

MEDIA RELEASE

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Seniors back in the pool with Life Saving Victoria

Seniors got their confidence back in the pool at Aquarena Doncaster on Thursday, as part of Life Saving Victoria's (LSV) new seniors recreation program.

After lockdowns impacted accessibility to public pools, particularly for older Victorians, LSV is providing the support to ensure they can now jump into water based activities with new confidence.

The program, designed by LSV, helps provide a safe space for older Victorians to return to aquatic facilities around Melbourne, and to reacquaint themselves with aquatic based exercise and water safety knowledge, with more than 150 people aged between 50 and 90 years of age participating in the three-week program across 6 aquatic facilities.

LSV's diversity and inclusion manager Trudy Micallef said the programs aimed to reduce social isolation, re-establish water confidence and increase safety skills for older Victorians, ultimately giving them the push to enter aquatic facilities on their own or with friends in future.

"There are many benefits both from a personal wellbeing perspective, as well as improving social connections, general health and water safety," Ms Micallef said.

Life Saving Victoria's Drowning Report 2020 – 2021 shows that the drowning rate of people aged over 65 has increased by 10 per cent in the last three years compared to baseline.

It shows that a lack of awareness of the risk factors affecting older Victorians around water such as prescription medications and medical conditions may be a contributing factor.

"While our participants are having fun and getting fitter, they are also developing a better understanding of water safety, exploring their own limitations and water safety risks as they age, and the benefits of adding water-based exercise to their normal routine.

"We're confident that this program is helping older adults understand what their risks might be and provide them ways to avoid those risks, all while having fun in the pool.

"The program covers multiple in water activities including walking and talking in water, aqua exercise hydrotherapy and spa time. We always finish with a coffee together too, ensuring there is dedicated time to socialise and build friendships.

"Hopefully we also see grandparents or caregivers who participated in the program bringing their grandkids to the pool over the school holidays, so they can have a new fulfilling and fun activity together," she said.

For more information on the LSV seniors program visit www.lsv.com.au

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