

BEACH OCEAN SAFE

Toolkit



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we gather and learn, and we pay our respects to the Elders both past and present. We recognise their enduring connection to land, waters, and culture and honour their invaluable knowledge, traditions, and contributions to the community. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise their ongoing role in the cultural and educational landscape across Australia.



We would like to extend our gratitude to all stakeholders, partners, and participants who contributed to the success of this program. Your ongoing support has been invaluable.

Foreword

Water is both a defining part of Australia's identity and a profound risk for those unfamiliar with its dangers. For international students and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, stepping into the ocean's vastness—often for the first time—can bring both excitement and uncertainty. The BOS Program toolkit is a result of years of dedication, learning, and collaboration between the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Coogee Surf Life Saving Club, and Surf Life Saving NSW and reflects our shared commitment to making these waters safer and more accessible.

As someone who has designed, delivered and implemented this program, we have witnessed firsthand how empowering individuals with water safety knowledge can transform their experiences, foster inclusivity, and even save lives. The program is not just about learning beach safety; it's about building a culture of confidence, awareness, and community around the water. This toolkit equips surf clubs, universities and multicultural organisations with the resources to extend this impact to new shores. It embodies our mission to bridge cultural divides, providing practical tools and insights to ensure that all people, regardless of background, can experience Australia's waters safely and confidently.

Our journey began with a simple vision: to make water safety accessible and relevant for international students. Through this toolkit, I invite you to carry forward that vision, making the shores a safer, more welcoming place for all.



Oliver Jackson

Water Safety, UNSW

Founders, WSIS CoP

Surf Life Savers, Coogee SLSC



Madhav Raman





BOC



Highlights





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Background

Over 25% of drownings in Australia occur within the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, with international students making up a portion of these annually. In response to rising international student drownings, many universities deliver water safety sessions, yet most don't go beyond conventional dry beach safety workshops and basic swimming lessons. A practical and immersive educational experience is needed to create generational change, reduce drowning fatalities and shift the dial on inclusivity in beach culture for international students.

BOS Objectives

The key objectives of the Beach Ocean Safe (BOS) Program are:



Enhance Water Safety Skills

Equip participants with essential water safety skills, such as swimming techniques, understanding ocean conditions, managing waves, floating, treading water, and identifying potential hazards.



Promote Beach Culture and Understanding

Introduce participants, especially those from international and CALD backgrounds to Australian beach culture.



Foster Community Engagement

Provide an opportunity for participants to connect with trained surf lifesavers, instructors, and fellow participants, fostering a sense of belonging and community spirit.



Surf Life Saving

Offers an insight into the volunteer Life Saving organisation and offers a pathway to being involved in Surf Life Saving's existing diverse and multicultural membership.



Program Overview

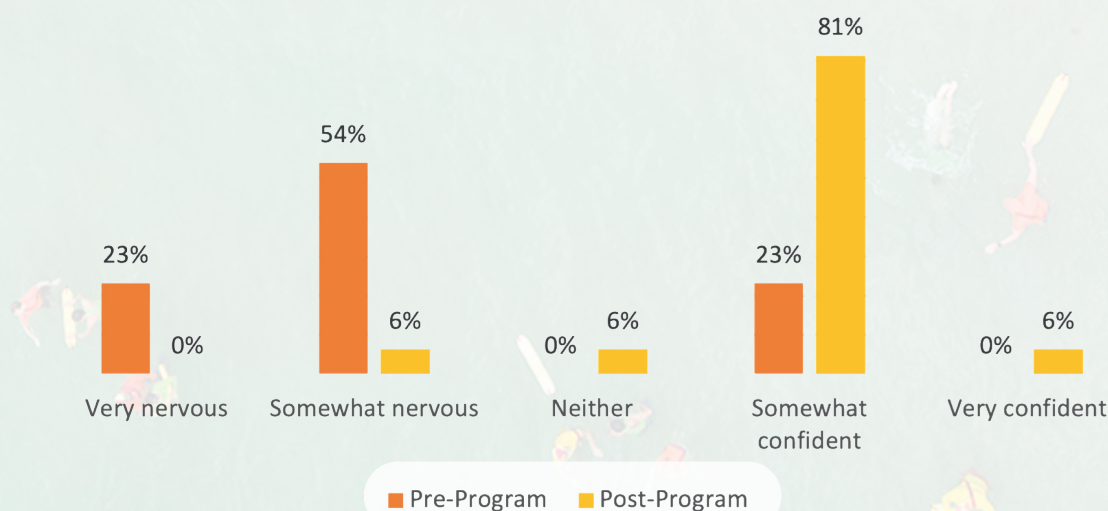


Target Groups

The program can benefit anyone who may have limited swimming skills, lack confidence in the water, or require additional support in understanding beach safety. This can include:

- ▶ International Students
- ▶ CALD Communities
- ▶ New Residents or Migrants
- ▶ Non-Swimmers or Inexperienced Swimmers
- ▶ Regional Communities
- ▶ Nipper Parents
- ▶ Community Groups and Organisations

Swimming at the Beach



Before the program, 77% of students were very or somewhat nervous about swimming at an Australian beach in comparison to 87% who were somewhat or very confident at the conclusion of the program.

9.7

Average Program Rating

62%

swam at an Australian beach for the first time

100%

of students felt the program equalled or exceeded their expectations.



The program didn't just involve swimming; it taught me about beach safety, first aid, CPR, understanding ocean conditions, water rescue techniques, and much more.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK 2023

Program Structure

The BOS Program is a comprehensive and immersive program aimed at improving water safety skills and beach knowledge among participants. It consists of the following general components:



Proficiency Session

The proficiency session is designed to assess the swimming capabilities and water safety proficiency of participants. Its main objective is to evaluate the swimming skills of participants and ensure they meet the minimum requirements for engaging in water-based activities during the program.



Surf Life Saving Sessions

Two full-day theory and practical learning sessions at a Surf Life Saving Club with Surf Life Savers focusing on beach safety, including topics such as reading signs at the beach, floating in rips, waves, and tides, swimming in beach conditions, basic CPR and first aid, emergency procedures, safe rock fishing, planning a safe trip to the beach, risks at the beach, and beach scenarios.



Assessment and Graduation

Both theoretical and practical assessments to evaluate participants' understanding of beach safety concepts and their ability to apply acquired skills. The graduation ceremony is a celebratory event that acknowledges participants' successful completion of the program.



Shadow a Surf Life Saver

Participants are given the opportunity to attend a surf lifesaving patrol and shadow current lifesavers. This session provides a practical and immersive experience, allowing participants to observe and learn from experienced surf lifesavers in a real-life beach setting.



Program Evaluation

The BOS Program is committed to program evaluation. The best method for evaluating the success and impact of the program is through conducting simple pre- and post-program surveys.

- Pre-program surveys help organisers understand the cohort and profile and the specific needs, concerns, and challenges faced by participants.
- Post-program surveys can assess the effectiveness of a program in achieving its intended outcomes.
- The aggregated data from pre and post-program surveys can contribute to broader research and knowledge generation in the field of beach safety and water education.

Partnering with researchers can greatly enhance program evaluation ensuring rigour, data security and ethical conduct of research. Researchers from the UNSW Beach Safety Research Group are well placed to assist with beach safety and broader water safety and drowning prevention programs.



**Find out more or contact the UNSW BSRG at
www.beachsafetyresearch.com**

To access pre and post program surveys that have been validated and used by researchers for the BOS Program or to participate in research activities, please contact the WSIS CoP or SLS NSW or visit the BOS Website.



This is a once in a lifetime experience which'll impact not just us, but all people around us!

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK 2023



ADAPTATION

Communities have unique cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. Adapting the program ensures that it aligns with the cultural context of the target community, making it more relatable, accessible, and engaging. Adaptation of the program should be done in consultation with community members to ensure cultural, religious and language changes are appropriate.

Cultural Awareness and Language Considerations

- It is recommended that trainers and or club members involved in these types of trainings participate in some cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness training to better understand the needs of multicultural communities.
- Examples of adaptations may include changing rooms and facilities, provision of spaces for religious workshop, catering requirements or language support.
- The level of English must be ascertained prior to the course and ideally upon registration to see if interpreters, additional multilingual resources or language support staff are required to help co-deliver information.
- The use of acronyms and surf jargon is to be avoided where possible (or common jargon is broken down and explained) to reduce confusion amongst participants.

Inclusion and Accessibility Resources

SLSNSW is committed to developing and expanding its networks and will work proactively to link, introduce and brief participating Surf Clubs to those external groups looking for opportunities to educate its clients. Please reach out to the SLSNSW Community Education team for further support and assistance with any questions or concerns at community@surflifesaving.com.au

Relevant resources on the beachsafetyhub.org.au include:

- [Multilingual Resources - Surf Life Saving NSW](#)
- [International Student Water Safety Videos - Beach Safety Hub](#)
- [Low ELP Resources - Beach Safety Hub](#)
- [Stories from our community - Beach Safety Hub](#)
- [Community Education Support - Beach Safety Hub](#)
- [Community Education Support Package - Beach Safety Hub](#)

Safety and Risk



As is required with all Surf Life Saving Ocean Activities, the adherence to the SLSA Water Safety Policy and Water Safety Procedures is imperative.

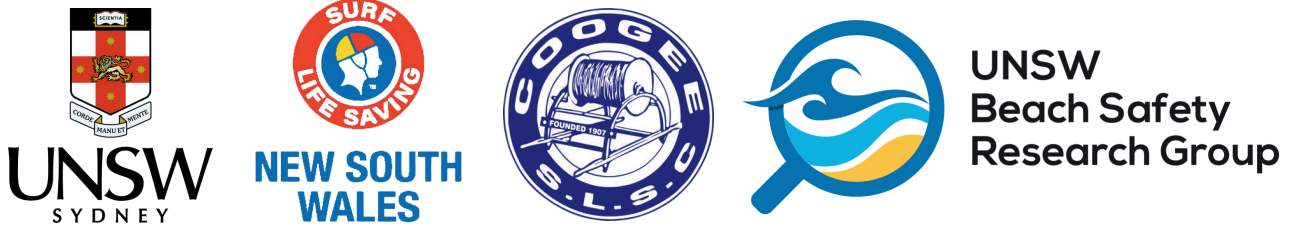
- Prior to engaging candidates in ocean activities, Patrol Captains/Lifeguards should be involved early in the process.
- Utilising the Surf Risk Rating App in conjunction with the Patrol Operations App is mandatory, and a risk rating based on the candidates' skill level is necessary. This program, akin to Nipper Training, places safety as paramount importance.
- Considering that the participant's proficiency in the ocean may be minimal, it is crucial to brief your Training and Water Safety Teams about the candidates' skill and confidence levels.
- Ensure that ALL members of the water safety team are proficient and wear the appropriate water safety apparel (hi-vis rashies). When using SRC teams, provide upfront training so they understand their defined roles and the skills they are presenting and teaching.
- Maintain a recommended ratio of 1:2 for effective supervision. During water safety sessions, count all participants going in and out of the ocean. The Surf Life Saving Club Lead should stay on shore the whole time to watch, manage and train.
- Lifesavers must always stay close to the candidates and have a Rescue Tube with them. Candidates are to be brought back to shore as soon as concerns are raised.



WSIS CoP 2024

The BOS Program toolkit is proudly delivered by the Water Safety for International Students (WSIS) Community of Practice (CoP).

Core Members



Educational Providers



Government



Community Organisations/Other



Resources



- ✓ Theory Presentations
- ✓ Promotional material including logos, shirt, towel designs
- ✓ Evaluation Surveys
- ✓ Registration Forms
- ✓ Graduation Certificates
- ✓ Example Emails to Participants
- ✓ Attendance Sheets

To access more resources and information, please contact us!

Contact Us!

UNSW WATER SAFETY & WSIS CoP

 healthy@unsw.edu.au

SURF LIFE SAVING NSW

 community@surflifesaving.com.au





Participant Feedback

"The best about this program is being able to do something I've never done before while feeling safe that lifesavers are next to me!"

"I feel like I have learnt enough to swim between the flags now, as well enough of the essentials to be able help others."

"It's the best program for international students to get to experience the Australia's beaches."

"Staying near the beaches, I always wanted to have fun on the beach and be safe and I believe so many other international students feel the same. So this program helps to develop the skill to have fun, be safe and be able to help others as well."

"It's a perfectly designed program at a very negligible price."

BEACH OCEAN SAFE

Toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to equip surf clubs, educational providers and community organisations with the necessary tools and resources to successfully implement the Beach Ocean Safe (BOS) Program.

The toolkit is proudly sponsored by:



Study NSW

The toolkit is proudly endorsed by:



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