



**AlburyCity**  
**Inland Waterways**  
**Drowning Prevention Strategy**  
**2022-2027**

## About Royal Life Saving

Royal Life Saving is focused on reducing drowning and promoting healthy, active, and skilled communities through innovative, reliable, evidence-based advocacy; strong and effective partnerships; quality programs, products, and services; underpinned by a cohesive and sustainable organisation.

Royal Life Saving is a public benevolent institution dedicated to reducing drowning and turning everyday people into everyday community lifesavers. We achieve this through advocacy, education, training, health promotion, aquatic risk management, community development, research, sport, leadership and participation and international networks.

© 2022 Royal Life Saving NSW

This publication is copyright. Except as expressly provided in the Copyright Act 1968 and the Copyright Amendment Act 2006, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted by any means (including electronic, mechanical, micro copying, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior permission from Royal Life Saving NSW. For enquiries concerning reproduction, contact RLSNSW.

Every attempt has been made to trace and acknowledge copyright, but in some cases this may not have been possible. Royal Life Saving apologises for any accidental infringements and would welcome any information to redress the situation.

## Acceptance and Release

This document is a managed document. For identification of amendments, each document contains an issue date and a version number. Changes will only be issued as a complete replacement document. Recipients should remove superseded versions from circulation.

Version	1.0
Release date	10 October 2022

# Table of Contents

<b>Mayor’s Message</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The role of AlburyCity</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our Aquatic Locations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Our People</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Albury Drowning Profile</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Our Engagement Journey</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>What can I do</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>How to read the Strategies</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Facilitate Leadership and Collaboration</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Build Safer Aquatic Environments</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Develop Safer Aquatic Users</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Design Safer Aquatic Activity</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Thank You</b>	<b>28</b>

## Mayor's Message



Kylie King, Mayor

*Albury's location on the northern banks of the Murray River plays such a big part in our local identity. We're so lucky to have beautiful places to escape the heat such as the Murray River and Lake Hume. However, we know that inland waterways present a higher risk of drowning to our community and AlburyCity is committed to reducing these risks to create a safer environment for everyone.*

*We're pleased to have been able to collaborate with the peak body in drowning prevention, Royal Life Saving NSW, to develop our first Inland Water Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027. This Strategy will guide our approach to supporting our whole community to be safer around the water.*

*Whilst AlburyCity has led the development of the strategy, it is not the sole responsibility of AlburyCity to deliver, with various stakeholder having carriage of associated actions in order to achieve our vision.*

*AlburyCity is committed to supporting the safety of our whole community, and we look forward to working towards achieving the ultimate goal of a community free from drowning.*



## Introduction

Albury is spoiled for choice when it comes to places to cool off with inland waterways such as rivers, creeks, lakes, and dams all popular amongst locals over the warmer months.

Noreuil Park foreshore on the banks of the Murray River and Lake Hume foreshore are among the most popular places in our region to escape the summer heat.

These environments present a higher risk of drowning due to a variety of factors including changeable conditions, remoteness, lack of supervision and alcohol. Sadly, the Murray River is the number one river drowning blackspot in Australia with over 70 unintentional fatal drownings since 2002.

The AlburyCity Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027 (the Strategy) has been developed with and on behalf of the Albury community. We've been working with Royal Life Saving NSW to develop this Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy to help our whole community to better manage the risk associated with using the water in our region.

It provides a long-term approach for the community to reducing drowning (fatal and non-fatal) in the area with a focus on 'Building Safer Aquatic Environments', 'Developing Safer Aquatic Users' and 'Designing Safer Aquatic Activity'.

## Integrating the Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy

This Strategy is designed to work hand in hand with other AlburyCity strategies and plans to support the community's vision and priorities. These include but are not limited to:

- Towards Albury 2050
- Environmental Strategies
- Asset Management Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy



## Safe System Approach to Drowning Prevention

The AlburyCity Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027 has adopted the Royal Life Saving's Safe System Approach to Drowning Prevention.

This approach is underpinned by these principles:

- Deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable.
- People are human and sometimes make mistakes – a simple mistake shouldn't cost anyone their life.
- People are vulnerable.
- Aquatic environments and activities should be designed to minimise the likelihood or severity of an aquatic incident if an accident happens.
- Drowning prevention is a shared responsibility – everyone needs to make safe decisions in, on and around the water to prioritise safety.

Initiatives to ensure safer aquatic environments, users and activities need to be implemented together so that the community can enjoy our aquatic environments when recreating or working.



## Safe System Outcomes



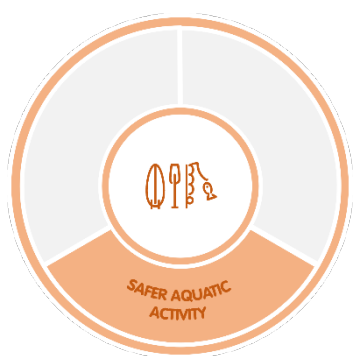
### **Safer Aquatic Users**

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to change behaviour through a combination of context-appropriate information, education, and enforcement activities.



### **Safer Aquatic Environments**

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to improve the physical or natural environments in, on and around waterways which individuals participate in recreational or work-related activity.



### **Safer Aquatic Activity**

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to change the methods or process in which an activity is being undertaken or performed through such things as policy, funding, planning or procedures.

# Our Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027

The Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy 2022-2027 has been developed based on the desires and priorities of our community. It demonstrates leadership by valuing and progressing the Safe Systems Approach to Drowning Prevention and it represents a commitment of working together for a future free from drowning.

While AlburyCity will play a leading role in facilitating and delivering some of the strategies, it fosters a shared responsibility for its implementation using relevant data to monitor and evaluate drowning prevention strategies.

Using the Safe Systems Approach to Drowning Prevention model the strategy describes four key actions areas each with key outcomes that the community seeks to achieve through the development and implementation of a drowning prevention strategy. These include:



**Facilitating  
Collaboration**



**Building  
Safer Aquatic  
Environments**



**Designing  
Safer Aquatic  
Activity**



**Developing Safer  
Aquatic Users**



## The role of AlburyCity

This is Council's Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy for the community and the goals and objectives outlined will help to deliver on the vision of a community free from drowning. It will however require a team effort.

AlburyCity has many partners in the community that must work together to make sure this strategy is a success. We thank the NSW and Australian governments and their associated departments, emergency services, Royal Life Saving NSW, businesses, health providers, education providers, community organisations, recreational groups, and our residents for the contribution they make now and into the future in reducing drowning.

Where AlburyCity does not have a direct delivery role, Councillors and council officers advocate to the community and the appropriate level of government.

In the delivery of this Strategy, AlburyCity acts as a:

**Leader** – Council is responsible for leading a range of activities throughout the region. Ensuring that this legislation, and the administration of it, is done in a way that is supporting the community vision.

**Advocate** – Council advocates on behalf of the community to other levels of government and various other decision makers to deliver the best possible outcomes for LGA.

**Provider** – Council directly provides services and/or infrastructure in ways that achieve the aims of its adopted actions.

**Supporter** – Council has many partners across the community to deliver services, infrastructure and events and supports them in doing so.

**Facilitator** – Council has a role in bringing groups of people and organisations together to support collaborations and new partnerships to create new opportunities and solve problems for the community.

## Our Aquatic Locations

Albury is surrounded by natural waterways, in particular Lake Hume to the east, Wonga Wetlands to the west and the Murray River which runs along the southern border of Victoria to the west. These locations are popular areas for recreation and leisure activities including swimming, boating, and fishing.



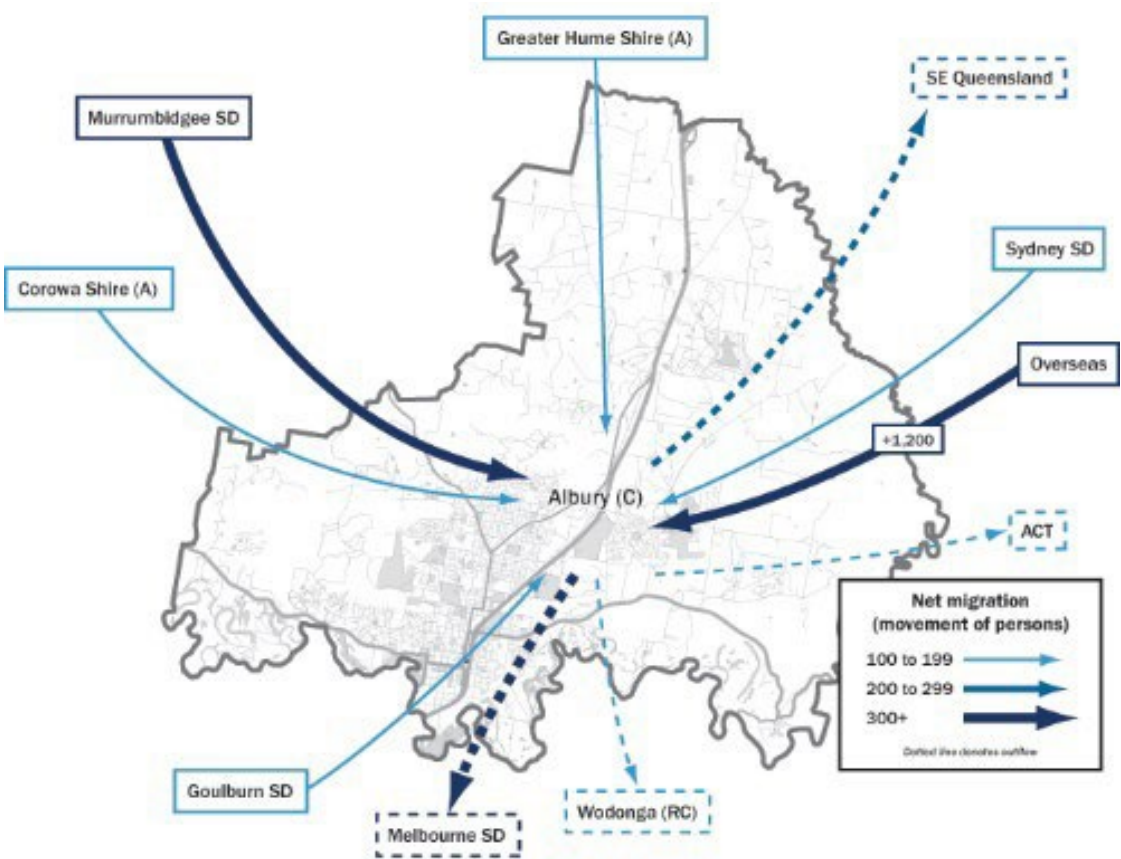
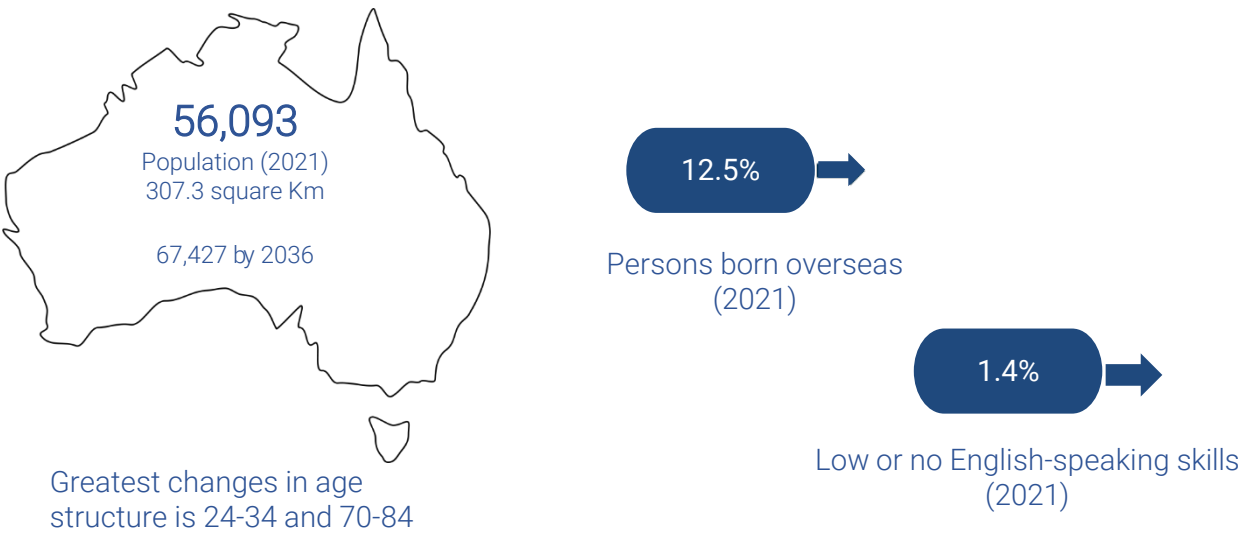
AlburyCity has two public swimming pools: Albury Swim Centre and Lavington Swim Centre. These are both outdoor seasonal pools.

There are two public swimming pools in nearby Wodonga (Victoria), of which one is an indoor pool open year around. Additionally, there are 4 private learn to swim schools in the Albury-Wodonga area.



# Our People

The Albury region has a unique multicultural heritage. Traditionally the home of the Wiradjuri people, the region became home to German, Dutch, Italian, Greek and Polish migrant communities after World War II, with settlements located at Bonegilla. More recently, Indian, Philippines, Bhutan, Nepal, South African and Democratic Republic of Congo residents have contributed to the city’s vital, cosmopolitan feel. AlburyCity has become a regional settlement hub for families from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Bhutan and Sudan.



# Albury Drowning Profile

(Between 2006/07 – 2021/22)

13 Drowning Deaths

40 Non-Fatal Drownings

<1 Drowning Death per year

0.013 Drowning Deaths per 1000

## Who is drowning?



92% Males

8% Female



39% Born Overseas

Residential LGA:	47% Albury	15% Wodonga	23% Intrastate
Distance from Home to Drowning	62% within 20km	8% 100km +	15% unknown
Top 3 Age Groups	17% 18-24yrs	24% 25-34yrs	17% 35-44yrs

## Where are they drowning?



46% Murray River



39% Lake Hume



15% Other

## What were they doing



46% Swimming



23% Boating & Craft



15% Falls

## When are they drowning



70% in November / December / January

## Our Engagement Journey

Engagement for the AlburyCity Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy commenced in December 2021 with an extensive Aquatic Risk Assessment by Royal Life Saving NSW.

The community and stakeholders actively participated through the 'Have your Say' website. The Have your Say survey targeted households and their swimming and water safety activity, understanding of risk and expectations in terms of safety. The community completed 123 household submissions were received via the Have Your Say online survey which represented 381 community members throughout July 2022. This interaction was achieved through online survey questions targeting the perceptions, thoughts, and activities of users of waterways in the Albury region.

Royal Life Saving NSW and AlburyCity also facilitated a community drowning prevention workshop in which community leaders, local emergency agencies and key stakeholders explored the issues surrounding drowning in the Albury region.



# What can I do

As a community member there is so much you can do to help achieve the vision of a community free from drowning for the Albury region, this may be individually, as part of a community group or with friends and family.

## Facilitating Collaboration

- Get involved. Take an interest in drowning prevention and what is planned in your community
- Have your say – It is important that you give feedback. Your opinion is important to us
- Share the love – make sure you tell others about the Strategy and what they should do in, on or around Inland Waterways
- Communicate – don't be afraid to share the Drowning Prevention message and help others in need.

## Safer Aquatic Environments

- Read the safety signs and know what they mean before entering the water
- Avoid ignoring or disregarding safety messages. They are there for a reason
- Check the water and weather Conditions before you go out
- Always check the conditions of the water before you enter
- Make sure you have a safe entry and exit location before you go in the water
- Avoid swimming and recreating in isolated areas.

## Safer Aquatic Activity

- Ensure you have enough safety equipment on board for you and your passengers
- Wear a Lifejacket when boating or fishing
- Log on/off with Marine Rescue NSW, or tell someone where you're going and when you'll return
- Avoid alcohol and drugs when in, on, or around water
- Enrol yourself in a Learn to Swim Program
- Always keep a proper lookout as the skipper of your vessel
- Always drive at a safe speed when you are the skipper of a vessel

## Safer Aquatic Users

- Educate yourself about the dangers and strategies to stay safe in inland waterways
- Avoid swimming or recreating in the water after dark or when alone
- Look after your mates and speak up if they are making poor decisions
- Visit your doctor to get a check-up
- Always supervise your children when around water
- Enrol yourself or your children in a CPR, First Aid or Lifesaving course
- Know your limits and avoid taking risks. If in doubt, don't go out.
- Keep yourself fit and healthy
- Know what to do in an emergency and who to call



## Our Action Plan

# How to read the Strategies

**Focus Areas**  
Our four focus areas are based on addressing the Safe Systems Approach to Drowning Prevention

**Actions**  
These outline the method or approach to achieve the outcomes of the Strategy. These strategies cascade down with specific and measurable actions, priorities and responsibilities

## Facilitate Leadership and Collaboration

1. FACILITATE LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION			
Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
11. Establish a Working Group to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategy	Leader Provider Facilitator	NSW Police Emergency Services Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities	High
12. Develop a specific budget and resources for the term of the strategy to support the working group and the implementation of strategies and initiatives	Leader Provider	Government Business and Industry Community	High

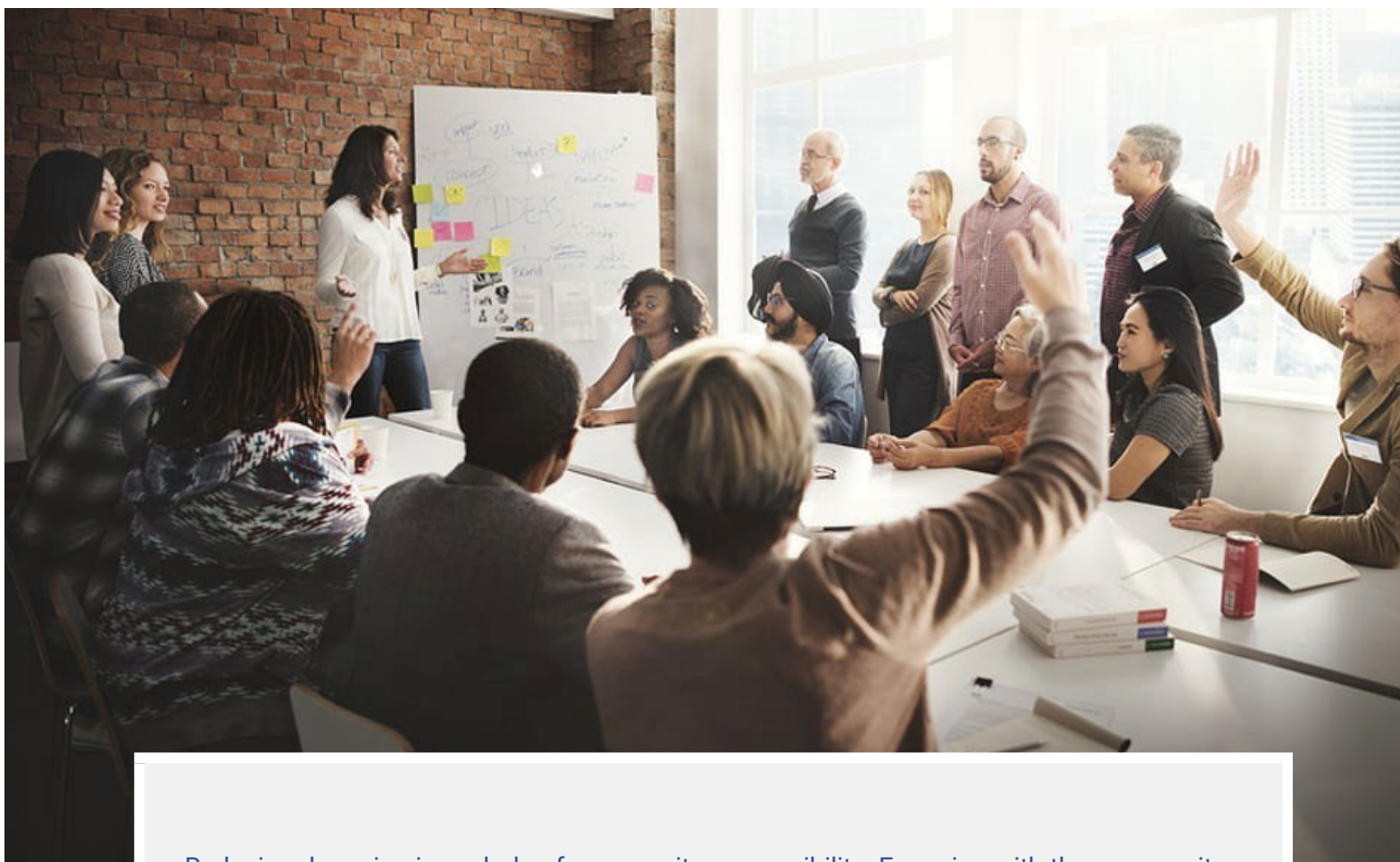
**Partners** Collaboration and partnerships are crucial to achieving our long-term goals. This Strategy identifies some of our key partners in delivery, however, the list is not exhaustive and we always welcome new partners.

**Priorities**  
Priorities have been established rather than timelines as many strategies are reliant or coexist with another.

**Council’s Role**  
Council has a custodial role in working towards each community outcome, however, is not wholly responsible for achieving them. Responsibility rests with everyone including other levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community organisations and individuals.

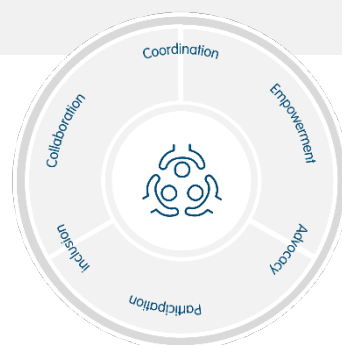


## Facilitate Leadership and Collaboration



Reducing drowning is a whole-of-community responsibility. Engaging with the community and involving them in key decision-making promotes collaboration, coordination and a shared sense of responsibility.

It also ensures that leaders within the community are ethical and transparent and committed to the cause through the provision of adequate resources to implement the strategies.



## 1. FACILITATE LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
1.1. Establish a Working Group to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategy.	Leader Provider Facilitator	NSW Police Emergency Services Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities	High
1.2. Develop a specific budget and resources (human and material) for the term of the Strategy to support the Working Group and the implementation of strategies and initiatives.	Leader Provider	Government Business and Industry Community	High
1.3. Annually review its performance against the Strategy and communicate this accordingly with the community.	Leader Facilitator	Working Group Community	High
1.4. Work with the Local / Regional Rescue Committee to evaluate existing response plans and procedures for inland waterways drowning incidents at Lake Hume and along the Murray River.	Leader Facilitator Advocate	NSW Police Emergency Services Royal Life Saving	Medium
1.5. Explore how reporting on drowning incidents in inland waterways can be improved to better inform further drowning prevention strategies.	Supporter Advocate	NSW Police Emergency Services Royal Life Saving	Medium



## Build Safer Aquatic Environments



Inland waterways provide significant value to the local community however drowning occurs in all types of aquatic environments and each environment poses unique risks.

Conditions can change rapidly, particularly in and around natural waterways, and visitors may be unfamiliar with local hazards. Visitors need to be able to identify these hazards and respond appropriately.



## 2. BUILD SAFER AQUATIC ENVIRONEMENTS

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
2.1. Implement the RLS NSW Best Practice Guidelines for Inclusivity in Aquatic Facilities.	Provider Advocate	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities	Medium
2.2. Explore the feasibility of a pilot for emergency help points, including rescue equipment, and communication system at an identified inland waterway location.  There are generally two types of Public Rescue Equipment that are appropriate for inland waterway use, throw bags and small to medium-sized life rings.	Leader Provider Evaluator	Community Royal Life Saving Emergency Services	High
2.3. Explore the feasibility of implementing a community program which trains members of the public in how to use public rescue equipment, undertake rescues safely and resuscitate drowning victims.	Leader Provider Evaluator	Community Royal Life Saving Emergency Services High Schools Recreation Organisations	Medium
2.4. Implement a regular program for checking and removing permanent and transitory hazards at identified locations at Lake Hume and the Noreuil Park Foreshore.	Leader Provider	NSW Maritime Albury Rescue NSW Police	Medium

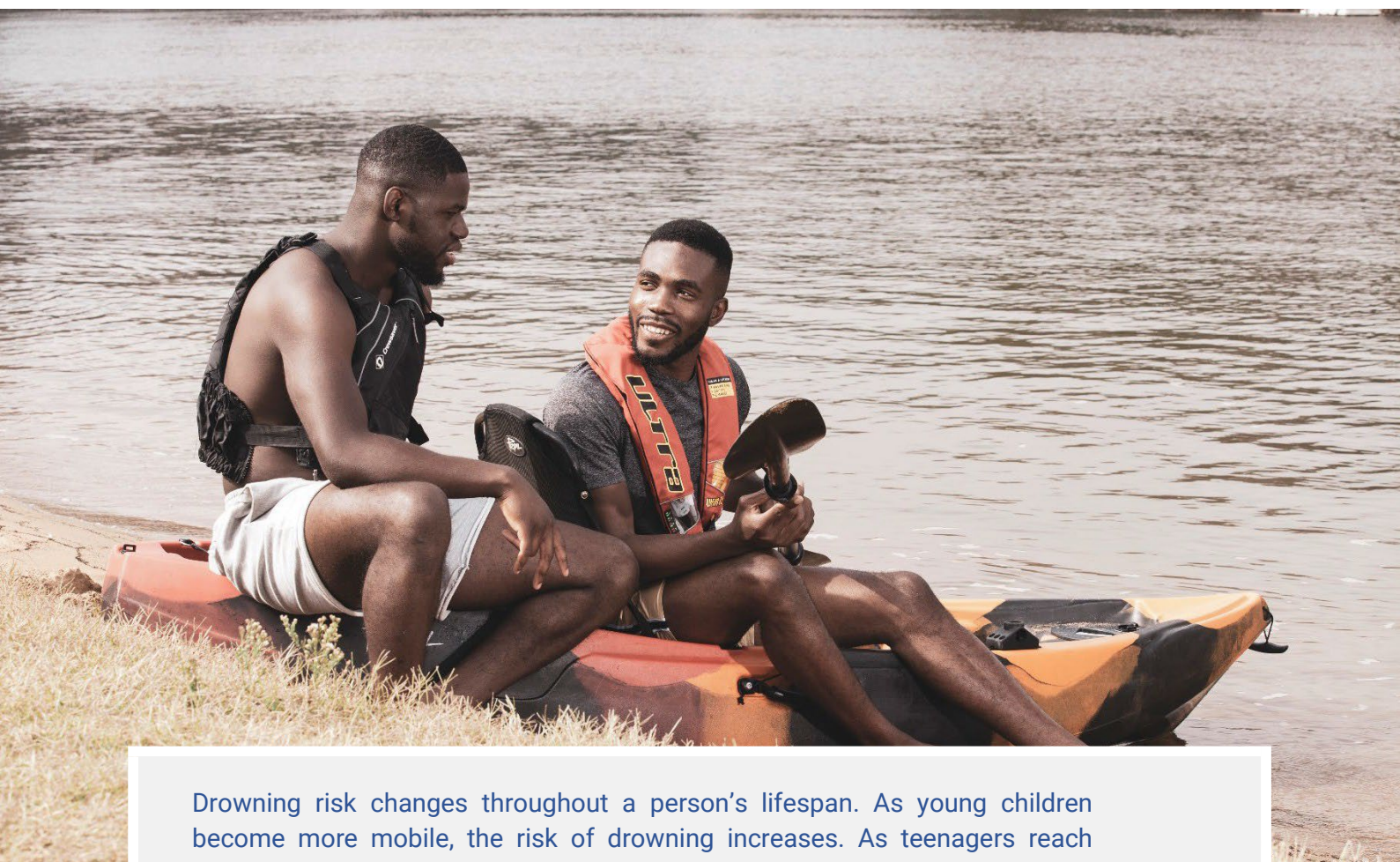
## 2. BUILD SAFER AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
2.5. Explore training and equipping full time police and emergency rescue officers with inland waterways Basic Water Rescue Training and use of public safety equipment.	Supporter Advocate	NSW Police Fire and Rescue NSW Royal Life Saving	Medium
2.6. Explore the feasibility of a pilot for a safe designated swimming area at an identified inland waterway location at Lake Hume.	Leader Provider Advocate	Community Royal Life Saving Emergency Services Recreation Organisations	Medium

N.B. Royal Life Saving NSW analysed the use of Lifeguard Supervision in and around the Noreuil Park Foreshore as part of the Aquatic Safety Assessment conducted in December 2021. Based on the context of the aquatic environments and the subsequent risk associated with area it was deemed that this was not practical to implement, and other more preventative measures should be considered at this location. This however should be reviewed in 2-3 years' time post the implementation of a safe swimming area pilot at an identified location at Lake Hume.



## Develop Safer Aquatic Users



Drowning risk changes throughout a person's lifespan. As young children become more mobile, the risk of drowning increases. As teenagers reach adulthood, legal drinking age and gain greater independence, their risk of drowning also increases.

Males are known to be at higher risk of drowning than females, particularly during adolescence and early adulthood as risk-taking behaviour becomes more apparent.

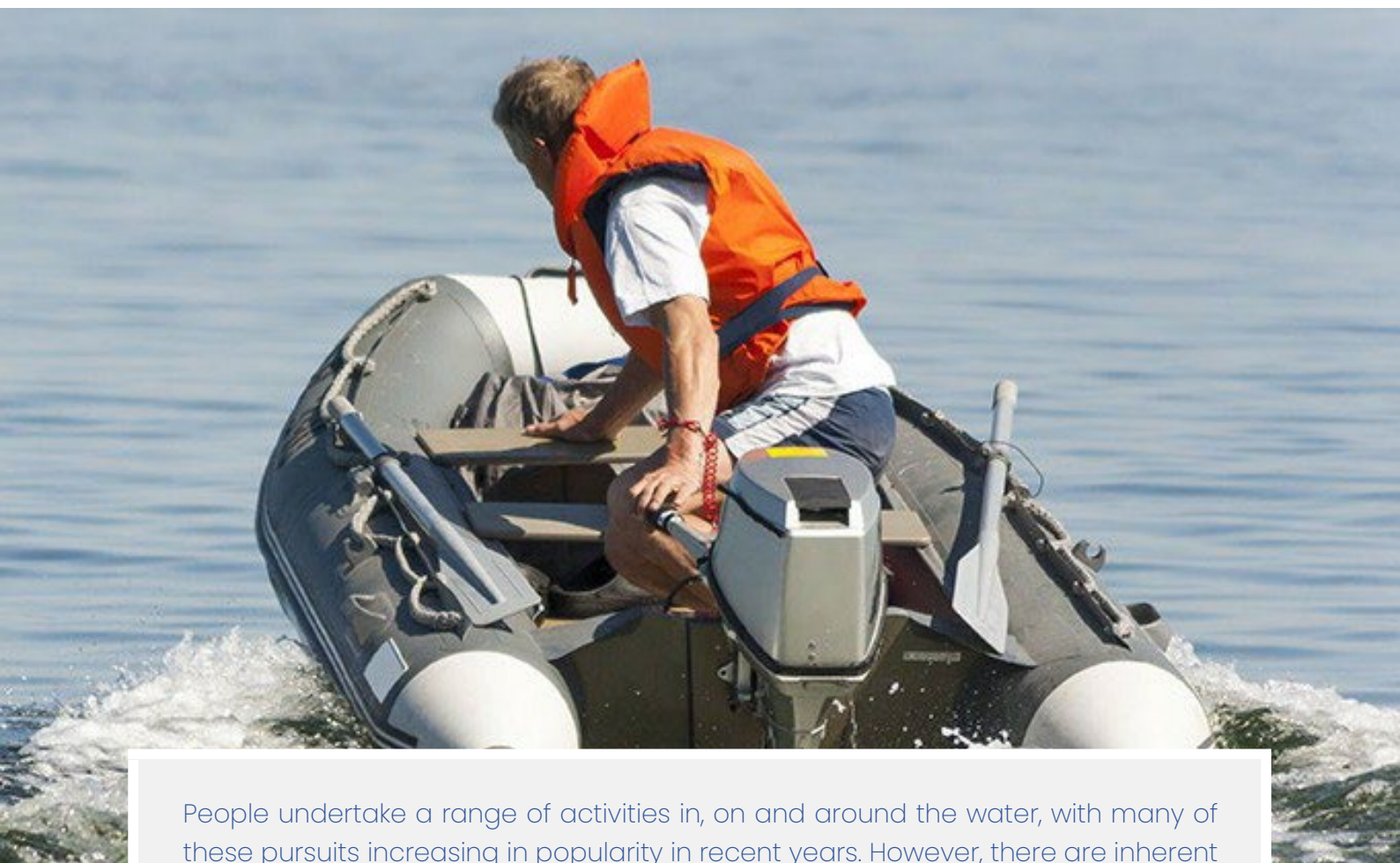


### 3. DEVELOP SAFER AQUATIC USERS

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
3.1. Implement an Inland Waterways safety campaign. The campaign should use local ambassadors and focus on changing behaviour associated with adult males swimming in inland waterways, understanding universal safety signage, lifejacket use and alcohol consumption in, on and around inland waterways.	Collaborator Advocate	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities Media Agencies Ethnic Media	High
3.2. Develop a campaign toolkit that is readily available to community organisations and businesses who regularly engage with adult males and Culturally and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) communities within the Albury region.	Leader Provider Advocate	Community Royal Life Saving Boating and Fishing Industry High School Tertiary Institutes	Medium
3.3. Implement a specific Inland Waterways education program targeting young males in CALD communities delivered at identified inland waterway locations at Lake Hume and the Noreuil Park Foreshore.	Provider Supporter	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Ethnic Media Primary and High Schools Tertiary Institutes	High
3.4. Explore the feasibility of implementing a renewed safety signage system at identified inland waterways locations with a view to expanding along the Murray River in future years. This should include the use of Emergency Location Numbers.	Leader Collaborator Advocate	Royal Life Saving NSW Maritime Albury Rescue	High

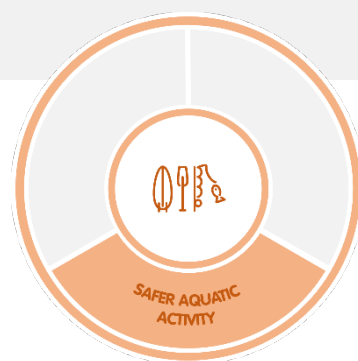


## Design Safer Aquatic Activity



People undertake a range of activities in, on and around the water, with many of these pursuits increasing in popularity in recent years. However, there are inherent risks associated with many of these activities.

Often, the risks are exacerbated by inexperience, poor or inadequate equipment, poor weather conditions and failing to take appropriate safety precautions.



#### 4. DESIGN SAFER AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
4.1. Implement a specific CALD Learn to Swim program in line with the RLSNSW 'Everyone Can Learn to Swim' Campaign.	Provider Supporter	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities Ethnic Media Primary and High Schools Tertiary Institutes	High
4.2. Implement subsidised swimming lessons for CALD community groups.	Leader Provider	Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities	High
4.3. Maintaining the alcohol prohibited area at the Noreuil Park Foreshore on Australia Day.	Leader Provider	NSW Police Business and Industry Community	Medium
4.4. Introduce an enhanced enforcement program with Murray River Police District to respond to anti-social and dangerous behaviour (e.g. alcohol and drug use) at identified inland waterway locations at Lake Hume and the Noreuil Park Foreshore.	Collaborator Advocate	NSW Police Business and Industry Community	Low
4.5. Explore the feasibility of conducting preventative in-water patrolling activity through December and January to educate and enforce aquatic users (and minimise response times) about inland waterway hazards, lifejacket use and alcohol consumption.	Leader Provider	NSW Maritime Albury Rescue NSW Police	Medium

#### 4. DESIGN SAFER AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
4.6. Trial a free pool entry program for Albury LGA residents at the Lavington and Albury Swim Centres on high risk days, including New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Australia Day, Christmas Eve and Boxing Day and any other days as deemed high risk by Council Officers, subject to resourcing and operational considerations	Provider Leader	Pool Contractor	High

## References

Albury Region Drowning Report - 15-year analysis of drowning deaths 2007/08 to 2020/21

Pidgeon, S. (2022) Albury Region Drowning Report: 15 years analysis of drowning deaths. Royal Life Saving – Australia. Sydney, Australia

Drowning Deaths in Australian Rivers, Creeks and Streams: A 10 Year Analysis

Peden, A & Queiroga, AC (2014) Drowning deaths in Australian rivers, creeks and streams: A 10-year analysis. Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, Sydney

Murray River drowning report

Peden, AE (2015) Murray River Drowning Report, Royal Life Saving Society – Australia. Sydney.

Towards Albury 2050

Community Strategic Plan 2022-2050 - Endorsed 14 June 2022

Guidelines for Inland Waterways Safety Royal

Life Saving Society – Australia

Australian Water Safety Strategy Australian

Water Safety Council 2020

Australian Policy and Case Law for Public Safety in Inland Waterways

Schiavone, C., Houston, R., Cherfils, B. & Pidgeon, S. (2022) Australian Policy and Case Law for Public Safety in Inland Waterways – A Review and Recommendations. Royal Life Saving Society - Australia, Sydney.

Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water

Australian Government – National Health and Medical Research Council

Public Rescue Equipment Guide – Inland Waterways Royal

Life Saving NSW

Practice Note 15 – Water Safety

NSW Office of Local Government, Department of Planning and Environment 2017

# Thank You

Royal Life Saving NSW prepared this strategy on behalf of AlburyCity Council and the Albury community and would like to thank:

Members of the community who participated in community engagement processes and provided valuable input during the development of this strategy.

Councillors, council employees, and members of the community who participated in the engagement opportunities including forums, meetings and surveys.

## **AlburyCity** **Inland Waterways Drowning Prevention Strategy**

553 Kiewa Street Albury NSW 2640

PO Box 323, Albury NSW 2640

P: (02) 6023 8111

E: [info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au) W:  
[alburycity.nsw.gov.au](http://alburycity.nsw.gov.au)

## **Royal Life Saving NSW**

34/10 Gladstone Road, Castle Hill NSW 2154

PO Box 8307, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

P: (02) 9634 3700

E: [nsw@royalnsw.com.au](mailto:nsw@royalnsw.com.au)

W: [www.drowningprevention.org.au](http://www.drowningprevention.org.au)



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
NEW SOUTH WALES