to strengthen community participation and water safety outcomes.
 - Provide examples of community engagement and collaboration.
- **Impact and Outcomes**
 - Explain the measurable or observable outcomes of your initiatives.
 - Include evidence such as participant feedback, increased participation, improved community awareness, program growth or other indicators of success.
- **Commitment to Ongoing Community Development**
 - Describe how you will continue to support your community through aquatic education and water safety.
 - Explain how your initiatives contribute to long-term community wellbeing and a culture of lifelong safe aquatic participation.



CELEBRATING OUR EVERYDAY HEROES

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