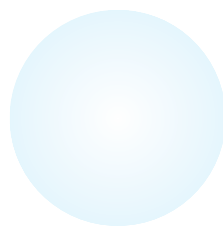
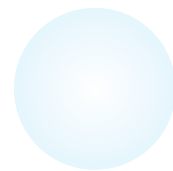


NTwater **safety**  
Advisory Council

# Water Safety Plan **2007**



## Foreword from Minister



Territorians live a terrific outdoor lifestyle that involves a great deal of water activities. We love our pools, waterholes, beaches and boats, but we have to stay safe when around water.

Prior to 2002, the Territory had one of the highest drowning rates for children under five years old.

To combat drowning the Northern Territory Government formed the Water Safety Advisory Council in November 2002. The establishment of the Council was an important step in increasing community awareness and also facilitated greater collaboration between Government and water safety stakeholders.

The Council developed and implemented the first Northern Territory Water Safety Plan, which expired in 2006. The highly successful plan helped dramatically reduce the number of drowning and near drowning incidents in the Territory.

I am proud to present the Water Safety Plan for 2007 which highlights the Council's and Northern Territory Government's continued commitment to water safety.

The plan focuses on water education, research, data collection and standards.

I strongly support the Council's vision to reduce the rate of drowning, near drowning and water related injuries in the Northern Territory.

On behalf of the Northern Territory Government, I strongly encourage all Territorians to continue to support the Water Safety Plan.

Mr Elliott McAdam MLA  
*Minister for Local Government*

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Message from the Chairperson of the Council



In June 2002 our Chief Minister, the Hon Clare Martin MLA, announced the establishment of the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council. 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.

The Council achieved this task in developing the 2003-2006 Strategic Plan. This Plan has been extremely valuable forming the blueprint for water safety in the Northern Territory. The Plan has now been updated and a plan for 2007 developed.

The objectives outlined in, and underlying, the plan support our Government's determination and belief in a high standard of water safety within our communities.

We are committed to our vision 'To reduce the rate of drowning, near drowning and water related injuries in our Northern Territory'.

Congratulations to my colleagues on the Council, Government, peak bodies and the many individuals and organisations that have assisted with the co-ordination of this working document.

The real challenge of the Plan will be to identify the key factors that contribute to drowning in the Northern Territory; and to use this information to develop, and continue to implement, strategies to combat drowning and near drowning incidents. I hope the collaboration, determination and common sense experienced during the establishment of this Plan will flow into our community and create safer water environments for Territorians.

Daphne Read, AO  
*Chairperson, NT Water Safety Advisory Council*



# Water Safety Plan 2007

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## Australian Water Safety Council

In February 1998, the Australian Water Safety Council (AWSC) was formed with the goal of providing a co-ordinated and cooperative approach to water safety in Australia. It was formed because drowning continued to occur in high numbers despite the efforts of water safety organisations, governments, water safety stakeholders and individuals. Drowning is the third highest cause of accidental death in Australia with over 300 deaths every year.

On 5 May 1998, the AWSC convened a National Water Safety Conference involving a broad cross-section of the Australian water safety community, including representatives from government departments and agencies throughout Australia. The National Water Safety Plan was developed and it presents a broad framework for all stakeholders to utilise in improving water safety standards and programs.

It is expected that by following the recommendations contained in the National Water Safety Plan there will be a significant reduction in the number of lives lost to drowning and water related incidents.

The current National Water Safety Plan runs from 2004 -2007. The Northern Territory Water Safety Plan has been reviewed and updated so that the plan can be brought in line with the Australian Water Safety Council National Water Safety Plan, which expires in December 2007 and is expected to be extended from 2008 - 2011.

Developing the Northern Territory Water Safety Plan in line with the National Water Safety Plan will enable comparisons of benchmarks and statistical data.

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council

In 2002, the Northern Territory drowning rate was more than three times the national average. These statistics and recent drownings in the Northern Territory have increased public interest in water safety issues and given water safety providers the platform to push for a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to water safety within the Northern Territory. The Royal Life Saving Society NT Branch (RLSSA-NT) and Kidsafe NT Inc had been lobbying Government for a number of years to obtain a commitment to the establishment of a Water Safety Council.

In June 2002, the Chief Minister, the Hon Clare Martin MLA, announced a Five Point Water Safety Plan to help prevent child drowning. Part of the Five Point Water Safety Plan included the introduction of swimming pool fencing legislation to meet Australian standards, and the establishment of a Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council.

The Northern Territory Government realised that water safety is more than just pool fencing, it includes community education and awareness programs on water safety issues.

Organisations including Kidsafe, RLSSA-NT, Surf Life Saving NT Inc and Local Government Councils play an important role through the provision of education and awareness programs. Whilst these organisations do a commendable job with limited resources, their efforts could be enhanced. The establishment of the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council is one way of achieving this.

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council began functioning in November 2002 and was directed to develop a 'Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2003-2006'. This Plan has been utilised and reviewed in preparing the 2007 Plan.

The Terms of Reference of the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council are;

- to provide advice to the Minister responsible for water safety on water safety related matters.
- identify gaps in existing provisions of water safety initiatives in relation to the services necessary for the prevention of drowning and near drowning in the Northern Territory.
- Implement and report against the Northern Territory Water Safety Plan focusing on water safety education, research and data collection and standards.

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Vision

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

## Strategic Goals

To achieve a co-ordinated and collaborative plan for the community with safe water:

- Environments;
- Education;
- Practises; and
- Skills.

## Key Priority Areas

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

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

### 1 Public Awareness

Describes actions to improve co-ordination, planning, development and implementation of water safety education and awareness strategies for stakeholders and the community.

### 2 Education

Describes actions aimed at:

- establishing and developing minimum skill levels for school aged children; and
- improving the quality of, and access to, water safety related resources.

### 3 Standards Legislation and Compliance

Describes actions aimed at identifying gaps and making recommendations for a co-ordinated approach regarding legislation, regulations, policies and standards.

### 4 Information and Monitoring

Describes actions regarding research, monitoring and assessment of data collection of drowning and water related incidents.

Research needs to be undertaken to ensure that existing programs, services and strategies remain effective and to identify future initiatives and directions.

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Key Priority Area 1 - *Public Awareness*

Objective	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies
1:1 To promote informed and responsible safe practices in and around water.	1:1:1 To co-ordinate an annual Northern Territory Water Safety Month, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.	Event conducted and achieves purpose throughout the Territory.	DLGHS (WSB)
	1:1:2 To develop, implement and evaluate appropriate ongoing 'seasonal' aquatic safety public awareness campaigns targeting high-risk groups with culturally appropriate messages.	Events are promoted within relevant media outlets and at primary locations including public swimming pools, schools, waterways and parks.	DLGHS (WSB) RLSS SLS
	1:1:3 Develop a database of displays, slogans, water safety images, and water safety resources from all stakeholders for use by the wider community.	Database is on line, maintained and accessible.	DLGHS (WSB)
1.2 To increase participation in swimming and water safety awareness programs to develop survival skills, resuscitation and safe participation in and around water.	1:2:1 To develop swimming and water safety programs to target relevant audiences.	Programs appropriately developed, implemented and reviewed.	DPI DLGHS SLS RLSS
	1:2:2 Identify the gaps in water safety skills, attitudes, knowledge and behaviour of community members.	Gaps identified, Programs developed and increased rates of participation achieved.	DPI DLGHS SLS RLSS

### Key Agency Acronyms

DLGHS	Department of Local Government Housing and Sport
DPI	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
WSB	Water Safety Branch
RLSS	Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) NT Branch Inc
KS	Kidsafe NT Inc
SLS	Surf Life Saving NT Inc

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council will work in consultation with the key agencies to achieve the actions within the Plan.

## Key Priority Area 2 - Education

Objective	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies
2.1 All school based children be provided with the opportunity to acquire a minimum standard of swimming and water safety competencies.	2:1:1 Determine the minimum standard of water safety and swimming competencies.	Standards and competencies determined.	DEET DPI
	2:1:2 Develop strategies to improve schools ability to access water safety programs.	Increased individual and school participation in programs.	DEET DPI
	2:1:3 Develop comprehensive wet and dry swimming and water safety packages to achieve educational framework outcomes.	Package is developed and endorsed.	DEET RLSS SLS KS
2.2 To promote and make available best practise resources and current research.	2:2:1 Assist health workers, police, and tourism to develop standardised culturally appropriate water safety information and support for service providers.	Assistance and support provided and appropriate information developed.	DLGHS (WSB)
	2:2:2 Establish a matrix of water safety resources and stakeholders.	Matrix developed and utilised.	DHCS DLGHS (WSB)

### Key Agency Acronyms

DEET	Department of Employment Education and Training
DHCS	Department of Health and Community Services
DLGHS	Department of Local Government Housing and Sport
DPI	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
WSB	Water Safety Branch
RLSS	Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) NT Branch Inc
KS	Kidsafe NT Inc
SLS	Surf Life Saving NT Inc

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council will work in consultation with the key agencies to achieve the actions within the Plan.

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Key Priority Area 3 - Standards, Legislation and Compliance

Objective	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies
3:1 To investigate options for policy and legislative change to maximise water safety.	3.1.1 Review current Northern Territory legislation in accordance with national standards and best practice.	Northern Territory legislation is reviewed in accordance with national standards and best practise.	DLGHS
	3.1.2 Compare legislation, regulations, policy and standards with other jurisdictions and identify gaps.	Gaps are identified through consultation.	DLGHS DPI
	3.1.3 Make appropriate recommendations regarding changes to legislation and regulations.	Legislation is changed or new legislation adopted to reflect changes as recommended.	DLGHS DPI
3.2 To establish best practice water safety standards and guidelines.	3.2.1 In line with other jurisdictions, review, and consider adopting, the Australian Standard signage.	Manual reviewed and recommendations made.	DLGHS NTRETA
	3.2.2 In line with other jurisdictions gain Australian Standards approval for signage and seek consensus of opinion in implementing standards.	Approval gained and commencement of placement of standardised signage	DLGHS DPI NRETA
	3.2.3. Identify and monitor standards for venues, aquatic activities and qualifications of service providers according to nationally recognised standards from peak aquatic agencies.	Policy documents established listing standards for venues, aquatic activities and qualifications of providers.	DLGHS DEET RLSSA SLS

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Continued...

3.3 Recommend monitoring and enforcement of legislation and regulations.	3.3.1 Make a recommendation to stakeholders to develop audit systems to monitor enforcement of legislation.	Recommendations made to stakeholders and audit systems developed.	DLGHS (WSB) NTP
	3.3.2 Monitor level of compliance of audit systems.	Audit reports indicate levels of compliance and identifies barriers to enforcing legislation.	DLGHS (WSB)

### Key Agency Acronyms

DEET	Department of Employment Education and Training
DHCS	Department of Health and Community Services
DLGHS	Department of Local Government Housing and Sport
DPI	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
NRETA	Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts
WSB	Water Safety Branch
RLSS	Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) NT Branch Inc
KS	Kidsafe NT Inc
SLS	Surf Life Saving NT Inc
NTP	NT Police

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council will work in consultation with the key agencies to achieve the actions within the Plan.

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Key Priority Area 4 - Information and Monitoring

Objective	Action	Performance Indicator	Key Agencies
4.1 Monitor drowning, near drowning and consequential injuries to provide information that is accurate reliable and accessible.	4.1.1 Develop rigorous standardised methodology for collection of water related injuries that occur in the aquatic setting and home environment. Liaise with NSW regarding minimum dataset for rescues.	NSW dataset reviewed. Methodology developed and implemented.	RLSS DHCS SLS KS
	4.1.2 Develop a longitudinal research plan that ensures consistent and accurate trend analysis.	Plan developed and forecasted trends provide relevant information.	RLSS DHCS
4.2 To research and evaluate the underlying causes, associations and links that contribute to drowning, near drowning and consequential injuries in all settings where these incidents occur.	4.2.1 Develop a co-ordinated and comprehensive research agenda that highlights the causes of water related injury and drowning.	Comprehensive research agenda produced and causes identified.	DHCS RLSS KS
	4.2.2 Establish and maintain research practise and reporting for water related injury and drowning.	Research conducted and qualitative data available.	DHCS RLSS KS
	4.2.3 Conduct ongoing research with stakeholders regarding best practice.	Regular research conducted and best practice is being applied.	DHCS

### Key Agency Acronyms

DHCS	Department of Health and Community Services
DLGHS	Department of Local Government Housing and Sport
RLSS	Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) NT Branch Inc
KS	Kidsafe NT Inc
SLS	Surf Life Saving NT Inc

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council will work in consultation with the key agencies to achieve the actions within the Plan.

## Conclusion

The Northern Territory Government is committed to protecting our community from water related tragedies. The Northern Territory Water Safety Plan aims to ensure that water safety is a priority in all aquatic activities. In addition, the Water Safety Plan is a working document involving constant review and evaluation; focusing upon improved outcomes and the prevention of the risks associated with aquatic activities. The ultimate success of the Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2007 will be the achievement of the Strategic Vision, 'To reduce the rate of drowning, near drowning and water related injuries in the Northern Territory.'

## Membership of the Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council

Chairperson.....	Mrs Daphne Read, AO
Water Safety Branch .....	Mr Graham Franklin
Royal Life Saving Society NT Branch .....	Ms Floss Roberts
Dept of Health and Community Services.....	Dr Steven Skov
Kidsafe NT Inc.....	Ms Saskia Strange
Dept of Employment, Education and Training.....	Dr Maria Marriner
Community Representative, Somerville .....	Mrs Vicki O'Halloran
Surf Life Saving NT Inc.....	Mr Paul Dale
Local Govt Association of the NT .....	Mr Bob Elix
Dept of Planning and Infrastructure .....	Mr Sri Srinivas
Dept of Natural Resources, Env and the Arts .....	Mr David West
Amateur Fisherman's Association of the NT.....	Mr Chris Makepeace
Tourism Top End.....	Mr Tony Clementson
Northern Territory Police .....	Superintendent John Emeny

# Water Safety Plan 2007

## Acknowledgements

Northern Territory Water Safety Plan 2003-2006  
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