Aquatic Education in New Zealand Schools

Report prepared for
Water Safety New Zealand

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Method

- We surveyed all state, state-integrated, special and kura kaupapa Māori schools in the primary and secondary sectors (2409 schools). We did not survey private schools.
- We obtained a response rate of 64 percent (1533 schools).
- We analysed the data in relation to the following school demographic variables: decile bands 1–2, 3–8, and 9–10; school type; Ministry of Education region and urban or rural classification.

Key findings

Aquatic education programmes

1. Most schools provide at least some water-based aquatic education (94% of those surveyed), and most also offered some classroom-based aquatic education (88%).
2. Primary schools were most likely to offer water-based aquatic education with around 97% indicating that they offered a water-based programme. Slightly fewer offered a water-based programme at intermediate level (79%) and secondary level (77%).
3. Just over a quarter of the schools surveyed (27%) achieved the acceptable combination of 8 or more lessons of at least 30 minutes. A further 40 percent managed 8 or more lessons of 26–30 minutes. Secondary schools were more likely to achieve the acceptable combination than primary schools.
4. Most, but not all (93%) of those offering water-based sessions, indicated that their programmes include: swimming lessons; some survival skills; beach and water safety. Smaller percentages (14-16%) offered a variety of other activities such as water sports and boating (sailing or kayaking). Those schools that offered classroom-based activities most often covered: general water environment rules hazards and risks; beach and river education. Overall less than four percent of schools surveyed did not offer any water-based aquatic education. This is much lower for primary schools (<3%) than for intermediate (19%) or secondary (21%).
5. The year levels at which the majority of students take part in classroom-based and water-based aquatic education are between Years 1 and 6. The percentage of students taking water-based lessons diminish as year levels increase. That is, the percentage at Years 7–8 is

slightly smaller, Years 9–10 smaller still, and Year 11 and upwards only 9 percent were involved in aquatic education sessions.

6. While there is no comparable data to indicate if hours and numbers of lessons have changed over time, the rest of the data suggests that schools generally agree that teaching aquatic skills is important and very few (3%) have stopped providing water-based aquatic education in the past 5 years.
7. Aquatic education lessons are most frequently taught by classroom teachers (66%) closely followed by external instructors (62%). Comments suggested that teachers often work with external instructors during water-based instruction. Nearly a quarter indicated that lessons were taken by specialised teachers, the majority of which work in secondary schools.

   Very few teachers had gained the formal aquatic education qualifications that were asked about in the survey. Several respondents commented that some or all staff at their schools had done short course SwimSafe and WaterWise training sessions, or sessions with local external instructors. Without specific quantitative data it is difficult to estimate how many staff this includes.

Pools

Many of the key findings about pools were very similar to what was found in the 2009 survey. These include:

- Contributing and full primary schools were much more likely to have a pool than secondary
- Rural schools were more likely than urban schools to have a pool
- Areas where the climate is warmer were more likely to have pools than cooler areas.

We also found

- That there is no discernible difference between decile band in whether schools have a pool or not.
- Fourteen percent of schools surveyed had an indoor pool, but only a small percentage of these were used year round.

Key comparison with 2009

The main finding is that the overall need for assistance has increased. In 2009 12% of schools indicated they did not needed any form of assistance and in 2016 this was reduced to 2%. Areas in which assistance was most needed included:

- Overall funding
- Pool upgrade and maintenance
- Staff PLD[1]
- Transport to suitable pool

[1] Professional learning and development

1. Introduction

For many people in New Zealand being around water is part of everyday life. Activities such as swimming, boating and fishing are amongst some of the most popular recreational activities, but these are also hazardous, and statistics on drownings continue to feature in the news. Raising awareness and education about water safety are important aspects of national strategies around the world to reduce the number of deaths by drowning.

On 22 September 2015 Sport and Recreation Minister Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman launched the Water Safety Sector Strategy 2020.

The strategy has been developed collectively by the wider water safety sector and includes ambitious targets to reduce preventable drownings in New Zealand

As part of this strategy, Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has developed the so-called *Water Skills for Life* initiative. Water Skills for Life is aimed at teaching 5 – 13 year old Kiwis the skills they need to help keep themselves safe in, on and around water. The new skills are the building blocks for the safe enjoyment of the many aquatic pursuits our country has to offer and are also the essential basis for participating in all aquatic sports.

In New Zealand, schools have largely borne the responsibility for teaching children to swim and water safety in general. The New Zealand Curriculum expects students to have basic aquatic skills by the end of Year 6. However, for many schools, providing quality aquatic education can be challenging. As part of a wider strategy to support schools and improve water safety overall, WSNZ has commissioned this report to provide up-to-date information about aquatic education in New Zealand schools today. The report also looks at the resourcing schools have to provide aquatic education programmes, and what resourcing they need to improve these programmes.

This study builds on an earlier survey undertaken by NZCER in 2009 and reviews basic information about school pools, but has a greater focus on the types of aquatic education being delivered, and how these are supported.

Methodology

This survey repeated many of the questions from the 2009 survey about aquatic education and programmes and pools to allow some comparison with the data from the earlier survey. Comparisons however, should be made with some caution, as the data is based on different response rates. In 2009 a response was recorded for almost all New Zealand schools, but the 2016 survey had a voluntary response rate of about 64%. It is possible that schools that do not offer an

aquatic education programme or do not have a pool were slightly less likely to respond to the survey, even though the survey invited all schools to respond regardless of whether they had pools or provided aquatic education programmes. In 2016 all state and integrated schools were surveyed, but private schools were not included.

The questions from the 2009 survey were reviewed to ensure that they were responding to WSNZ's current information needs, were up-to-date in the NZ education context, and sophisticated in terms of an online context, that is, to ensure the survey was easy to navigate and complete. Questions were refined to make a clearer distinction between classroom-based and water-based aquatic education. The survey also asked for more detail about the professional learning and development (PLD) staff members have undertaken in the past five years to support teaching aquatic skills.

The research questions aimed to build a picture of the current status of aquatic education in New Zealand schools and asked:

1. Whether the school provides aquatic education
2. What type of aquatic education is provided
3. At what year levels aquatic education is provided, and for which (or all) students
4. How many hours of aquatic education are provided (how many lessons, length of average session, and/or an alternative measures of quantum)
5. Whether the hours have changed in recent years and why
6. Who teaches the sessions? The professional development teachers have received, and future support they may need.

An email with a link to the updated online survey was sent to 2409 schools in term 3 of 2016. These schools included all state and state integrated primary, intermediate and secondary schools, including Te Kura Kaupapa Maori-medium schools, and most special schools. As in 2009, this approach allowed us to send a reminder email to schools that had not responded initially and to send paper copies of the survey to non-respondents. We also conducted a number of follow up phone calls, in which some schools were happy to be interviewed and others willing to have the survey link resent to them. The aim was to generate as complete a database as possible, as was achieved in 2009. To raise the profile of the survey, and maximise the response rate, the New Zealand Principals Association was approached for an endorsement, as was done in 2009. The survey was subsequently highlighted in two NZPF newsletters.

Since 2009 schools have been increasingly asked for data and to fill in surveys, and they are understandably becoming more selective about which ones they respond to. In a number of cases school leaders and staff have become unwilling, or have a policy of not responding to any surveys. This process resulted in 1533 schools completing the survey, a response rate of 64% of those schools that were initially contacted. This is a favourable response rate given the number of surveys schools are requested to complete and could reflect the importance of aquatic education to schools.

The data from the paper surveys was captured using SAS software. Open responses were coded to be able to compare frequencies with closed responses, but also offered more nuanced information about how schools respond to issues around provision of aquatic education. In some tables, percentages do not always total to 100 when multiple responses were possible.

To compare the similarities and differences between schools, we analysed the data in relation to the following school demographic variables: decile (low decile 1–2, medium decile 3–8, or high decile 9–10); school type (full primary (Year 0–8), contributing (Year 0–6), composite/area schools, intermediate (Year 7–8), secondary (Year 7 or 9 to Year 15, and special); location (rural or urban); region (Tai Tokerau, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay/Gisborne, Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu, Wellington, Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast, Canterbury, Otago/Southland).

To ascertain if there were any differences between sub-groups of respondents, chi-square statistics from contingency tables were used to test for statistical significance. Where statistical differences were found, key differences are commented on.

School demographics

The majority of schools that responded to the survey were primary or intermediate level (83%). The additional 6% of composite schools will include a percentage of primary aged students. This reflects the area in which traditional 'learn to swim' programmes are targeted, and is also the target group for WSNZ's Water Skills for Life initiative. The schools that responded were representative of the contacted national population in terms of school type, decile, urban or rural classification and region.

Table 1 **Schools by: type, decile band, size, urban/rural and region**

Type	*% of schools responding to survey*[2] *n = 1533*	*% of schools nationally* *N = 2409*
Full primary (Year 0–8)	44	43
Contributing (Year 0–6)	34	32
Intermediate (Year 7–8)	5	5
Composite/area schools	6	5
Secondary Schools (Year 7–15 and Year 9–15)	10	13
Special schools and Teen parent units	2	2
Decile Band[3]	%	
Low (decile 1–2)	20	22
Mid (decile 3–8)	61	59
High (decile 9–10)	19	19
Urban/Rural		
Main, minor and secondary urban areas	71	72
Rural areas	29	28
MoE Region		
Tai Tokerau	8	6
Auckland	19	21
Waikato	11	11
Bay of Plenty/Rotorua/ Taupo	6	8
Hawkes Bay/Gisborne	7	7
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	10	10
Wellington	13	12
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	6	5
Canterbury	11	11
Otago/Southland	10	9

[2] Percentages do not always add to 100 because of rounding.
[3] Responding schools were evenly spread across decile with close to 10% in each decile.

2. Schools' aquatic education programmes

In this section we summarise and explore the data from the schools that offer an aquatic education programme, and the types of programmes they offer. We look at the year levels at which aquatic education is taught, the number and length of sessions in the water, who teaches these sessions, and the types of professional learning and development (PLD) they have received.

Types of Aquatic Education offered in schools

In total, 1437 of the schools that responded to the survey offered water-based aquatic education (94%). While this is significantly greater than the proportion that reported offering water-based aquatic education in 2009 (89%), we don't know if the schools that didn't respond offer such a programme. It is possible that schools which don't offer water-based aquatic education were less likely to respond to the survey.

Most, but not all (94%) of the schools offering water-based aquatic education indicated that their programmes include swimming lessons. Over half included survival skills and just under half included water safety days or beach days.

The most frequent types of classroom-based aquatic education taught were general water environment rules, hazards and risks, beach education, and recognition of an emergency and what to do.

Table 2 **Types of water-based aquatic education offered**

Types of water-based aquatic education	*% of schools that indicated that they provided aquatic education n = 1437*
Swimming lessons	94
Water survival skills	62
Water safety day(s)	43
Beach education	42
Water sport (e.g. water polo)	18
River education	16
Boating education	15
Other	6

Table 3 **Types of classroom-based aquatic education offered**

Types of classroom-based aquatic education	*% of schools responding to survey n=1533*
General water environment rules, hazards and risks	68
Beach education	43
Recognition of an emergency and what to do	40
River education	20
Hypothermia	16
Boating education	14
None	13
Other	9
Peer pressure	8
Not sure	4

NB Percentages may not always add to 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Year levels at which aquatic education is taught

The data show that overall more students are offered water-based aquatic education than classroom-based. The majority of students that take part in classroom-based (>60%) and water-based aquatic education (>80%) are between Years 1 and 6. The percentages at Years 7 and 8 are smaller (45% and 55%), considerably smaller at Years 9 and 10 (8% and 11%) and smaller still at Year 11 and above (7% and 9%).

Table 4 **Year levels at which water-based aquatic education is offered**

Year levels at which aquatic education is offered	*schools that indicated that they provided aquatic education* *n = 1437*	*schools responding to survey* *n = 1533*
	Water-based aquatic education	Classroom-based aquatic education
Year 1	85	58
Year 2	85	59
Year 3	85	61
Year 4	84	63
Year 5	82	66
Year 6	81	67
Year 7	56	45
Year 8	55	45
Year 9	12	9
Year 10	11	8
Year 11 or higher	9	7

Number and length of lessons in the water

In terms of hours taught, WSNZ notes that eight sessions of 30 minutes or more each is likely to result in better student swimming abilities than eight quarter hour sessions. While an optimum number and duration of lessons is greater than this (and was formerly defined as ten sessions of 30 minutes or more) this combination is currently considered acceptable for teaching aquatic skills. The data showed that 27 percent of schools surveyed achieved this combination. Forty percent achieved close to that with 8 or more lessons of 26–30 minutes. A further 11 percent managed 8 or more lessons of 20–25 minutes. We cannot see if the number of hours aquatic education is taught has changed since 2009 as the earlier survey did not ask about the number of hours.

To investigate the characteristics of the schools that achieved the acceptable combination we looked at lesson frequency and duration across school type, decile, and region. The interesting finding here is that secondary schools were far more likely to achieve adequate lesson times and length. This could well be explained by the timetable structure that secondary schools operate where lessons are generally around an hour, and often for more than one term. While primary schools were more likely to have pools and to offer water-based sessions, these were less likely to be of the adequate duration and frequency, and is possibly due to a number of factors such as access to a pool or adequate supervision.

There was no significant difference in the number and length of water-based sessions being offered across the lower decile bands from 1 to 8. However, decile 9 and 10 schools were

significantly less likely to offer adequate opportunities for aquatic education. There is no clear evidence for why this is the case, but could be interesting to explore further.

By region, there was not much difference between the number of sessions and duration across almost all regions. The exception was Canterbury, which was well below all other regions. This is likely to be a combination of factors. Firstly that urban areas and colder regions are generally less likely to have a school pool, and this would have been compounded by the after effects of the damage to many pools by the earthquakes, as indicated in a few comments.

Places where water-based programmes are taught

Over half of all school aquatics programmes are taught in the schools' own pool. Nearly 40% of schools use local council pools and a further 18% use a community pool. Only a few schools reported using a pool at another school.

Table 5 **Where water-based aquatic education programmes are taught**

Where programme is taught	*Schools that offer water-based aquatic education* *n* = 1437 *%*
School's own pool	58
Council pool	39
Community pool	18
Another schools' pool	6
Other	17

Some schools used more than one facility, and in an open response section attached to the 'other' option 240 schools described other places where their students are taught about swimming and water safety. The most frequently mentioned were local beaches, bays and estuaries (145), rivers and lakes (57), and private providers (32).

The range of different facilities was interesting and included using the pool at two NZ Defence Force bases, university pools and nine reported using temporary or relocatable pools that are set up in their area during the summer months. Private providers included a dive centre, swim schools, Aquagym, a hospital pool, and thermal pools.

Who teaches water-based aquatic education?

Of the 1437 schools that provided water-based aquatic lessons, schools reported that these were most frequently taught by classroom teachers (66%) and/or external swimming instructors (62%). Twenty three percent reported that lessons were taught by a specialised teacher. The data show

that these are most likely to be in secondary schools, followed by composite schools, which employ subject specialist teachers.

Table 6 **Who teaches the water-based programme?**

Who teaches the water-based programme?	*Schools that offer water-based aquatic education* *n* = 1437 *%*
Classroom teachers	66
External Swimming instructor	62
Specialised teacher	23
parents	8
Other	7

Of the 110 comments associated with 'other', almost all described someone with relevant qualifications such as instructors from Surf Life Saving, WSNZ, yachting clubs, dive clubs, as well as local parents, teachers, teacher aides and even a principal who had swimming instructor training.

PLD for teachers

The survey asked about the kinds of PLD teachers have had to teach aquatic skills. Many respondents were not sure or did not complete this question. What the available data do show is that few teachers have done courses that offer a formal award or qualification such as SNZ ASTA, SNZ STA, AUSTSWIM or National Certificate in Recreation and Sport - Aquatics). In the comments option for 'other' 260 comments indicated a range of local and 'in-house' training. The majority described these as some form of PLD session with an external instructor from Swim Safe, Swim smart, Water wise, Water Safety NZ, Project Energise. A small number (16) noted boating course such as Day Skippers, Boat Masters or Kayak skills and a few had done surf lifesaving courses. Fourteen comments specifically noted that all their staff have done or regularly (annually) do some form of PLD for teaching aquatic education.

> 100% of teachers and some parents have had training with Swim NZ, but it was not a certified course - about 3 hours a year.
>
> All staff have had PLD in teaching water-based aquatic education held by a SNZ STA instructor at the school pool.
>
> Yearly PD with a swimming instructor.
>
> This is why we employ others.
>
> No award but worked alongside professional swimming instructors

Observing professional swimming instructors

Overall, very low numbers of staff received specific training to teach water safety and aquatics. Some of the comments suggested that training was often quite informal, and not practical or 'hands-on' training.

Of those who had noted some form of PLD, the majority indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the PLD they have attended. However, the number of responses to a question about the types of assistance that would most help improve schools water-based education programme, which was supported by many similar comments, indicated that over half of all schools providing water-based aquatic education want more for PLD for teachers.

Assistance to improve water-based aquatic education delivery

Schools most wanted additional funding to support their water-based aquatic education programmes. The comments showed that this was for a variety of purposes, most frequently for maintaining a pool, or for transporting students to a pool. The need for PLD to help school staff in their skills and confidence to teach aquatic skills was the second most important type of assistance needed (see table 7). Only three percent reported that they did not need any additional help to run their programme.

Table 7 **Assistance needed to support aquatic education programmes in schools**

Types assistance needed to support aquatic education programmes in schools	*Schools that offer water-based aquatic education* *n* = 1437 %
Funding assistance	71
Help with PLD for staff to teach swimming/aquatic skills	51
Maintain/upgrade the pool we use	38
More/better water safety equipment/material	31
Help with transport options to a pool	30
Help with finding instructors to teach swimming/aquatic education	26
More teaching assistants (i.e. to help supervise students)	24
More parent help	12
Other	8
No assistance needed	3
Help finding a better pool	2
Not sure	2

Most of the comments reiterated the needs indicated in the table above, but they offer a bit more insight into what extra funding would be used for. Most frequently it is needed to build, upgrade, or maintain a pool. Twelve respondents mentioned that funding is needed to heat a pool either to extend the season, or just make it tolerable for young children.

> Interested in heating pool as cold water restricts learning time.
>
> A pool cover to keep the pool warmer so that we can maximise its summer use.
>
> Our pool is very cold. We use it term 1. Would love to know how to get funding for roof.

Other aspects of support that respondents elaborated on include PLD for staff, transport to a pool, managing large classes in the pool with inadequate assistance and getting time in the pool, either because of timetabling constraints within the school and other curriculum areas, or because of demand at a community or council pool.

> Sport Hawkes Bay offer to come and assist but times for PLD are very limited.
>
> Only one PD course held 2 hours away in the last 2 years. More training would be great.
>
> We transport our children to 30 mins per week for lessons at swim school. This is partially funded by Sport Tairawhiti.
>
> The cost of hiring a bus to swim is double the cost of the actual swimming lessons
>
> We have up to 30 students per class and have different abilities of swimmers. Most of our school instruction is in our small pool with 2 classes and 2 teachers. Big numbers to teach effectively.
>
> Time! Restricted by timetable and location of pool/school.

The diversity of NZ schools and the children they teach was evident in the variety of other types of assistance, resources or equipment that a few schools noted:

> Te reo Maori speaking instructors
>
> Our students need swimwear - suitable clothing and towels
>
> Reliable hoist at pool
>
> Looking for safety items such as life belt/ buoy for survival training
>
> Transparent risk assessment procedures especially when working outside of school
>
> Water safety based lesson plans
>
> We lack classroom activities, as our programme is mainly practical.
>
> Trouble shooting sheets e.g. a teacher identifies that the student has a weak kick and the sheet gives the teacher a number of different drills or teaching points to cover

3. Reasons for not offering water-based aquatic education

In this section we look at the reasons schools do not offer a water-based aquatic education programme, and discuss the conditions that effect schools' capacity to offer water-based aquatic education to their students.

Of the 1533 schools that responded to the survey only five percent said they did not provide a water-based aquatic education programme (1% were not sure). Primary schools were far more likely to offer water-based aquatic education, with less than three percent not offering water-based lessons, compared to approximately 20 percent of secondary schools not offering water-based sessions.

The most frequently reported reason for not offering a water-based aquatic education programme was the lack of a suitable or operational pool, or access to a suitable pool. This was closely followed by the costs being too high, which as discussed above was often about accessing a suitable pool, either by upgrading or maintaining one, or transport to a pool. Under a third of these schools said that they did not have enough trained staff, and a similar number indicated that aquatic education is not a high priority at their schools.

Table 8 **Main barriers to providing aquatic education programmes in schools**

Barriers	*Schools that **do not** offer water-based aquatic education*[4] *n* = 82 %
We don't have a suitable or operational pool	59
Costs are too high	46
We don't have transport to suitable pool	35
Aquatic education is not a priority at this school	24
Don't have enough/appropriately trained staff at our school	23
Too much competition/demand for places at a suitable pool	20
We don't have enough parent help	18
We don't have enough teaching assistants (i.e. to supervise students)	16
We don't have appropriate equipment	12
Student or family factors or lack of resources (religious beliefs, no swimming gear)	10
We can't find enough/appropriate external instructors to teach swimming	9
Not sure	1

[4] Note that the number of schools that do not offer water-based aquatic education is relatively small.

The number of schools that reported having provided water-based aquatic education in the past, but do not do so now was 46, a very small percentage of the overall number of respondents. Three quarters of these had stopped providing aquatic education in the past five years. The remaining quarter had not offered aquatic education for the past six years or more.

4. Access to pools

All schools (1533) were asked if they had a pool and just over half (57%) indicated that they have at least one. This was almost the same as reported in 2009 (58%). The majority of these pools (86%) are outdoor pools that are used for part of the year. Fourteen percent of the schools that have a pool said they had an indoor pool. Only three percent of schools who have pools used them all year round (these were of course, most likely to be indoor pools).

Table 9 **School pools and their uses**

School Pools	*%* *n=869*
Indoor	14
Outdoor	86
Used for part of year only	93
Used all year round	3
Number of schools with pools that don't use them	3

Contributing and full primary schools are still significantly more likely to have a pool than secondary schools, rural more likely than urban, and warmer regions such as Tai Tokerau, Hawkes Bay and Nelson/Marlborough are more likely to have a pool than cooler regions, especially Southland, Otago and Canterbury. Schools in the major urban areas of Auckland and Wellington are less likely to have a pool. The types of schools, and distribution of schools with pools across urban/rural and regions have not changed since 2009.

About a third of the schools reported sharing their pool with other local schools or groups, and a further seven percent weren't currently sharing the use of their pool but would consider it.

Three percent of the schools that reported having a pool said that they did not use it. The most frequently reason reported was that maintenance costs were too high.

Table 10 **Demographics of schools with pools**

Schools with pools	*Schools responding to the survey that have a pool* *n = 1533* *%*
Type	
Full primary (Year 0–8)	60
Contributing (Year 0–6)	63
Intermediate (Year 7–8)	33
Composite/area schools	41
Secondary Schools (Year 7–15 and Year 9–15)	42
Special schools and Teen parent units	35
Decile Band	
Low (decile 1–2)	55
Mid (decile 3–8)	57
High (decile 9–10)	56
Urban/Rural	
Main, minor and secondary urban areas	46
Rural areas	83
Region	
Tai Tokerau	81
Auckland	51
Waikato	70
Bay of Plenty/Rotorua/ Taupo	59
Hawkes Bay/Gisborne	76
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	70
Wellington	32
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	73
Canterbury	50
Otago/Southland	37

5. Attitudes to aquatic education programmes

When asked if they had any other comments, nearly half of the 610 comments given included a reference about the importance of aquatic education. Many referred to safety in the New Zealand environment in which children are often around lakes, rivers and beaches. They frequently also described a tension between delivering water-based learning for the children, and the costs involved in maintaining or accessing pools and qualified staff.

No open comments suggested that aquatic education was not important, and very few responses to questions about the reasons for not including aquatic education indicated that it is not a priority at their school.

> It is a vital part of our programme - compulsory swimming lessons start at NE / Year 1 level and continue through to Year 10. Our Year 4 up do other focus work around water in different environments (beach / river etc) as part of EOTC. Swimming is becoming an event which is beyond the price range of a number of our families, yet statistics show a need for each NZ child to be able to swim.
>
> Aquatic education is utmost important especially for Maori and Pasifika students and their whanau.
>
> Swimming is a really important aspect of the curriculum particularly for our students who do not come from a 'culture' of learning to swim.
>
> This is a vital area for development and I don't feel we are addressing the need of our students.
>
> Our BOT funds both the transport and the lessons, as they see the value in this programme and how important it is to give every child the opportunity to learn to swim and be safe in the water.
>
> We struggle to get some students to get involved but we feel it is vital to the safety of our students in this area.
>
> It is vitally important that all children who live in New Zealand learn about the water that surrounds their home and the skills to survive in that water.
>
> It is a very vital part of the school curriculum that should be better funded and supported by the Ministry of Education.
>
> I personally think it is up there with reading, writing & maths. If not in front as every child in New Zealand needs to learn to swim. Even if learning is challenging often in the pool they can all have success at their level.

6. Final Comments

Additional comments by respondents were very similar to those in the 2009 survey and included the same challenges as today, and in similar proportions. At the top of the list is funding for pool maintenance and upgrade, with 41 percent of comments saying something about the cost of accessing a pool to teach in. Forty percent also commented on the need for PLD for teachers or some form of help from qualified instructors. Fourteen percent commented on time constraints, and six percent noted difficulties with managing large groups especially with mixed ability levels in the pool with inadequate supervision or qualified assistance.

> Over the last few years as Sports Co-ordinator I have pushed for swimming education at our school. We now have a good programme set up with Sarah from SwimNZ who visits us every year for: PD - teachers and class instruction with our students. Our teachers are now feeling a lot more confident in teaching swimming using the book as a resource. There has been a significant improvement in the children's swimming and this year's swimming sports was a great indicator of this! However, our pool is old and we need it to be upgraded... it costs so much money! Funding is an issue for us.

Increased costs and time pressure means that some schools have cut back on the time spent on water-based aquatic education.

> We used to swim 1 afternoon a week all year. Now only 1 afternoon for 1 term. Both the cost of travel to the pool and the cost of the pool has increased. Also demands on teachers' time have increased.

Despite the continued challenges, some schools nevertheless found ways to build programmes that work for their students. The following comments from schools illustrate how they balance the tensions between providing quality water-based aquatic education and limited resourcing.

> We run a great programme. Have done for years. Very important to us. Stroke management, Water safety, survival and rescue skills, first aid, Life saving, training, beach, river etc etc.

> Our Kura has access, 1 day a week, for 30+ minutes, in each school term to a privately owned indoor heated swimming pool where our tamariki are taught by 'learn to swim' instructors. They are taught water survival skills and swim stroke techniques. The pool is located 22 kilometres away from the kura. We transport our tamariki to swimming in private vehicles. We pay for this service from our operations grant. We are desperate for financial support in order to maintain and continue this important part of our children's aquatic education.

> Our NZ Swim instructor is outstanding. She keeps us as teachers upskilled, she supports our teacher aides at our local indoor pool, with 1:1 programmes for our students with special needs and she offers us land based whole day sessions for our students. We have always had Beach Ed for Years 3–4 students but it has priced itself off the market this year so we are

having 4 Dry Land Water Survival Skills Day instead. We have booked Kiwi Swim Safe "Elite" programme for 2017. Our instructor and Swimming NZ are the whole reason we keep the integrity of our curriculum in swimming. They ensure that our teachers are empowered to teach swimming well. My biggest concern is the survival of our school pool, built in 1934. The filtration system is being nursed by the caretaker as we can't condone the expense of a new one since we only use the pool for 7–8 weeks a year. However because we have our pool students have swimming curriculum lessons every day of that 7–8 weeks. Finally NPDC and AWE are to be congratulated on the excellent one week AWE programme at our aquatic centre for all year 6s in the district. They cover all costs of transport etc. They have measurable aims and top quality instructors. Magic! One other point to note- we have a marked percentage of students with English as second or third language. These students require, as a general rule, a lot of extra support in swimming.

Further Considerations

Exploration of the data in this study has highlighted three areas which could be explored in more detail, or followed up in future surveys. Firstly, the broadened scope of aquatic education, as described by respondents to this survey. This includes a much wider range of activities than the earlier focus on swimming lessons. It would be interesting and perhaps useful to investigate the range of activities that schools offer, and to explore the extent to which these include the skills for life competencies.

PLD is another area for further study. The survey asked about formal qualifications or awards, but the open comments showed there was a wide variety of less formal PLD undertaken by staff that could be usefully explored in more detail.

Finally, while primary schools are more likely than intermediate or secondary schools to offer water-based aquatic education, the paradox seems to be that secondary schools are more likely to deliver lessons of sufficient duration and number. Exploring ways to support primary schools and teachers to increase the time spent in the water in aquatic education programme could potentially offer improved outcomes.

7. Appendix

Aquatic Education in New Zealand schools survey 2016

Introduction

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) has been contracted by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) to gather information about current aquatic education programmes in New Zealand schools.

The data from this survey will enable WSNZ to effectively target funding and other support so that all schools are able to provide good aquatic education programmes. Individual schools will not be identified in any reporting, and their data will not be disclosed by WSNZ to any third party without their consent.

We would like to hear from you <u>even if your school does not</u> have a swimming pool or does not offer an aquatic education programme. Please pass this survey on to the person who knows about aquatic education in your school.

You may not need to answer all the questions in this survey. There are instructions about which questions to complete.

Please complete this survey and return it in the reply paid envelope by Friday 23rd September. Alternatively, you can fax it to 04 384 7933.

All completed surveys have the opportunity go into a draw to win *one of five $100 book vouchers or an iPad Air.*

If you have any queries about this survey, please feel free to phone or email Eliza Stevens, DD 04 802 1624, Eliza.Stevens@nzcer.org.nz.

Your school's aquatic education programme

1. What **classroom-based** aquatic education is offered at your school? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. Recognition of an emergency and what to do
- ○ b. General water environment rules, hazards, risks
- ○ c. Hypothermia
- ○ d. Peer pressure
- ○ e. Beach education
- ○ f. Boating education
- ○ g. River education
- ○ h. Not sure
- ○ i. None
- ○ j. Other (please specify): _____

2. Which students in your school are involved in **classroom-based** aquatic education activities? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. Year 1/new entrant
- ○ b. Year 2
- ○ c. Year 3
- ○ d. Year 4
- ○ e. Year 5
- ○ f. Year 6
- ○ g. Year 7
- ○ h. Year 8
- ○ i. Year 9
- ○ j. Year 10
- ○ k. Year 11 or higher
- ○ l. Not sure

3. Does your school offer an aquatic education programme where students are taught **in the water** (i.e. activities in a pool)?

- ○ a. Yes (If 'Yes' please go to Question 4)
- ○ b. No (If 'No' please go to Question 13)

Your school's water-based aquatic education programme

4. What **water-based** aquatic education is offered at your school? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ◯ a Swimming lessons
- ◯ b Water safety day(s)
- ◯ c Water survival skills
- ◯ d Beach education
- ◯ e Boating education
- ◯ f River education
- ◯ g Water sport (e.g. water polo).
- ◯ h Not sure
- ◯ i Other (please specify, e.g. Bronze Medallion Surf Lifesaving):
  a _____

5. Which students in your school are involved in **water-based** aquatic education activities? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ◯ a. Year 1/new entrant
- ◯ b. Year 2
- ◯ c. Year 3
- ◯ d. Year 4
- ◯ e. Year 5
- ◯ f. Year 6
- ◯ g. Year 7
- ◯ h. Year 8
- ◯ i. Year 9
- ◯ j. Year 10
- ◯ k. Year 11 or higher
- ◯ l. Not sure

6. Where is your school's **water-based** programme taught? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. Our school pool
- ○ b. Another school's pool
- ○ c. Council pool
- ○ d. Community pool
- ○ e. Not sure
- ○ f. Other (please specify): _____

7. Who teaches the **water-based** aquatic education programme in your school? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. Classroom teacher(s)
- ○ b. Specialised teacher(s) (e.g. physical activity co-ordinator, physical education teacher)
- ○ c. External swimming instructor(s)
- ○ d. Parent(s)
- ○ e. Not sure
- ○ f. Other (please specify): _____

Your school's water-based aquatic education programme and PLD

8. What proportion of your school staff has had professional learning and development (PLD) in teaching **water-based** aquatic education in the last 5 years?

		None	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
○ a.	Swimming NZ Assistant Swim Teacher Award (SNZ ASTA)	○	○	○	○	○
○ b.	Swimming NZ Swim Teacher Award (SNZ STA)	○	○	○	○	○
○ c.	AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety	○	○	○	○	○
○ d.	National Certificate in Recreation and Sport (Aquatics)	○	○	○	○	○
○ e.	Other (please specify - e.g. boating education)	○	○	○	○	○

9. Overall, how satisfied do you think your school staff is with the **water-based** aquatic education PLD they have attended?

○ a. Very satisfied

○ b. Satisfied

○ c. Neutral

○ d. Dissatisfied

○ e. Very dissatisfied

About your school's water-based aquatic education programme

10. How many **water-based** sessions does your school's aquatic education programme include per year?

- ○ a. 1-3
- ○ b. 4-7
- ○ c. 8-10
- ○ d. 10+

11. How long on average is each **water-based** session in your school's aquatic education programme?

- ○ a. 20 minutes or less
- ○ b. 21-25 minutes
- ○ c. 26-30 minutes
- ○ d. 31-45 minutes
- ○ e. Longer than 45 minutes

12. What type of assistance would improve your school's **water-based** aquatic education programme? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ b No assistance needed
- ○ c Funding assistance
- ○ d Maintain/upgrade the pool we use
- ○ e Help with transport options to a pool
- ○ f Help finding a better pool
- ○ f. Help with PLD for our school staff to teach swimming/aquatic skills
- ○ g. Help with finding external instructors to teach swimming/aquatic skills
- ○ h. More teaching assistants (i.e. to supervise students)
- ○ i. More parent help
- ○ j. More/better water safety equipment/material (e.g. flutter boards, teaching resources)
- ○ k. Not sure
- ○ l. Other (please specify): _____

If your school DOES NOT have a water-based aquatic education programme

(If your school offers a water-based programme, please go to Question 19)

13. What are the reasons your school does not currently offer a **water-based** aquatic education programme? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. The costs are too high
- ○ b. We don't have a suitable/operational school pool
- ○ c. There is too much competition/demand for places at a suitable/operational pool
- ○ d. We don't have transport to a suitable/operational pool
- ○ e. We don't have enough/appropriately trained teaching staff from our school
- ○ f. We can't find enough/appropriate external instructors to teach swimming
- ○ g. We don't have enough teaching assistants (i.e. to supervise students)
- ○ h. We don't have enough parent help
- ○ i. We don't have enough/appropriate water safety equipment/material (e.g. flutter boards, teaching resources)
- ○ j. Student or family factors or lack of resources (e.g. religious beliefs, no swimming gear)
- ○ k. Aquatic education is not a priority at our school
- ○ l. Not sure
- ○ m. Other (please specify): _____

14. Has your school provided **water-based** aquatic education in the past?

○ a. Yes ○ b. No ○ c. Not sure

15. When did your school last offer a **water-based** aquatic education programme?

- ○ a. Within the last 2 years
- ○ b. 2-5 years ago
- ○ c. Longer than 6 years ago
- ○ d. Don't know

16. Are the reasons your school stopped offering a **water-based** aquatic education programme the same as the reasons that your school does not currently offer **water-based** aquatic education, or have the reasons changed?

- ○ a. The reasons are the same **(Go to Question 18)**
- ○ b. The reasons have changed **(Go to Question 17)**
- ○ c. Don't know **(Go to Question 18)**

17. If you answered Question 16 with 'The reasons have changed', what are the reasons your school stopped offering **water-based** aquatic education? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. The costs were too high
- ○ b. We didn't have a suitable/operational school pool
- ○ c. There was too much competition/demand for places at a suitable/operational pool
- ○ d. We didn't have transport to a suitable/operational pool
- ○ e. We didn't have enough/appropriately trained teaching staff from our school
- ○ f. We couldn't find enough/appropriate external instructors to teach swimming
- ○ g. We didn't have enough teaching assistants (i.e. to supervise students)
- ○ h. We didn't have enough parent help
- ○ i. We didn't have enough/appropriate water safety equipment/material (e.g. flutter boards, teaching resources)
- ○ j. Student or family factors or lack of resources (e.g. religious beliefs, no swimming gear)
- ○ k. Aquatic education was not a priority at our school
- ○ l. Not sure
- ○ m. Other (please specify) _____

18. Would you like to be able to offer a **water-based** aquatic education programme?

- ○ a. Yes
- ○ b. No
- ○ c. Not sure

Access to a School Pool (Everyone to complete)

19. Do you have a school pool?

- ○ a. Yes (If 'Yes' please go to Question 20)
- ○ b. No (If 'No' please go to Question 24)

20. Is your school pool indoors or outdoors: *(If you have more than one pool, please tick all that apply)*

- ○ a. Indoors
- ○ b. Outdoors

21. When is your school pool used for aquatic education? (If you have more than one pool, please answer this question for your main pool)

- ○ a. We use it all year round (Please go to Question 22)
- ○ b. We only use it for part of the year (e.g. during summer) (Please go to Question 22)
- ○ c. We do not use it (Please go to Question 23)

22. Are you sharing your pool with other local schools or groups?

- ○ a. Yes
- ○ b. No
- ○ c. Not currently, but we would consider it

Please comment if you wish:

If you have a school pool but don't use it for aquatic education.

(If your school has a pool and it is used for aquatic education, please go to Question 24)

23. Why is the pool not used by your school? *(Please tick all that apply).*

- ○ a. It's too expensive to maintain
- ○ b. It's too small
- ○ c. It's too shallow
- ○ d. It's only used by keyholders or for leisure
- ○ e. It's currently being upgraded and we have plans to use it again in the future
- ○ f. We have access to a pool elsewhere
- ○ g. We don't have enough/appropriately trained teaching staff from our school
- ○ h. We can't find enough/appropriate external instructors to teach swimming
- ○ i. We don't have enough teaching assistants (i.e. to supervise students)
- ○ j. We don't have enough parent help
- ○ k. We don't have enough/appropriate water safety equipment/material (e.g. flutter boards, teaching resources)
- ○ l. Student or family factors or lack of resources (e.g. religious beliefs, no swimming gear)
- ○ m. Aquatic education is not a priority at our school
- ○ n. Not sure
- ○ o. Other (please specify): _____

Other Comments

24. Do you have any other comments about aquatic education?

Enter the Draw

Before you finish you have the option of entering a draw to win *one of five $100 vouchers* or an *iPad Air* provided by Water Safety New Zealand.

To enter the draw, you will need you to provide your name and email. This information will not be used to identify you and will be kept separately from your responses to the survey.

Please provide:

Your name: _____

Name of your school: _____

An email address we can use to contact you if your school is a winner: _____

Thank you for your participation.

Please return this survey to NZCER in the pre-paid envelope or fax it to 04 384 7933 by Friday 23rd September 2016.