
Chapter 8

Investigating a Win-Win Situation

Delivering Quality Swimming Experiences for Children in Local
Primary Schools Within the Gippsland Region, Via Teacher
Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the “commitment to action” designed by ministers of education, which act as stepping stones during implementation of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. The reflection conceptualises what these goals look like in practice within the Health and Physical Education (HPE) key learning area. “Swimming and water safety” for both pre-service teachers and children in Primary schools was implemented, which in hindsight provided a win-win situation. Furthermore, a framework enabling sustainable swimming education within the Gippsland rural community was developed.

There were barriers to be overcome and amendments identified for possible future improvements; however, the project is strongly supported by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Discussion Paper “A Tertiary Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria”. The pathway involving collaboration of various stakeholders has begun, a process that can now be reflected upon, reassessed, amendments made and relationships strengthened for the sustainability of swimming and water safety within local rural primary schools in the Gippsland region.

Introduction

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was established by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood

Development and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA) in December, 2008. Goals included: Goal 1 – Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; Goal 2 – All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. These Goals for Young Australians have driven the present National Curriculum reform; they are supported by socio-critical pedagogy in education and underpinned by a socio-cultural perspective. According to Professor Robyn Ewing, an education academic from Sydney University, the goals are “about equity and social justice and improved learning outcomes for our most disadvantaged and isolated students” (2010: 127). Such an educational policy reads well, Ministers state collaborative intent and identify possible improvements within Australian education, but how do the goals make a difference for children in classrooms? That is, what does goal implementation look like in practice?

The ministers of education designed a commitment to action, which act as stepping stones in goal implementation, they include:

- Developing stronger partnerships;
- Supporting quality teaching and school leadership;
- Strengthening early childhood education;
- Enhancing middle years development;
- Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions;
- Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment;
- Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds;
- Strengthening accountability and transparency.

This chapter reflects on the “commitment to action” during implementation of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, in an effort to conceptualise what these goals may look like in practice within the Health and Physical Education key learning area. The tangible educational content implemented was “Swimming and water safety” for both education students at Tertiary level and for children in Primary schools, which in hindsight appeared to be advantageous for both stakeholders – a win-win situation. A framework enabling sustainable swimming education within the Gippsland rural community was developed. There were barriers to be overcome and amendments identified for possible future improvements; however, the project is strongly supported by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Discussion Paper “A Tertiary

Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria” which was released in August later in the year (2011). The Discussion Paper was encouraging and offered value to such pathways, shedding light on the difficulties faced by many stakeholders in the process. This chapter comprises a narrative memoir by the author of his involvement at tertiary education to implement swimming and water safety lessons in local primary schools.

Swimming Education Subject Content

Within the Bachelor of Primary Education course at Monash University, education students choosing the Physical Education major stream or selecting EDF2611 “Experiencing Aquatic Environments” as an elective, are required to hold a current teacher of swimming and water safety qualification by unit completion. This is a requirement mandated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) (VIT 2008) for teacher registration as a Primary school Physical Education teacher. It was decided that a pathway be created to achieve these national ideals and goals through the implementation of swimming and water safety education. The unit at the Gippsland campus previously required that students complete swimming and water safety accreditation during their own time and present evidence of the qualification. The unit workshop program (two hours per week) was carefully redesigned to create a pathway between the university unit objectives and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) swimming and water safety course units of competency.

There were two suitable programs offered by providers, associated with courses and qualifications for teaching Swimming and water safety: (1) Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) Swim Australia Teacher; and (2) Austswim training of teachers of swimming and water safety. Swim Australia (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association) was:

launched in 1997 by the Federal Minister for Sport and Recreation to assist develop the Learn to Swim program in Australia to its full potential. ASCTA is a not for profit, membership based organisation that strives to achieve the World’s best swimming and water safety Teachers and highest performing swimming Coaches. (ASCTA 2011)

Swim Australia’s aim is for all Australians learning to swim and gaining water safety knowledge through safe, enjoyable and quality swimming lessons.

ASCTA is an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO) offering 35 units of competency, delivered in all states and territories (Australian Government 2011). Swim Australia Teacher courses include:

- Swim Australia Teacher (SAT) directed at 4–12 years;
- Swim Australia Teacher of Babies and Toddlers (SAT B & T) directed at 0–4 years;
- Swim Australia Teacher of Competitive Swimming (SAT CS) directed at 7–12 years;
- Swim Australia Teacher Adolescents and Adults (SAT AA) directed at 0 14 and above;
- Swim Australia Teacher Learners with Disability (SAT LWD); and,
- Swim Australia Teacher Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (SAT CALD). (ASCTA 2011)

Austswim has a close philosophical and working relationship with Swim Australia, the Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) and Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) (Austswim 2009). Austswim programs for teaching swimming and water safety can be aligned with the units of competency in the corresponding Swim Australia Teacher courses. Austswim is also an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO), offering 18 units of competency but are not delivered within every Australian State and Territory (Australian Government 2011). Austswim courses include:

- Austswim Teacher of Swimming and water safety;
- Austswim Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics;
- Austswim Teacher of Aquatics for People with a Disability;
- Austswim Teacher Towards Competitive Strokes; and,
- Austswim Teacher of Adults.

The third provider contacted was the RLSSA which is known in the state of Victoria as Lifesaving Victoria. Courses in relation to swimming and water safety provided by Lifesaving Victoria include: Keep Watch, Swim and Survive, Bronze Medallion, Junior Lifeguard Club, and Grey Medallion.

Correspondence with providers was initiated and it was anticipated that they would share similar swimming and water safety educational aspirations with that of Monash Gippsland. The response from ASCTA and RLSSA was very optimistic and built the foundations for strong partnerships. It was evident that ASCTA and RLSSA clearly valued the opportunity to promote swimming and water safety, especially within the demographics of Gippsland. Staff were personable and understanding in their dealings with the author, moved hastily to recognise the author's recognised prior learning (RPL) and to have the courses fully prepared so that success for

all stakeholders was optimised. Both organisations were flexible in their disposition and offered large discounts in courses so that they were affordable for the university students. It was axiomatic that both providers aimed to promote swimming and water safety to its full potential and in a professional manner. Prioritising “education” was a commonality of both RTOs which appeared to enable strong collaboration with Monash University’s Faculty of Education.

The factors taken into consideration when choosing a swimming and water safety course included quality (safety, insurance, and registered accreditation), cost, and collaborative potential. While both SAT and Austswim courses are nationally registered, when the two options are juxtaposed and compared (Table 1), light is shed on the course advantages of ASCTA, which includes: international recognition; International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA), less than half the cost, and is valid for a longer period of time.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	Austswim	ASCTA (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association)
Course	Austswim Teacher of Swimming and water safety	Swim Australia Teacher (SAT)
Minimal cost required by provider	\$215	\$100
Cost for university students	\$215	\$100
Amount of time valid	3 years	4 years
National recognition	RTO 104975	RTO20948
International recognition	–	International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA)
Units of competency	SRC AQU 003B SRC AQU 008B SRC AQU 009B SRC AQU 0010B SRC AQU 0011B SRC AQU 013B SRC CRO 007B	SRC AQU 003B SRC AQU 008B SRC AQU 009B SRC AQU 0010B SRC AQU 0011B SRC AQU 013B SRC CRO 007B

Table 1. Comparison between providers

(Australian Government 2011)

Pathways created enabled the opportunity for the university students to obtain qualifications in Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) – Swim Australia Teacher (SAT), Royal Life

Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) Bronze Medallion (BM), and RLSSA Resuscitation (RE) courses. By becoming an endorsed service member with Lifesaving Victoria, the author was qualified to endorse the BM, RE, and Bronze Rescue (BR). The students were required to have current resuscitation accreditation to obtain a Swim Australia Teacher qualification, so this enabled a pathway within a pathway.

Meeting the Educational Goals for Young Australians’ Commitment to Action

1. Developing Stronger Partnerships

The attempt to create what could be described as a logical pathway led to a process of events that although initially on the surface seemed quite simple, involved a complex process of social relationships. Creating pathways between RTOs, namely, ASCTA and RLSSA, was necessary to enable the implementation of swimming and water safety lessons for the primary school children, but was only one of three equally important collaborations required. The other collaborations were with the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre), which included establishing a working relationship with external swimming instructors employed at the venue, and collaboration with local primary schools. Relationships between Monash University and all stakeholders played a major role in enabling fruition of the pathways.

Contact was initially made through informal introductions with the centre leader at the local leisure and sports centre, followed by e-mail and phone calls, which culminated with a formal face-to-face meeting prior to the beginning of Semester 1 at the local leisure and sports centre. This meeting was productive as far as it ascertained each stakeholder’s purpose of collaboration. The author was able to share his vision of involving local primary schools during the unit (at no cost) and the pathway he was creating, which was fully supported by the leader. Facilities, costs, equipment, insurance, access, and spaces were discussed and finalised (where applicable). The author was introduced to the swimming supervisor who also supported the pathways being created, although with caveat. It was collaboratively decided that the author would provide the dates and times for the primary schools’ free lessons to be conducted by the university students. The swimming supervisor would then use the sports centre’s contact with the schools, through upper school swimming lessons facilitated during the year, to organise the lessons for children where priority was to be given to year levels who would otherwise miss out on the opportunity. This collaboration

reinforced a larger partnership established between Monash University, the local City Council, and the Australian Government, coinciding with the completion of the local leisure and sports centre redevelopment project which involved the swimming pool facility. Effective communication and effort was essential for this pathway to be created, which involved personal face-to-face relations within the local health industry.

2. Supporting Quality Teaching and School Leadership

Swimming and water safety for the local schools was being introduced to the children in the early year levels; hence, it involved a change in curriculum. For this change to be effectively implemented required teachers valuing their influence on children and believing the difference they can make in reducing drowning fatalities through swimming and water safety education. Thus, by teachers observing the university students conducting swimming lessons, it was anticipated that this could initiate teachers and education students to act collaboratively and cooperatively in promoting swimming and water safety. Data gathered in a recent study (Whipp, Hutton, Grove & Jackson 2011) found that teachers working collaboratively with external providers is associated with positive perceptions about the value of the physical activity, which enables teachers to develop confidence and is less stressful. Curriculum change and reform is a process that is associated with teacher stress, so this partnership was perceived as favourable.

As part of the swimming and water safety course, the university students provided quality lessons for the local primary school students in Years 2/3 and Years 3/4 (early to middle years) from the local public and Catholic schools respectively. It was envisaged that this collaboration of quality teaching would become an annual event.

3. Strengthening Early Childhood Education

The best time to prepare children for safe aquatic participation and provide the skills and knowledge needed to have a lifelong safe association with water is during childhood (Royal Life Saving Society Australia 2010). Hence, primary schools and, in particular, primary school teachers play a vital role in providing access to all children. This is supported by research which suggests that the best time for children to learn and refine their motor skills is the preschool and early primary school years (Branta, Haubenstricker & Seefeldt 1984; Commonwealth of Australia 1992; Espenshade & Eckert 1980), as these are also the most formative years to establish a healthy approach towards physical activity (Queensland Government 2003). This phase of child development has the advantage that it is aligned with the

child's natural play structure and is likely to have fewer competing activities, therein allowing children more time to concentrate on developing their motor skills. The early detection of motor problems facilitates early intervention programs which can reduce many physical and related emotional problems (Arnheim & Sinclair 1979; Commonwealth of Australia 1992; Hardin & Garcia 1982; Haubensticker & Seefeldt 1974; Johnson & Rubinson 1983; Seefeldt 1975; Smoll 1974).

In Australia, children have traditionally received their swimming and water safety education during primary school. Within Australian education curriculum, swimming and water safety is closely aligned with the Health and Physical Education key learning area which consists of three strands: Health, Personal Development, and Physical Activities. It is axiomatic that the HPE key learning area be prioritised in today's education, as it is necessary for holistic lifelong health and well-being. This prioritisation is an issue greatly valued by governments responsible for costs involved with wellness of citizens, the influence of hypokinetic diseases, and the strong connection physical activity has with optimal health and quality of life (Corbin, Welk, Corbin & Welk 2011; Robbins, Powers & Burgess 2011; Mackenroth 2004; Howard 2004). However, the HPE learning area has had a history of barriers that have impeded quality delivery within all Australian primary schools, which Sloan suggests has also existed in schools internationally (2010). These issues still exist today (ACHPER 2011).

4. Enhancing Middle Years Development

Swimming and water safety can be used to enhance the middle years development but was not the purpose within this pathway.

5. Supporting Senior Years of Schooling and Youth Transitions

Senior years of schooling and youth transitions were not involved during this pathway.

6. Promoting World-Class Curriculum and Assessment

ASCTA is Australia's peak professional swimming body, and courses are recognised by the International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA), thus providing a world-class curriculum for all stakeholders. As part of the SAT swimming and water safety course, the university students provided low-ratio quality lessons: the most children for any student teacher was four and often it was as low as two. This provided world-class swimming and water safety curriculum and assessment lessons for the local primary school students (Years 2/3 and Years 3/4) over three weeks.

7. Improving Educational Outcomes for Indigenous Youth and Disadvantaged Young Australians, Especially Those from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Monash University (Gippsland campus) is situated in Churchill, Latrobe Valley, located in central Gippsland, eastern Victoria. A large percentage of the Gippsland region is comprised of a socio-economically disadvantaged population (DEECD 2011). Via implementing “hands on” practical teaching and learning experiences for the university students, subsequently the workshops enabled the provision of quality lessons at no cost for local primary school children (from a disadvantaged socio-economic region), who otherwise would not have received swimming lessons. This was of particular benefit because even though a considerable amount of work has been attributed to educating the Australian public about swimming and water safety awareness in a commitment to reducing drowning fatalities, research suggests that rural and isolated schools find it most difficult to conduct aquatic activities (Peden, Franklin & Larsen 2009). Rural communities are defined by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) as “being not metropolitan; not major regional centres; not remote; and having a population within town boundaries of less than 10000” (Clayton, Blom, Bateman & Carden 2004: 6).

There were Austswim course negotiations prior to the arrival of the author (mid-January), involving the local leisure and sports centre’s swimming supervisor and a Gippsland Austswim Presenter. This involved the university students completing the course externally to the university unit. Negotiations between the local leisure and sports centre’s swimming supervisor, local Austswim Presenter and Monash University Faculty of Education administrative staff in late 2010 confirmed that there would be a minimum of 100 students, 30 students per course, and each student would be charged \$280 rather than the recommended price of \$365 (personal communication, 28 February 2011). Hence, both families with children in local primary schools and university students benefitted financially from the pathways created.

8. Strengthening Accountability and Transparency

By implementing “hands on” practical teaching and learning experiences for the university students, the workshops enabled the provision of quality transparent lessons in that they demonstrated the university students’ course content and pedagogy knowledge to teachers, teacher assistants, and parents from the local schools. They were also conducted in a public swimming facility open for interested parties to witness. As mentioned earlier, teachers working collaboratively with external providers who are associated with

positive perceptions about the value of the physical activity enables teachers to develop confidence and is less stressful. Hence, it can be argued that the same positive perceptions can be developed through the collaboration with the university students.

Transparency accentuated the importance of the education degree when implementing swimming and water safety. An example of good pedagogy was witnessed when a child in Year 2 did not want to participate in an aspect of the lesson. The education student was understanding and gently encouraged the child to have a rest before having another attempt when he felt comfortable. Later it was reinforced by the classroom teacher that the education student had managed the particular child very well and built a good rapport which was evidenced by the child's application. Robertson (2008: 19) suggests that even the next sequential qualification extending from the swimming instructor, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, "does not embed the opportunity to develop the suite of knowledge bases required for autonomous training in diverse and complex environments". Naturally, alignment of a tertiary education university degree with the industry course was not always flush, an argument that cannot be hidden nor ignored within the transparent environment.

It is envisaged that through identifying how the swimming pathway addresses the Ministers' of Education commitment to action, the education goals are illustrated in practice and the value of the pathway is accentuated.

Support from Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

The Discussion Paper "A Tertiary Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria" was a pleasing reminder that the effort required in creating such pathways was necessary and imperative. Change is a by-product of the collaborative process involved in creating the swimming pathway within Gippsland's community. Change brought envisaged improvement for the university unit, subsequently benefitting the community (school children) and yet, within this context, change also brought competition within the health industry. Competition evolved between swimming and water safety course providers, Austswim and ASCTA. The ASCTA SAT course chosen and introduced by the author, who may have been perceived by local stakeholders as an "outsider", did appear to be somewhat of a threat to business for some people involved.

As collaboration involves a complex process of social relationships, it was important to maintain realistic expectations of what could be initially

achieved. Furthermore, transformations often result in conflict, loss, and struggle which are fundamental to successful change (Fullan 1982). If the pathways were to succeed in developing “education for regional sustainability”, it was vital that time and effort was afforded a period of transition. The issues of change, collaboration and barriers that impede such projects were acknowledged by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s (DEECD) Discussion Paper “A Tertiary Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria”. This was reassuring for the project and encouraging that impediments were to be expected; the paper recommended that such pathways were essential for sustainability of Gippsland’s education. The discussion paper assisted during reflection and unit evaluation, reminding the author of the purpose of the pathway and the realisation that it was achieved.

Feedback from the primary schools and education students was very encouraging, and evidence that they found the pathways to be meaningful and valuable. The author was commended by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Swim Australia (ASCTA) based on feedback the education student participants expressed in the SAT student evaluations summary (personal communication, 24 June 2011), which was reinforced in the university unit evaluation completed by the students, where the best aspects of the unit included:

Learning how to teach swimming and the opportunity to teach kids how to swim in prac. All aspects that we learnt about related to teaching primary kids (which hasn’t happened in the last 2 yrs of PE). The Unit co-ordinator’s explanations and teaching was fantastic with the use of his prior experiences etc. and also his hard work to help us reach success in all tasks. (Personal communication, 2 September 2011)

The children from the local primary schools were excited to be taught by the education students during each of the three weeks. Parents came to support their children, and comments from teachers, teaching assistants, parents, and the children expressed their gratitude for the lessons provided. One teacher wrote:

My kids had a ball with the swimming. They were disappointed that it was only for the extra two weeks (one week was a holiday for this school). Like I said to you then, any time you need children feel free to approach us. We are very willing to assist. (Personal communication, 23 July 2011)

Positive experiences for children and their families promotes swimming and water safety, and builds aquatic confidence for the primary school

children, university students, and primary school teachers. Implementation of swimming and water safety into the school curriculum enables children to become aware of water safety, subsequently decreasing drowning fatalities in the short and long term. Furthermore, it builds an optimistic image of Monash University within the community. The discussion paper “A Tertiary Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria” (DEECD) listed raising aspirations and improved awareness as a targeted strategy, specifically “school engagement/outreach programs addressing the perception of tertiary education in the primary and secondary school environment” (2011: 21). This was raised as a priority as “low aspirations and attitudes towards education in Gippsland are a major concern” (2011: 22).

It was always going to be difficult for arrangements to suit all stakeholders all of the time. An ideological prioritisation of “education” appeared to enable strong collaboration between stakeholders but it was not going to guarantee a smooth flow in the implementation process. The strategy recommended for overcoming differences is “flexibility” (Kilpatrick & Bell 1999), “without such flexibility the diverse needs of stakeholders cannot possibly be met” (Clayton *et al.* 2004). Flexibility involves content, delivery modes, location, recognition of prior learning, existing qualifications, and skills.

Impediments were evident within the web of relationships and flexibility was essential. Confirmation of which schools, classes, numbers, and ability groups attending the swimming and water safety classes were late, which proved to be difficult for the author and education students. Another barrier that caused initial damage to the collaborative pathway, and, as such, the ASCTA reputation, which was difficult to rebuild within the community, was the misinformation provided to the primary school community about the lessons. The first time the author met with the classroom teacher and teaching assistants, he needed to reassure them about the safety of the lessons and defend the Swim Australia Teacher Swimming and water safety program. While it is understood that the training market is a competitive one (Clayton *et al.* 2004), such consequences of competition is not consistent with the Austswim-proclaimed close philosophical and working relationship with Swim Australia (Austswim 2009).

DEECD’s discussion paper describes an option for the future as being “Institutional possibilities, focussed on the role of tertiary education providers in responding to local need through partnerships and flexible governance arrangements” (2011: 12). At times within this pathway, it did appear to involve the university tailoring to the needs of local industry, more so than the local industry adjusting to the requirements of university standards.

“Current pathways between schools, TAFE institutes and universities are unclear and inaccessible. A coordinated approach is needed to improve pathways between education providers” (DEECD 2011: 23). This imbalance and inaccessibility was exemplified by the demands placed on the author for meeting the swimming course presenter requirements. This was necessary to grant the university students with the swimming and water safety qualification. A requirement for the Presenter of Swimming and water safety for any provider involved completion of a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) (personal communication, 2 February 2011).

While this is the requirement for anyone wishing to become a Swimming and water safety presenter, it did seem somewhat of a paradox that a university lecturer with a number of education degrees, 15 years full-time teaching experience in primary and secondary schools, two years full-time teaching experience at tertiary and current teacher registration, in the attempt to create pathways between tertiary and industry is then required to complete further study to demonstrate that he can meet the unit of competencies for a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

As advised by the Lifesaving Victoria General Manager for Education and Training, the “RPL document for your Cert IV is a long process and it is probably easier just to go and sit the course” (personal communication, 3 February 2011). This course was a barrier to creating a pathway opportunity within the Gippsland region. However, with many trips to Melbourne and extra work on behalf of the author and the RTO, Innovative Business Training (RTO Number 3875), the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was obtained in time for the semester so that the pathway for the education students was possible.

Another barrier lies within Monash University - Gippsland, Bachelor of Primary Education degree, specifically within the PE major stream where the unit EDF2611 Experiencing Aquatic Environments is only offered biennially. Having this unit offered only once every two years is not ideal with renewal of the unit co-ordinator’s swimming qualifications and maintaining working relationships with local industry and primary schools. As revealed during the semester, it was not possible to conduct the unit annually due to university policy processes and the time necessary for course and unit amendments. A course design where swimming is offered annually has been proposed for the future as part of the present Faculty of Education course renewal.

Furthermore, it can be argued that when using externally-provided programs implemented by external swim instructors, some teachers will not be utilised during the students’ swimming and water safety lesson. This is not

to suggest that schools do not use outside agents for swimming instruction or diminish the expertise that swimming instructors encompass; however, teacher involvement could be one possible strategy for educating all children and reinforcing knowledge, skills, and understanding. This may involve teachers being in the water if they are comfortable with this, or it may be involvement from the side of the pool, offering feedback, acknowledging children's efforts and improvements. It also involves external instructors and teachers collaboratively and cooperatively promoting swimming and water safety. Increasing teacher participation during lessons was identified as an area of focus for the future.

The Discussion Paper offered support to the author who instigated and drove the pathway. He used details and acknowledgement of social politics in an effort to maintain realistic expectations, and awareness that struggles and even opposition were necessary for swimming and water safety curriculum change. It is essential that teachers have both the knowledge and confidence to implement swimming and water safety into the curriculum. As stated by the Australian Water Safety Council (2008); swimming and aquatic activity in Australia are part of the social makeup of the country. Inspiration for the project was empowered by present and future teachers valuing and believing in the process and the vital role they assume.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the implementation of Educational Goals for Young Australians within Health and Physical Education in primary schools: "swimming and water safety" lessons. Via addressing the MCEEDYA "commitment to action" which supports achievement of the Goals, the importance of the collaborative pathway created is illuminated. A narrative memoir is written by the author of his involvement at tertiary education (Monash University) in Semester 1, 2011.

By using swimming and water safety as the curriculum content, stronger partnerships were developed supporting quality teaching and, in particular within this context, strengthened early childhood education. By initiating pathways with ASCTA and RLSSA, the University's primary education students promoted a world-class curriculum and assessment which they implemented in local primary schools, subsequently improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and strengthened accountability and transparency for various stakeholders.

The DEECD's Discussion Paper "A Tertiary Education Plan for Gippsland, Victoria", released in August (2011), supported such initiatives and endorsed that they were essential for educational sustainability within this rural area. Collaborations assisted in achieving the Educational Goals for Young Australians cited at the beginning of this paper (i.e., Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens).

A conscious effort has been made by the author to be fair in the presentation of events and data gathered. The purpose is not to be conceited in reflection, but rather to delve below the surface of policy implementation to offer insight into the complexity and difficulties involved in such processes, and to illustrate their actualisation in practice. The pathway involving collaboration of various stakeholders has begun, a process that can now be reflected upon, reassessed, amendments made and relationships strengthened for the sustainability of swimming and water safety within local rural primary schools in the Gippsland region.

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