

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



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CELEBRATING WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO LIFESAVING

Life Saving Victoria has launched its annual initiative celebrating the more than 125 years of contribution women have made to the lifesaving movement, with all-women or women-led patrols protecting our beaches at locations across Victoria.

Women have played a vital role in the Victorian lifesaving movement since the Royal Life Saving Society was established in 1904. Today, Life Saving Victoria's membership includes 49.7 per cent female representation and women make up 45 per cent on the board.

This year's patrols will occur on Saturday, 18 February at coastal locations, and from 20-26 February at participating aquatic facilities. More than 1,000 people are expected to take part across Victorian lifesaving clubs and aquatic facilities.

The initiative celebrates the many contributions women have made in lifesaving to champion inclusion and diversity and empower future generations to take on the crucial task of keeping our beaches and waterways safe.

Tragically, there have been 37 fatal drownings from 1 July 2022 to 15 February 2023. This is seven more than the 10-year average. Of these deaths, most occurred in inland waterways such as rivers, creeks, streams or lakes, as well as at home or other locations, and coastal waterways.

To make sure everyone gets home safely, swimmers should always check the conditions of the water including the depth and currents, swim at patrolled locations, wear a lifejacket when boating or fishing, avoid drinking alcohol and going out in the water, always supervise children and never swim alone.

Swimming isn't the only way people can get into trouble in the water – four in five boating or fishing-related drowning deaths in the past decade involved incorrect or no lifejacket use.

As part of the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*, the Andrews Labor Government is delivering \$11.9 million to help keep people safe around water, including funding for Life Saving Victoria to continue valuable water safety programs at public pools and helping more Victorians improve their swimming and water skills.

Through Jobs Victoria and in partnership with Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, the Government is also creating 300 jobs for the aquatics sector, including swimming teachers, lifeguards and customer service staff.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"Life Saving Victoria members dedicate their time and energy to keeping Victorians safe during summer and in times of emergency like floods."

"This celebration of the role women play in lifesaving is a chance to inspire more women and girls to build their capabilities and consider a rewarding experience as a volunteer life saver."

Quotes attributable to Life Saving Victoria CEO Catherine Greaves

"Lifesaving would not be possible without the significant contribution women and girls have made to our movement for the past 125 years."

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“While we’ve made strides in representation, we still have work to do, which is why initiatives like these are so important to not only celebrate the accomplishments of women in our ranks, but to also make pathways into operational roles more visible for the next generation of women in lifesaving and emergency services.”