

**Aims/Objectives/Purpose** The research sought to describe participation rates, achievement levels against the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework (NSWSF), gaps in provision and barriers to accessing S&WS education among primary school aged children.

**Methods** This research involved several discrete investigations including: survey of schools, survey of swimming and water safety teachers, analysis of participation and performance data from school and vocational based programmes, web based knowledge quiz development and testing of children.

**Results/Outcome** Achievement of the S&WS standard set in the NSWSF is achievable but varied (68.6% in Tasmania to 8.8% in South Australia). Indigenous children and children born outside Australia were less likely to achieve the benchmark. Indigenous children, children from rural and remote areas and children with a greater socio-economic disadvantage were underrepresented in those participating in S&WS education.

Challenges identified in benchmarking children's S&WS skills and knowledge included: difficulty in comparing programmes due to the diversity in provision; sampling; age at which to test; and access to children (particularly those not currently participating).

**Significance/Contribution to the Field** There is a need to ensure that the limited public resources for swimming and water safety are used effectively, in this case to ensure that children are equipped with the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe in, on, and around water. This research is the first of its kind in Australia and has changed how we are addressing S&WS.

## Concurrent G: Water Safety

25

### BENCHMARKING AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

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A Peden\*, R Franklin. *Royal Life Saving Society, Australia*

**Background** Royal Life Saving Society—Australia has undertaken a research programme into the swimming and water safety (S&WS) skills and knowledge of Australian children.