



Watch Around Water Evaluation Summary 2009/10

Background and Program Growth

The Watch Around Water campaign has been developed with the intention of complimenting and supporting existing legislation and guidelines. The campaign also addresses in-water supervision and parental supervision ratios which are not yet addressed through existing legislation and guidelines, but requested by the industry.

Injury in public aquatic facilities is a major issue faced by the Victorian Aquatic Recreation Industry. Inadequate levels of personal supervision have been identified as a major area of concern when relating to the number of incidences involving young children.

While Watch Around Water was developed by Royal Life Saving Society WA and Leisure Institute Western Australia (LIWA), it has now been successfully implemented into Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, with over 200 facilities nationally.

In its pilot year (2008/2009), Victoria had a total of 15 facilities accredited in the program. The program has continued to expand, more than doubling in its second year with a total of 35 facilities, and in 2010/2011 there were 85 participating facilities, more than fivefold what the program started with three years earlier. The program is now moving into our fourth season, with over 100 accredited facilities.

Summary of Findings- Awareness

There were improvements in facility staff and management, as well as patrons, in responding that supervision is the most effective way to prevent drowning in young children (15%, 20%, 18% respectively). Patrons responding aquatic .

education had an 11% decrease; however this was still quite high drawing attention to the need to promote that there is no substitute for active adult supervision.

Respondents reporting the most appropriate level of supervision for children under 5 as *within arm's reach* remained fairly unchanged in staff, although there was a 10% decrease in this response by management. This correlated with increases in *within 2m* in this group.

Staff and management both reported improvements in parental supervision of children within the facility (11% and 30% respectively) in 2009/10. Combined staff and management responses also showed that patrons were *more aware* or *much more aware* about their responsibilities to supervise their children by 7% (when compared to Pre 2009/10 evaluation).

These results were consistent with the self-rated patron supervision behaviours, with 13% more patrons reporting they *Always get into the water with children* (18% Pre, 31% Post).

While almost two thirds of patrons surveyed had heard about the Watch Around Water program (63%), this highlights the need to further promote program policies, to ensure that all patrons are aware. Of those aware of Watch Around Water, 96% knew what the main message of the program was.

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