

Royal Life Saving

130 summers



Safer Places to Swimposium

Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th August 2025

Oaks Cypress Lakes Resort, Hunter Valley, NSW

Day 1 - Infrastructure & Inland Waterways – Challenges

Morning

8:30	Registration/Coffee	11:15	Sue Raven – Parramatta Council A summary of the journey over the past 10 years and how we've managed the risks and challenges that have evolved in this time for Parramatta.
9:00	Welcome & Opening Remarks		
9:15	Will Koon – Royal Life Saving Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 Midpoint Update: Progress, priorities, and the path forward.	11:30	Malcolm Kuhn – Otium Planning Group A case study in how the Inverell Aquatic Centre project has provided a fantastic, cost-effective outcome for a small regional community.
9:45	Nick Ryan - Business Western Sydney Communities deserve to be better connected to their local rivers through cleaner waterways, more swimmable spaces, and revitalised river beaches. This vision calls for cultural, political, and physical change to embrace the region's rivers as vital community assets.	11:45	Alexia Morgan – Belgravia Leisure A discussion about making aquatic venues safer, more inclusive and sustainable—cutting emissions, waste, energy and water use—and showcasing adaptation strategies that minimise disruption for staff and the community.
10:15	Morning Tea		
10:45	Simon Duck - Inner West Council Inner West is a uniquely creative community with vibrant and diverse neighbourhoods living side-by-side in harmony. Each of our 6 facilities provide a unique challenge for our operators.	12:00	Panel Discussion with Presenters
11:00	David Stennent - Maytronics Producing outcomes and changes to future-proof our great aquatic facilities.	12:15	Lunch



Day 1 - Infrastructure & Inland Waterways – Challenges

Afternoon

1:00 Keynote: Victoria Vanstone

Victoria's sobriety began on her bedroom floor—hungover, overwhelmed, and ready for change. Her blog Drunk Mummy Sober Mummy led to the hit podcast Sober Awkward, now with over 7 million downloads and hailed by The Guardian UK as “culture-changing.” Join Victoria as she shares her powerful story.

1:45 Jill Summers / Damien Kiley – Liverpool Council / Maran Property

The design, consultation and development of the new Georges River Kayak Trail.

2:15 Matt Gijselman - Bentley Systems

With 20+ years in strategy, policy, and public affairs, Matt has driven infrastructure reform through data-led decisions, mega-projects, and sustainability. He played a key role in Infrastructure Australia's efforts to address capacity challenges in major projects.

2:15 Amy Peden – University of New South Wales

Explore the latest evidence on risk management approaches for inland waterways, while uncovering opportunities to strengthen knowledge and improve future safety strategies.

2:30 Panel Discussion with Presenters

3:00 Afternoon Tea

3:30 Belinda Mills – Cabonne Council

How a regional council took the steps to implement reduced Lifeguard supervision model for their aging centres.

3:45 Gary Johnson – Tamworth Regional Council

As countless LGAs stare down the barrel of managing aging public swimming facilities, how best do we utilise any future facility funding?

4:00 Panel Discussion

Chad McCamley (Cessnock Council), Jodie Buttsworth (The Y), Mandy Stains (Cabonne Council)



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Day 2 - Infrastructure & Inland Waterways – Solutions

Morning

8:30 **Registration/Coffee**

8:45 **Recap and Overview**

9:00 **RJ Houston – Royal Life Saving**

Gain insights into the State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure report—how it was developed, what the data reveals about the condition of Australia’s aquatic centres, and the implications for safety, access, and future investment.

9:30 **Michelle Nolan – Larcán**

With more aquatic centres being built or upgraded, it’s vital to design for real community needs—not just aspirations. Learn from practical lessons and avoid costly design oversights.

9:45 **Matthew O’Connor – Blacktown City Council**

Meeting the future needs of the Blacktown community for aquatic recreation.

10:00 **Chiara Cenati – Myrtha Pools**

Gain insights into innovative aquatic solutions for aging facilities, informed by industry leaders and real-world examples of creative, forward-thinking approaches.

10:15 **Tania Modde – ParaMobility**

How collaborative working arrangements with aquatic centres, councils, architects and pool builders can deliver safe, client-focused aquatic access solutions that are safe and dignified.

10:30 **Morning Tea**

11:00 **Alex Olszewski – Life Saving Victoria**

This presentation will provide a high-level overview of the state of water safety in Victoria, drawing on current data, emerging trends, and project outcomes across both public aquatic facilities and inland waterways.

11:15 **Scott Vanderheyden – Belgravia Leisure**

A highlight of Belgravia's implementation of the organisational aquatic safety strategy with a focus on improving Lifeguard supervision through our Triple A's for Aquatic Safety methodology and associated culture shift.

11:30 **Workshop**

Engage in a dynamic discussion on designing the ideal place to swim—exploring creative solutions to one of the most complex challenges in aquatic safety and access.

12:30 **Lunch**



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Day 2 - Infrastructure & Inland Waterways – Solutions

Afternoon

1:30 Hannah McKnight – Sydney Water

Swimming in natural waterways can reshape urban recreation and health. Sydney Water and PRCG's work on the Parramatta River shows it's possible to change how we view and use urban waterways.

1:45 Susan Petterson – Water & Health

Natural swim sites can contain harmful microbes that pose health risks. This session outlines key pathogens and the best approach to ensure water quality safety for all.

2:00 Lori Modde – Outdoors NSW

Discover how to activate healthier, more resilient, and connected communities by harnessing the power of the outdoors to support wellbeing and sustainability.

2:30 Stephen Leahy – NSW State Emergency Services

Insights into the role of the SES in recent flood events, highlighting their emergency response within aquatic environments and the lessons learned for future preparedness and safety.

3:00 Panel Discussion - Where to from here

Final panel featuring local councils and aquatic leaders

3:00 Final Remarks and Closing

3:15 Afternoon Tea and Safe Travels



This event would not be possible without the support of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and the Australian Government.



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