



MEDIA RELEASE

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Royal Life Saving NSW launches “The Future of Pools” — A new vision for sustainable, community-led aquatic facilities

Royal Life Saving NSW will this Friday unveil a landmark concept that reimagines how Australia plans, designs, finances, and delivers public swimming pools. Developed in partnership with Cox Architects and WaterCo, “The Future of Pools” collaboration presents concepts for a modern, modular design approach to Australia’s Swimming Pools and responds to one of the most urgent infrastructure challenges facing Australian communities.

Public swimming pools are among Australia’s most valuable community assets — building essential life skills, improving public health, supporting inclusion, strengthening local identity, and providing safe places to swim across every region of the state. Yet without a reimagined approach, many communities face the real prospect of losing access to safe and equitable aquatic environments.

A National Challenge Requiring New Thinking

Nearly 40% of Australia’s 1,200 public pools will reach end-of-life by 2030, representing an estimated \$8 billion replacement cost. Many facilities are ageing, energy-inefficient, costly to maintain, or no longer aligned with contemporary safety and community **needs**. Royal Life Saving NSW CEO Michael Ilinsky said the sector now stands at a critical moment.

“We are challenging conventional assumptions. We are questioning old models, old timelines, and old cost structures,” he said.

“Without fresh thinking and sustainable delivery models, many towns and suburbs risk losing access to places that support health, safety, connection, and community identity.”

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A New Model for Community Aquatic Infrastructure

The Future of Pools **introduces an adaptable model** that aligns infrastructure delivery with contemporary community needs, environmental expectations, and long-term operational sustainability.

Aquatic facilities are reframed not just as places to swim, but as:

- Community anchors
- Public health assets
- Social equalisers
- Climate-resilient refuges
- Gateways to lifelong safety and wellbeing

This future-ready approach balances:

- Safety and life-saving outcomes
- Financial efficiency and operational sustainability
- Environmental performance and climate resilience
- Universal access and inclusion
- Cultural relevance, community identity and place-making

A Partnership to Drive Sector-Wide Reform

Royal Life Saving has joined forces with Cox Architects and WaterCo to pioneer a new approach.

The collaboration combines:

- Royal Life Saving's expertise in drowning prevention and sector leadership
- Cox Architects' internationally recognised design capability
- WaterCo's industry-leading water technology and systems
- Public policy analysis, cost modelling, and community consultation

This partnership aims to shift the conversation from traditional, capital-heavy builds to innovative, modular, scalable and community-led solutions that can be delivered faster and more affordably — without compromising quality, safety, or community value.

“We are imagining a future where aquatic facilities can be delivered faster, smarter, and more affordably than ever before — without sacrificing quality, safety or community value,” Mr Ilinsky said.

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Exhibition and Launch Event at NSW Parliament

The concept will be formally launched this Friday at NSW Parliament House, where Members of Parliament, Local Government General Managers, industry partners and sector leaders will attend a preview of the concept model and exhibition.

The launch will feature remarks from:

- **Hon Roy Butler MP**
- **Michael Ilinsky, CEO, Royal Life Saving NSW**
- **Alastair Richardson, Director, Cox Architecture**
- **Andy Gale WaterCo**

Visitors will view concept designs showcasing the modular design framework, community-consultation insights, cost modelling, and a concept model illustrating future-ready aquatic infrastructure.

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