

# NT Water Safety Plan

## 2008-2011

NT water safety  
Advisory Council



## Minister's Message

NT Water Safety Plan 2008-2011

Water activities are a great part of the Territory lifestyle. To keep people safe in and around the water, all Territorians need to be water safety wise and responsible.

In recent years, the Northern Territory has improved its water safety standards with the introduction of the *Swimming Pool Safety Act 2004*, and water safety education initiatives.

The Northern Territory now has the lowest drowning rate for the under five age group in the country.

In fact, since the Water Safety Awareness Program for children aged under five started, no child in this age group has drowned in a backyard pool or spa. This is a good result, but we can't be complacent, so the Northern Territory Government has approved the ongoing delivery of the program.

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council (NTWSAC) has been a driving force behind these initiatives and their work has been vital in raising awareness among the community.

Whilst drowning in backyard pools and spas have significantly decreased, there is still work to be done.

The Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2008-2011, aims to minimise drowning and water related injuries in the Northern Territory.

The new plan, modelled on the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2008-2011, allows for a more targeted approach to water safety education.

Water safety extends beyond our backyard pools and spas. For this reason, the NTWSAC, in conjunction with the Northern Territory Government and the Darwin and Palmerston City Councils, recently launched an education campaign to help young Territorians understand the dangers associated with playing in pipes and drains.

NTWSAC members work hard to educate Territorians about keeping safe in the water.

I would like to congratulate the committee for their dedication, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

**Rob Knight**  
**Minister for Local Government**





## Chairperson's Message

I am pleased to present the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council's (NTWSAC) Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2008-2011.

The NTWSAC was established in 2002 as part of the Northern Territory Government's 5 point Water Safety Plan. One of the major requirements of the Council was to 'develop and implement a Northern Territory Water Safety Plan that focuses on water safety education, research and data collection and standards'.

Prior to 2002 the Northern Territory had the highest drownings in the under 5 age group per capita. Since the implementation of several key initiatives including a Northern Territory Water Safety Plan and the Swimming Pool Safety Act 2004, the Northern Territory now has the lowest drownings in the under 5 age group.

Whilst this is an impressive statistic, there is still a considerable amount of work in water safety awareness to be done.

This plan is designed to build on work that has already been done, while continuing to minimise the rate of drowning, near drowning and water related injuries in the Northern Territory.

The plan is directly linked to the National Water Safety Council's Plan and focuses on four key areas:

1. Adopting a water safety life stages approach
2. Addressing high drowning and injury locations
3. Meeting key drowning and injury challenges
4. Strengthening drowning and injury prevention strategies

The challenge for the Council over the next three years will be to maintain an impressive under 5 record, as well as implement strategies to combat drownings amongst older Territorians.

This plan clearly reinstates the collaborative approach to water safety within the community which has proven invaluable. I would like to thank our committed stakeholders and partners who continue to share our dedication to improving water safety awareness in the Territory.

I would also like to congratulate my dedicated colleagues, both on the Council and in the Northern Territory Government, for their coordinated effort in developing this document.

I envisage that the direction set by the Council and this plan will flow onto our community and create safer aquatic environments for all Territorians.

**Daphne Read AO**  
**Chairperson**



## Vision

To minimise the rate of drowning, near drowning and water related injuries in the Northern Territory.

## Strategic Goal

To achieve a coordinated and collaborative water safety plan for the community through:

1. Education
2. Public Awareness
3. Standards, Legislation and Compliance
4. Information and Monitoring

## Key Priority Areas

The Northern Territory Water Safety Plan focuses on four key priority areas.

1. Adopt a water safety life stages approach
2. Address high drowning and injury locations
3. Meet key drowning and injury challenges
4. Strengthen drowning and injury prevention strategies

### 1. Adopt a water safety life stages approach

Targets specific age demographics that are at a high a risk of drowning and being involved in water related injuries.

### 2. Address high drowning and injury locations

Describes and identifies key locations that result in high drownings and water related injuries.

### 3. Meet key drowning and injury challenges

Describe and targets specific areas that require a different approach to reduce and prevent drowning and water related injuries.

### 4. Strengthen drowning and injury prevention pillars

Describes a combination of factors that can be attributed to drowning and water related injury prevention. These include safe venues, safe people, research, policy, legislation and standards and collaboration.



## Northern Territory Priority Areas

### 1. Adopt a water safety life stages approach

- Reduce drowning and water related injuries in children under five
- Reduce alcohol related drowning deaths particularly in men aged 18-34
- Reduce drowning and water related injuries in older adults



### 2. Address high drowning and injury locations

- Reduce drowning and water related injuries in open waters (including beach, river, lakes and dams)
- Reduce remote drowning deaths and water related injuries
- Reduce drowning and water related injuries in backyard swimming pools



### 3. Meet key drowning and injury challenges

- Reduce drowning deaths and water related injuries attributed to high risk recreational activities such as boating
- Reduce drowning deaths and water related injuries in high risk populations such as Indigenous people
- Reduce the impact of climate change and extreme weather on drowning deaths and water related injuries



### 4. Strengthen drowning and injury prevention strategies

- Build systems that support safe aquatic recreation venues
- Strengthen the skills, standards and contribution of our drowning prevention people
- Extend drowning prevention evidence base
- Influence policies, legislation and standards related to water safety
- Foster collaborative approaches to drowning prevention



## Stakeholders

<b>DHF</b>	- Department of Health and Families
<b>DLGH</b>	- Department of Local Government and Housing
<b>RLSSANT</b>	- Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) NT Branch
<b>SLSNT</b>	- Surf Life Saving Northern Territory
<b>KS</b>	- Kidsafe
<b>DET</b>	- Department of Education and Training
<b>DPI</b>	- Department of Planning and Infrastructure
<b>AFANT</b>	- Amateur Fisherman's Association
<b>DNRETAS</b>	- Department of Natural Resources Environment the Arts and Sport
<b>NTPFES</b>	- Northern Territory Police Fire and Emergency Services
<b>TTE</b>	- Tourism Top End
<b>BIANT</b>	- Boating Industry Australia NT



## Sub Committees

The sub committees are based on the strategic goals and will meet to discuss the actions that the strategic goals cover.

### Sub Committee 1: Education and Public Awareness

#### 1. Adopt a water safety life stages approach

- 1.1.1 - To deliver the Water Safety Awareness Program throughout the NT
- 1.1.2 - To co-ordinate an annual Northern Territory Water Safety Month in conjunction with relevant stakeholders
- 1.1.3 - Develop and deliver programs, marketing tools and messages
- 1.3.1 - Develop and deliver programs, marketing tools and messages

#### 2. Address high drowning and injury locations

- 2.1.1 - Develop, implement and evaluate seasonal aquatic water safety programs and campaigns
- 2.2.1 - Increase access for water safety programs for people in remote areas

#### 3. Meet key drowning and injury challenges

- 3.1.2 - Make appropriate recommendations regarding legislation
- 3.2.2 - Create and implement strategies and program to reduce drowning and water related injuries in Indigenous people
- 3.2.3 - Develop programs and strategies targeting identified high risk groups
- 3.3.2 - Develop programs and messages relating to extreme weather conditions

#### 4. Strengthen drowning and injury prevention strategies

- 4.1.2 - Identify and maintain and water safety resources
- 4.2.1 - Promote swimming, water safety and life saving to school aged children
- 4.2.2 - Develop strategies to improve schools ability to access pool based swimming programs
- 4.5.1 - Provide advice and support to stakeholders/organisations on water safety issues



## Sub Committee 2: Information and Monitoring Standards, Legislation and Compliance

### 1. Adopt a water safety life stages approach

- 1.1.4 - Continue to monitor the application of the *Swimming Pool Safety Act*
- 1.1.5 - Monitor and report on near drowning and water related injuries in children under five
- 1.2.4 - Prepare a report that maps the relationship between drowning/water related injuries and alcohol

### 2. Address high drowning and injury locations

- 2.1.2 - Continue to monitor and review aquatic signage
- 2.1.3 - Aquatic Recreational locations monitored for water related injuries, drownings, and near drownings
- 2.3.1 - *Swimming Pool Safety Act* is monitored

### 3. Meet key drowning and injury challenges

- 3.1.1 - Compare relevant legislation, regulations, policy and standards with other jurisdictions/local governments and identify gaps
- 3.1.2 - Make appropriate recommendations regarding legislation
- 3.1.3 - Monitor and map recreational boating infringements served by NTPFES

### 4. Strengthen drowning and injury prevention strategies

- 4.1.1 - Identify and monitor standards for venues, aquatic activities and qualifications of service providers according to nationally recognised standards from peak aquatic agencies.
- 4.3.1 - Monitor NT drownings and water related injuries and provide recommendations for prevention by producing the following reports:
  - NT Drowning Report
  - Hospital Admission Report relating to water injuries
  - NTWSAC Annual Report detailing future priorities
  - Water Safety Report
- 4.4.1 - Identify and monitor relevant policies, legislation and standards related to water safety
- 4.4.2 - Identify best practice water safety standards and guidelines
- 4.5.2 - Establish relationships with National and International Water Safety Advisory Councils



**Key Priority Area 1 - Adopt a water safety life stages approach**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
1.1 Reduce drowning and water related injuries in children under five	<b>Education</b> <b>Public Awareness</b>	1.1.1 To deliver the Water Safety Awareness Program throughout the NT	A minimum of 500 registrations received annually	DLGH RLSSA NT	Annually
		1.1.2 To co-ordinate an annual Northern Territory Water Safety Month in conjunction with relevant stakeholders	Stakeholders submit event information to NTWSAC	ALL	July/Annually
			Water Safety Month conducted	ALL	September/Annually
			A minimum of 10 events and activities conducted	ALL	
			5000 people attend events		
			Water Safety Month Report produced	DLGH	December
		1.1.3 Develop and deliver programs, marketing tools and messages	Tools and messages developed and implemented	DLGH SLSNT RLSSA NT DHF KS	As needs basis
			Tools and messages made available online and at displays	DLGH SLSNT RLSSA NT DHF KS	Ongoing

## Key Priority Area 1 – (Continued)

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	1.1.4 Continue to monitor the application of the <i>Swimming Pool Safety Act</i>	Report provided to NTWSAC stating number of compliant existing and new pools, number of pools inspected	DLGH	Bi-monthly
		1.1.5 Monitor and report on near drowning and water related injuries in children under five	Case studies developed and reported at NTWSAC meetings	DHF	Bi-monthly
			Case studies included in NTWSAC Annual Report	DHF	Annually
1.2 Reduce alcohol related drownings and injuries particularly in men aged 18-34	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	1.2.1 See Action item 1.1.2	Water Safety Month conducted annually	ALL	September/Annually
			A minimum of 10 events and activities conducted		
			5000 people attend events		
			Water Safety Month Report produced		
		1.2.3 See Action item 1.1.3	A minimum of 3 displays conducted promoting safe boating practices	DLGH DPI BIANT	Annually
	Safe Boating Campaign delivered and evaluated		DLGH DPI DHF BIANT AFANT	2009	
	Marketing tools and messages developed and implemented		DPI BIANT AFANT DLGH	Ongoing	
	Marketing tools and messages available online and at displays		DLGH DPI DHF BIANT AFANT	Ongoing	

**Key Priority Area 1 – (Continued)**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
	<b>Information and Monitoring</b>	1.2.4 Prepare a report that maps the relationship between drowning/water related injuries and alcohol	Report prepared and distributed to NTWSAC	DHF RLSSA NT	Bi-monthly
			Report included in NTWSAC Annual Report	DHF RLSSNT	Annually
1.3 Reduce drowning and injuries in older adults including tourist	<b>Education Public Awareness</b>	1.3.1 Develop and deliver programs, marketing tools and messages	Programs, marketing tools and messages developed and delivered	DLGH RLSSA NT SLSNT DHF DNRETAS	Annually and ongoing
			Messages and programs delivered during Seniors Months	DLGH RLSSA NT SLSNT DHF	August/Annually

**Key Priority Area 2 - Address high drowning and injury locations**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
2.1 Reduce drowning and water related injuries in open waters and inland waterways	<b>Education</b> <b>Public Awareness</b>	2.1.1 Develop, implement and evaluate seasonal aquatic water safety programs and campaigns	A minimum of 3 programs implemented and reviewed	SLSNT DPI DLGH DNRETAS DET TTE RLSSA NT AFANT	Ongoing
	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b> <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	2.1.2 Continue to monitor and review aquatic signage	Information gathered from National Committee and reported back to NTWSAC	DNRETAS SLSNT RLSSA NT DPI	As needs basis
			Feedback provided to National Committee	DNRETAS SLSNT RLSSA NT DPI	As needs basis
			NT signage reviewed and recommendations made	DNRETAS SLSNT RLSSA NT DPI	As needs basis
		2.1.3 Aquatic Recreational locations monitored for water related injuries, drownings, and near drownings	Identified locations/sites monitored and relevant report provided	RLSSA NT SLSNT DNRETAS DPI AFANT	Bi-monthly

## Key Priority Area 2 - (Continued)

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
2.2 Reduce remote drowning deaths and water related injuries	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	2.2.1 Increase access for water safety programs for people in remote areas	Programs conducted in remote areas identified and participation tracked	DPI SLSNT DLGH DET RLSSA NT	Bi-monthly
			Increase in participation by 10%	RLSSA NT SLSNT DET DPI	Annually
			Aquatic providers in remote areas identified and tracked	RLSSA NT SLSNT DET DPI	Bi-monthly
			Increase of aquatic providers in remote areas by 5%	RLSSA NT SLSNT DET DPI	Annually
2.3 Reduce drowning and water related injuries in backyard swimming pools	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	2.3.1 <i>Swimming Pool Safety Act</i> is monitored	Zero deaths maintained for compliant pools and spas for children under five	DLGH	Ongoing
	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	2.3.2 See action 1.1.2	Water Safety Month conducted annually	ALL	September
			A minimum of 10 events and activities conducted	ALL	
			5000 people attend events		December
			Water Safety Month Report produced	DLGH	

**Key Priority Area 3 - Meet key drowning and injury challenges**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
3.1 Reduce drowning deaths and water related injuries attributed to high risk recreational activities	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	3.1.1 Compare relevant legislation, regulations, policy and standards with other jurisdictions/local governments and identify gaps	Gaps are identified and reported to NTWSAC	DPI DNRETAS DHF DLGH NTPFES	As needs basis
		3.1.2 Make appropriate recommendations regarding legislation	Appropriate Minister informed	DLGH DPI DNRETAS NTPFES DHF	As needs basis
		3.1.3 Monitor and map recreational boating infringements served by NTPFES	Report on recreational boating infringements provided to NTWSAC	NTPFES	Bi-monthly
	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	3.1.4 See Action item 1.2.3	A minimum 3 displays conducted promoting safe boating practices	DPI BIANT	Annually
			Safe Boating Campaign delivered and evaluated	DLGH DPI DHF BIANT AFANT	2009
			Marketing tools and messages developed and implemented	DPI BIANT AFANT	Ongoing
			Marketing tools and messages available online and at displays	DPI BIANT AFANT	Ongoing

## Key Priority Area 3 – (Continued)

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
3.2 Reduce drowning deaths and water related injuries in high risk populations	<b>Education</b> <b>Public Awareness</b>	3.2.1 Determine high risk groups in the NT	High risk groups identified	ALL	End 2008
		3.2.2 Create and implement strategies and program to reduce drowning and water related injuries in Indigenous people	Number of programs identified	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DPI	Bi-monthly
			Participation in programs are tracked	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DPI	Bi-monthly
			Relevant marketing tools are developed and implemented	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DPI	As needs basis
		3.2.3 Develop programs and strategies targeting identified high risk groups	Programs and strategies targeting identified high risk groups are developed, implemented and evaluated	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DPI TTE	As needs basis
3.3 Reduce the impact of climate change and extreme weather on drowning deaths and water related injuries	<b>Education</b> <b>Public Awareness</b>	3.3.2 Develop programs and messages relating to extreme weather conditions	Pipes and Drains Campaign delivered and evaluated	DLGH	Sept and ongoing
			Water Safety Lesson Plans delivered at schools	DLGH DET DPI	Ongoing
			Messages and programs delivered	DLGH DPI DNRETAS NTPFES TTE	Ongoing

**Key Priority Area 4 – Strengthen drowning and injury Prevention Strategies**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
4.1 Build systems that support safe aquatic recreation venues	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	4.1.1 Identify and monitor standards for venues, aquatic activities and qualifications of service providers according to nationally recognised standards from peak aquatic agencies.	Relevant standards, publications and guidelines identified and awareness raised with relevant stakeholders	SLSNT RLSSNT DPI DNRETAS DHF DET	As needs basis
			Number of skilled aquatic people in NT reported in NTWSAC Annual Report	SLSNT RLSSA NT DET DPI	Annually
	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	4.1.2 Identify and maintain and water safety resources	Existing water safety resources are reviewed, updated and made available to stakeholders	ALL	As needs basis
			Newsplash Newsletter distributed to stakeholders and made available to public on line	DLGH	Monthly
			Water Safety website maintained and updated	DLGH	As needs basis
			New water safety resources are presented to NTWSAC	ALL	As needs basis
4.2 Strengthen the skills, standards and contribution of our drowning prevention people	<b>Education</b>  <b>Public Awareness</b>	4.2.1 Promote swimming, water safety and life saving to school aged children	Report on number of water safety and lifesaving education programs being delivered to school aged children (including in water)	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DET DPI	Bi-monthly
			Report on number of children participating in school based water safety education (including in water)	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DET DPI	Annually

## Key Priority Area 4 – (Continued)

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
		4.2.2 Develop strategies to improve schools ability to access pool based swimming programs	Research conducted regarding swimming competencies and participation in the NT (relating to schools)	SLSNT RLSSA NT DLGH DET DPI	2008
			Advice and options for way forward for children achieving the minimum benchmark in water safety education	DET	2009
4.3 Extend drowning and water related injury prevention evidence base	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	4.3.1 Monitor NT drownings and water related injuries and provide recommendations for prevention by producing the following reports:	Reports produced by relevant stakeholders		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NT Drowning Report</li> </ul>		RLSSA NT	Annually
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital Admission Report relating to water injuries</li> </ul>		DHF	Annually
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NTWSAC Annual Report detailing future priorities</li> </ul>		DLGH	Annually
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Safety Report</li> </ul>		ALL	Bi-monthly
4.4 Review and provide recommendations to policies, legislation and standards related to water safety	<b>Standards, Legislation and Compliance</b>  <b>Information and Monitoring</b>	4.4.1 Identify and monitor relevant policies, legislation and standards related to water safety	Gaps in legislation identified and recommendations presented to NTG	ALL	As needs basis
			Appropriate policies, legislation and standards reported on in NTWSAC Annual Report and recommendations provided	DLGH DET DPI DNRETAS NTPFES	Annually
		4.4.2 Identify best practice water safety standards and guidelines	Best practice standards and guidelines identified, researched and implemented as appropriate	ALL	Ongoing

**Key Priority Area 4 – (Continued)**

Objectives	Strategic Goal	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies	Time Frame
4.5 Foster collaborative approaches to drowning and water related injury prevention	Education	4.5.1 Provide advice and support to stakeholders/organisations on water safety issues	Relevant advice and support provided by key agencies	ALL	As needs basis
	Public Awareness				
	Information and Monitoring	4.5.2 Establish relationships with National and International Water Safety Advisory Councils	NT Water Safety Plan 2008-2011 developed and implemented in conjunction with stakeholders	ALL	September 2008
			NT Water Safety Plan reported against	ALL	Bi-monthly
			NT Water Safety Plan reviewed and presented to stakeholders	DLGH	Annually
			Relationships established and maintained	DLGH	Ongoing
Attendance at National Conferences	DLGH	As needs basis			