

# Procedure: Water Safety Protocols

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Approved by: Club Captain

1. **PURPOSE:** Define water safety protocols for Queenscliff SLSC Nippers
2. **REFERENCES / STANDARDS:**
  - SLSA's Standard Operating Procedures,
  - Patrol Operations Manual
  - Water Safety Policy
3. **PROCEDURE:**
  - As Queenscliff is rated moderately hazardous by SLSA, Queenscliff must have a ratio of 1:5 (1 water safety member : 5 nippers) in the water. 75% of our water safety people must be in the water. Low Risk conditions require 10 water safety SRC/Bronze members per 1 child.
  - Patrolling members can only be allocated to water safety at the discretion of the PC of the day. No other patrol member or water safety member can reallocate a member from patrol to water safety. If a patrol or water safety/nipper members observe something important they should bring it to the attention of the PC who will determine a course of action
  - Nipper water activities cannot be undertaken on a closed beach under any circumstances. This includes no wading.
  - PC will make an IRB available on the water for nippers rather than stationary on the beach where possible
  - Maximum numbers in swim races are: 1) 32 for surf swims and 2) 16 for board races

**a) Mandatory Surf Risk Rating Assessment and Briefing**

  - i) At 8:45am before the 9am group commences, a Risk Rating Assessment must be undertaken for all age managers by the Patrol Captain (PC) and Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) before nippers can proceed with water activities (including boards and wading). If there is no risk assessment conducted with the PC, nippers will not proceed.
  - ii) Our WSS will locate the PC and bring them to the briefings.
  - iii) The *Risk Rating is completed in the Patrol Operations App* and can also be completed on paper if required and attached to the patrol log of the day. The PC will find the risk assessment in the App at the top of the home screen. Click on the 3 bars to see a new menu and select "Risk Rating". Start a new risk rating and select from the drop down options (tip click "auto" at the top and select "other" for arena). When you click on assessment, you will get a rating. If that rating has anything in it saying "high risk" the PC will determine there can be no nipper water activities that day. In this instance, the PC will confer with the lifeguards when they see a moderate - high risk rating.
  - iv) If the beach is closed no nippers are allowed in the water on boards or wading
  - v) The Water Safety Policy and our Patrol Operations Manual also includes our protocol. Both are on our website under Lifesaving and under Nippers

## **b) Role of the Water Safety Supervisor (WSS)**

- i) Conducting Risk Assessment with the Patrol Captain (PC) before commencing nippers and based on the assessment determine the number of water areas and the number of Water safety required.
- ii) Allocate water safety to the water areas. **Note: SRC water safety cannot be responsible for the area. An adult Bronze medallion person must be appointed as the responsible person.**
- iii) Ensure water safety members are wearing a high vis water safety vest.
- iv) Meet with PC and Age managers at the briefing before nippers.

## **c) Role of Patrol Captains (PC)**

- i) The PC has control of the beach. They will defer to the lifeguard for assessing beach conditions where necessary. The PC will determine if nipper water events can proceed. This will be assessed based on the Risk Assessment and discussions with the WSS and the Lifeguard if necessary.
- ii) At 8.45am before the 9am group commences, the WSS will meet the PC in the patrol shed to conduct the Risk Assessment with the PC on the app before nippers or boards enter the water
- iii) PC's are part of this briefing which provides opportunity also for age managers to meet with the PC which is helpful if there is an incident on the beach.

## **d) Role of Age Managers**

Age managers have a duty of care for the full 90 minutes of nippers:

- i. It is mandatory for all water participants in nippers to wear high visibility vests and a Club cap or they cannot go in the water. Age managers must ensure this before allowing nippers in the water.
- ii. Water safety members must be wearing a clearly identified uniform including a high visibility vest
- iii. It is the responsibility of the Age Manager to designate an Age Assistant or Water Safety Team member (SPOTTER) to count IN children before each surf swim, board race or relay and count OUT

## **e) Count in / Count out**

- i. All nippers entering the water must be accounted for by counting in and counting out. Red folders are to be used for all count in/count out.
- ii. It is the responsibility of the Age Manager to designate an Age Assistant or Water Safety Team member (SPOTTER) to count children before each surf swim, board race or relay.
- iii. This adult is to conduct a COUNT IN at the start of each event, maintain a watch over the children during the event and a COUNT OUT at the end of the event.
- iv. The COUNT OUT must include children that complete the course, children that return to shore without completing the course and children that are rescued. Particular care must be taken to observe children that drift into adjacent water areas due to cross currents.
- v. In the event COUNT OUT does not match COUNT IN the SPOTTER must raise the alarm with the Age Manager in charge of the area, WSS and the Patrol Captain who will activate the Missing Children / Submerged Patient Plan.

## **f) Nippers Search and Rescue Protocol**

Missing Children / Submerged Patient Plan

This situation may be witnessed or determined as a result of a discrepancy with “Count In, Count Out” (see count in / out requirements in this email). It could also be signalled via “Code X” signal from water safety personnel.

1. WSS to notify the PC immediately. The PC is the beach manager and has the command and control position in the event of a search. ALL actions must go through them.
2. Age managers and water safety personnel are immediately notified to clear ALL water areas and get all nippers out of the water.
3. All children must be moved to the back of the beach and assembled in age groups. Age managers are to perform a detailed head count against the names in the red folder and confirm with the WSS that all nippers are present and accounted for. No nippers are to return to the water until the all clear is given by the PC
4. People who last sighted patient to be identified and brought to the PC – it is imperative as much information is collected as possible
5. Age manager of the missing child is to locate the parent and inform them in a calm manner and stay with them on the beach throughout the search
6. PC coordinates a search of the area – this will involve bronze and silver medallion holders – and will escalate to Lifeguards/Surfcom if required.
7. WSS and PC / Lifeguards will determine a last known position and the possible influence of known currents
8. When this is confirmed, IRB/s and/or boards will be tasked to conduct immediate search at last known position if in water deeper than standing depth
9. All available Water Safety Personnel to report to water's edge near IRB launch area ready to search if instructed.
10. Patient to be recovered to shore as quickly as possible, DRSABCD
11. Patrol will fill in an Incident Report. If no Patrol, WSS is to fill in an Incident Report
12. Club Captain will notify SNB Duty Officer. If T.I.P.S. is required for stress concerns, Club Captain to organise