



National Aquatics Symposium 2023

> **Thursday 9 & Friday 10 March**
The Views, Life Saving Victoria,
Port Melbourne



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTED BY



Australian Government

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Welcome

Welcome to the National Aquatics Symposium 2023.

Your attendance reinforces your commitment to working together to shape strategies to address some problems we all share concern for. We meet at a critical juncture.

There are infrastructure challenges: in the next 10 years, up to 40 per cent of public aquatic facilities that local governments own are likely to need serious refurbishment or outright replacement at a cost of more than \$8 billion.

There are workforce challenges: there is a significant shortage of workers for the 2113 publicly accessible pools in Australia - swim teachers, pool lifeguards, and frontline aquatic and leisure centre staff.

There are challenges in water safety education: we are all concerned about the risks of generational impact of the pandemic, compounding already concerning gaps in children's swimming abilities.

These challenges are all interconnected. Without collaboration we cannot expect to meet the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 goal of reducing drowning by 50 per cent by 2030.

We come into this Symposium with an estimated 90 people drowning over summer – that is one person dying from drowning on average every day from 1 December. No state or territory was immune.

Last year in fact was the worst year for drowning in the past 20 years with families, friends, and colleagues mourning 339 lives lost over this period.

The National Aquatic Symposium at which we are gathered is unique. The Symposium brings together more than 150 respected and experienced leaders in policy, aquatic safety, education and research, all to address key issues. Together we will discuss:

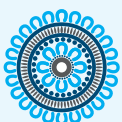
- **Swimming skills** – ensuring that all children have access to swimming and water safety programs and achieve National Benchmarks.
- **Workforce** – raising the profile of the industry as a career opportunity and ensuring the workforce is sustainable, supported and capable.
- **Infrastructure** – ensuring the availability and sustainability of fit-for-purpose aquatic facilities.

Together this week we can transform wicked problems into a more unified path which address these challenges, and the emerging threats they present, to work towards our overall goal, which is preventing drowning.

We hope to reach consensus by the close of the Symposium on Friday on a collective agenda which will drive our efforts to save lives and ensure everyone can enjoy the water safely.

I encourage you to be open, engaged and focused on a collective outcome.

Justin Scarr
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Life Saving Society - Australia



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the Bunurong People of the South Eastern Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which the National Aquatics Symposium is being held. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present recognising their continued connection to land, waters and communities.

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 1: Thursday 9th March 2023

8.00am	Registration and Arrival Tea & Coffee
8.50am	Welcome to Country Kobi Sainty, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
9.00am	Symposium Opening Address Justin Scarr, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia
SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY SKILLS	
Theme: Who is missing out and why?	
9.30-9.40am	PRESENTATIONS Overview of swimming and water safety advocacy, and why this issue matters Peter Leaversuch, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving – Western Australia
9.40-9.50am	Water Skills for Life - a New Zealand perspective on the issues and solutions on missing out on learning to swim Daniel Gerrard, Chief Executive Officer, Water Safety New Zealand
9.50-10.00am	Who's at risk, what they need and how can it be done? Dr Hannah Calverley PhD, Manager – Research and Evaluation, Life Saving Victoria
10.00-10.10am	Insights into the implementation of the National Framework and value in measuring against the National Benchmarks Penny Larsen, National Manager Education, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia
10.10-10.30am	PANEL DISCUSSION How can we better leverage the advocacy and frameworks in place to ensure no child misses out? Daniel Gerrard, Chief Executive Officer, Water Safety New Zealand Bradley Low, Chief Executive Officer, AUSTSWIM Kate Simpson, General Manager, Governance, Club Support & Education, Life Saving Victoria Grant Connors, General Manager Programs, Belgravia Leisure
10.30-11.00am	Morning Tea Break
Theme: Lowering barriers to access	
11.00-11.10am	PRESENTATIONS Localising strategy so 'no child misses out' - lessons from Frankston Kath Thom, Chief Executive Officer, Peninsula Leisure
11.10-11.20am	Analysis of sport and swimming vouchers in Australia and their impacts on children's participation in swimming and water safety programs Katrien Pickles, Senior Project Officer Research & Policy, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia
11.20am – 12.00pm	PANEL DISCUSSION How to strengthen programs which support lowering barriers to access swimming and water safety programs? Kath Thom, Chief Executive Officer, Peninsula Leisure Peter Leaversuch, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving – Western Australia Megan Kerr, A/Director, Statewide Services, Victorian Department of Education Jodie Freund, Senior Project Officer, Sector Capability, South Australian Office for Recreation, Sport & Racing

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 1: Thursday 9th March 2023

12.00-12.30pm	Lunch Break
Theme: Increasing participation	
12.30-12.40pm	PRESENTATIONS Increasing the user base for sport and physical activity at the grassroots by leveraging diversity and inclusion Kym McMahon, AFL National Diversity and Inclusion Participation Manager
12.40-12.50pm	Tackling retention and increasing participation with a post learn to swim pathway using a local lens Janelle Falkingham, Aquatic Product Manager, the Y Victoria
Theme: Youth development and empowerment	
12.50-1.00pm	PRESENTATIONS Learning from Bambigi: a grassroots youth-lead first nations swimming initiative Piper Stewart, Founder, Bambigi
1.00-1.10pm	Personal journey from learning to swim to teaching lifesaving to other CaLD community members Sahar Ehsani, Life Saving Victoria CaLD program participant
1.10-1.30pm	PANEL DISCUSSION – EMERGING WOMEN LEADERS How can we create pathways and programs that excite and engage youth and young people into lifelong enjoyment of swimming, lifesaving and aquatic recreation? Piper Stewart, Founder, Bambigi Sahar Ehsani, Life Saving Victoria CaLD program participant Bianca DeFazio, Senior Aquatics Coordinator, the Y Victoria Georgina Laws, Black Rock Life Saving Club, Youth Advisory Committee Member
1.30-2.30pm	WORKSHOP SESSION Setting a collective agenda – developing action statements Facilitator: Justin Scarr
2.30-3.00pm	Afternoon Tea Break

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 1: Thursday 9th March 2023

WORKFORCE

Theme: Workforce profile, issues and opportunities

3.00-3.20pm

PRESENTATIONS

National aquatic workforce survey 2022: results & insights

Shaun Jackson, National Manager Training & Workforce Development, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

3.20-3.30pm

Attracting the right people - a tale of two cities

Adam Luscombe, General Manager, South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre

3.30-3.40pm

Victorian swim teacher retention project

Kate Simpson, General Manager, Governance, Club Support & Education, Life Saving Victoria

3.40-4.00pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

How do we raise the profile of aquatic industry jobs and opportunities, and better access local talent pools?

Alexandra Ash, Chief Executive Officer, Gymnastics Australia

Ben Tudhope, General Manager - Partnerships, Aligned Leisure

John Clark, Chief Executive Officer, South East Leisure

Adam Luscombe, General Manager, South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre

Theme: Career pathways, retaining and developing talent

4.00-4.10pm

PRESENTATIONS

The Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System - what does it mean for aquatic industry roles?

Bill Mollison, Manager Victoria, Skills Programs, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

4.10-4.20pm

Creating a work environment that people want to stay in

Nicky Sloan, People and Culture, City Venue Management

4.20-4.30pm

Developing your people to grow and lead your organisation through new opportunities and challenges

Kara Monaghan, Regional Manager VIC/TAS, Belgravia Leisure

4.30-5.00pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

What career pathways are available and how do we retain and develop talent?

Victoria Clarke, Project Manager, Swim Jobs Victoria

Nicky Sloan, People and Culture, City Venue Management

Emma Jackson, Manager, Active Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Kathy Parton, Chief Executive Officer, Aquatics and Recreation Victoria

Kara Monaghan, Regional Manager VIC/TAS, Belgravia Leisure

5.00pm

Day's wrap up and thanks

5.15pm – 6.15pm

NETWORKING FUNCTION

Join us to relax and network with colleagues at the Beach Bar at The Views

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 2: Friday 10th March 2023

8.30am	Registration and Arrival Tea & Coffee
9.00am	Welcome to day 2 and day 1 recap RJ Houston, General Manager Capability & Industry, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia
WORKFORCE	
Theme: Diversity and inclusion in the workforce	
9.30-9.40am	Building an inclusive culture in leisure facilities Matthew Haanappel OAM PLY, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, AUSTSWIM
9.40-9.50am	Creating welcoming and inclusive sports workplaces and facilities for the LGBTQIA+ community Emily Fox, Manager - Capacity Building, Proud2Play
9.50-10.00am	Why diversity matters in grassroots sport Richard Quail, National AusKick and Alternative Formats Manager, AFL Kym McMahon, National Diversity and Inclusion Participation Manager, AFL
10.00-10.10am	Collective Leisure: a work integration social enterprise (WISE) David Burns, Chief Executive Officer, Collective Leisure
10.10am	PANEL DISCUSSION Why is diversity and inclusion important, what are we doing well, and what can we do differently? Emily Fox, Manager - Capacity Building, Proud2Play Richard Quail, National AusKick and Alternative Formats Manager, AFL Kym McMahon, National Diversity and Inclusion Participation Manager, AFL Stan Wall, Chief Executive Officer, Lifeguarding Services Australia & Board Member HumanAbility Matthew Haanappel OAM PLY, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, AUSTSWIM
10.30-11.00am	Morning Tea Break
11.00-12.00pm	WORKSHOP SESSION Setting a collective agenda – developing action statements Facilitator: Justin Scarr
12.00-12.30pm	Lunch Break

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 2: Friday 10th March 2023

INFRASTRUCTURE

Theme: Understanding the current state of aquatic infrastructure in Australia

12.30-12.40pm

PRESENTATIONS

Overview of state of aquatic facility infrastructure

John Summers, Managing Director, Leisure Management Excellence

12.40-12.50pm

Challenges maintaining regional swimming pools

Steve Good, Executive Director, Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics (LIWA)

12.50-1.00pm

Current challenges in swimming pool construction

Steve Meikle, General Manager - Victoria, Commercial Aquatics Australia

1.00-1.30pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Understanding the impacts of rising utility costs on aquatic facilities now and into the future

Steve Good, Executive Director, Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics (LIWA)

Steve Meikle, General Manager - Victoria, Commercial Aquatics Australia

Jay Clarke, Managing Director, City Venue Management

Amanda Locke, Manager of Leisure and Recreation, City of Greater Geelong

Barry Harrison, General Manager Aquatic Facilities, Western Leisure Services

Theme: Current approaches to aquatic facility planning and delivery

1.30-1.40pm

Reflections and lessons from recent Australian projects

Miranda Markovic, Senior Consultant, Otium Planning Group

1.40-1.50pm

Vision, leadership and future proofing new facilities – Are we master planning for current thinking and the squeaky wheels in the community or for future generations of participants and managers?

Martin Sheppard, Managing Director, Smart Connection Consultancy

1.50-2.00pm

Rejuvenating regional public pools – pitching a new model

Andy Dennis, General Manager - Training & Aquatic Industry, Life Saving Victoria

2.00-2.10pm

Research into planning of aquatic facilities - key learnings

Dr Katie McDonald, Adjunct Research Fellow - Victoria University & Recreation Planner - @leisure

2.10-2.30pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Are we planning for swimming pools appropriately?

Tim Goward, Executive Coordinator Aquatics, City of Gold Coast

Phil Saikaly, Lead Director Community Sports Infrastructure, Sport & Recreation Victoria

Dr Katie McDonald, Adjunct Research Fellow - Victoria University & Recreation Planner - @leisure

Martin Sheppard, Managing Director, Smart Connection Consultancy

Miranda Markovic, Senior Consultant, Otium Planning Group

2.30-3.00pm

Afternoon Tea Break

National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Day 2: Friday 10th March 2023

Theme: Designing for impact and challenging the norm	
3.00-3.10pm	PRESENTATIONS How to create community buildings with impact Melissa Higgs, Principal, HCMA Architects Vancouver
3.10-3.20pm	The social impact of the aquatic industry - the role of people and places Professor Emma Sherry, Co-director, Sport Innovation Research Group, Swinburne University
3.20-3.30pm	Building carbon neutral, or net-negative aquatic facilities – is it possible in Australia? Brett Diprose, Associate Principal, Warren and Mahoney
3.30-3.40pm	Delivering pools in remote Aboriginal communities Peter Leaversuch, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving Western Australia
3.40-4.00pm	PANEL DISCUSSION Are we building the right facilities that communities actually need, now and in the future? John Summers, Managing Director, Leisure Management Excellence Professor Emma Sherry, Sport Innovation Research Group, Swinburne University Yvette Audet, Vice President, International Leisure Facilities Association (IAKS) Dr John Tower, Honorary Research Fellow - Victoria University & Managing Director - JRT Leisure
4.00-5.00pm	WORKSHOP SESSION Setting a collective agenda – developing action statements Facilitator: Justin Scarr
5.00pm	Day's wrap up and thanks

We thank Aflex Inflatables for their support of the National Aquatics Symposium.



National Aquatics Symposium Program

> Speaker Bio's



Peter Leaversuch

Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving Society - Western Australia

Peter was appointed CEO of the Royal Life Saving Society WA in 2015. The appointment was the culmination of 20 years working in the community recreation sector predominately at Royal Life Saving but also at the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Leisure Institute of Western Australia.

Peter is passionate about:

- Advancing services in remote aboriginal communities where Royal Life Saving manages the local swimming pool,
- Increasing community access to water safety education for at-risk and vulnerable populations.

Peter has actively pursued the introduction of social enterprises at Royal Life Saving that generate surpluses to fund its community service activities. These include social enterprises in risk management and vocational training. Peter completed a Bachelor of Economics at the University of WA in 1992 and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Social Impact at the UWA Business School in 2019. He is a Life Member of the Royal Life Saving Society, Leisure Institute of WA and Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club where he currently volunteers.



Daniel Gerrard

Chief Executive Officer, Water Safety New Zealand

Daniel Gerrard took the helm of the Water Safety NZ, in early 2021 and this time WSNZ has taken on a new form and approach to supporting its partners. following the successful launch of Wai ora Aotearoa: Navigating to a safer future, New Zealand's Water Safety Sector Strategy 2025. WSNZ is the lead agency for Wai ora Aotearoa 2025, New Zealand's Water Safety Sector Strategy 2025. WSNZ, alongside its sector partners, has set out a collaborative approach to reduce drowning fatalities and injuries in Aotearoa New Zealand over the next five years. Daniel has extensive experience in the sector in leadership roles most recently at Surf Life Saving (Northern) and has previously held Chief Executive positions at Sport Auckland and Sport Gisborne Tairāwhiti. He's spent over 12 years as Chair and board member of Canoe Racing NZ and Sportnet (Regional Sports Trusts Governing body) and was instrumental in developing and executing the Greater Auckland Aquatic Action plan (GAAAP).



Dr Hannah Calverley PhD

Manager - Research and Evaluation, Life Saving Victoria

Dr Hannah Calverley is the Manager - Research and Evaluation for Life Saving Victoria (LSV). Hannah assists in the management and undertaking of LSV's research and evaluation of injury prevention and water safety issues, including: swimming and water safety education programs; lifesaving service delivery; water competency among children and older adults; inland waterways drowning prevention; public pool safety; multicultural water safety campaigns and international drowning prevention research. Hannah holds a Bachelor (with Honours) of Sport Development with Coaching, a Masters of Psychology, and a PhD which investigated alcohol-related drownings among young people.



Penny Larsen

National Manager Education, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

Penny Larsen has extensive experience in developing, deploying and evaluating water safety education programs. Since 2005, Penny has been the National Education Manager for Royal Life Saving Society – Australia. In this role, she is responsible for driving advocacy, education and programs for swimming, lifesaving and water safety including the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework. She oversees Royal Life Saving's key community education programs including Swim and Survive, Water Smart, Bronze e-Lifesaving and Bronze Medallion. Her role includes producing quality teaching and learning resources, evaluating program implementation and developing strategies to increase participation. Penny sees education as one of the vital components in the prevention of drowning.



Bradley Low

Chief Executive Officer, AUSTSWIM

Brad has a lifelong love of all things swimming and water safety, with his first job as an AUSTSWIM teacher in Queensland back in 1995. Since then, Brad has continued to foster his love of aquatics through a long association with AUSTSWIM – Australia's national organisation for teaching swimming and water safety – as a course presenter, committee, and council member and now as CEO. Professionally, Brad has over 20 years of corporate experience in association management, vocational education and training, sports management, and leisure where he is recognised for his ability to foster strong industry networks and develop educational and program opportunities for communities within Australia and internationally.



Grant Connors
General Manager Programs, Belgravia Leisure

Grant is an experienced executive level leader with a demonstrated history of working in the aquatic, sport & recreation industry. Skilled in Strategic & Analytical Thinking, Stakeholder Management, Business Planning, Operations Management, Sales, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Strong business development professional with a history of program growth and improved systems efficiency. Grant holds a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Leadership.



Kate Simpson
General Manager, Governance, Club Support & Education, Life Saving Victoria

Originally a physical education and health teacher, Kate has twenty years' experience working across the aquatic industry, education, sport and emergency management sectors. Kate is currently the general manager of governance, club support and education at Life Saving Victoria, a role that sees her oversee the strategic development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative water safety education programs for the community, while also supporting LSV's board and 43,000 volunteer members across the state.



Kath Thom
Chief Executive Officer, Peninsula Leisure

Kath Thom is the CEO of Peninsula Leisure, an independent subsidiary company of Frankston City Council, focused on improving lives by inspiring activity and connection. Kath started her career as a casual swim teacher and has a long history of contribution to the sector. Her passion for aquatic education has remained firm over 20-odd years with roles coordinating large Learn to Swim programs in both NSW and Victoria, Coordinating Lifesaving Education programs, as well as serving on the AUSTSWIM Board of Directors. Now, with the help of her talented team, they have committed to tackling their mission that 'Every Child in Frankston Can Swim'.



Katrien Pickles
Senior Research Officer Research & Policy, Life Saving Society - Australia

Katrien is a Senior Project Officer (Research and Policy) at Royal Life Saving Society - Australia. She brings a family studies lens to her drowning prevention and water safety research. Katrien received a PhD in Family Studies from the University of Newcastle in 2021 and has previously worked in family support research and practice roles and as a swim teacher.



Megan Kerr
A/Director, Statewide Services, Victorian Department of Education

Megan is a public policy professional with over 20 years' experience in policy and program design, implementation, evaluation and research. Megan has worked across education, health, sport and community development settings in the government and non-government sectors and is currently the A/Director, Statewide Services in the Victorian Department of Education. In this role, Megan leads a portfolio of participation and engagement initiatives that are delivered directly to students, teachers, principals, and school communities and which make significant contributions to the learning and development outcomes of Victorian students, across all sectors.



Jodie Freund
Senior Project Officer at the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing in South Australia

Jodie Freund is currently the Senior Project Officer at the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing in South Australia, with over 20 years' experience working in the sport and recreation industry. Jodie has extensive experience ranging from State Sporting Organisations to State and Federal Government, including the South Australian VACSWIM program, and in multiple volunteer roles as coach and committee member. Jodie values making a difference and the impact that water safety can make in people's lives.



Kym McMahon
AFL National Diversity and Inclusion Participation Manager

Kym has over 20 years' experience in education, sport and physical activity program development and delivery from grassroots through to national program management. Kim also has a passion for community consultation and continual improvement in program delivery to ensure sport and physical activity is fun, safe and accessible to all. Within the role of AFL National Diversity and Inclusion Participation Manager, Kym McMahon is responsible for driving participation growth, partnerships and social cohesion within a diverse range of communities across Australia. These opportunities are designed to engage communities through schools, Auskick programs and community clubs. Kym is a qualified PE Teacher, with additional business and management qualification. Kym has held a variety of participation and development roles within Swimming Australia and the Australian Sports Commission where she worked with National Sporting Organisations on their participation growth plans and delivered the Active After School Communities Program, which has evolved to the Sporting Schools program.



Janelle Falkingham
Aquatic Product Manager, the Y Victoria

Janelle has been working in the aquatics industry in Australia for 25 years. Initially within the private swim school sector until she commenced with the Y in 2011, where she led aquatic programming at many YMCA managed centres across Victoria until moving into her role as the Aquatic Product Manager. Janelle's current role enables her to lead programming specialists and develop initiatives in learn to swim and water safety while executing the Y's Aquatic Product Strategy. Janelle is a board member at Aquatics & Recreation Victoria where she chairs the Facility Management Committee, she is also a member of Life Saving Victoria's, Play It Safe by The Water steering committee. Janelle is driven to continue working alongside aquatic industry groups and leading bodies to strengthen work in drowning prevention and the swimming and water safety competency of all Australians.



Piper Stewart
Founder, Bambigi

Piper Stewart is a proud Gulidjan woman living on Wiradjuri Country. She is in Yr 12 at Murrumbidgee Regional High School, and she loves to swim. 4 years ago, she noticed that there were only a couple of other Aboriginal kids her town, Griffith, who swim regularly, and few competed in swim meets. Due to the cost of swimming lessons, many Aboriginal kids in Griffith swim in dangerous channels or never learn to swim. So when she was 12 Piper created Bambigi, an organisation that works to make sure more Aboriginal kids learn to swim and are safe in the water. Bambigi means "to swim" in Wiradjuri, Griffith's traditional Aboriginal language.



Sahar Ehsani
Life Saving Victoria CaLD program Participant

Sahar is currently in her second year of a Paramedicine degree at Monash University, Melbourne, Sahar arrived in Australia from Pakistan in 2018 with her parents and five siblings. Whilst at Noble Park English Language school Sahar and her girlfriends were motivated by other Afghan youth who had previously participated in a local CaLD lifesaving initiative. The problem with their plan was that neither her nor her friends could swim. Utilising funded swimming lessons offered by Life Saving Victoria (LSV), one year later all graduated from a Surf Rescue Course at Bonbeach LSV (Melbourne) and started patrolling as volunteer surf lifesavers. By the following patrolling season her and her teammates had won a silver medal at the State Surf Lifesaving Championships in the Open Girls R&R event. Her aquatics journey continued to flourish to become a local swim teacher. Today Sahar also works for LSV as a casual educator teaching other newly arrived Australians about water safety.



Georgina Laws
Black Rock Life Saving Club, Youth Advisory Committee Member

Georgina is 15 years old and competes in the U15 (youth) age group for both Summer Beach Lifesaving and Pool Lifesaving. Since Georgina was 7 she has been a member at Black Rock Life Saving Club where she is an active patrolling member. Georgina is also on the LSV committee which she really enjoys. This committee works to engage with the youth in Beach Lifesaving and Pool Lifesaving sports. Georgina has a special interest in R&R and has just competed in the United States where she was part of the team that won U14/15 youth Gold and Team of the Year.



Bianca DeFazio
Senior Aquatics Coordinator, the Y Victoria

Bianca has been employed with the Y for 7 years. She started her journey as a swim teacher at Coburg Leisure Centre and moved across to Fawkner Leisure. Bianca then gained experience working across café, TIC and CSO areas. Bianca's hard work was rewarded after just a few years when she moved up into an Aquatics admin role. This then lead Bianca to a high leadership role as Aquatics Coordinator. After periods of lockdown Bianca came back onsite to take on the position of Frontline and Aquatics Coordinator. In 2022, Bianca then obtained the role of 2IC at Fawkner Leisure in operations and frontline. A testament to Bianca's hard work, customer focus, leadership and willingness to give anything a go.



Shaun Jackson
National Manager - Training & Workforce Development, Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

Shaun has worked in higher education and vocational training and education for over 20 years, starting out as a teacher / vocational trainer and then moving into academic coordination, course writing / instructional design and management of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Shaun has been with the Royal Life Saving – Australia National Office since 2016 in the role of National Manager – Training and Workforce Development. In this role Shaun works closely with the network of Royal Life Saving RTOs across Australia, and also represents Royal Life Saving in its capacity as an aquatic industry peak body in the areas of workforce development and training, safety, and compliance. Shaun is driven by his love for the water and healthy, active living, along the satisfaction in seeing people learn and develop new skills, and the career and life opportunities that brings.



Adam Luscombe
General Manager, South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre

Adam is the General Manager of South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre, and has remit for a number of regional facilities managed by the Y Victoria. Since opening in 2011, SAALC has experienced significant success, positioning the facility as one of the premier community and sports venues in the country. SAALC has hosted a multitude of major events, provided substantial economic and social benefit to South Australia and most notably, improved the health outcomes of the community. Prior to working with the Y, Adam was the General Manager of Sports Venues at the State Sports Centres Trust (MSAC) in Melbourne and has lectured at the University of South Australia in sport and recreation management. Adam holds an MBA from the University of New England, as well as various other qualifications.



Alexandra Ash
Chief Executive Officer Gymnastics Australia

Alexandra is the CEO of Gymnastics Australia one of the largest participation sports in the country with over 600 clubs nationally ranging from small not for profit clubs to professional businesses with over 5000 athlete registrations. Gymnastics is one of the foundation Olympic sports with 4 disciplines plus an additional 4 non-olympic gym sports. Alex is also the Vice-President of Royal Life Saving Society Australia and has been a previous Board director of Skate Australia, Disability Sport and Recreation and Gymnastics Victoria. Alex also had a 13 year career at The Y Victoria, with her most recent role as Executive General Manager of Recreation overseeing 83 facilities including South Australia Aquatic and Leisure Centre.



Ben Tudhope
General Manager - Partnerships, Aligned Leisure

Ben is a veteran of more than 16 years in the health and fitness industry. Having worked in Local Government, University and Not For Profit sectors, he is currently the General Manager - Partnerships of Aligned Leisure. In this role, Ben is responsible for developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders across Government, Industry and Private sectors to benefit local communities in which Aligned Leisure work. Immediately prior to this role, Ben worked for YMCA Victoria in various roles from Centre Manager through to General Manager positions responsible for a range of facilities under management. Previously, Ben worked for the City of Melbourne and RMIT University within their in-house operated facilities. Ben is a proven leader having led large teams across a range of facilities and operations with strategic foresight and a focus on continuous improvement.



John Clark
Chief Executive Officer, South East Leisure

John is passionate about creating high quality experiences - for both his team and his customers. With over 18 years in the leisure industry John has a track record of successful outcomes, driven largely through committed, positive leadership and the ability to identify opportunities and implement significant change. John is not scared of a challenge either. In 2011-12, I cycled 24,000km across 27 countries from London to Melbourne. I've also completed four full-distance Ironman triathlons including the Ironman World Championships in Kona, Hawaii. John is currently the CEO of South East Leisure who oversee Dandenong Oasis, Noble Park Aquatic Centre, Springers Leisure and Dandenong Stadium.



Bill Mollison
Manager Victoria, Skills Programs, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Bill Mollison is the State Contract Manager for the Australian Apprenticeships Support Network (AASN) Program in the Victoria State Office of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). In this role, Bill is responsible for the contract management of the four AASN providers in Victoria and provides VET policy advice to National Office. Bill also manages a foundation skills program, Skills for Education and Employment Program (SEE). He has been in this role for nine years, and with the Department for 20 years. Bill has previously worked in the vocational education and training community sector, delivering training for job seekers in asset maintenance and practical IT skills.



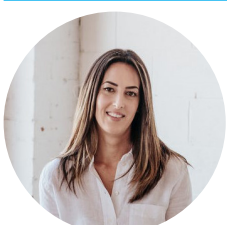
Nicky Sloan
People and Culture, City Venue Management

Nicky Sloan, Chief People Officer at City Venue Management, will be speaking about 'Creating a work environment that people want to stay in'. Nicky is a results driven leader and brings a wealth of experience in aligning people capabilities with business strategy, developing a high performance organisational culture and creating experiences that delight and engage.



Kara Monaghan
Regional Manager VIC/TAS, Belgravia Leisure

Kara is a focussed and diverse change leader with a strong passion for partnerships, community outcomes and empowering the advancement of our sector. Kara uniquely represents the whole spectrum of industry experience with over 18 years in management roles across both local government and the private sector. In her current role as the Regional Manager for Western Victoria and Tasmania for Belgravia Leisure, Kara is committed to the innovative shift away from traditional leisure facility offerings and is focussed on embracing and strengthening the connection between leisure, health and wellness to deliver better outcomes for the community as a whole.



Victoria Clarke
Project Manager, Swim Jobs Victoria

Victoria Clark is the project manager for the SWIM Jobs Victoria program. With more than 18 years of experience in a variety of senior commercial and partnership management roles with elite sport, government and community, Victoria's current role focuses on revitalising the aquatic industry with the recruitment of swim teachers and aquatic roles across the state. Having worn many hats with one constant - an unrelenting passion for the opportunities that sport and in particular, swimming can provide. She is truly proud to be involved in a program with great impact.



Emma Jackson
Manager, Active Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Emma continues her extensive career in the sport and recreation sector across various roles in major events, sector development, inclusion, and physical activity campaigns. She is passionate about driving interventions that will get Victorians more physically active. In her current role as Manager, Active Recreation at Sport and Recreation Victoria, Emma collaborates with a range of diverse stakeholders to strategically develop policy advice to support the aquatic sector. She acknowledges how important aquatic facilities are as places to keep us active, healthy and connected to family and friends. Emma also manages the VICSWIM Summer Kidz Program investment that is delivered by Aquatic and Leisure Victoria and is a member of the Victorian Water Safety Taskforce. She sees the importance of swimming lessons to ensure people can safely enjoy pools, beaches and rivers.



Kathy Parton
Chief Executive Officer, Aquatics and Recreation Victoria

Kathy is a Masters qualified Government and Community sector professional with over 20 years experience in senior organisational and community leadership, community services provision, operational management accompanied by strengths and expertise in partnership development, leadership & capability Development, strategic public policy and planning, community engagement, evaluation, project management, community development, community and social infrastructure planning and development, urban and place planning, leading change and diversity & Inclusion. With a background working in senior roles in Local, State and Federal Government and the community sector, Kathy is a solutions focused, emotionally aware, collaborative, ethical, passionate community minded leader who looks to achieve positive outcomes for all. Kathy is an experienced board director with a strong knowledge of the community service sector, service systems and the variety of social issues present within contemporary communities and preventative strategies to respond to these issues. Kathy is currently the CEO of Aquatic & Recreation Victoria, a position she has held since 2019. Prior to this Kathy has worked in local government in a range of sectors including Well-being, Community Planning and Children's services.



Matt Haanappel OAM PLY
Diversity and Inclusion Manager, AUSTSWIM

Matthew was born with Cerebral Palsy, but this didn't stop him or his parents from ensuring he had a full and normal life. As a child with a disability making his way through Learn to Swim in the early 1990's this was not without challenge. Matt would go on to be selected to the 2012 Australian Paralympic Team followed by Rio 2016 and the Commonwealth Games in 2018. He retired during COVID, as a Paralympic Gold Medalist, World Record Holder and last year received a formal commendation from the International Paralympic Committee for his significant contribution to the Diversity & Inclusion sector globally. Today, Matt is a qualified Lifeguard and Swimming Instructor, and before joining AUSTSWIM, was the Diversity & Inclusion Lead at the ABC working on recruitment and program initiatives on Q&A, ABC News Breakfast, Playschool, BBC Earth productions with Sir David Attenborough, and 'The School that Tried to End Racism' to name a few. Joining AUSTSWIM late last year, he currently leads the Removing Barriers program and a handful of other exciting projects.



Emily Fox
Manager - Capacity Building, Proud2Play

Em Fox (She/They) is the capacity manager at Proud2Play, a leading non-profit dedicated to creating safe and inclusive spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community within sport and movement settings. As a member of the gender diverse community and a former elite athlete, Em brings her lived experience into conversations encouraging the right for all people to find a place within sport in Australia and around the world.



Richard Quail
National Auskick and Alternative Formats Manager, AFL

An experienced leader in the Sport and Community Recreation / Fitness industry, including work recent work with the Australian Football League (AFL) and over 7 years with YMCA Victoria. Richard has had the opportunities to develop extensive experience in this sector, including skills in people development, participation growth, contract management, financial management and stakeholder engagement. Richard brings a positive and energetic approach with a proven history of results.



David Brynes
Chief Executive Officer, Collective Leisure

David has worked in the sport and physical activity sector in England and Australia for 23 years, in roles spanning Local Government, peak bodies, private sector and the social economy. David is a competent agent of change operating from two platforms, as the Founder and CEO of Collective Leisure and Director of DB Consulting. Collective Leisure is Australia's first social enterprise leisure management company, certified by Social Traders. With a mission to reduce health inequity within our communities. This is summarised in their purpose statement of "enabling well-being without boundaries". DB Consulting works with government and peak bodies in a policy, planning and strategic context.



Stan Wall

Chief Executive Officer, Lifeguarding Services Australia & Board Member HumanAbility

For the past 30 years Stan has had the pleasure of being a professional lifeguard and having worked throughout Australia, Pacific Islands, Middle East, Asia and Europe. As a leader in aquatic based risk management and risk based assessments, one of his major roles has been specialising in major aquatic events and operations. In addition to his aquatic risk background Stan has 18 years as a qualified emergency rescue paramedic officer with extensive water rescue, aviation and technical rescue experience. Stan has managed or been a key stakeholder in the risk management of over 4,000 major and international events, including the logistic coordination and operations management of the Sydney Aquatic Centre during the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Water Safety Coordinator for the World Masters, ITU World Triathlon Series and has worked events ranging from FINA World Championships through to film shoots and backyard pool parties. For the past 10 years Stan has maintained a role as a senior board member of the Aquatic & Recreation Institute holding key state and national board positions and volunteering for other key governance roles as the corporate secretary, national training advisory and I am currently a member of the boards executive management team. Stan is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and holds both Fellow and Life Member status with the Aquatic & Recreation Institute. Over the course of his professional carrier Stan has been awarded the Emergency Services Long Service Medal, the National Medal of Australia as well as numerous awards of service and merit for services to the aquatic industry.



John Summers

Managing Director, Leisure Management Excellence

John is an experienced and senior strategic and operational leader having worked across a broad range of sectors including aquatics, health and wellness, sports and community services. In 2018 John created Leisure Management Excellence Pty Ltd to apply his experience and skills to support and guide local government on developing and enacting strategy and achieving operational excellence in the design, development, and management of their aquatic, sports and leisure facilities. John has extensive experience in the development of aquatic facility strategies, development of improvement plan for an indoor sports and aquatic centre/outdoor pool, feasibility studies, sports precinct masterplan, tender documentation for the management and operation of aquatic facilities and sports facility operational performance review. John has recently created a partnership with Childsafe Australia to develop safeguarding children training specifically developed for staff of aquatic leisure facilities.



Steve Good

Executive Director, Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics (LIWA)

Steve has been involved in the Aquatic Recreation industry for 20 years managing metro facilities, training Pool Lifeguards, First Aid and Pool Managers. Over the past 8 years, Steve's activities have taken him to the middle east to deliver Pool Lifeguard training throughout Saudi Arabia and Oman. Steve has served on the LIWA Aquatics Board for 15 years and in 2018 was appointed the position of Executive Office LIWA Aquatics.



Steve Meikle

General Manager - Victoria, Commercial Aquatics Australia

Steve Meikle is the General Manager (VIC) at Commercial Aquatics Australia (CAA). Commercial Aquatics Australia provides aquatic solutions nationwide and is one of the largest and most experienced companies specialising in the design, construction, renovation, service, maintenance and water treatment of commercial pools and aquatic centres. Prior to working for CAA Steve worked in aquatic facility operations and management with the Y Victoria.



Jay Clarke

Managing Director, City Venue Management

Jay is an experienced General Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the recreational facilities and services industry. Jay has high level skilled in Budgeting, Business Planning, Coaching, Integrated Marketing, and Sales. Jay is currently the Managing Director of City Venue Management in the Gold Coast, Australia.



Amanda Locke

Manager of Leisure and Recreation, City of Greater Geelong

Amanda has recently commenced a new role as the Manager for Leisure and Recreation Services with the City of Greater Geelong. Amanda is a strategic, results-driven executive with more than 20 years' experience in the not-for-profit, local government and commercial sectors specialising in health and wellness, aquatics and children's services. Amanda has substantial operational experience in managing complex environments and large teams with core capabilities in strategic development, commercial and community outcomes, senior leadership and stakeholder engagement; capabilities which she brings to the NAIC to influence the future direction of the aquatic industry in Australia.



Barry Harrison

General Manager Aquatic Facilities, Western Leisure Services

Barry Harrison has been associated with the aquatic industry for over 30 years and has managed large local government owned facilities including leisure centres, stadiums, event centres, and convention centres. In his current role as General Manager Aquatic Facilities, Barry oversees all operations at the large regional leisure centre AquaPulse and the outdoor pool Werribee Outdoor Pool. He brings a wealth of knowledge to the role having worked as a consultant, a teacher, and as an organisational coach in government, not-for-profit, and commercial organisations. Barry holds a Bachelor Degree in Education, and a Graduate Diploma in Innovation and Service Management. He is also the co-Chair of the ARV Local Government Facility Management Standing Committee and a member of the LSV Aquatic Education and Industry Engagement Council.



Miranda Markovic

Senior Consultant, Otium Planning Group

Miranda has over 15 years' experience in the recreation and leisure industry. She has held facility roles in sales and marketing and management, and has prepared business cases, financial models, master plans, feasibility studies, grant applications, benefit assessments and project plans. Miranda is a highly motivated professional with experience in delivering major projects and initiatives to improve the performance of organisations and wellbeing of communities. With recent experience in greenfield facility builds, redevelopments, strategic master planning and contract transitions she thrives in being able to innovate and achieve best practice for the local community and the sector as a whole.



Martin Sheppard

Smart Connection Consultancy

Martin has been in the sport and recreation industry for over 40 years, both in the UK and Australia. Managing facilities, parks and open space, arts, museums and leisure services. He has developed and managed in UK and Australia an array of contracted out services including the largest single contract in UK Leisure, contracted services for tourism precincts, carparking, theatres, pools, sports development and golf courses, and led the introduction of ISO 9000 into the UK leisure market, developed a leisure specific QA and Benchmark tool that is still used by over 60% of all leisure facilities in the UK. Although Martin has in recent years specialised in using synthetic sports surfaces to encourage the community to be more active and is recognised as being one of the predominant advisors on surfaces in the world, his passion of how active and passive leisure can improve community outcomes, social impact and social value has provided him with insights to planning and facilities that are practical and realistic. He sits on a number of global and national working parties and last year was awarded the prestigious Sir Frank Beaurepaire / ARV award for Outstanding Contribution to the Aquatic and Recreation Industry. Additionally, Martin is the co-founder and curator of the National Sports & Physical Activity Convention.



Andy Dennis

General Manager - Training & Aquatic Industry, Life Saving Victoria

Andy Dennis is the General Manager: Training & Aquatic Industry at Life Saving Victoria. Andy looks after a range of portfolios at Life Saving Victoria including both Public & Volunteer Training, Aquatic Industry Services, RTO Compliance, Coastal and Inland Risk and Diversity & Inclusion. Andy started his career in the aquatic industry in England having gone through the prestigious sports management program at Loughborough University and into aquatic facility management. He then joined LSV in the Risk and Research team as a coordinator and has been instrumental in building up a range of services at LSV which contribute to its mission of preventing aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities. Andy is currently studying an MBA with Federation University.



Dr Katie McDonald

Adjunct Research Fellow - Victoria University & Recreation Planner - @leisure

Dr Katie McDonald has over 25 years of experience in the sport and recreation industry. A passionate supporter of community sport and recreation, Katie has worked at Victoria University for many years as a lecturer and sessional tutor for undergraduate sport and recreation students and also has numerous research experience. Prior to that, she was the Aquatics Director and Team Leader at Narre Warren's Casey Aquatic and Recreation Centre. Katie has recently completed a PhD where she provided a critical analysis of aquatic and recreation centre planning and decision-making and also was a contributing author of the book "Community Leisure and Recreation Planning," published in 2021.



Tim Goward

Executive Coordinator Aquatics, City of Gold Coast

Tim believes that, as a leader, mentor and coach it is vital to create a safe setting to experiment, fail and learn, while building confidence and creating an environment to succeed. Tim has a strong desire to help others succeed and have provided a wide range of mentoring to professional athletes, colleges and staff on a professional, developmental and personal level. As the Executive Coordinator Aquatic Centres a large part of Tim's role is building stakeholder relationships to solve problems within resources. Key to this is developing and implementing a strategy to achieving success. The breadth of work requires collaboration across the organisation and a wide range of external stakeholders. Tim has worked in Local Government for the past 13 years in a number of roles and has a broad depth of knowledge across development and implementation of strategy through to service delivery, project management and governance. Tim has also worked in state government, the not-for-profit sector, private sector, self-employed, worked as a professional swim coach and proudly served in the army. Tim is currently the Executive Coordinator Aquatic Centres at City of Gold Coast.



Phil Saikaly

Lead Director - Community Sports Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Philip is an experienced Victorian Public Service executive, with over 23 years in State and local governments. He is recognised nationally for his knowledge and expertise driving public policy outcomes through community sport and recreation infrastructure investment programs and projects. Philip's capacity to create positive change has resulted in outstanding outcomes for Victorians, driven by innovative thought leadership, reform experience and continuous improvement.



Melissa Higgs

Principal, HCMA Architects Vancouver

Melissa is a believer in the power of architecture and design as a catalyst for positive change in the world. As a Principal at HCMA Architecture + Design (Canada), Melissa enjoys working closely with clients and project teams to find creative solutions to unique design challenges. Her focus has been designing recreation facilities and arts and culture projects, including the award-winning West Vancouver Community Centre, Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre in Surrey, BC, and the Clayton Community Centre — the first Passive House community centre in North America. She is also experienced with long-range vision plans that help shape Canadian cities, including Granville Island 2040, OnWater, Vancouver's non-motorized boating strategy, and VanSplash, the City's aquatic strategy. Melissa is also a lecturer in Social Sustainability at the University of British Columbia's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.



Professor Emma Sherry

Co-Director, Sport Innovation Research Group, Swinburne University

Emma Sherry is a Professor at Swinburne University, specialising in the area of sport for development. Emma has completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne and a Masters of Business (Sport Management) and PhD at Deakin University. Emma's PhD studies investigated conflict of interest in the Australian Football League. Emma's current research interests include community development through sport activities, undertaking a broad range of research projects with national and regional sport organisations in Australia and globally including the Commonwealth Secretariat, Victorian Government, VicHealth, Netball Australia, National Rugby League, Australian Football League, and Tennis Australia. Other recent research has included access and equity in sport participation, sport in correctional facilities, and sport and recreation for at-risk and marginalised communities. Emma is currently supervising a number of PhD students in the areas of: sport and environmental sustainability, digital tracking of athletes, open space exercise equipment, sport leadership, sport innovation, and social impact of sport for Australian Indigenous communities. Emma is on the editorial board of Journal of Sport Management, Sport Management Review, European Sport Management Quarterly, and Communications and Sport Journal.



Brett Diprose

Associate Principal, Warren and Mahoney Architects

Brett Diprose is the Associate Principal at Warren and Mahoney's Melbourne studio as a registered Senior Architect. Brett has been involved in a large portfolio of aquatic design projects including Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Metro Sports Facility in Christchurch, Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, Stage 2 (2006 Commonwealth Games and 2007 World Swimming Championships) Swansea and Charlestown Leisure Centres (DA Submissions) – Lake Macquarie City Council and Regional Aquatic Centres for the Hume City Council in Craigieburn and for the Banyule City Council in Greensborough Victoria. Brett believes a stadium or sports facility has the capacity to support and enhance the identity of a city. He believes the process of developing an understanding of our clients and their ambition for a project is of vital importance to creating a unique identity for any sporting project. Warren and Mahoney are leaders in sustainable design practices and Brett will share the latest innovations in building carbon-neutral aquatic and recreation facilities.



Yvette Audet

Vice President, International Leisure Facilities Association (IAKS)

Yvette Audet is currently the Vice President of the International Association for Sport and Leisure Facilities (IAKS) and sits on the expert aquatic circle with representatives from different countries across the UK, Canada, Europe and Asia. Her global knowledge comes from international operators and architects and local knowledge from her current role with Fluidra. Yvette's network in the industry gives her a national and international perspective to current design and operational trends in the aquatic industry. Yvette's experience in the aquatic and leisure industry spans for almost three decades in various roles from programming through to planning and feasibility. She is a very proud mother of two teenagers who remain heavily involved in sport, tries to keep active as much as she can and writes a sporting mum blog www.sportingmum.com.au on how 'Sport Mirrors Life'.



John Tower

Research Fellow - Recreation and Sport Management, Victoria University

John is currently working in several positions in which he supervises research students, manage research projects and conduct leisure consulting projects. John's two main areas of expertise are in i) leisure management, particularly the management of community aquatic and recreation centres, and ii) leisure partnerships. John has an interest in being involved in leisure research projects, leisure industry training and higher education courses. John is also involved as a volunteer board member for World Leisure Organisation and the past President for the Australian and New Zealand Association of Leisure Studies (ANZALS).



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