



SEPTEMBER 2021

# COVID IMPACT ON NSW & ACT SWIM SCHOOL BUSINESSES

## FINDINGS OF A COMBINED ASCTA AND ASSA INDUSTRY TASKFORCE

- ASCTA - Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association / Swim Australia
- ASSA - Australian Swim School Association
- TASKFORCE - Melissa Rickwood, Nancy Shaw, Julie Sheldrake, Narelle Simpson, and Julie Zancanaro.

# BACKGROUND

The COVID pandemic environment of 2020 and 2021 has significantly impacted Swim School Businesses across Australia, particularly in the metropolitan areas.

It is important that industry bodies effectively represent Swim School Businesses during this COVID affected operating environment, requesting special consideration for support and safe reopening. Whilst some excellent data has been collected, particularly by the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia, more specific data from Swim School businesses will further support industry needs.

01

## DROWNING PREVENTION

Drowning is the highest cause of accidental death in early childhood. Access to Learn to Swim and Water Safety programs can be considered central/critical to providing for the health, wellbeing, and safety of Australian children.

02

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Many people with disabilities rely on Swim Schools to provide them with important access to facilities and instructors - catering for their health, fitness, therapy, and aquatic safety needs.

03

## THE WORKFORCE

Swim Schools are a labour intensive industry, with a predominantly casualised workforce - increasing the impact of closures on families and communities. Closures are potentially devastating for those without adequate government support - both to the businesses and to the casualised workforce they employ. There is a concern that many smaller Swim Schools will not survive the current extended lockdowns.

04

## TYPES OF FACILITIES

Swim School Businesses operate within various types of facilities – both public and private. It is challenging to quantify just how many swim schools are in a particular area as they may be registered with several different industry bodies, or none.

# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to quantify the number of Swim School Businesses in Greater Sydney, and estimate the impact on them of COVID lockdowns.

It also aims to identify the scope and characteristics of Swim School Businesses in NSW/ACT, and the services they provide to local communities.

# METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data was gathered via Survey Monkey from NSW and ACT Swim Schools to identify and quantify trends using the largest possible data sample. Additionally, all Swim School Businesses in the Greater Sydney COVID lockdown regions were identified to quantify the number of Swim Schools most affected (including Shoalhaven and Wollongong, Blue Mountains and Central Coast).

## 01

### Surveying NSW/ACT Swim Schools.

- The peak industry bodies of ASCTA/Swim Australia and ASSA distributed a questionnaire to all member Swim Schools, requesting one response per swim school location.
- Survey questions focused on service provision, student diversity, employment capacity, and COVID impact.

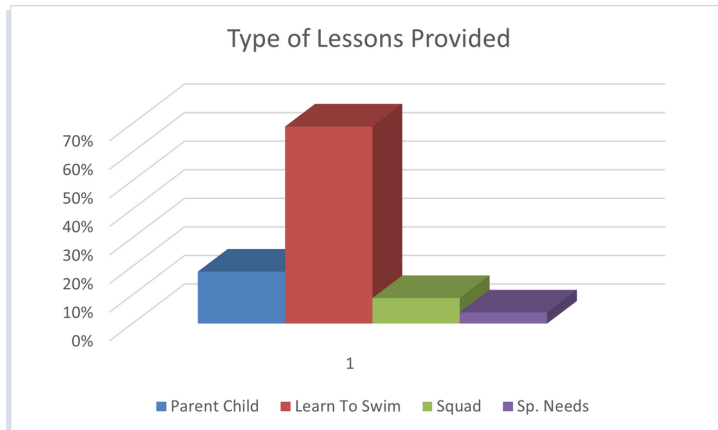
## 02

### Identifying Swim Schools in Greater Sydney.

- All LGA's in the Greater Sydney lockdown area were approached requesting the name and location of all Swim Schools they test for water quality.
- A set question guide and proforma email was used.

# SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS

Swim Schools in NSW/ACT returned 71 questionnaires, including 46 from Greater Sydney. 333 Swim Schools were identified in the Greater Sydney lockdown area.



Survey results estimate that **each week** the **Average Swim School delivers 894** swimming lessons ...

- 617 Learn to Swim lessons
- 161 Parent and Child lessons
- 80 squad lessons
- 36 lessons for people with disabilities

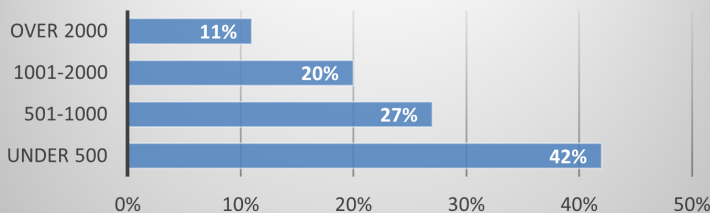
## The Survey showed ...

- **77%** of Swim Schools are providing lessons to **People with Disabilities**
- **89%** are providing **Parent and Child** lessons
- Swim Schools want acknowledgement from government that they are essential and/or educational.

## Other studies show ...

**Drowning is the highest cause of accidental death in toddlers and children with autism**

## NSW/ACT Swim School Size (in LPW - Lessons Per Week)



**10%** of swim schools said they **may not reopen** after lockdown

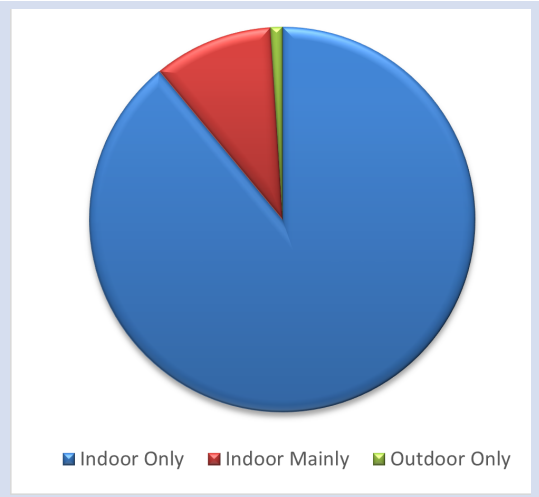
- 69% of Swim Schools are small businesses with less than 1000 lessons per week
- 62% of all schools have lost staff
- 45% said lockdown financial support was inadequate

**300,000**

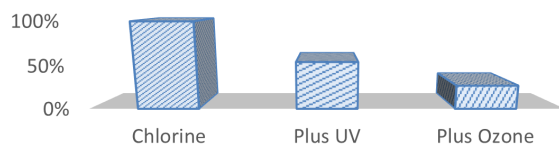
*That's how many lessons per week are estimated to be delivered by the 333 Swim Schools in Greater Sydney!*

Of the 71 NSW/ACT swim schools who returned surveys:

- 89% were fully indoors
- 10% were mainly indoors
- Only 1 was outdoor only

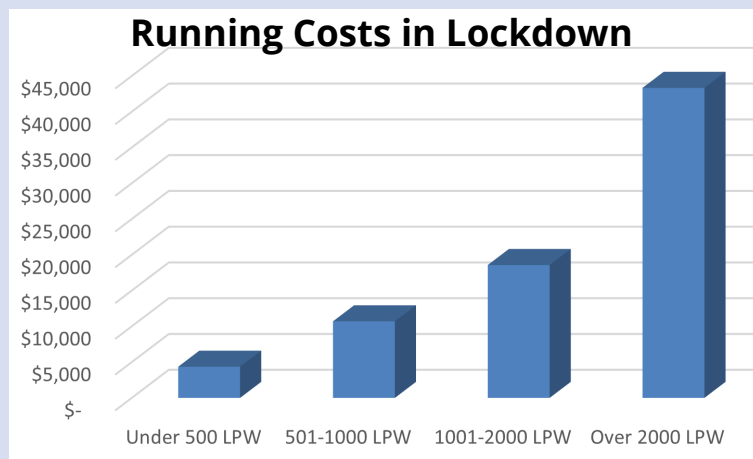


### SECONDARY DISINFECTION



**54%**  
use UV  
in addition to Chlorine

- 100% of Swim Schools kept plant running in some capacity during lockdown
- **Running costs in lockdown** are \$12,000/month on average
- Over \$40,000 per month for large swim schools
- Called for more financial support from the government, and acknowledgement of the running costs involved in maintaining pools whilst in lockdown.



**8000**

*The average NSW/ACT Swim School employs 24 staff. That's almost 8000 staff across the 333 in Greater Sydney!*