

## Play it Safe by the Water

Consumer tracking report and program evaluations 2021-22



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# Consumer tracking report 2021-22

## Community survey

The Play it Safe by the Water (PISBTW) Community Survey is conducted annually to examine the impact of aquatic safety messaging delivered via the public awareness campaign and education programs on the self-reported recall, awareness, attitudes and behaviours of Victorians. An online survey of 725 Victorians aged 18 years and over was conducted by social research data collection agency I-view (Ipsos Observer). Respondents were selected via a random sampling process, which included quotas placed on location, gender and age according to population distribution and demographics. Analysis and reporting of data was by Life Saving Victoria's (LSV's) research and health promotion team.

**725**  
Victorian adults surveyed

### Demographics

34% aged 45-64 years

50% male; 50% female; 1% other

15% with a disability

1% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both

48% parent/ guardian

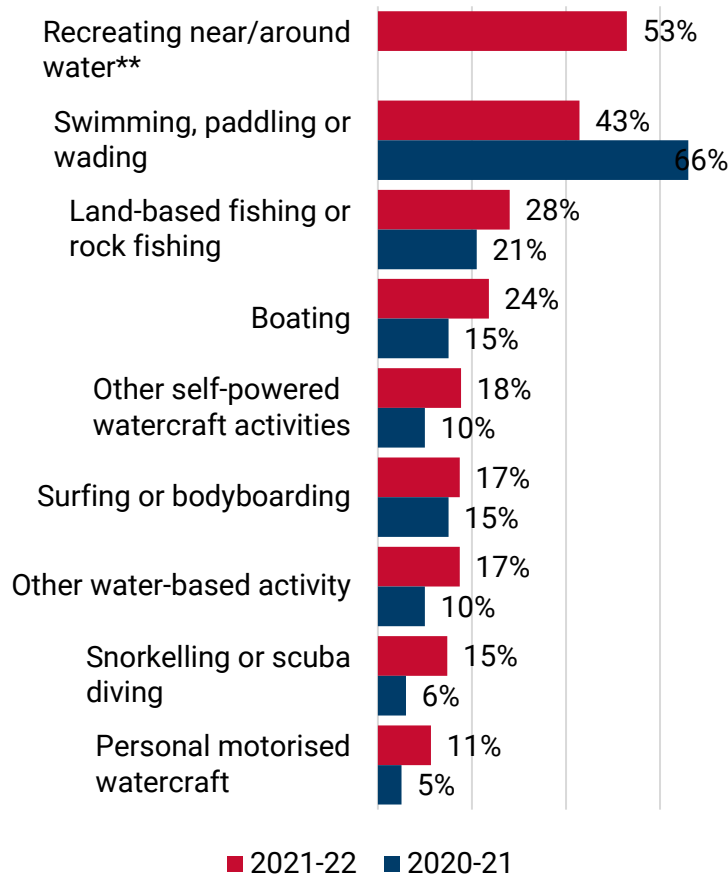
71% metropolitan Melbourne residents

71% born in Australia (6% England, 5% India)

82% of overseas-born participants lived in Australia 9+ years

18% spoke a language other than English

Participation in water-based activities in 2020-21 and 2021-22



\*\*Activity introduced as multiple choice selection in 2021-22.

### Key findings

- Most common times to visit inland and coastal waterways were weekends in January, February and December, between 12pm and 5pm.
- In coastal and inland waterways, rip currents/ strong currents were perceived to be the most hazardous risks; cold water/ cold spots were considered the least hazardous.
- 66% of participants had previously undertaken formal swim lessons.
- In a typical 25-metre pool, 36% of participants identified as weak or non-swimmers; in coastal/ inland waters, 43% of participants identified as weak or non-swimmers.
- Abalone fishing safety messages were the least commonly recalled messages (3%).

## Of the participants...

70% did not agree that only weak or non-swimmers swam between the red and yellow flags (55% in 2020-21).

68% agreed that there was risk in having alcohol around the water (68% in 2020-21).

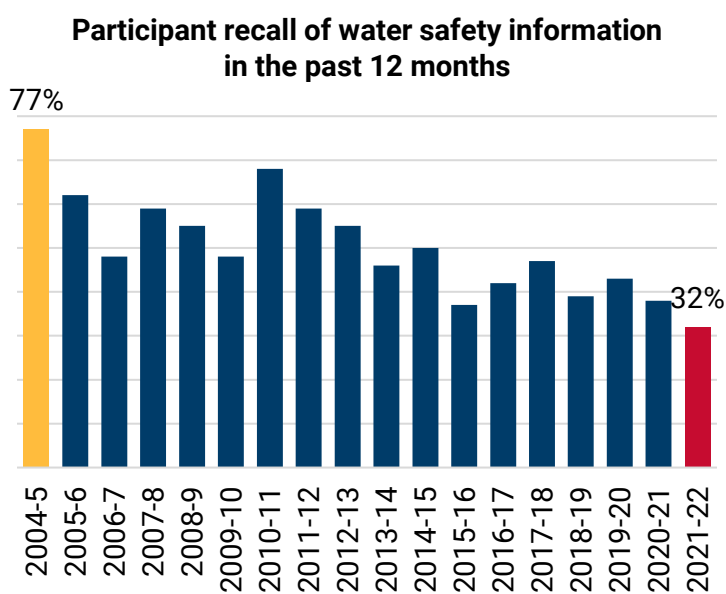
32% could identify a rip current/ strong flowing current (44% in 2020-21).

46% knew and could perform CPR (57% in 2020-21).

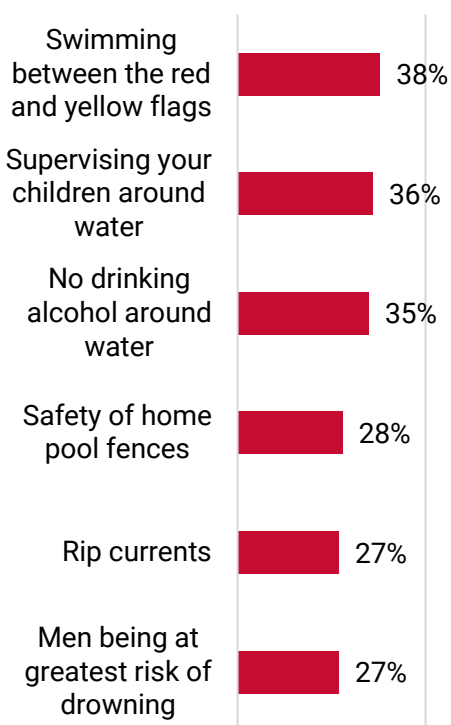
33% were aware of how to perform a safe rescue (61% in 2020-21).

39% could exit safely unassisted if they were unexpectedly swept into the water close to shore (52% in 2020-21).

Top 5 sources for water safety messaging	
2021-22	2020-21
<b>59%</b> Television ads	<b>74%</b> Television ads
<b>29%</b> Signage at beaches/ lakes	<b>27%</b> Signage at beaches, rivers or lakes
<b>28%</b> Media/ news reports	<b>23%</b> Radio
<b>26%</b> Ads on catch-up TV	<b>22%</b> Catch-up TV
<b>15%</b> Radio ads	<b>15%</b> Learn-to-swim lessons/ aquatic centres



## Top 6 water safety messages recalled by participants

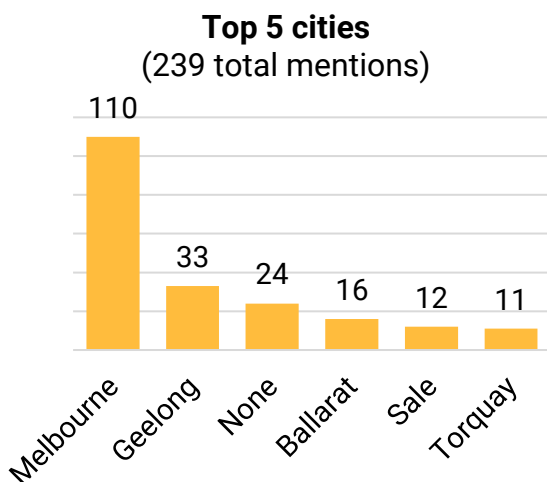
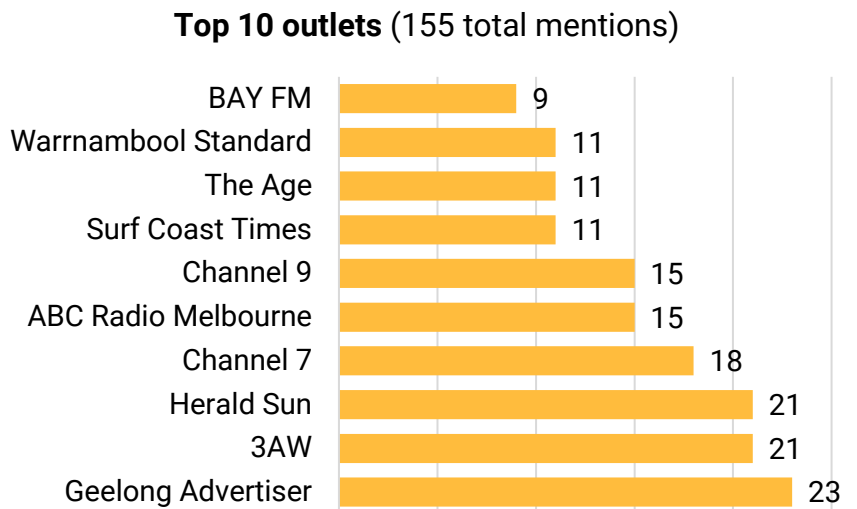
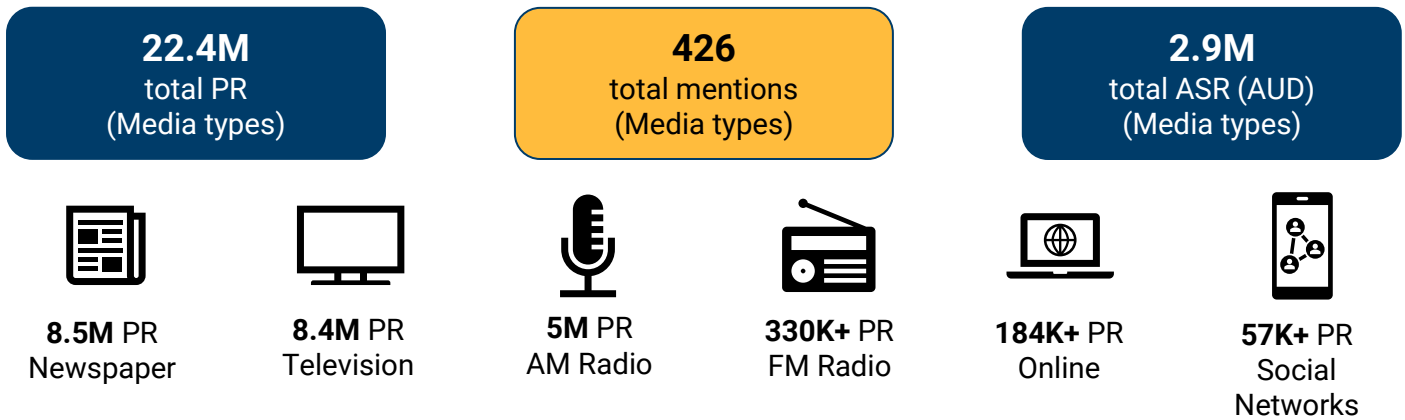


What have the messages done for you personally?	Percentage (%)		
	2021-22	Average (2007-2021)	Difference
Reminded you of water safety issues	67.9	72.35	6.35
Told you something new about water safety	15.0	15.1	0.66
Made you more careful around water	42.1	39.6	6.12
Made you plan ahead to ensure safety before participation in, on or around water	21.7	23.15	6.47
None/ unsure	2.3	12.55	138.05

# Media monitoring report

The Play it Safe by the Water media analysis is conducted annually to review exposure of campaign and Aquatic Injury Prevention Agenda messages through media and social media. Media items, provided through iSentia media monitoring service, were reviewed between 12 July 2021 and 30 June 2022 (354 days), for the inclusion of water safety issues, drowning statistics and safety messages and/or calls to action.

Data were collected regarding water safety messaging mentions, location, potential audience reach (PR) and equivalent advertising value (ASR).



- ### Recommendations
1. Continue engagement with newspapers and increase community engagement with people online and via social networks.
  2. Increase water safety messaging during winter months to highlight that drowning can occur year-round.
  3. Increase promotion of water safety messages to regional Victorian areas.

## Aquatic industry water safety merchandise distribution

Aquatics & Recreation Victoria (ARV) received funding to distribute PISBTW-branded merchandise within the aquatics industry. Two hundred Melbourne-based aquatic recreation facilities each received waterproof swim bags (50), dive balls (30), stickers (100) and jigsaw puzzle keyrings (50). To determine merchandise effectiveness, an online survey was sent to these facilities, which was completed by 21 organisational representatives.



Overall, the relevance of the merchandise received an average of **7.24/ 10**, with over three-quarters (77%) of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was relevant.

### Positive merchandise feedback



They were helpful to educate, promote and create awareness of water safety.

They were great incentive to use as rewards/ prizes to encourage students while swimming.

Participants enjoyed the design colours and particularly liked the dive toys.

### Areas for improvement

- Some participants believed that more merchandise was needed, as well as more timely provision, as they believed it was delivered too late to be effective.
- Some participants suggested other types of merchandise (including to replace the stickers) specifically for use around water or to encourage educational and swimming and water safety practises, e.g., water-based toys, posters to place around pools, swimming caps or lesson plans.

### Recommendations

1. As the merchandise was useful for eliciting engagement to encourage students to learn swimming and water safety, ARV should consider providing merchandise that can be used for water-based activities for students; and consider water safety promotional materials for pool attendees (e.g., parents), including flyers and or pamphlets.
2. To ensure enough merchandise is delivered, there should be communication between ARV and other organisations to determine what quantities are required to tailor quantities to each organisation.
3. To ensure timely delivery or delivery before the summer period merchandise should be delivered before December to maximise engagement.

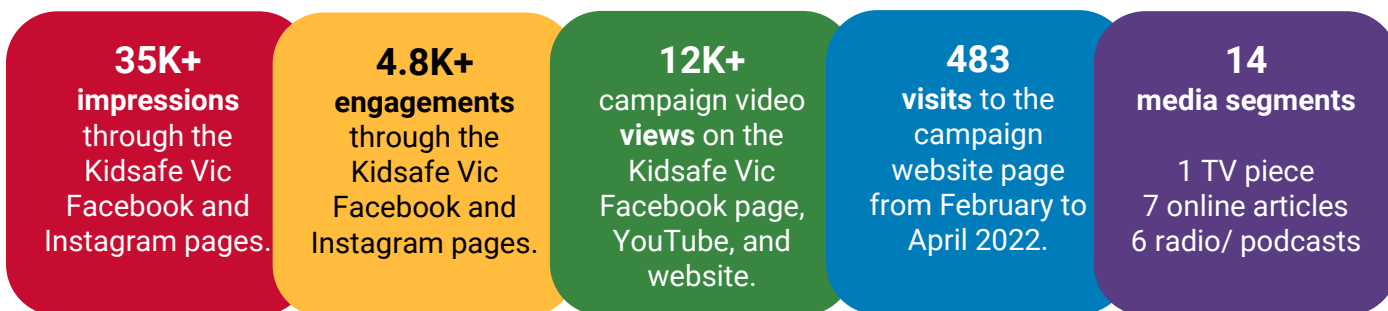
## Drowning hazard safety campaign

**Kidsafe Victoria's drowning hazard safety campaign** was an expansion of Kidsafe Victoria's 'Safe Barriers Save Lives' backyard pool safety campaign. It widened the scope of potential drowning hazards around the home and farm, for example, dams, pet water bowls, fish ponds and baths. The aim was to reduce childhood drowning incidents in Victoria. The campaign showcased real-life stories from people who were personally affected by fatal and non-fatal drownings occurring in the home. It utilised various mediums for outreach and engagement, including videos, digital and print resources, media and social media campaigns and promotion of these resources through various media and websites. The campaign ran from March to June 2022, with the following report using information current as of April 2022.

The campaign aimed to increase awareness of:

1. Common drowning hazards among parents and carers, including those less commonly known, e.g., pet water bowls and fishponds,
2. The importance (and definition) of active adult supervision of toddlers in and around water, and
3. Other practical measures that parents and carers could use to reduce the risk of child drowning.

### Campaign outcomes



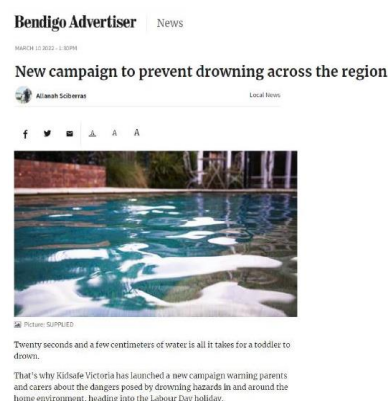
The "Through My Eyes" videos which presented real-life drowning incidents were the most effective for engaging parents, carers and the general public.

They facilitated discussions and encouraged learnings of water safety hazards, including for toddlers.



### Recommendations

1. Continue engaging with the public and target demographics (parents/ carers) through social media platforms, as these appear to be effective message channels.
2. Continue the use of real-life examples of incidents to highlight the consequences arising from a lack of supervision, as this was an effective method for eliciting engagement from the public.



## Safe barriers safe lives – backyard pool safety campaign

**Kidsafe Victoria's 'Safe Barriers Save Lives' (SBSL) backyard pool safety campaign** reminds pool/spa owners about the importance of checking their pool/spa safety barriers by providing a call to action to do so at the beginning of daylight saving. The aim is to reduce drowning incidents in backyard pools and spas among children under the age of four. The campaign has run for the past nine years in Victoria and has been leveraged to deliver a national campaign involving the Kidsafe state and territory offices since 2017.

### Key objectives:

1. Increase public discussion about the importance of maintaining pool barriers,
2. Encourage pool owners to regularly check and maintain pool/spa barriers,
3. Increase awareness of the incidence of both fatal and non-fatal childhood drownings, and
4. Increase water safety knowledge and skills among parents and carers.

### Activity

Campaign video series, including a water safety lesson from a 5-year-old, and personal stories.

### Outcomes

**112k+** campaign video views on Kidsafe Vic Facebook page.

**46k+** campaign video views on Kidsafe Australia Facebook page.



### Activity

Media campaign releases and other media activities: online, on TV, and on radio.

### Outcomes

- 67** media segments:
- **61** online articles
  - **3** TV segments (Today Show and 9 News)
  - **3** radio segments
  - **350** radio stations played one news grab



### Activity

Social media campaign, targeted advertising (digital, radio, and public), and the development of other promotional content.

### Outcomes

**200k+** people reached via Spotify adverts.

**1.4m+** people reached via digital advertising.

**23,400+** visits to Kidsafe Vic website

Kidsafe Vic Facebook page received **430k+** impressions, and **5,900+** engagements on posts.

Kidsafe Australia Facebook page received **100k+** impressions and **2,300** engagements on posts.



### Recommendations

1. Continue the production and promotion of campaign videos, particularly those that display personal stories from families/ first responders.
2. Continue digital advertising, particularly the promotion of content through Kidsafe Facebook pages and other social media.
3. Increase and diversify the number of media segments of TV and radio channels.

### Why your pool and spa must be registered



RAKY  
Posted October 21, 2020

The deadline for Victorians to have their pools inspected and registered with a compliance certificate has been extended.

Victorians with home swimming pools and spas built before 1984 now have until 1 June 2022 to register their pools with their local council and receive a Certificate of Compliance from a registered swimming pool inspector. Pools built after 1984 have also had their due dates extended, but owners will have three and five year compliance deadlines depending on their state's rules.

f in v

## Beach program

The diversity and inclusion team (D&I) at LSV have developed, organised and run the Beach Program for several years. The multicultural beach programs educate participants on life saving techniques and water safety messages. The programs offer a practical approach to familiarising participants with the beach environment through educational activities. Evaluation was in the form of an online survey, completed by teachers and coordinators from participating schools and organisations. Data were collected by D&I and analysed by the research and health promotion team at LSV. In the 2021-22 financial year, 58 respondents completed the post-program evaluation.

**5 /5**

Participants' overall experience

**4.9 /5**

Quality of instructors

**4.8 /5**

Appropriateness of language levels

**4.9 /5**

Appropriateness of resources/ activities

**100%**

of participants believed program participants gained 'some' or 'a lot' of new knowledge/ skills.

**98%**

of participants would recommend this program to others.

## Teacher/ coordinator feedback

### What is working well?

- Participants thoroughly enjoyed the program and were engaged throughout.
- New learnings included water safety skills such as practical advice for coastal safety and terminology (important for new arrivals to Australia).
- High praise for instructors' enthusiasm, patience, compassion, presentation skills and running of the program, including their ability to continue engagement despite weather conditions.
- Great communication with schools outside of the program.
- Praise for supplying culturally appropriate swimwear.

### What could be improved?

- Pending weather conditions and ability of group, prioritise water-based activities, e.g., if time only allows for five activities when there are six in total, soccer could be removed.

## Recommendations

- Prioritise water-based activities, permitting of weather and beach conditions and group ability.

# Life Saving Victoria– diversity and inclusion team



## Meet a Lifeguard program

The diversity and inclusion team (D&I) at LSV have developed, organised and run the Meet a Lifeguard (MAL) program for several years. The multicultural meet a lifeguard program is an interactive session designed to educate students and community groups about how to make safe decisions when enjoying inland and coastal aquatic environments. The session is conducted by a lifeguard and can be tailored to suit the requirements of each group. Evaluation was in the form of an online survey, completed by teachers and coordinators from participating schools and organisations. Data were collected by D&I and analysed by the research and health promotion team at LSV. In the 2021-22 financial year, 46 respondents completed the post-program evaluation.

**4.9 /5**

Participants' overall experience

**4.9 /5**

Quality of instructors

**4.8 /5**

Appropriateness of language levels

**4.8 /5**

Appropriateness of resources/ activities

**100%**

of participants believed program participants gained 'some' or 'a lot' of new knowledge/ skills.

**98%**

of participants would recommend this program to others.

### Teacher/ coordinator feedback

#### What is working well?

- Respondents were impressed with the execution of the online learning option; participants were engaged, and instructors communicated effectively online.
- Excellent instruction: the team were friendly, encouraging, and tailored language to their audience.
- Well-organised and consistent with needs of participating communities, e.g., five simple water safety points, use of simple language and visuals.
- Resources provided for participants who spoke English as an additional language (EAL) were commended for providing context prior to the program.
- Interactive elements of the program were commended for the engagement of participants and provided good insight into survival and rescue actions.

#### What could be improved?

- Despite successful application of the virtual program, face-to-face learning was preferred when possible.
- Ensure easy location of EAL resources, e.g., clear instructions to find link on LSV website (if available).
- Introduction of quiz at end of the program to gain an idea of participant knowledge post-program.
- Post-program merchandise or materials for participants to ensure continuation of learning.
- Translate certain terminology, e.g., 'drowning', to most commonly used languages.

### Recommendations

1. While the virtual program was highly commended, when possible, engage in face-to-face learning to provide maximum engagement.
2. Provide clear direction to resources/ materials (especially for EAL students) or provide plain English language materials for students to continue post-program learning, e.g., individual handouts or classroom resources.
3. Consider introducing a post-program quiz to gauge learning and outcomes of participants.
4. While communication was praised for clarity, consider translating certain terms to ensure understanding.

# Life Saving Victoria– diversity and inclusion team



## Resuscitate a Mate program

The diversity and inclusion team (D&I) at LSV have developed, organised and run the Resuscitate a Mate (RAM) program for several years. The multicultural RAM program is designed to introduce participants to basic anatomy and emergency response management (DRSABCD). In the interactive session, participants learn about the steps to follow in an emergency situation and the knowledge to potentially save a life. Evaluation is in the form of an online survey, completed by teachers and coordinators from participating schools and organisations. Data were collected by D&I and analysed by the research and health promotion team at LSV. In the 2021-22 financial year, 30 respondents completed the post-program evaluation.

**4.9 /5**

Participants' overall experience

**5 /5**

Quality of instructors

**4.9 /5**

Appropriateness of language levels

**4.9 /5**

Appropriateness of resources/ activities

**100%**

of participants believed program participants gained 'some' or 'a lot' of new knowledge/ skills.

**100%**

of participants would recommend this program to others.

## Teacher/ coordinator feedback

### What is working well?

- Praise for instruction team for being engaging, compassionate, patient, employing appropriate language levels and having great presentation skills.
- Well organised program, with great communication and professionalism of the D&I team towards schools and organisations.
- Great practical and theory-based components led to high engagement and understanding for program participants, and online workshops were also well-received.

### What could be improved?

- Consider providing post-program materials to participants.

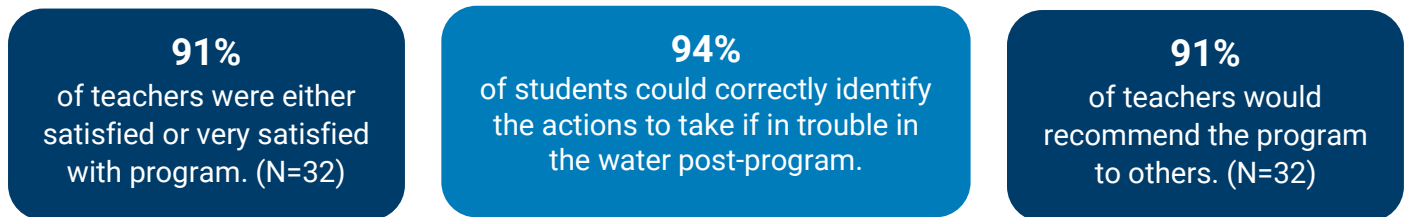
## Recommendations

- Consider providing materials in plain English to supply to program participants to ensure continuation of learning post-program, e.g., individual handouts or classroom resources.

## Open water learning experience

In the 2021-22 financial year, Life Saving Victoria’s (LSV’s) education team implemented the Open Water Learning Experience (OWLE). To evaluate the effectiveness of this program, the Student Water Safety Quiz and LSV Education program Teacher Survey were developed to capture students’ perspectives of their experiences undertaking the program, as well as the satisfaction levels and experiences of teachers witnessing the program. The following report details the responses from these surveys.

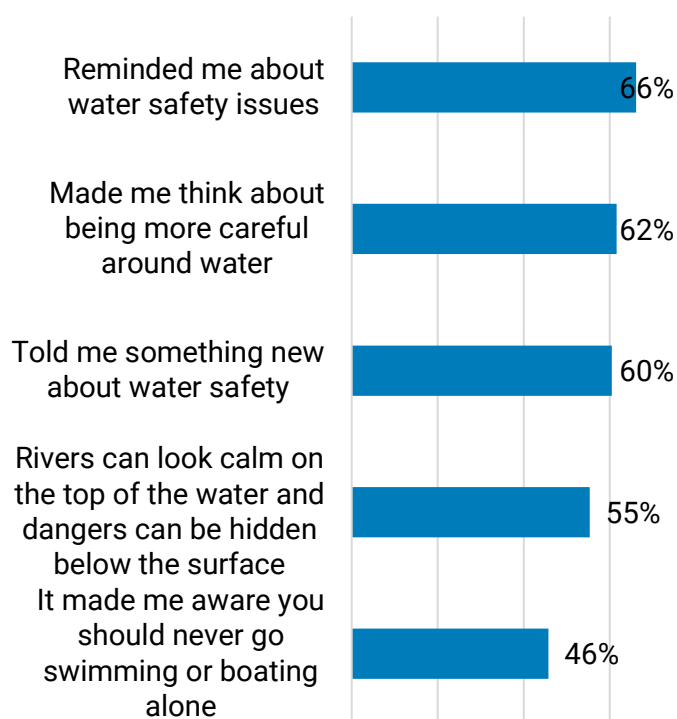
Overall, 178 students aged nine to 12 years old (grades three to six), and 35 teachers (of which 31 witnessed the program) completed their respective surveys.



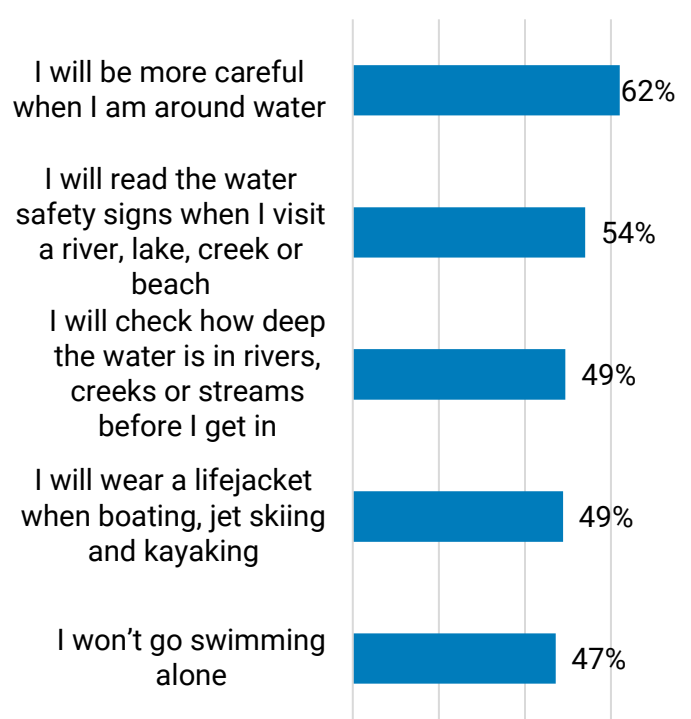
**What did students learn?**

- Lifesaving skills, including CPR and DRSABCD.
- Coastal safety, including rip identification, survival skills, reading safety signage and what to do if caught in a rip current. Over one-third of students could correctly identify all of the correct actions to take if caught in a rip current.
- Hazard identification: when shown a picture, many students were able identify potential risks in and under the water, e.g., sharp rocks, submerged objects, potentially hazardous wildlife, deep water, etc.

**Top 5 impacts on water safety awareness of students (N=177)**



**Top 5 intended behaviour changes of students (N=174)**



## What did students enjoy?

- Over half (52%) of the students reported they either liked the program or liked it a lot.
- Water-based activities including coastal swimming and using lifejackets and boogie boards.
- Lifesaving skills, including learning CPR and rescue simulations.
- Learning from engaging instructors.
- Incorporating the natural environment into teachings.

**Teachers (n=32) believed the program had the following impacts on students:**

The program reminded them about water safety issues (91%)

The program taught them to be more careful around water (75%)

It told them something new about water safety (72%)

It made them think about planning ahead to ensure safety before participating in activities around water (50%)

## Teacher responses

- 91% believed students were either engaged or very engaged. (N=32)
- 95% believed that the students' ability to deal with emergency situations was either better or much better following the program. (N=20)
- 90% believed the students' water safety knowledge and skills were either better or much better following the program. (N=32)
- 95% believed that the students' understanding of their local aquatic environment, including pools and potential risk was either better or much better following the program. (N=20)

## What could be improved? (Student and teacher responses)

- Learning the same content as previous years may lead to lower engagement from returning students.
- Students who were unable to go in the water due to bad conditions were disappointed. While this is demonstrating a key safety message in practise (considering conditions before entering), this may indicate a need for an improved 'bad weather plan'.
- Some students who had certain medical conditions or aversions to elements in the natural environment felt uncomfortable. There were also concerns over lack of shade from the sun.
- Organisation and communication: ensure instructors are prepared and that information sent to schools prior to the program is correct.

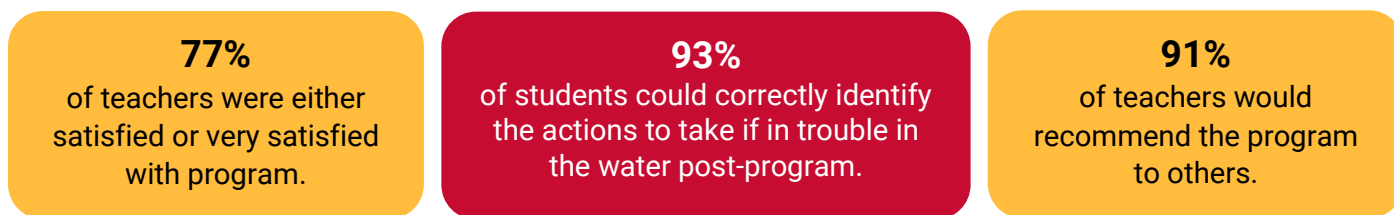
## Recommendations

1. Overall, the program appeared effective in teaching water safety to students, therefore it is recommended to continue teaching lifesaving skills and coastal safety; however, it may be worth considering altering content based on whether delivery is to a new or continuing cohort, to maximise engagement.
2. While it is necessary to adhere to beach conditions, in the event of water-based activities being cancelled, a 'bad weather plan' should be developed/improved to improve student enjoyment.
3. Instructors should ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable, especially students with medical conditions. This may include increasing shade and sun safety measures.

## Sink or swim (meet a lifeguard)

Life Saving Victoria’s (LSV) education team implemented the Sink or Swim (Meet a Lifeguard) (SORS) program. To evaluate the effectiveness of this program, the Student Water Safety Quiz and LSV Education program Teacher Survey were developed to capture students’ perspectives of their experiences as well as satisfaction levels and experiences of teachers witnessing the program. The following report details the responses from these surveys.

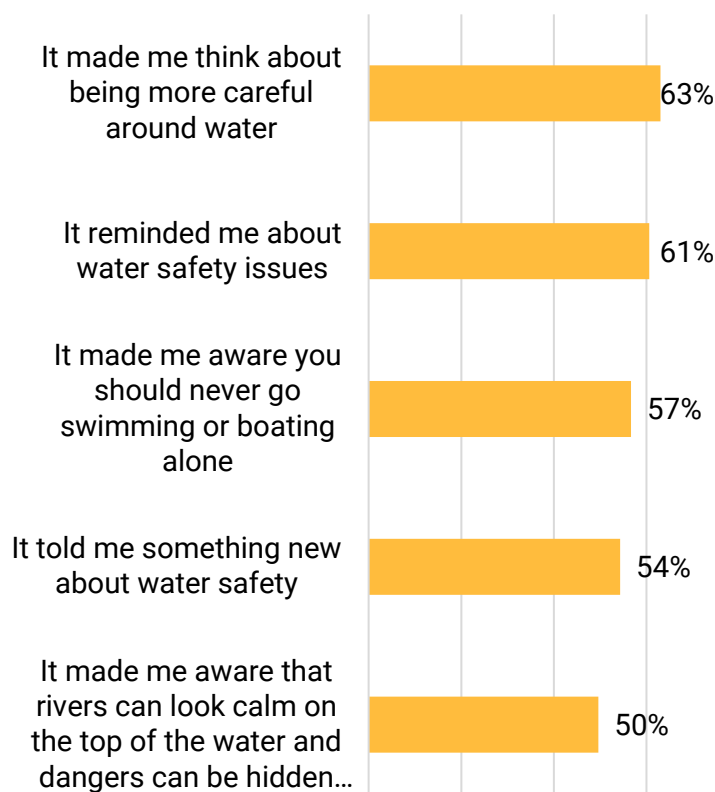
Overall, 127 students mostly aged eight to 12 years old, and 21 teachers (of which 19 observed the program) completed their respective surveys.



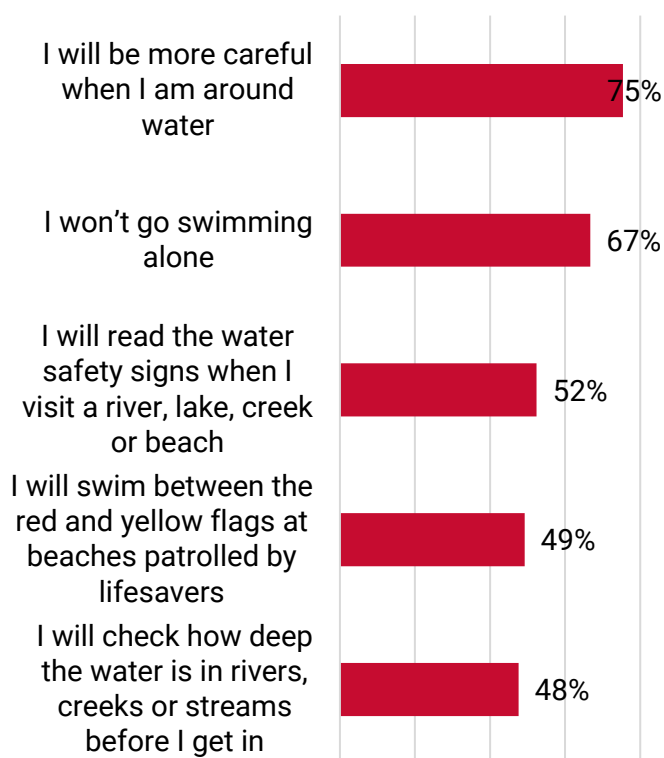
### What did students learn?

- Coastal safety, including rip identification, survival skills, reading safety signage and what to do if caught in a rip current. Over one-third of students could correctly identify all of the correct actions to take if caught in a rip current.
- Hazard identification: when shown a picture, many students were able identify potential risks in and under the water, e.g., sharp rocks, submerged objects, potentially hazardous wildlife, deep water, etc.
- Many could correctly identify safety signage that indicated ‘no swimming’ and to wear a lifejacket.

**Top 5 impacts on students (N=127)**



**Top 5 intended behaviour changes of students (N=126)**



## What did students enjoy?

- Two-thirds of students (65%) either liked the program or liked it a lot.
- The students' prior experiences were tied into the teaching, adding an interactive element.
- Learning new facts about water safety and specifically about rip currents, especially when they got to be a part of the demonstration (playing the rip current game).
- Having a real lifesaver/ lifeguard was received positively, as were the engaging instructors.

Teachers (n=21) believed the program had the following impacts on students:

The program reminded them about water safety issues  
(76%)

It told them something new about water safety  
(57%)

The program taught them to be more careful around water  
(76%)

It made them think about planning ahead to ensure safety before participating in activities around water  
(62%)

## Teacher responses

- **66%** believed students were either engaged or very engaged. (N=21)
- **81%** believed the students' water safety knowledge and skills were either better or much better following the program. (N=21)
- **83%** believed that the students' ability to deal with emergency situations was either better or much better following the program. (N=18)
- **83%** believed that the students' understanding of their local aquatic environment, including pools and potential risk was either better or much better following the program. (N=18)

## What could be improved? (Student and teacher responses)

- Some students and teachers believed there was too much sitting on the floor and that this was not conducive to engagement; some teachers also believed the sessions could be shortened.
- Inclusivity – some students felt that they were not included in the activities.
- The scenarios that were not water-based did not always positively resonate with the children (e.g., pretending to be in a pool).
- Potentially consider geographical limitations, e.g., inland waterway safety may be more appropriate for schools that are not as close to coastal areas (or teach alongside the coastal safety).

## Recommendations

1. Overall, the program appeared effective in teaching water safety to students, so it is recommended to continue teaching coastal safety in a way that is interactive.
2. Instructors should ensure that all students remain active and engaged during activities that are not water-based. Consider the inclusion of more inland waterway content and include content based on geographical location (e.g., local waterways within a regional area).
3. Suggest a review of the length of the sessions, ensuring that important information is still taught.

## African & Pasifika stand up paddleboard program

The African & Pasifika stand up paddleboard (SUP) program run by Surfing Victoria aims to engage young people from African and Pasifika communities to learn about safety in coastal and inland waterways, as well as the health and wellbeing benefits these environments can bring. The program utilised an advisory group (of ambassadors and role models) to better understand participants' wants and needs to make collaborative decisions on how the program would be run. The following evaluation report was conducted by the research and health promotion team at Life Saving Victoria (LSV) using data collected from pre- and post-program surveys completed by participants.

Overall, 81 participants completed the program: Nhill (8), Ballarat (22) and Horsham (51). The program was held from August to December 2021 (including extending periods due to COVID-19 related circumstances). It was noted that when weather conditions were unsuitable, the program was cancelled to ensure safe conditions for participants.

**100%**

of participants could correctly identify a rip current post-program.  
(50% pre-program)

**100%**

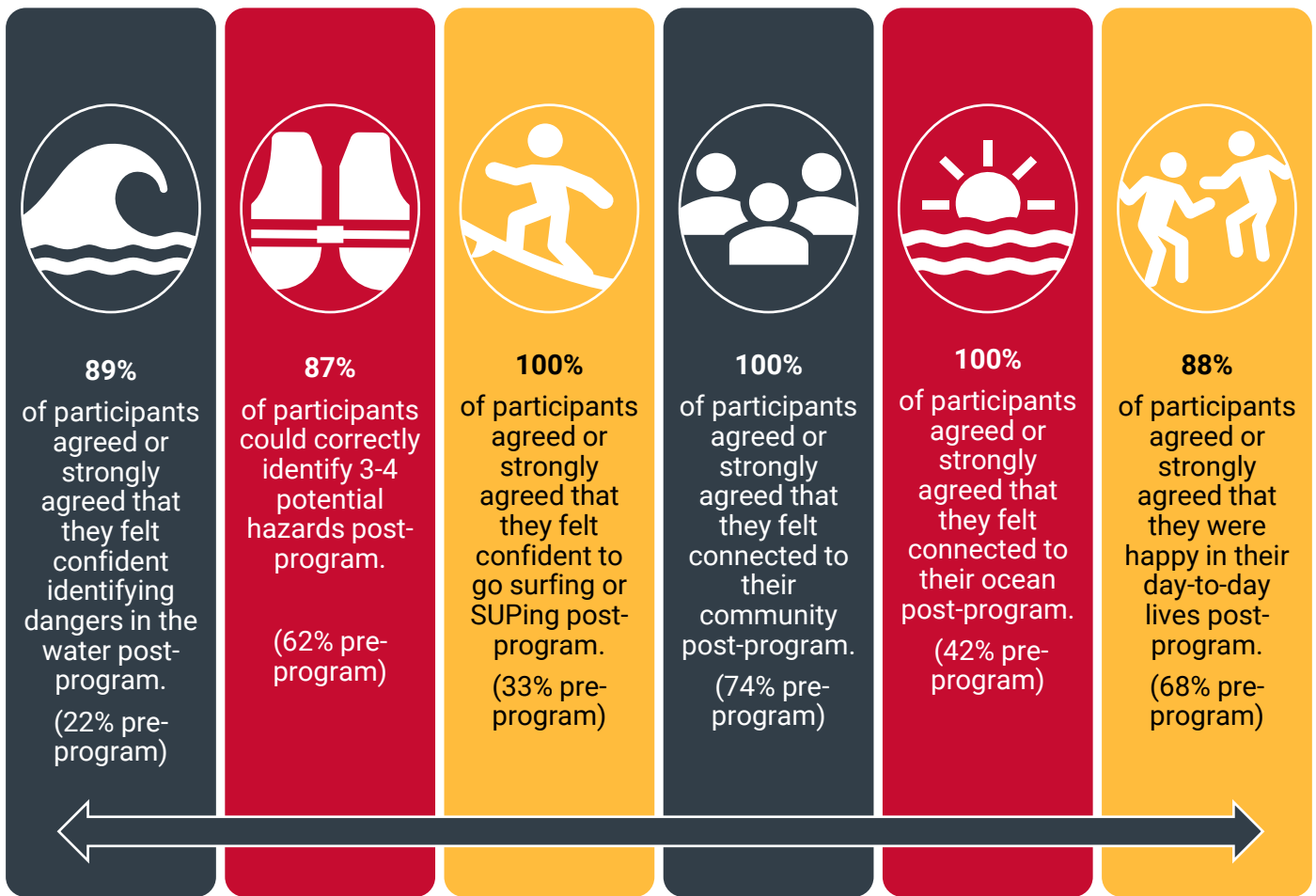
of participants agreed or strongly agreed they knew how to be safe in the water post-program.  
(45% pre-program)

## Participant information

Information		Pre-program (n=31)	Post-program (n=12)
Country of birth	Australia	100%	
Gender	Male	61%	50%
	Female	39%	
Indigenous status	Aboriginal	87%	50%
	Torres Strait Islander	6.5%	8%
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		17%

## Limitations

- Pre- and post-survey participant numbers varied, with post-program numbers being lower. As a result, percentages may not accurately reflect knowledge change for the whole cohort.
- Covid-19 restrictions led to requiring running extended sessions and may have potentially impacted participation.



### Recommendations

Overall, the program was effective in increasing participants’ water safety knowledge, and confidence in and around waterways, despite the impacts of COVID-19 related circumstances. The following recommendations have been made to continue the effectiveness of the program:

1. Continue employing best practise for water safety measures, e.g., cancelling due to bad weather conditions, as this also sets a good example to participants to be aware of conditions and respond appropriately.
2. If possible, all participants should be encouraged to complete the pre- and post-program surveys to ensure an accurate reflection of participant knowledge when comparing pre- and post-program results.

## Victorian Indigenous surfing program

Surfing Victoria (SV) has held the Victorian Indigenous Surfing Program (VISP) for 24 years. The VISP teaches coastal safety awareness to Indigenous youth, with a focus on surfing. The following evaluation report was conducted by the research and health promotion team at Life Saving Victoria (LSV) using data collected from pre- and post-program surveys completed by participants, as well as through researcher observation. Observations were held in the final session of the multi-week program on 16 December 2021 at Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club (JJSLSC). Five participants attended the final session, which was a lower-than-usual attendance rate due to COVID-19-related circumstances.

### Participant information

Most participants in the program were between the ages of eight to 16 and were primarily from the Geelong and Surf Coast Indigenous community and *Strong Brother Strong Sister*. The instruction team included three representatives from SV and three members of JJSLSC. Interviewed participants included the five participants, one instructor and a participant's relative. Participation in this program was primarily for enjoyment/ fun and to gain general water safety knowledge.

Information		Pre-program (n=12)	Post-program (n=11)
Country of birth	Australia	100%	
Gender	Male	55%	36%
	Female	45%	64%
Indigenous status	Aboriginal	92%	100%

### What has the program done for participants? (Instructor-reported)

Told them something new about water safety

Made them plan ahead to ensure their safety before participating in activities around water

Reminded them about water safety

### Program benefits



#### Great engagement and mentorship

Mentorship, guidance and rapport-building were evident, and participants appeared to have good relationships with the instruction team.



#### Positive, long-term impact on participants

The participants' positive experience of the program had a long-lasting impact. Family commented on the positive change in student behaviour and attitude.



#### Improvement in participant confidence

Participants had minimal former experience in the water prior to attendance and were initially shy and nervous, but quickly began to increase confidence in and around water.

## Key lessons and water safety messages learnt by participants

How to identify rip currents

Understanding unpredictable ocean conditions and ways to mitigate risk  
(self- and instructor-reported)

Informing family and friends of water safety  
(instructor-reported)

How to use surf boards, including paddling and how unpredictable they could be in a coastal location  
(self-reported)

### Observations

- Participants enjoyed the program and benefitted from being with like-minded individuals and mentors, with evidence of strong participant-instructor rapport.
- Instructors were vigilant about safety precautions. The program was within sight of the lifesaving watch tower and participants sat out if injured.
- Family members and peers of the participants recognised the positive change in their behaviours and attitudes towards water and ocean activities, indicating a long-lasting positive effect on participants.

### Barriers, limitations & gaps



#### Long-term funding measures

According to a program instructor, if this program were not funded, participants would be unable to attend due to financial difficulties. As funding is provided on a yearly basis and with varied amounts provided each year, it is difficult to initiate a long-term continual program, due to limited knowledge of future resourcing.



#### Implementation of surf rescue techniques

Safe surf rescue techniques could be incorporated for older participants to learn how to perform a rescue in a controlled environment.



#### Survey data

Based on participation numbers and gender differences in the pre- and post-program surveys, it could be assumed that the not all the participants pre- and post-program were the same. Therefore, results may not be entirely reflective of actual improvements in knowledge and confidence.

### Recommendations

Overall, the program was engaging, enjoyable and effective in increasing participants' confidence in water safety and surfing. It successfully engaged participants in a culturally appropriate manner and built strong relationships and rapport. Based on the findings three recommendations have been considered to improve the VISP:

1. Having a funding period that is longer than one year could be considered to allow for long-term goals to be planned, prioritised and implemented to allow for continual learning experiences.
2. SV should consider implementing and/or increasing the current teaching of surf rescue techniques for older participants to learn how to perform a safe rescue in a controlled environment.
3. If possible, all participants should be encouraged to complete the pre- and post-program survey to ensure an accurate comparison of pre- and post-program results.

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they felt confident identifying dangers in the water post-program. (N=11)

(42% pre-program, N=12)

"[I enjoyed] surfing and catching waves"  
– Participant

"[The participants enjoyed] surfing. They get excited...when they used to be scared of water."

– Instructor

**91%**  
of participants could correctly identify a rip current post-program. (N=11)

(50% pre-program, N=12)

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they knew how to be safe in the water post-program. (N=11)

(42% pre-program, N=12)

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they felt confident in the water post-program. (N=11)

(58% pre-program, N=12)

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they felt confident to go surfing or stand-up paddle boarding post-program. (N=11)

(58% pre-program, N=12)

"It's been a pleasure being a part of it."  
– Instructor

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they were happy in their day-to-day lives post-program. (N=11)

(83% pre-program, N=12)

**100%**  
of participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that they felt connected to their community post-program (N=11)

(67% pre-program, N=12)



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