



# KEEPING WATCH OVER FIVE YEARS: EVALUATING A CHILD DROWNING PREVENTION PROGRAM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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## BACKGROUND

Child drowning is a significant and preventable public health issue. Around the world, drowning is one of the most common causes of death for children and young people.<sup>1</sup>

In 2016-2017 there were 29 drowning deaths in children aged 0 to 4 years across Australia.<sup>2</sup> Over this period, almost half of all drowning deaths of children in this age group occurred in swimming pools. The second most common location was a bathtub (24%). In most cases this has occurred due to an accidental fall into water or during bathing.<sup>2</sup>

Keep Watch is a state-wide, collaborative and comprehensive health promotion program that aims to reduce the incidence of fatal and non-fatal drowning among children aged 0 to 4 years in Western Australia (WA).

Over the past five years the Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health (CERIPH) has worked with Royal Life Saving Society WA (RLSSWA) to evaluate Keep Watch program strategies, including mass media campaigns.

The 'This Much' campaign ran during the summer months from November 2014 – February 2017. The campaign message, that young children were susceptible to drowning in shallow water (6 cm) and that various water hazards existed in and around the home, was delivered by local celebrities.

In the 2017 – 18 summer, a new campaign 'Water. It's only safe while you're watching' reminded parents not to become complacent about pool safety. The campaign featured two advertisements. A 30 second version with a supervision message and a 15 second version with a pool gate/fencing message.



## METHODS

- Evaluation of the Keep Watch mass media campaigns comprised five time points of data collection over four media waves (Table 1).
- Online and intercept survey of parents and carers of children aged 0 – 4 years living in WA.
- Recruitment protocol required equal proportions of pool owners / large bodies of water and non-pool owners, and 20% of the sample from regional WA.
- Data collection included the following measures:
  - T1 – T4: awareness, comprehension and acceptance of campaign advertising; knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and intentions regarding water safety; and completion of CPR training.
  - T5: awareness, comprehension and acceptance of campaign advertising and behavioural intent only.

## RESULTS

Survey respondents were predominantly:

- Female, from Metropolitan WA, with a tertiary diploma or university degree
- T1-T4 aged between 25 and 44 years; T5, aged between 18 – 34 years (Table 2).

**UNPROMPTED RECALL** [number of respondents who, when asked if they had seen any TV advertising related to water safety and children under 5 years of age, described the campaign]

- Unprompted recall of 'This Much' almost doubled from T2 – T4.
- 'Water. It's only safe while you're watching' had similar unprompted recall as 'This Much' (at T3 & T4).

**PROMPTED RECOGNITION** [whether advertisement was recognised when respondents were shown it, using stills (T2 – T4) or a video link (T5)]

- Between T2 and T4 there was a build in prompted recognition for 'This Much'.
- At T5, prompted recognition varied by execution with prompted recognition of the 'Supervision ad' higher than that of the 'Pool gate ad'.

**TOTAL AWARENESS** [combination of unprompted recall and prompted recognition]

- Between T2 – T4 'This Much' total awareness improved to just under two thirds of respondents (Table 3).
- Total awareness of 'Water. It's only safe while you're watching' was almost one third of respondents.

Table 1: Media waves (W1- W4) and survey time points (T1 – T5)

CAMPAIGN	THIS MUCH				Water. It's only safe while you're watching
	W1	W2	W3	W4	
MEDIA WAVE	17/11/14 to 29/01/15	29/11/15 to 20/02/16	27/11/16 to 28/02/17	29/10/17 to 26/01/18	
SURVEY TIME POINT	T1 (baseline) 22/10/14 to 05/12/14 n = 478	T2 09/03/15 to 22/05/15 n = 341	T3 22/02/16 to 01/04/16 n = 375	T4 20/02/17 to 01/04/17 n = 663	T5 02/02/18 to 04/04/18 n = 257

Table 2: Demographics

	T1 (n=478) %	T2 (n=341) %	T3 (n=375) %	T4 (n=663) %	T5 (n=257) %
GENDER					
Male	6.0	6.7	5.0	5.7	3.6
Female	94.0	93.3	95.0	94.3	96.4
AGE					
Under 18 years	-	-	0.3	-	3.5
18 to 24 years	1.9	4.0	5.7	1.8	45.5
25 to 34 years	43.9	49.8	50.3	53.1	41.6
35 to 44 years	36.2	39.1	34.6	39.5	1.2
45 to 54 years	3.8	3.7	4.5	2.6	3.9
55+ years	8.0	3.4	4.5	3.0	4.3
REGION					
Metropolitan	86.4	87.4	90.7	82.9	83.7
Regional	13.4	12.6	9.3	17.1	16.3
CARER STATUS					
Parent or carer	90.8	95.0	93.1	96.1	91.8
Grandparent	9.4	5.0	7.7	4.2	5.8
Carer in home setting	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.3
CHILDREN AGED <5					
One child	60.2	59.5	65.6	63.7	65.4
Two children	34.9	37.8	29.3	33.5	31.5
Three children	4.2	2.1	3.2	1.8	2.3
Four children	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.4
Five or more children	-	-	0.8	-	0.4
BIRTH COUNTRY					
Australian born	76.6	73.4	61.0	69.2	66.1
Overseas born	23.4	26.6	39.0	30.8	33.9
EDUCATION LEVEL COMPLETED					
Year 10 or lower	6.8	7.1	5.3	6.3	8.5
Year 12	14.5	15.2	13.2	13.7	15.5
Trade/ diploma certificate	25.5	27.3	21.7	24.2	27.3
University/ college	52.6	46.8	54.3	51.8	48.6
Other	0.7	3.0	4.7	3.5	0.0

Table 3: Unprompted recall, prompted recognition and awareness

CAMPAIGN	THIS MUCH						Water. It's only safe while you're watching	
	T2		T3		T4		T5	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
UNPROMPTED RECALL	21	10.0	31	16.4	64	19.7	18	17.0
PROMPTED RECOGNITION	101	32.4	168	47.2	267	46.2	Supervision 53 Pool gate 39	21.1 15.7
TOTAL AWARENESS	101	38.7	170	64.6	273	60.4	83	32.3

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The 'Water. It's only safe while you're watching' campaign will continue to run for another two waves. Evaluation is ongoing.

Future evaluation will:

- Review recruitment methods to expand the socio-demographic profile of survey respondents.
- Review television scheduling options to better utilise Target Audience Rating Points to ensure maximum reach.
- Explore evaluation methodology to understand short to medium impacts of the media execution in a more meaningful way.

## REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. (2014). *Global report on drowning: preventing a leading killer*. Switzerland: World Health Organization.
2. Royal Life Saving Society - Australia. (2017). *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2017*. Royal Life Saving Society - Australia.

