

SCHOOL CARNIVALS

Things to remember

- Students should carefully consider their abilities before entering the pool or a School Swimming event
- Overestimation of swimming abilities is a key cause of drowning
- Students should know and consider their limitations (fitness, confidence, water skills)
- Staying safe around water is always the priority

Swimming carnivals pose a great environment for students to have fun with peers, cool off in the pool and participate in friendly competition. However, it is essential to remember the foundations of water safety as we enter a carnival season like no other.

Due to COVID-19, students have potentially been out of the water for up to twelve months. Pool closures have meant swimming lessons and squad training have ceased, and students have not had the opportunity to practice their swimming and water familiarisation skills. Unfortunately, this means students may lack the level of fitness, confidence, and swimming ability they previously held.

WynActive has witnessed this in the first few School Carnivals of the season, with lifeguards performing up to 35 rescues in a single day due to students suffering exhaustion. This number is much higher than previous years and acts as a stark reminder for students to seriously consider their abilities before jumping in the water.

A more serious incident at a recent carnival

resulted in a swimmer leaving the facility in an ambulance after suffering exhaustion. The swimmer, participating in a relay race at their school's carnival, struggled in the early stages of the race prompting lifeguards to quickly remove them from the water.

In Australia, the overestimation of swimming ability is a key cause of drowning (RLSS Australia). Royal Life Saving Australia suggests swimmers know their limitations, regularly keep track of fitness levels and learn life-saving skills, as this is a crucial way to prevent drowning.

WynActive asks that students carefully consider their abilities before entering a School Swimming event. In cases of uncertainty, students should not enter events and should work to build up their water confidence and fitness levels in a secure environment. Staying safe around water is always the priority.

