

VicHealth - State Sporting Association Participation Program

Evaluation Report Year 4

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Background

Inequalities for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are evidenced in many areas of public health. In Australia, higher drowning rates have been reported for people who were born in countries of a non-English speaking background (Australian Water Safety Council [AWSC], 2008). A number of barriers inhibit their access to swimming and water safety education including the distance to facilities and a lack of transport to them, language barriers and the cost of pool entry and swimming lessons. Furthermore, prioritising aquatics has often been difficult in the country of birth particularly regions that are landlocked, where swimming isn't a priority, or areas involved in economic or political uncertainty (Office of Multicultural Interests, 2009). These factors lead to a limited awareness of aquatic hazards and risks and little or no swimming capability, which can be dangerous in many areas of Australia with its abundance of water. As a result, a large proportion of CALD communities often have limited, if any, experience of Australian aquatic environments (Life Saving Victoria [LSV], 2012). Their subsequent low participation rates in aquatic recreation puts them at greater risk of drowning than other communities within Australia (AWSC, 2008).

VicHealth's State Sporting Association Participation Program (SSAPP) is an initiative developed with a goal to increase participation in community sport and active recreation focussing on priority populations. Life Saving Victoria (LSV) is working with Victorian's from CALD backgrounds to increase their participation in water safety programs, swimming lessons and Life Saving Clubs. Additionally, the SSAPP seeks to build healthier State Sporting Association environments via improved inclusion, accessibility and equity for CALD populations.

A series of 'actions' adopted by LSV have been progressively completed over the four-year project period to achieve not only the abovementioned participation goal, but also overall organisational change. This includes a one year extension on the original project plan. For further background to this study please see the *VicHealth – State Sporting Association Participation Program: Evaluation Report Year 1* (LSV, 2012), *Evaluation Report Year 2* (LSV, 2013) and *Evaluation Report Year 3* (LSV, 2015).

Following the success of Year's 1, 2 and 3 this report summarises the evaluation of the final year, Year 4 of VicHealth's SSAPP. It also includes an evaluation of the overall program over the four year period. The key evaluation areas are:

- Participation levels in aquatic education activities, training courses, learn to swim courses and swim clubs,
- A telephone survey for parents of participants in past SSAPP pool programs,
- Focus groups for parents of children who participated in pool programs in Year 4, and
- Interviews with past SSAPP CALD participants who have continued in the aquatics industry and become qualified as a swim teacher and/or lifeguard.

Ten Victorian public aquatic facilities held learn to swim lessons (known here as pool programs), and 17 participating Life Saving Clubs conducted beach programs and education sessions. These pool and beach programs were run in conjunction with numerous migrant service groups, language schools and other community organisations in 2014-15. The

evaluation will be used by LSV and other stakeholders to determine the ongoing value, impact and outcomes of the program, and provide input for its extension and expansion to other CALD communities throughout Victoria.

Aims and objectives

The overall goal of LSVs four year SSAPP is to create 'healthier sporting environments that are safe, accessible, inclusive and equitable to support participation of CALD communities'. It is anticipated that through participation in swimming and water safety education programs, members of CALD communities are likely to experience a higher level of safe participation in aquatic and community activities, have the potential to develop into role models within their community and experience improved settlement into their new environment.

The achievement of these overall goals will be measured by an evaluation of the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** By June 2015, 2,100 to 2,400 participants will directly participate in onsite and offsite aquatic activities.
- **Objective 2:** By June 2015, role models will be developed via training courses (26 people), participants in learn to swim courses (261 people) and local competitive swim clubs (14 people).
- **Objective 3:** By June 2015, LSVs policies and procedures (audited in 2012/13 & drafted in 2013/14 will be introduced to better facilitate CALD group's ability to participate in aquatics.
- **Objective 4:** By June 2015, additional clubs (to the original 8 participating Pilot LSCs) will receive improved education, support and resources to assist them in engaging the CALD community - Target 35% (20) of Victoria's 57 Life Saving Clubs.
- **Objective 5:** By June 2015, 50% of surveyed participants in ongoing swimming or training programs in will indicate that settlement in their new environment improved as a result of this project involvement.

Methodology

The evaluation was based on quantitative and qualitative methods, as outlined below. The ten public swimming pools involved in the SSAPP were Casey Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Casey RACE. Dandenong Oasis, Doug Ellis Swimming Pool and Noble Park Aquatic Centre in Melbourne's east and Ascot Vale Leisure Centre, BayFit Leisure Centre, Laverton Swim and Fitness Centre, Sunshine Leisure Centre and Waterworld Swim Sport and Leisure Geelong in the west.

Beach programs were also conducted with the support of 17 LSCs (Altona Life Saving Club, Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club, Beaumaris Life Saving Club, Brighton Life Saving Club, Edithvale Life Saving Club, Frankston Life Saving Club, Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club, Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club, Ocean Grove Surf Life Saving Club, Port Melbourne Life Saving Club, Sandridge Life Saving Club, Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club, South Melbourne Life Saving Club, St Kilda Life Saving Club, Surf Life Saving Lakes Entrance, Torquay Surf Life Saving Club and Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club).

The programs were also facilitated by a number of organisations including migrant services groups, language schools and other community organisations.

Quantitative Research

- Participation records were kept for each pool program, beach program and education session.
- Beach program participants were surveyed to identify their pre-program water safety knowledge, swimming capability and familiarisation with aquatic environments, as well as their willingness to partake in swimming lessons and general demographic data.
- Telephone surveys of 30 parents of pool program participants from Year 4 were conducted to determine children's swimming capability and exposure to water before and after the program and to evaluate aspects of the program including how it was conducted, the impact of role models on participants and the settlement effects of the program.
- Summary data were analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative Research

- Face-to-face case study interviews were held with three past participants of pool programs; two Burmese (Karen) brothers and one teenager from Afghanistan. Each had participated in swimming lessons through the SSAPP and two had gained their pool lifeguard and beach lifesaver qualifications. The interviews provided a detailed insight into the impacts of their involvement in swimming and the SSAPP, the process of becoming qualified in the industry, how this involvement influenced their settlement into life in Australia and the extent to which they believe they are role models for new participants. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and reviewed to identify recurrent themes and attitudes.
- A focus group was conducted with three parents of pool program participants from Afghanistan and Iran. Parents provided feedback on the program and described their experiences with swimming and water safety, the impact of role models on participants and the settlement effects of the program.

- Interviews of people from three organisations involved over the four years to determine the impact of the program on participants, the broader CALD community and organisations themselves. These interviews provided feedback on the program from an organisation's perspective, particularly in terms of the water safety and swimming capability of the local CALD community, any change in their attendance and settlement and changes in member's cultural awareness. Those interviewed were:
 - the team leader of a Migrant Resource Centre,
 - the aquatic team leader of a public aquatic facility, and
 - the Chief Instructor of a LSC
- The process of reviewing LSVs policies and procedures was communicated by the LSV Executive Committee and staff.
- Participating clubs provided ongoing feedback and communications regarding the implementation of inclusive strategies.
- Five LSCs applied for 'LSV CALD small grants' to run water safety, beach safety and/or surf education programs for their local multicultural communities. Acquittals of these programs were provided by each individual club and these were used to evaluate their impact.

Results

Participation

Objective 1: By June 2015, 2,100 to 2,400 participants will directly participate in onsite and offsite aquatic activities.

The target participation objective of directly engaging 2,100 to 2,400 participants in onsite and offsite aquatic activities was exceeded, with a total of 3,982 people partaking in education programs, swimming lessons or training programs. The most common activities were education programs in the form of either beach programs (2,026) or Meet a Lifeguard education sessions (1,120) (Figure 1), which could be delivered to larger groups in one session compared to swimming lessons in pool programs (704 participants).

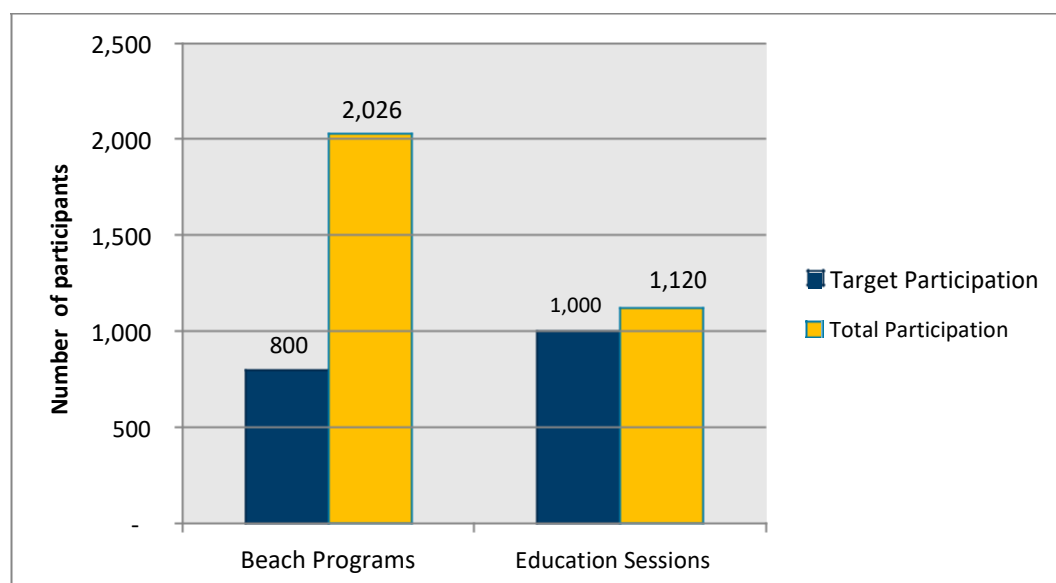


Figure 1 Participation in education programs (beach programs and education sessions): Target vs. Actual

Pool programs, swim teams and further training

Year 4 provided learn to swim lessons to 704 members of the CALD community, a figure 270% higher than in the target (261) (Figure 2). These participants completed 5,972 lessons in total.

Fifteen participants joined a swim team, surpassing the target of 14; and they completed a combined total of 542 sessions. In total 117 participants undertook further training (34 in pool lifeguard training, 20 in lifesaving training and 63 in First Aid training), exceeding the target of 26. After missing the target in Year 3, the target number of pool program participants was more than doubled in Year 4 (target = 261, actual = 704), and consequently the target number of lessons was exceeded (target = 2,610, actual = 5,972). In addition, the Family Card was used 532 times in Year 4. The Family Card allows additional family members of those involved in the SSAPP to swim recreationally outside of lessons at no cost.

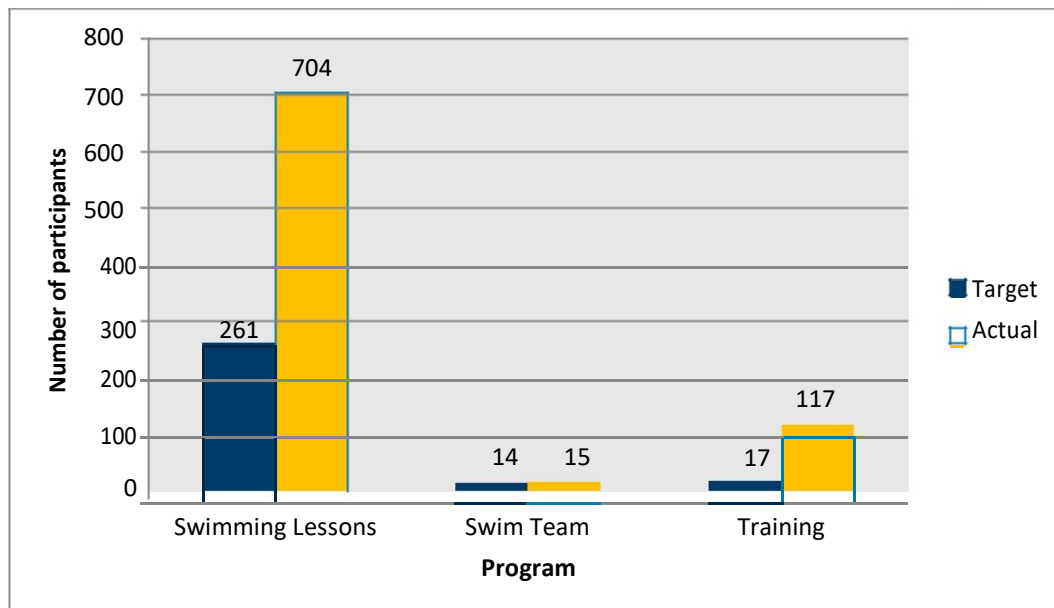


Figure 2 Participation in pool programs: Target vs. Actual

Parent focus group and Migrant Resource Centre

Every parent in the focus group thought their child enjoyed the pool program and recommended it to other families. Parents viewed the program as an excellent opportunity, most of whom had limited experience around water but who wanted their children to be safe around water. Parents particularly valued it for the opportunities it provided in teaching important life skills, with one parent saying, *‘in my opinion, [swimming and water safety knowledge is] important as we are living in a country surrounded by water so it is handy to have this skill’*. Another parent observed improvements in the children’s abilities, commenting that, *‘many times I go to the swimming pool and they are improving. I feel they are proud of themselves and they can now do their swimming’*. They also recognised the social, health and recreational benefits it delivered.

Since the program’s conclusion, the families had visited the pool again, despite some difficulties, because their children enjoyed it so much. Parents also learned about the importance of supervision and would also like the opportunity to participate in swimming lessons so they can recreate safely with their children and learn how to respond appropriately in risky situations. The Migrant Resource Centre receives many requests for adult pool programs.

Parent survey of pool participants

The telephone survey of 29 parents of children who completed the Year 4 pool program provided positive feedback on the program. The children were largely aged 5-9 years (45%, 13) or 10-14 years (41%, 12) and were most commonly born in Iran (31%, 9) and Afghanistan (28%, 8). One third (34%, 10) had lived in Australia for one year or less and 24% (7) for two years. Fifty-nine per cent (17) were female.

Three-quarters of children (76%, 22) had never had formal swimming lessons before the SSAPP, largely due to a lack of opportunity (77%, 17) and/or cost (23%, 5). Before the program, 64% (18) of parents said their child could not swim at all and the remaining 36%

(10) rated their child as a poor swimmer. The majority (97%, 28) thought their child’s swimming capability improved in the program and every parent thought that their child knew more about water safety (100%, 29). Every parent said their child enjoyed the program and two-thirds (66%, 19) of children had been swimming at the pool outside of the swimming lessons.

Beach programs

Beach programs

In total, 162 beach program participants were surveyed at the end of their session. Respondents ranged in age from 15 to over 55 years, with 56% (90) aged between 15-19 years and 58% (93) male. The regions most represented were Afghanistan (30%, 49 respondents), Burma (21%, 33) and Iraq (19%, 30). Twenty-eight per cent (46) had been living in Australia for less than one year when they participated in the beach program, and a further 57% (92) had lived in Australia for one to two years.

Thirty-six per cent (58) reportedly could not swim and 32% (51) self-rated themselves as poor swimmers. Similarly, 40% (64) said they never swam or visited a beach, pool or river in their home country. Since moving to Australia, this figure decreased to 33% (Figure 3).

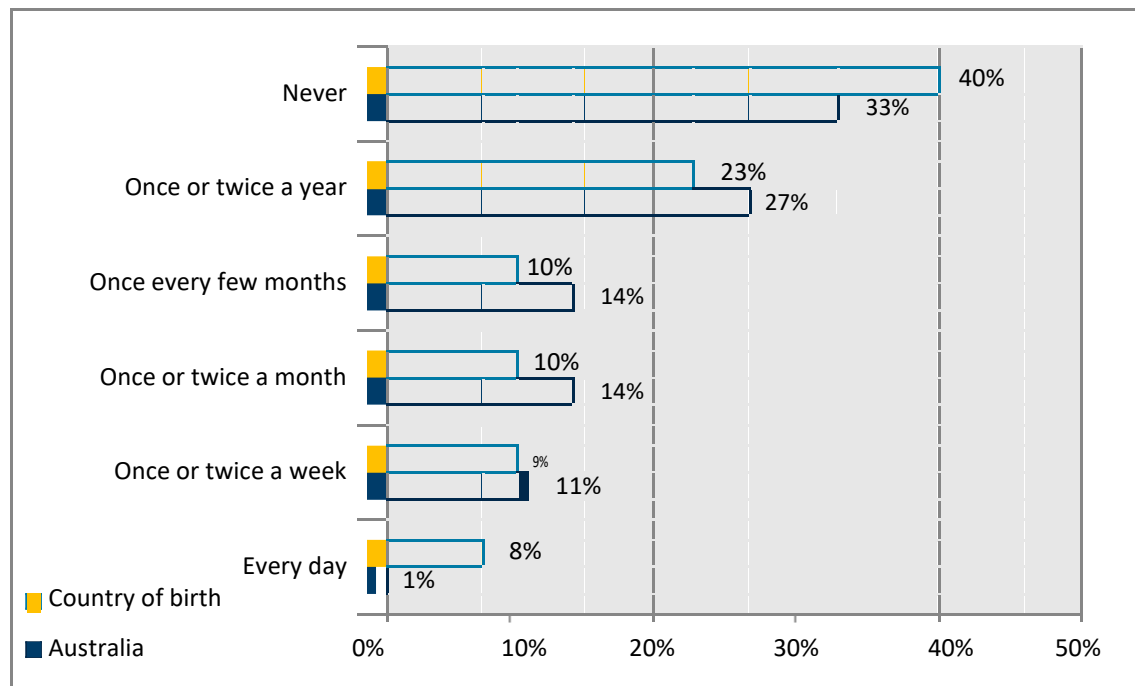


Figure 3 Comparison of swim frequency between home country and Australia

The water safety presentation delivered to participants as part of the beach program was valuable, as 37% (60) rated their level of water safety knowledge prior to the talk as zero, and 47% (76) reported having limited knowledge

Over two-thirds (71%, 113) had never had swimming lessons, primarily because there was no opportunity (61%, 60) and to a lesser extent, because of the cost of lessons (14%, 14). Most of those who had participated in swimming lessons had done 10 lessons or fewer. After

taking part in the beach program, 80% (128) said they would like to have swimming lessons and 57% (92) would consider becoming a lifeguard.

Role models

Objective 2: By June 2015, role models will be developed via training courses (26 people), participants in learn to swim courses (261 people) and local competitive swim clubs (14 people).

The development of potential role models for CALD communities was measured by the number of project participants who partook in learn to swim programs, undertook industry training or joined swim clubs and lifesaving clubs after their program’s completion. These individuals have the potential to encourage others in their community to become involved in aquatics.

Objective 2 of engaging sufficient participants to develop potential role models for CALD communities in aquatics was achieved in Year 4, with 117 people completing further training (34 in industry training and 20 in lifesaving training and 63 in First Aid for students) (Figure 4), in addition to the 704 people that engaged in learn to swim lessons and the 15 who joined a local competitive swim club (Figure 2).

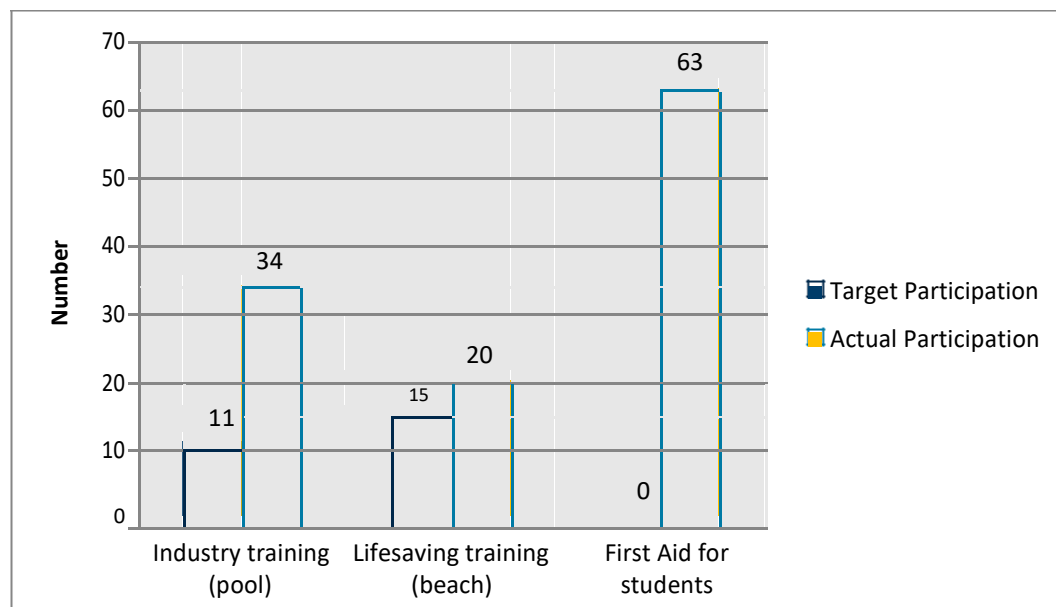


Figure 4 Participation in industry and lifesaving training: Target vs. Actual

Parent focus group and Aquatics team leader

Parents of pool program participants agreed that it is good for multicultural communities to have role models like swim teachers, pool lifeguards and surf lifesavers from their own community. Parents reported that children liked their swim teachers and looked up to them, which they felt is a positive. One parent said that, *‘it’s a very good idea to have our people as an example for our children, provided they are qualified and good at their profession’*. The aquatics team leader supported the parents’ comments and added that another benefit of having CALD staff members is that they can help interpret important messages when people need help.

Organisational change

Objective 3: *By June 2015 LSVs policies and procedures will be introduced to better facilitate CALD group's ability to participate in aquatics.*

In Year 1 of the SSAPP, an audit of LSVs policies and procedures was undertaken to establish where improvements could be made to increase inclusion within the organisation. In Year 2 of the SSAPP, policies and procedures documents were updated to reflect inclusive practices and new policies and procedures were developed to further facilitate the ability of CALD communities to participate in aquatics.

These were delivered to LSVs Executive group and then the LSV Board for review and approval. The updated policies and procedures were approved, and final documents were to be released in 2015/16.

Engaging the CALD community

Objective 4: *By June 2015 additional clubs (to the original 8 participating Pilot LSCs) will receive improved education, support and resources to assist them in engaging the CALD community - Target 35% (20) of Victoria's 57 Life Saving Clubs.*

In excess of 20 clubs (35%) were involved in activities over the course of the four year project.

Five LSCs received specific funding to run water safety, beach safety and surf education programs for the CALD community in Year 4 of the project. Anglesea, Brighton, Jan Juc, Lakes Entrance, and Point Leo each ran a successful program for different CALD communities, which benefited both the participants and the LSC volunteers involved. A summary of these projects can be found in Table 1.

Whilst each project was unique, they all achieved the common goal of engaging the CALD community in lifesaving activities and introduced them to concepts of water safety, beach safety and/or surf education. Each club also successfully demonstrated their project's sustainability, which was dependent on a number of variables, including a project's simplicity and replicability, volunteer support, transport needs, culturally appropriate activities and groups and establishing positive relationships between stakeholders.

Table 1 LSV CALD Small Grants project summary (Year 4)

Project title	The Huddle / Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club Surf Camp	CALD Water Safety Program	Karen Beach Safety Day	Koorie Engagement Program	Surf Education Program
Club	Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club	Brighton Life Saving Club	Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club	Surf Life Saving Lakes Entrance	Point Leo Surf Life Saving Club
CALD participant snapshot	25 children aged 6-18 years and seven parents from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Vietnam.	52 Afghanis from Dandenong, including asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants.	30 newly arrived Karen families	20 Indigenous participants aged 7-16 years	24 secondary school students from various CALD backgrounds
Project description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to beach and water safety. - Information on lifesaving equipment. - Basic lifesaving techniques. - Surf lesson provided by Go-Ride-A-Wave. - Invitation to join the LSC. 	<p>Water Safety Program for new settlers who reside in the Dandenong Region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic information about Australian waterways including rivers, pools and the surf and bay beaches. - Strategies to ensure safety in and around the water. 	<p>A day at the beach program in a safe and supportive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural awareness session for club members prior to Beach Safety Day. - Water safety talk for Karen participants. - Demonstration of IRB and a rescue. - Introduction to red and yellow flags. 	<p>Two water safety programs designed to improve the knowledge and participation of local indigenous youth in Surf Life Saving programs.</p>	<p>The second year of an annual cultural exchange between CALD students from regional secondary schools and members of Point Leo Surf Life Saving Club.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic beach and water safety. - Introduction to the culture and rewards of being a member of a LSC.
Project outcomes	<p>Benefits to CALD participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First opportunity for many to experience a beach. - Learning about lifesaving equipment, rip currents etc. - Gaining confidence and enjoying the water. <p>Benefits to LSC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning about different cultures. - Bonding and sharing positive experiences with CALD participants. 	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive verbal feedback from participants and LSC members. - Catholic Care plan to run additional programs. - Support from State Coroner. - Media coverage by SBS, Channel 9 and the Herald Sun. 	<p>Benefits to Karen participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of beach safety. - Understanding of LSCs. - Enjoyment and confidence at the beach. <p>Benefits to LSC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased cultural awareness. - Overcoming language barriers. - Pride in watching new Karen friends succeed. - Understanding about the refugee situation. 	<p>Benefits:</p> <p>Providing water safety education to indigenous youth in the community.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased participation on first year. - Twice as many girls than in first year. - Abundance of volunteers willing to assist. - LSC members rewarded by social interaction and developing an understanding of the students' history, heritage and culture.

Contribution to settlement

Objective 5: *By June 2015, 50% of surveyed participants in ongoing swimming or training programs in will indicate that settlement in their new environment improved as a result of this project involvement.*

In Year 4, the focus groups, surveys, case studies and interviews of parents, participants and stakeholders involved in the program again suggested that the SSAPP improved participants' settlement in Australia.

Parent survey of pool participants

Parents described positive impacts of the pool program on settlement, with 86% (23) reporting the lessons helped their child settle into the local area and 93% (27) feeling that their child knew more about the local pool and local community. Furthermore, 100% (29) reported their child was happier and healthier and 97% (28) said they made friends with people from other cultures. Additionally, as a result of the program, most parents thought their child would feel more comfortable visiting the pool or beach (93%, 27), that their child would swim at the beach, pool or river more often than in country of birth (96%, 26), and that their child felt happy around water (72%, 21). Two-thirds (66%, 19) thought that their child's English improved during the program.

Parent focus group

Parents described how they feared the water when they first arrived in Australia, particularly open water environments such as beaches and lakes. They valued the opportunity their children were given to learn how to behave safely in these environments. Furthermore, they agreed that the pool program helped their children settle into their new life in Victoria. Not only did they overcome some fears of the water, they looked forward to their lessons and underwent other personal changes including being happier, making friends and improved health as a result of increased physical activity.

The parents also felt the pool program contributed positively to their own settlement in Australia because they too met people from different cultures, made new friends and improved their English skills. The parents did raise the issue of the mix of children and adults being in the same change rooms, which can be seen as inappropriate in the Muslim community. This issue was subsequently raised by LSV with Dandenong Oasis and they will address the concern.

Parents also learned about the importance of supervision of children around water, which may increase the chances of families visiting aquatic environments. They understood that, *'as a parent it is our responsibility to watch all the time when children are in the water, if they are playing in the beach or lake and make sure they stay where they are safe'*. Parents were however, not confident around the water themselves and felt they would benefit greatly from adult swimming lessons, particularly so they can enjoy the water safely with their children and respond appropriately in emergency situations. One parent said that whilst the *'children know [about water] as a parent we don't know so can't help if something happens. We can't do anything, just look or shouting or something'*. Another said, *'the parents should know what to do in an emergency [and] know of the dangers'*. They would like lessons *'not to be the best swimmer, but just enough to keep me and my family safe'*.

Aquatics team leader

The aquatics team leader also observed changes in the apparent settlement of children involved in the pool programs in Year 4. They became a lot more confident and appeared to have made friends with others in their classes. The manager felt that children's involvement in the program has provided them a fun activity to do to prevent them from getting bored, whilst doing something positive by learning swimming and water safety. The aquatics team leader stressed the benefits of running the women's only sessions, as they provided a chance for women to recreate and socialise in an environment they would otherwise not visit.

Case studies

The case studies below provide details of the impacts of the program on three past participants in terms of their settlement in Australia. Their names have been changed.

Case study 1: Mustafa

Skills: Pool lifeguard, beach lifesaver

Story: Mustafa was born in Afghanistan and moved to Australia via Pakistan with his family when he was young. Now at university, he works as a casual pool lifeguard and a volunteer beach lifesaver.

Pathway

Mustafa never learned to swim in Afghanistan or Pakistan. He first began lessons three years ago after he attended a SSAPP beach program in Year 1. After enjoying one year of swimming lessons, he decided to enrol in a pool lifeguard course. He found the course difficult at first and almost withdrew; however, he persisted and soon began to enjoy it. He was employed as a pool lifeguard in Melbourne's south-east and later joined a local lifesaving club, where he patrols in summer.

On being a role model

Mustafa hopes he is a role model to CALD children and youth who are learning to swim or visiting the swimming pool or beach. He often talks to people about what he has done and has inspired others from his community to consider learning to swim and become a pool lifeguard or beach lifesaver. He has helped them by forwarding their details to program coordinators.

Impacts on settlement

In Afghanistan, Mustafa could not swim at all and had no water safety knowledge. Now, he rates these skills as, *'pretty good. I'm a lifeguard and a lifesaver and I teach people'*. He says these activities have made him more active. He goes swimming and surfing and has made a lot of friends at the lifesaving club and the pool. Alongside these skills, he found it helped him understand the culture, saying *'I didn't completely understand [Australian culture] until after the program. It really helps you settle in'*. Aside from these impacts, Mustafa also feels that, *'even if you don't want to be a lifesaver the multicultural programs are a great day out'*.

Impacts on the CALD community

Mustafa enjoys helping the community through his involvement in the pool and lifesaving club. The pool is becoming popular for Afghan families, many of whom don't speak English well. He is able to assist them by explaining the pool environment, dangers and basic water safety tips in their own language.

Case study 2: Kyaw Ke and Eh Lar

Skills: Swim team members, pool lifeguard, beach lifesaver

Story: Kyaw Ke and Eh Lar are Karen brothers, who were born on the Thai/Burma border and lived in a Thai refugee camp before they came to Australia with their family. They both attend swim team training and Kyaw Ke (the eldest) works as a casual pool lifeguard at a facility in Melbourne's west and a beach lifesaver in summer.

Pathway

Kyaw Ke and Eh Lar had never swum before they arrived in Australia; they had only played in the small river in the refugee camp. They learned to swim after their mother enrolled them in the SSAPP program in 2012. They enjoyed the lessons and, once his skills improved, Kyaw Ke decided to gain a lifeguard qualification.

On being a role model

Kyaw Ke feels somewhat like a role model to other Burmese youth, despite the fact he feels he is 'not good at everything' as he is still learning and developing his swimming skills.

Impacts on settlement

Kyaw Ke believes his involvement in has improved his settlement in Australia saying that, '*being a lifesaver and pool lifeguard has given me so much confidence to socialise with other cultures and it is a privilege for me to get to help the community*'. He also enjoys socialising with his colleagues and getting involved in other activities, including learning to surf.

Eh Lar feels he has a much better understanding of swimming and water safety since joining the swim team. He also made friends from other cultures and felt more comfortable in the water thanks to his swim teachers. He also notes that, '*mum is happy I'm doing it, it's good for the future – so I can swim and be safe. I will go to the beach when I'm a better swimmer.*'

Impacts on the CALD community

Kyaw Ke feels that he has assisted the CALD community because he is helping others. He recommends that other people from CALD backgrounds learn to swim, '*because it is a really good sport and it is good fun ... and it will also help [people] to be more confident in the water [if they] learn to swim for safety*'.

He thinks that '*people from different backgrounds should become lifesavers, pool lifeguards or swim teachers because it would be great for them to teach the people in their community of what they know*'. This will contribute to encouraging members of the wider CALD community to become involved in their community, in aquatics and learn valuable water safety skills.

Project overview

Participation data and interviews of people involved in all four years of the SSAPP (an aquatics team leader, the Chief Instructor of a LSC and a team leader from the Migrant Resources Centre), highlight the significant positive impact of the program on Victoria's CALD population

Program growth

The number of overall participants in the SSAPP grew by 82% (1,794) from Year 1 to Year 4, exposing over 13,000 members of the Victorian CALD community to swimming and water safety education through education sessions, beach programs, pool programs, swim teams and further training. In Year 4, there was an increase in the number of participants in beach programs, pool programs, swim teams and training (lifesaving, industry and First Aid training) (Figure 5). There were fewer participants in education sessions (Meet a Lifeguard); however overall participation levels in Year 4 were the highest of all four Years.

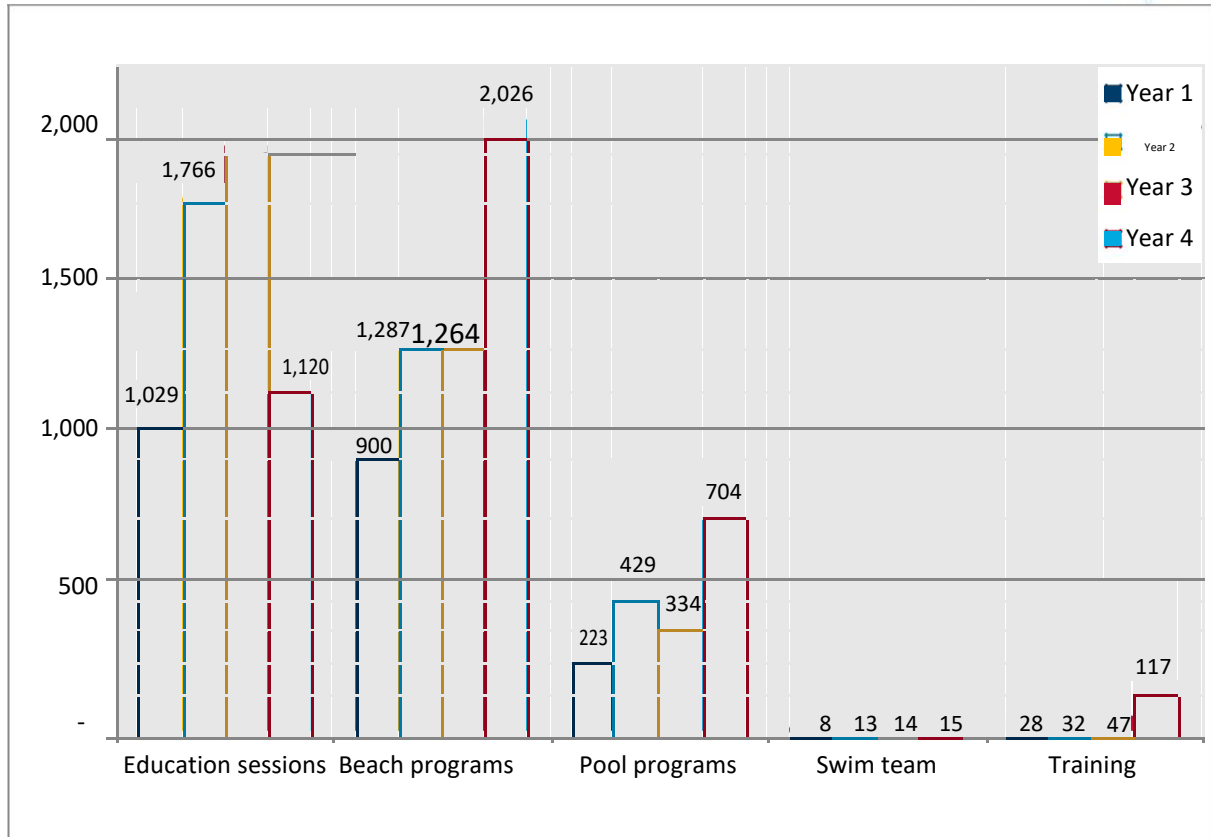


Figure 5 Change in participation: Year on Year

The number of organisations involved in program delivery also grew from year to year, from three LSCs and two aquatic facilities in Year 1, to 17 LSCs and 10 facilities in Year 4 (Table 2).

Life Saving Clubs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Edithvale Life Saving Club				
Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club				
Mentone Life Saving Club				
Altona Life Saving Club				
Beaumaris Life Saving Club				
Port Melbourne Life Saving Club				
Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club				
Ocean Grove Surf Life Saving Club				
South Melbourne Life Saving Club				
Torquay Surf Life Saving Club				
Carrum Life Saving Club				
Mordialloc Life Saving Club				
Point Leo Surf Life Saving Club				
Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club				
Brighton Life Saving Club				
Frankston Life Saving Club				
Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club				
Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club				
Sandridge Life Saving Club				
St Kilda Life Saving Club				
Surf Life Saving Lakes Entrance				

Aquatic facilities	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Dandenong Oasis				
Wyndham Leisure and Events Centre			<i>Closed for renovation</i>	
Laverton Swim and Fitness Centre				
Waterworld Swim Sport and Leisure Geelong				
Sunshine Leisure Centre				
Casey Aquatic and Recreation Centre				
Casey RACE				
Ascot Vale Leisure Centre				
BayFit Leisure Centre				
Doug Ellis Swimming Pool - Monash University				
Noble Park Aquatic Centre				

Table 2 Life Saving Clubs and Aquatic facilities involved in the SSAPP

Aquatics team leader

The aquatics team leader described the benefits of participation in the pool program in terms of providing swimming and water safety education to so many members of the CALD community, and observed increased awareness of water safety among the community. The program was very popular and spread via word-of-mouth as more people recognised the importance swimming and water safety knowledge in Australia. She saw the families visiting the facility outside their lesson times and had noticed an increased attendance at the facility

overall by multicultural communities since the program began in 2011, and has observed an improvement in their skills and adherence to pool rules.

Migrant Resource Centre

The Migrant Resource Centre team leader also recognised the immense benefits of the SSAPP on the CALD community. She knew of the program's popularity via the positive feedback the centre received. Word-of-mouth is so strong in these communities and there were often requests to join the next program, for programs to be extended. Having an Afghan beach lifesaver on lifesaving posters made a big impact on the local Afghan community and boosted their interest, because, *'it shows that someone has fully participated in Australian life... it demonstrates the blending of two cultures'*.

Life Saving Club

The LSC Chief Instructor had observed a small increase in the number of people from CALD backgrounds visiting the beach since Year 1, however as a result of changes to the bus route, most people went to a nearby beach where the new bus stop was positioned. However, she had observed an increase in the proportion of people from CALD backgrounds actually going into the water compared with Year 1.

Impact on the CALD community

Aquatics team leader

The aquatics team leader felt the program had a very positive impact of the local CALD community. These benefits include, assisting families' settlement and connection with their local community, providing healthy activities and keeping children busy, and the development of role models to encourage further participation and training of other members of the community.

The benefits to their facility to partner in such a program included engaging with the CALD community and creating a welcoming recreational environment, reducing the risk of drowning by teaching water safety and encouraging the participation of others in the community. She felt it was a *'great program that can hopefully continue'*.

Migrant Resource Centre

The Migrant Resource Centre team leader felt the pool program had a very positive impact on the CALD community, particularly newly arrived families whose priorities focus more on finding housing, employment and becoming established in their new country. Not only did it raise awareness that aquatic recreation is a part of life for many Australians, they became aware of the necessity of having water safety knowledge and of active supervision of young children.

The Migrant Resource Centre was very happy to be involved in the SSAPP as it was also a fantastic opportunity for them to further engage with the local CALD community and provide active recreational opportunities to this group. Without the SSAPP, the Centre would investigate other funding options because of the immense value of the program.

Life Saving Club

The LSC Chief Instructor observed that multicultural beach visitors seemed more comfortable at the beach than they used to; however lifesavers still need to pay extra attention to them. They have benefited immensely from their patrol members from the local CALD community, who could liaise with beach visitors, communicating effectively with them and demonstrating that everyone is welcome to enjoy the beach. These lifesavers have also received positive feedback from the broader local community (CALD and non-CALD). The existing club also demonstrated a significant positive change in their understanding and knowledge of the CALD community. The LSC saw the engagement of CALD lifesavers and their involvement in the program as a significant step to reducing the drowning risk of these groups.

Discussion

Participation in pool and beach programs

Year 4 of the SSAPP again successfully engaged members of the CALD community in a variety of activities designed to introduce them to aquatic recreation. Exposing nearly 4,000 CALD participants to onsite and offsite aquatic activities again demonstrates the popularity and value of the project among the CALD community in Victoria. In Year 4 the focus shifted to increasing the number of participants in direct onsite beach programs, pool programs, swim teams and training (lifesaving, industry and First Aid training). Similar to the first three years of the project, the progression of 15 participants into swim teams and 117 participants who completed further training (in pool lifeguard, lifesaving or First Aid training) is expected to have provided them with numerous benefits in terms of their swimming capability and water safety knowledge, familiarisation with aquatic environments as well as employment and volunteer prospects and other benefits to their health, wellbeing and inclusion in the community.

Evidence of these positive changes is demonstrated by the feedback received by parents on the noticeable improvements they observed in their children's confidence in the water, swimming skills and water safety knowledge as a result of pool programs – the majority of whom had never had swimming lessons before. This is amplified by the positive outcomes of the beach programs that provided vital water safety information to new arrivals and introduced many to the value and enjoyment of learning swimming and water safety skills. Other indications of the value families placed on aquatic recreation include, that three-quarters of beach program participants surveyed said they would like to have swimming lessons and the growth in pool and beach visitations by pool program participants.

Before the pool program, the main reported barriers to families participating in swimming lessons were the lack of opportunities and the cost to participate. The SSAPP successfully addressed both these barriers by providing accessible lessons to the community at no cost to the participants. The use of the Family Card provided further opportunities for additional family members to participate in aquatic recreation. Moreover, participation in these programs in previous years has made considerable impacts on the lives of a number of those who first became involved via a pool program or a beach program. Therefore, the high participation numbers in Year 4 are likely to lead to further opportunities for more CALD individuals to engage in aquatic recreation, and possibly gain volunteer and employment opportunities.

Given that CALD groups are often overrepresented in the proportion of drowning deaths in developed countries, these observations demonstrate the valuable opportunities the SSAPP has provided these groups, who historically have lower participation rates in aquatic recreation than non-CALD individuals (Moran, 2006). The ongoing support and contributions of all the stakeholders, including LSCs, migrant service groups, language schools and other community organisations was crucial to this success. This continuing shift in behaviour and attitudes towards aquatic recreation and the growing water safety knowledge among CALD participants demonstrates the significant benefit the project is having on those involved.

Role models

Role models are those who influence another person's '*attitudes, behaviors, or aspirations*' (Buford May, 2009, p. 450), and who are respected and exemplary members of a group (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). People from a similar background who demonstrate they have overcome initial barriers and reached a level of success in a new country can encourage and inspire others to become involved as well (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).

Potential role models were developed through a variety of avenues in the SSAPP; from pool and beach program participants, to those who undertook industry training or joined swim clubs and lifesaving clubs, and previous participants who gained employment as swim teachers, lifeguards or LSV staff or they worked as volunteer beach lifesavers. The positive influence of role models on young people from minority groups is well-known (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003), and the participants, parents and those now working and volunteering in the aquatic industry that have contributed to this report all indicated the importance of role models in influencing their choices to further their participation.

The impact these individuals can have on their community is enormous as they are an example of someone with a similar background who has overcome perceived barriers to participation in aquatic activities, who enjoys their involvement and who is successful in their pursuits. These role models' participation in aquatic recreation, their encouragement of others and their achievement of goals, from learning to swim to becoming a lifeguard, swim teacher or beach lifesaver demonstrates that barriers can be overcome and that everyone is welcome to enjoy the water, regardless of their background.

Organisational change

In Year 1 of the SSAPP, an audit of LSVs policies and procedures was undertaken to establish where improvements could be made to increase inclusion within the organisation. In Year 2 of the SSAPP, policies and procedures documents were updated to reflect inclusive practices and new policies and procedures were developed to further facilitate the ability of CALD communities to participate in aquatics.

These were delivered to LSVs Executive group and then the LSV Board for review and approval. The updated policies and procedures were approved, and final documents were to be released in 2015/16.

Engaging the CALD community

The success of these programs is demonstrated by feedback received by a school involved in one of the programs run by a LSC as part of the 'LSV CALD small grants' program;

'I was immediately struck with the camaraderie and joy of bringing together the young people to share experiences, food, dance and the surf. Through my lens I captured the smiles, handshakes, embraces and rapture of sharing the beach. It came about through a combination of the generosity of the surf lifesaving club, hard working parents, youth workers, teachers and young people's desire to learn from each other and bond together in an unforgettable way. I am very proud to be part of such an exciting and rewarding day'.

Contribution to settlement

Factors contributing to one's settlement in a new country include finding suitable accommodation, employment, learning English, developing personal connections, maintaining sufficient health and wellbeing (including access to counselling) and one's perceived value to the community (Morgan, 2008). The evaluation of Year 4 demonstrates the positive impact the program has continued to have on participants in terms of their settlement in Victoria. As in previous years, many felt the pool program helped their child settle into the local area and provided an entry point to understanding more about the local pool and the local community. Many made friends with people from various cultures, they felt happier and healthier, and improved their English language skills. Furthermore, participants learned more about water safety and felt comfortable visiting public pools and beaches. The combination of these factors may certainly contribute to a person's integration into a new life in Australia.

The increase in the number of people that joined swim teams, completed further training and successfully gained employment or volunteer positions in the industry highlights the real impact of the program. These individuals demonstrated the value of the program in terms of contributing to one's feelings of inclusion in a new place, as well as their settlement. The case study interviews demonstrated that through their involvement in the SSAPP, they not only learned valuable swimming and water safety skills, but also developed a sense of pride in their achievements, their roles of responsibility and the way in which other community members looked up to them and learned from them. Furthermore, they inspired the next wave of CALD members to become involved in the aquatic industry, who should, in-turn, also experience similar benefits.

Parents also felt the SSAPP contributed positively to their own settlement in Australia because they also met people from different cultures, made new friends and improved their English skills. The provision of swimming lessons and water safety education for adults is strongly recommended so that parents and carers can then enjoy the water safely and confidently with their children and know how to respond in an emergency.

Conclusions

Year 4 of LSVs SSAPP successfully addressed achieving each of the project objectives. In addition, the overall four-year goal of creating 'healthier sporting environments that are safe, accessible, inclusive and equitable to support participation of CALD communities' was achieved, as demonstrated by growth in program participation, the development of role models through people working and volunteering in the aquatic industry and by whole-program evaluation by stakeholders.

A record 3,982 CALD participants were involved in education programs (beach program and education sessions), pool programs, further training and swim teams. This continual growth in participation in swimming and water safety programs and the overwhelming support for the project are a testament to the value placed upon it by those involved, including the participants and their families and stakeholders such as aquatic facilities, lifesaving clubs, migrant service groups and language schools.

The ongoing development of even more potential role models for CALD communities has facilitated a growing involvement by more individuals in the aquatic industry. These people have been shown to inspire, educate and encourage others in their community to participate in aquatic recreation. The Year 4 evaluation has added to the evidence base from previous years that demonstrates the and the flow on effects and the positive influence of CALD pool lifeguards, swim teachers and beach lifesavers on others as well as their own lives.

The audit, review and ultimate presentation of LSV's diversity related policies and procedures were completed during the four years of the project, further consolidating the required organisational change in this area for future years.

The effect of the SSAPP on participants' settlement was again very positive, for those in volunteer or paid roles, but also for children in pool programs and their families. These again include substantial improvements to people's happiness, health and wellbeing, English skills, friendships and, of course, swimming capability and water safety knowledge. Again, the combination of participation, role model development, organisational change and improved resources to better facilitate CALD community participation in aquatics improves the settlement and inclusion of those involved. These factors have contributed to creating safe, accessible, inclusive environments to support the participation of Victoria's CALD communities in aquatic recreation.

At the conclusion on the four year SSAPP, over 13,000 members of the Victorian CALD community have been exposed to swimming and water safety education through education sessions, beach programs, pool programs, swim teams and further training. There has been a full cycle of people who, initially unable to swim, became involved in a pool program and have become community leaders as pool lifeguards, swim teachers, volunteer beach lifesavers and competent swimmers with excellent water safety knowledge. These people are fantastic examples of the value of the program, the importance of having swimming and water safety knowledge and they demonstrate to others that they are welcome in swimming pools and at beaches and can also achieve substantial goals. This program has changed lives, and through the development leaders such as these, it should continue to do so for years to come.

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