



# WORLD CONFERENCE ON DROWNING PREVENTION



## World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2025

### Conference Statement

This conference statement is made on behalf of the organisers and delegates of the World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2025 (WCDP 2025) held 21-23 November 2025 in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt, and attended by more than 500 research, policy, and technical experts from more than 50 countries under the banner of Waves of Change: Charting A Course To Safer Waters.



## SECTION ONE: DROWNING PREVENTION CONTEXT FOR WCDP 2025

**We, the delegates, are motivated to accelerate drowning prevention action by the knowledge that:**

- Current global estimates show that nearly 300,000 people die from drowning each year, not including fatalities linked to disasters like floods or incidents related to water transport and migration (1).
- The consequences of non-fatal drowning are far reaching and place significant social, health, and economic strains on survivors, their families, caregivers, communities, first responders, and healthcare systems - yet these burdens remain insufficiently recognized, understood, and reported.
- The impact of drowning is most pressing in low- and middle-income countries, particularly within disadvantaged or rural populations living near water sources, those vulnerable to riverine and coastal flooding, and individuals frequently exposed to water in occupational settings (1).
- In many countries, its children and adolescents who bear the brunt of drowning deaths, creating tremendous personal and financial hardship for families and society.
- As a person ages, vulnerability to drowning increases. Drowning prevention for the older adults and the elderly remains a neglected domain across research, policy and programs.
- Refugees and migrants face higher exposures to drowning, often compounded by social and economic vulnerabilities, especially during transit and early in the settlement process.
- Increasing climate volatility is exposing people to more extreme weather events, including flash floods, tropical storms, and heatwaves, which are all hazards where drowning is often a leading cause of death.
- Drowning is a complex public health and development problem for which the solutions are often multisectoral, meaning cross-sector coordination and collaboration is critical.

**We, note with pride that past World Conferences on Drowning Prevention have contributed to global, regional, and national momentum.**

We recall the legacy of events including World Congress of Drowning 2002 (Amsterdam, Netherlands), World Water Safety 2007 (Porto, Portugal), and WCDP 2011 (Da Nang, Viet Nam), which was hosted under the banner of *Building a global platform to reduce drowning*, opening our eyes to:

- The burden and context of drowning in low-and middle-income countries.
- Promising child drowning interventions from Bangladesh, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- The potential for strengthened United Nations engagement in drowning prevention.

We reflect on events since - WCDP2013 (Potsdam, Germany), WCDP2015 (Penang, Malaysia), WCDP2017 (Vancouver, Canada), and WCDP2019 (Durban, South Africa) that have reinforced the ongoing need for:

- Efforts to advocate and mitigate drowning prevention for migrants and refugees.
- Sustained research and advocacy aimed at addressing the impacts of non-fatal drowning.
- Greater collaboration especially with the disaster risk reduction sector.
- Respect for Indigenous knowledge in drowning prevention.
- A greater emphasis on placing the people, populations and communities with the most complex vulnerabilities and hazard exposures at the centre of research, policy and implementation.

We reflect on our last conference at WCDP2023 (Perth, Australia) which committed to three main ideas for consideration through the two-year period before WCDP 2025:

- Drowning prevention is multidisciplinary, multisectoral and bigger than any organisation or individual, so seize opportunities to collaborate, grow, and continue to expand collective impact.
- Drowning prevention is increasingly an issue of equity, meaning the need for diverse voices is clear, so prioritise those most affected, historically marginalised, and excluded; seek out different perspectives and work to create opportunities for new and inclusive forms of leadership.

- The drowning burden is disproportionately borne by those under 25 years of age (1), meaning future drowning prevention efforts must place children, adolescents, and young people at the centre of decision making; include, listen, and centre youth in all aspects of drowning prevention.

**Great progress has been made in the two years since WCDP 2023, including:**

- World Drowning Prevention Day commemorations have been held across the world on July 25, each year growing in participation, reach, and impact (3). In 2025, WDPD reached more than 80 countries.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) released the first-ever Global Status Report on Drowning Prevention in 2024, showing that around 3 million people drowned in the past decade and 300 000 in 2021 (1).
- WHO has initiated the development of a technical package on policies for drowning prevention and is further investing in case studies for national success in drowning prevention.
- The Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention commenced development of the first Global Strategy for Drowning Prevention (3).
- The United Nations (UN) Friendship Group for Drowning Prevention met on a six-monthly basis, most recently to explore drowning prevention in commercial and artisanal fishing in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

It is in this context, that we came together at WCDP2025 in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt.

## SECTION TWO: WCDP 2025 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

Throughout the WCDP 2025, we presented, listened, engaged, debated, and shared ideas, with enthusiasm, expertise and humility, to create new knowledge. As a result, we highlight the following:

### Key plenary sessions

#### Egyptian contexts

The conference opening featured formal speeches and keynote presentations from the Minister for Sport and Youth, and Egyptian Diving and Lifesaving Federation (EDLF). The presentations highlighted:

- The contextual diversity of drowning prevention across Egypt. Some of the contexts and challenges that were highlighted by speakers included:
  - The Mediterranean coast, where popular beaches strong waves, rip currents, erosion, and storm surges endanger swimmers, tourists and residents.
  - The Nile Delta, where low-lying, flood-prone communities face daily exposure and flooding to the river and tributaries.
  - That Children and young people are hit hardest, with repeated multi-victim events and daily exposure to canals and irrigation channels in rural areas.
- The EDLF launched a new Egyptian National Water Safety Strategy under the guidance of the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sport. The Strategy seeks to position the country as a regional leader in drowning prevention, align with Egypt Vision 2030, and respond to drowning prevention in high-risk coastal and urban areas such as the Nile Delta, Mediterranean coastline, and key resort areas on the Red Sea.
- The Egyptian National Water Safety Strategy commits to; stronger governance and legislation; safer aquatic environments and engineering standards; expanded lifeguard training and public awareness; better data and research; and school-based swimming and lifesaving education, to systematically reduce drowning risk nationwide.
- The EDLF is encouraged by the interest and efforts of various partners including various Egyptian Government Ministries, and the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional office to build momentum for water safety and drowning prevention in Egypt, including strengthening capacity for data collection.
- The EDLF highlighted the role of sport and youth in drowning prevention, including exceptional youth engagement in all conference activities via a team of university graduates from across Egypt. University volunteers welcomed and registered delegates, co-chaired sessions, managed audio-visual support and the poster sessions, in an innovation that must continue in future events.

#### Global contexts

The day one afternoon plenary – part A aimed to situate drowning prevention globally, by presenting the results of the global status report on drowning prevention, providing an update from working groups of the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention and by launching the Global Strategy for Drowning Prevention.

The WHO Global Status Report on Drowning Prevention found:

- Around 3 million people drowned in the past decade and 300 000 in 2021, 43% were children 14 or younger and 92% lived in low- and middle-income countries.
- Global drowning rates have fallen 38% since 2000, but declines are uneven and remain slow in high-burden regions such as the African Region.
- Drowning prevention systems are incomplete. Of those countries that responded: only about half of have a national focal point, roughly a quarter have a national drowning prevention strategy, around 40% a coordination mechanism for drowning prevention, and less than half implement key community measures or national awareness campaigns at scale.
- Major gaps in data, policy, and law persist, with many countries lacking detailed drowning data and strong regulations on alcohol near water, pool fencing, lifejackets, and disaster risk management that explicitly addresses drowning.

In response to the Global Status Report, the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention released the Global Strategy for Drowning Prevention. After extensive consultation and input from WHO and other UN Agencies, technical experts and the wider drowning prevention community, the Global Strategy seeks to:

- Focus all countries on reducing drowning by 35% by 2035 through action to reduce drowning risk and build resilience across three domains: people (reducing vulnerabilities in populations and across the life course), places (with emphasis on hazards in homes, communities, natural waters, and transport routes), and contexts (exposures in daily life, work, recreation, disasters).
- Strengthen six strategic pillars so countries can plan, resource, and scale prevention. The six pillars are governance and leadership; multisectoral collaboration; resourcing and financing; advocacy and awareness; data and reporting; and research and innovation.
- Strengthen the implementation of ten priority, high-impact and evidence-informed interventions: 1) promote supervision & safe places for children; 2) raise awareness and change behaviours; 3) expand the use and quality of infrastructure to prevent drowning; 4) train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation; 5) boost swimming, water safety & self-rescue skills; 6) strengthen lifeguarding services; 7) reduce occupational exposure to drowning; 8) integrate drowning prevention with disaster risk reduction; 9) enforce maritime, ferry, and boating safety; and 10) strengthen search and rescue services.

### Plenary Panels

The WCDP 2025 plenary sessions brought together experts in rich panel discussions:

#### Putting Affected Communities at the Centre: Equitable Partnerships in Drowning Prevention

The first day one plenary panel, curated by A/Prof Colleen Saunders, brought together three experienced champions of community-based drowning prevention to explore what equitable partnerships look like in practice. The discussion:

- Explored strategies for shifting power, fostering trust and ensuring that drowning prevention efforts are inclusive, sustainable, and led by those who understand the risks most deeply.
- Reinforced that impactful community-based programs rely on sustained engagement that builds trust by addressing locally identified priorities and following through on commitments.
- Emphasised co-creation of community-driven solutions strengthens local ownership and ensures that interventions are rooted in local context, culture and language.
- Restated that equitable partnerships require individuals and organisations to recognise and acknowledge power imbalances and purposefully shift power to the communities they serve.
- Concluded that we must be more intentional in ensuring that people and communities most affected by drowning are better represented in future conferences and decision-making spaces.

#### Boosting youth leadership for drowning prevention

The second day one plenary panel, curated by A/Prof Jagnoor Jagnoor, explored topics through the lens of youth leadership, and reinforced:

- The importance of creating and energizing a global youth movement for drowning prevention that positions young people as mentors, leaders, and equal stakeholders in governance, policy advocacy, research, and program design.
- The imperative to establish youth-led initiatives that build, empower, and engage young people in governance, policy advocacy, research, and program design.
- The role of youth, in promoting swimming as an essential life-saving skill and expanding inclusive, culturally safe opportunities for all young people to learn swimming and water safety, especially those most at risk.
- The potential of youth-driven innovation, including AI-based tools and digital platforms, to transform education, communication, and advocacy in drowning prevention, enabling youth to design campaigns and solutions that drive behavioural and legislative change across road and water safety.

### Integrating drowning prevention with climate and disaster

The first day two plenary panel, curated by Dr William Koon, and several concurrent session presentations, focused on integrating drowning prevention with climate and disaster, reinforcing:

- That many drowning deaths worldwide are due to floods, storms, and other water-related disasters, especially in low and middle-income countries.
- That drowning prevention has a critical role to play in the four priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: Understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction and resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (4).
- That climate change impacts on drowning prevention involve more than just disaster; contexts of exposure are evolving due to heatwaves, desertification, warmer winters, marine ecosystem collapse, drought, climate-related migration – including both in transit and settlement, and exacerbation of existing vulnerabilities to drowning such as poverty, infrastructure, and health.

### Opportunities to strengthen rescue systems

The second day two plenary panel, curated by Dr William Koon, focused on strengthening rescue systems, and the important role of lifeguards in drowning prevention. The panel highlighted three critical topics for the field:

- Mental health and wellbeing, including the fact that young lifeguards and lifesavers are at higher risk of developing post-traumatic stress and other mental health impacts related to their roles.
- Positioning lifeguard systems as adaptable and agile prevention-focused entities that can respond to emerging challenges and evolving contexts, support risk-based and evidence-informed operational decisions and seize opportunities for policy change when appropriate.
- Lifeguard training as an essential component of a high-functioning operation, and emerging evidence on the importance of specific instruction in hazard detection with practical skill development in scanning and recognition techniques.

### Reducing drowning in occupational contexts

The first day three plenary panel, curated by Dr Rebecca Sindall, explored the challenges of workplace drowning and approaches to addressing occupational risk globally, particularly amongst fishers. It highlighted that:

- Despite huge variations in contexts, many of the challenges of addressing occupational risk are common around the world including poor access to data, low uptake of accepted interventions such as life jackets, and the difficulty of enforcing safety regulations once fishers are at sea.
- Addressing occupational risk requires a careful balance between regulatory measures and voluntary changes in safety culture which in turn need collaboration between a wide range of actors including workers, employers, communities, industry regulators, governments, and non-governmental organisations at all levels.
- Whilst fishing was centred in this discussion, there are many other jobs that are affected by drowning risk which must not be neglected including seaweed farming, gleaning, boat-based transport of people and goods, aquatic leisure professionals, and aquatic rescue.

### Boosting swimming, water safety and self-rescue skills

The second day three plenary panel, curated by Dr Ana Catarina Queiroga, was a deep dive into the opportunities to boost swimming, water safety and self-rescue skills across all communities. It highlighted that:

- Global inequities persist – most drowning occurs where access to formal swim training is limited.
- Evidence exists for effective delivery models, but major knowledge and data gaps remain.
- Scaling must consider starting points and context – progress is not linear
- The top priority at every level is access – to real-environment swimming, aquatic literacy and culturally grounded learning, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Other actionable priorities include expand school/community programs, build instructor capacity, ensure local ownership, foster multisector partnerships, strengthen frameworks and data, consider differences

between swimming skills and water competence.

- Research and implementation need stronger links and collaboration.
- Shared urgency to create inclusive, scalable solutions ahead of WCDP 2027.

## Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent sessions were well attended, and discussion was robust and rich with insight. Sessions included:

### Policy

The WCDP 2025 sessions on policy exhibited growing complexity and momentum, and reinforced the importance of:

- Turning global mandates (UN and WHA resolutions, Global Status Report, Global Strategy) into national and local strategies, and governance mechanisms to achieve national and community level reductions.
- Growth in countries building or updating water safety and drowning prevention plans (e.g. Hawaii, India, Uganda), using systems thinking, consultation, and the integration of drowning prevention within education, health, climate, and disaster risk policies.
- Equitable, community-led policymaking, positioning affected communities, women, fisherfolk, youth, and civil society as co-designers so policies are contextual, culturally grounded, and sustainable.
- Embedding drowning within climate, flood, and emergency management, with lifesaving and aquatic rescue organisations recognised as formal partners in national disaster risk reduction and flood response systems.
- Stronger data, surveillance, and financing (including better classification of flood-related drowning) and for durable multisectoral partnerships to scale policy solutions in high-risk, low-resource settings.

### Prevention

The WCDP 2025 sessions on prevention reinforced the depth and breadth of global efforts to address the drowning burden. In particular, the sessions highlighted the importance of:

- Collaborating with traditionally underserved groups via peer-led initiatives, community-engaged interventions and harnessing community knowledge to enhance reach.
- Acknowledging that context matters and ensuring that consideration of gender norms, cultural practices and local nuances are central in the design, implementation and evaluation of drowning prevention efforts.
- Recognising intersections between drowning prevention and other agendas including road safety, migration and settlement support among others.
- Committing to data driven approaches, evaluation and improving the evidence regarding the cost-benefit of drowning prevention interventions.
- Reflecting on achievements in drowning prevention initiatives and sharing lessons learned along the way.
- Leveraging the transformative power of aquatic participation and the physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits of blue space.
- Harnessing the power of media to increase public awareness of drowning prevention and advocate for those most effected.
- Broadening our focus to include intentional drowning within a more comprehensive approach to the prevention of drowning.

### Research

The WCDP 2025 sessions on research demonstrated growing global capacity to generate evidence, evaluate interventions and strengthen data systems. They underscored the need to turn research into action. In particular, the sessions highlighted the importance of:

- Strengthening surveillance and routinely capturing both fatal and non-fatal data to reveal the true burden.
- Developing standardised definitions, reporting tools and shared data platforms to enable comparison and collaboration across countries.
- Accelerating implementation research and rigorous evaluation of interventions, particularly for children under five and in LMIC contexts.

- Expanding economic studies to inform investment, policy decisions and long-term programme sustainability.
- Scaling innovative research methods including human-centred design, community-based surveillance and geospatial risk mapping.
- Promoting equitable research partnerships that elevate LMIC voices, centre community experience and ensure shared ownership of findings.
- Investing in research translation, ensuring evidence informs policy, practice and climate-responsive prevention strategies.
- In coming years, the drowning prevention community seeks to expand research efforts focused on:
  - Accelerating efforts to expand the global evidence base, ensuring advances in surveillance, non-fatal drowning measurement and early-childhood intervention design reach every region.
  - Scaling and sharing innovative research solutions globally, including real-time observatories, community-based surveillance models, economic burden analyses and geospatial risk mapping.
  - Establishing standardised data systems and harmonised definitions to make non-fatal drowning visible and accurately quantify its burden.
  - Translating evidence into policy and practice, ensuring research informs government funding, programme design and implementation.
  - Investing strategically in surveillance, evaluation, research capacity and climate-responsive strategies so research drives action, accountability and measurable impact.
  - Strengthening funding, training and mentoring pipelines to build the next generation of researchers.

## Rescue

The WCDP2025 sessions on rescue highlighted the urgent need for multipronged strategies to address drowning risk in environments without professional supervision. Key themes include:

- The expansion of lifeguard and lifesaving services including:
  - Extending coverage to new locations and increasing operating hours as the risk of drowning is higher when people are not near lifeguards and lifesavers.
  - Using data-driven insights to prioritise deployment where risk is highest, accounting for the influence of visitation, weather and ocean conditions, and hazards.
- Innovative public education and behaviour change including:
  - Campaigns promoting swimming at supervised beaches.
  - The need to regularly challenge signage and flag systems, with readiness to update if there is evidence of a need for change.
  - The need to expand bystander rescue training for community members and aquatic recreation groups, such as surfers.
- Advances in technology solutions, including:
  - Evaluation of emerging and existing technologies for drowning prevention impact, in this conference the expansion of AI technology was noticeable with different approaches being taken. It will be very interesting to see where this evolves by the time of the next WCDP.
  - Drones are no longer just airborne; we are seeing the integration of aquatic-based drone technology emerging.
- Sharing information around effective water safety and rescue operations from a more diverse cohort can help challenge us to think about the issues from a different perspective.

## Disaster

The WCDP2025 sessions on disaster reinforced the importance of:

- Growing impacts of climate change, extreme weather and floods, and the resulting increases in drowning risk. Presentations highlighted evidence of large-scale mortality, displacement and economic loss from recent global flood events and projections of escalating risk.
- Practical and evidence-informed models for flood disaster management, including multi-agency coordination frameworks, evolution of flood and swift water rescue training.
- Sharing expertise and lessons, with multiple high quality national case studies presented, discussed and debated including those from Australia, Germany, Thailand, Bangladesh that demonstrated how structured training, equipment, and planning can markedly improve rescue and response outcomes.
- Integrating drowning prevention into wider disaster risk reduction, stressing community awareness, behaviour-change interventions (such as planning not to drive into floodwater), and tailored communication with vulnerable groups, to align national drowning prevention plans with broader climate and disaster preparedness agendas.

## Swimming and water safety education

The WCDP2025 sessions on swimming and water safety education highlighted:

- A recognition of every child's right to learn water competence including swimming skills.
- The central role of school-based swimming and water safety education, given its reach to all children. Embedding water competence and aquatic literacy within national curricula is a critical objective.
- A commitment to understanding and respecting local cultures, knowledge and experiences, including barriers, enablers, resource constraints, and the availability of qualified educators and safe learning environments with consideration to women's health, to strengthen program design and delivery.
- Policies and programs that reduce barriers and promote universal access to swimming and water safety education across diverse communities and life stages, with particular attention to vulnerable and underserved groups - including migrants, regional communities, persons with disabilities, and others - to ensure inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive aquatic education.
- The need for research to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and social impact of learn-to-swim and water safety programs in varied cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic contexts.
- The engagement of priority populations, such as children and youth, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to strengthen relevance, acceptability, and impact.
- Support for the development and adoption of innovations that enhance teaching environments and improve the quality and accessibility of swimming and water safety instruction.
- The importance of opportunities to build swimming, water safety and lifesaving skills in a range of water bodies in addition to the traditional venue for swimming instruction i.e. swimming pools.
- The harmonisation of concepts, practice and terminologies; including swimming skills, water competence, and aquatic literacy; to support consistency across languages, cultures, and international policy frameworks.
- The opportunity to embrace ripple effect mapping and the holistic benefits of the sector.

## Medical aspects of drowning

Across the WCDP 2025, the medical sessions demonstrated meaningful progress toward a more unified, evidence-based, and globally applicable approach to drowning resuscitation. They highlighted that:

- Future efforts are focused on improving the quality and uniformity of collecting and reporting data in drowning studies through the UTSTEIN and STROBE guidelines.
- Drowning resuscitation is now receiving detailed, special consideration in international guidelines.
- Adapting guidelines and training methods to the resources in LMIC's continues to be a major priority.

- Systems based approaches integrating lifeguards into formal EMS systems were presented.
- CPR must be simple, uniform and consistent in training, system design and execution to improve survival.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

A novel theme from the WCDP2025 sessions highlighted mental health and wellbeing, emphasising that:

- Mental health and wellbeing are multifaceted and need to be considered and integrated from both preventative and responsive lenses.
- Historically, lifesaving personnel have received little training for managing mental health presentations during their role.
- Aquatic personnel are exposed to traumatic experiences within their role, with very little research being conducted on this cohort.
- Exposure to trauma or stress during an incident or experienced vicariously, has been linked to poor wellbeing, including depression, anxiety and PTSD.
- Resilience and coping strategies within personnel can be developed through promotion of protective factors within the system as well as training, peer support, and structured debriefing opportunities.
- Aquatic activities and environments, a.k.a. 'blue spaces' provide benefits beyond drowning prevention: improved physical, social, and mental health for all, and better settlement experiences in migrants.

### Intentional drowning

For the first time, WCDP 2025 included a session focused on intentional drowning. It highlighted that:

- As unintentional drowning is addressed, countries are increasingly facing a higher proportion of intentional drowning and more attention in this area is required, including multisectoral engagement with the suicide prevention sector globally, nationally and locally.
- Given the potential for impact on lifesavers and lifeguards who respond to incidents, it is important that we build our understanding of holistic approaches to prevention and continue to explore the role that lifesaving agencies can play in prevention.
- Intentional drowning is not currently captured in WHO estimates on drowning; but many of the skills to address it, including data, collaboration, and sensitive media reporting, are equally relevant across both unintentional and intentional drowning.

### Pre-conference Workshops

WCDP 2025 delegates took advantage of the international gathering to participate in a range of technical workshops including those focused on Research and Policy, Integrating swimming and water safety into the school curriculum, ILS Academy Inaugural Course on Flood Rescue and Journalist Training Program. We thank those who contributed to the planning and deliver of those workshops, as well as all delegates who attended.

## SECTION THREE: A CALL TO ACTION

WCDP2025 session chairs, plenary facilitators drafted a set of principles to guide future actions. Delegates provided feedback on a draft list of actions. As a result, the delegates of WCDP2025 call for waves of change to reduce the impacts of drowning, specifically by:

- 1) Prioritising community leadership and committing to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all drowning prevention efforts from governance and priority setting to program design, implementation and evaluation.
- 2) Recognising the multisectoral nature of drowning prevention and committing to fostering collaboration with all relevant sectors, stakeholders and agendas.
- 3) Investing in participation of representatives from the communities, countries and regions most affected by drowning in decision making.
- 4) Encourage and support meaningful participation at future conferences for those who represent the locations and communities most at risk of drowning yet have traditionally been underrepresented at conferences.
- 5) Fostering youth-led initiatives to build, empower, and engage young people in all aspects of drowning prevention including governance and decision making, policy advocacy, research, and program design.
- 6) Providing mentorship that supports youth leadership, while maintaining youth decision-making power.
- 7) Creating national platforms and community coalitions to enhance coordination and collaboration so all interested parties can be empowered to join drowning prevention efforts.
- 8) Strengthening research efforts through prioritisation of improved data collection, high quality studies, including cost-benefit analyses.
- 9) Expand investment in all areas of drowning prevention by building investment cases for research and interventions, partnering broadly across sectors, and delivering impact to donors.
- 10) Investigating opportunities to embed interventions within existing health and sustainable development efforts, including early childhood care and development, disaster risk reduction and climate agendas (including anticipatory action plans), occupational safety, and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 11) Leveraging technological advancements to further advance drowning prevention efforts, including ensuring efficient use of limited resources.
- 12) Harnessing the power of the media, using both data and real-life stories (videos, audio, written testimony across traditional and social media) of those who drown, their loved ones and rescuers in an ethical and empowering way, to increase public awareness and encourage government and donor commitment to the issue of drowning prevention.
- 13) Implementing evidence-informed initiatives to support those affected by drowning, including those living with, or supporting those living with, the ongoing impacts of non-fatal drowning.
- 14) Developing resilience among lifesavers and making appropriate critical incident response protocols available to aquatic staff to help minimize potential negative mental health effects of potentially traumatic incidents at pools and beaches.
- 15) Strengthen regional collaboration between governments, non-government organisations, research institutions and donors, to enhance drowning prevention policy, research and implementation.
- 16) Enhance the governance of drowning prevention by implementing concrete initiatives to build accountability among global and regional actors, ensure collaborative behaviours and the prioritisation of communities affected over individual or collective interests.
- 17) Embedding drowning prevention within national health, and development systems through designated focal points, coordinating mechanisms, and sustainable financing to ensure long-term, scalable impact.
- 18) Adopt a life-course and systems-based approach to drowning prevention that addresses risks across all ages and settings, and strengthens accountability through improved monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

## In closing,

The organisers would like to leave you with four main ideas for consideration before the next conference:

- Drowning prevention is a collective effort, much bigger than any organisation, institution or individual. We must continue to strengthen global governance, build bridges to other global efforts, to steps to align to the Global Strategy for Drowning Prevention, and build accountabilities that ensure we measure progress, create commitments, generate and deploy resources where they are most needed.
- Drowning prevention is in transition, and that provides equal doses of excitement and challenge. The field is growing, adding layers of capability, fresh ideas and new areas of expertise. We build bridges to other fields, sectors and disciplines, globally, nationally and most essentially, locally.
- Drowning prevention is an issue of equity, meaning the need for diverse voices is clear. Prioritise those most affected, historically marginalised, and excluded. Seek out different perspectives and work to create opportunities for new and inclusive forms of leadership.
- The drowning burden is disproportionately borne by those under 25 years of age. Efforts must place children, adolescents, and young people at the centre of decision making. Include, listen, and centre youth in all aspects of drowning prevention.

In the time between now and WCDP2027, we encourage everyone to increase collaboration, create new knowledge, reach further into the communities most vulnerable to drowning, form new partnerships, especially with those not yet engaged in drowning prevention, and capitalise on this exciting time to be committed to eliminating drowning.

## Author group

The development of the WCDP 2025 Conference Statement was led by Dr Justin Scarr, Dr William Koon, and Dr Amy Peden. Sections of this statement were drafted by the following section leads: Shane Daw, Ingy El Shazly, A/Prof Jagnoor Jagnoor, Dr Jaz Lawes, Leonardo A. Manino, Adrian Mayhew, Dr Ana Catarina Queiroga, A/Prof Colleen Saunders, Dr Justin Sempsrott, Dr Rebecca Sindall, Riitta Vienola, Adam Weir and Adam Wooler.

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