

VICTORIAN SWIM TEACHER SHORTAGE

PURPOSE

Life Saving Victoria's (LSV) mission is to prevent aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities, with a vision that all Victorians will learn water safety, swimming and resuscitation and be provided with safe aquatic environments and venues. However, a shortage of swim teachers has been reported in Victoria, with recent data indicating approximately 82% of swim schools are concerned about staff retention*.

This absence of a skilled workforce limits the extent to which LSV can provide swimming and water safety knowledge and skills to Victorians to ensure their safety around water.

Therefore, LSV aimed to quantify the extent of the swim teacher shortage within Victoria to assist in informing the appropriate action required to address this issue.

METHODS

An online survey was distributed by LSV in May 2021 to organisations delivering swimming lessons across Victoria; both Learn-to-Swim and School swimming lesson providers. Retrospective and current data was requested from the organisations about their swimming lesson provision.

Some organisations also provided some thoughts on ways to address the shortage.

OUTCOMES

39 swim schools completed the survey, and reported:

-23.8%
in the **total number of swimming teachers** employed from 2019 to 2021

-21.7%
in the number of swim teachers employed by **learn-to-swim** providers

-25.1%
in the number of swim teachers employed by **school swimming lesson** providers



Total market share was calculated based on the current respondents to quantify the total swim teacher shortage in Victoria.

The number of swim teachers required in Victoria is likely

1800+



Tables 1 and 2 indicate that within Victoria, demand for swimming lessons outweighs the current provision and suggests additional swim teachers could ease the burden experienced by swimming lesson providers.

Table 1. Percentage changes for learn-to-swim program providers as of 1 Mar 2019, 2020 and 2021

% change from:	Enrolled students	Scheduled weekly classes	Waiting list size
2019 to 2020	-5.8%	-2.7%	+30.8%
2020 to 2021	-16.1%	-23.2%	+1,837.6%
2019 to 2021	-21%	-25.3%	+2,433.8%

Table 2. Percentage changes for school swimming lesson providers as of 31 Dec 2019 and 2020 and projected for 2021

% change from:	No. of cancelled programs	No. of participants	No. of programs delivered
2019 to 2020	+4,900%	-60.5%	-35.7%
2020 to 2021	-99.4%	+62.7%	+42.6%
2019 to 2021	-71.4%	+6%	-8.3%

PROPOSED METHODS TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE



Facilitate the swim teacher training pathway [review obtaining and retaining swim teaching qualifications (e.g. cost)].



Enhance retention of swim teachers by exploring opportunities for various career pathways.



Attract more people to become swim teachers e.g., older adults and parents.