

**NEW AUSTRALIAN SWIM SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
AIMS TO LINK LEARN-TO-SWIM OPERATORS**



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A new peak body for swim school operators, the Australian Swim Schools Association Ltd (ASSA), has been launched.

Formed in the wake of the Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) taking back control of its Swim Australia brand, ASSA aims to help develop its members into world's best practice swim schools. With this, in turn, resulting in many more safer, lifelong swimmers, ASSA's approach centres around the delivery of international leading guidelines, professional development programs, growth opportunities and business support.

Commenting on the creation of ASSA, the Association's inaugural President, David Urquhart explained "it's become apparent our vital swim school industry has evolved ... and now requires its very own, solely swim school focused, peak industry body, uniquely and totally focused on the needs of swim schools."

Currently being established as a limited company, ASSA has been developed by a steering committee consisting of Urquhart (a Past President of both ASCTA and Swimming Australia Ltd as well as being a Life Member of Swimming Australia) along with a group of highly respected, industry leaders: Bev Christmass, John Coutts, Julia Ham, Reece Rackley, Shawn Read and Bruce Sullivan.

Collectively, the group brings a wide range of expertise from swim schools, covering private and public experience; varying sizes of school; single and multiple sites; family and corporate business; and 'outside' expertise.

ASSA workings will see it establish a strong group of internal committees, special interest groups and specialist expert advisors and with this expertise it is currently seeking membership of and involvement in key industry, education and water-safety bodies.

Currently formulating membership requirements and benefits, the new not for profit organisation will be governed by its members who will have a direct say in its activities and the ability to elect directors.

Management of ASSA will be undertaken by the highly respected Ross Gage, who is currently performing the role of acting Chief Executive.

Gage's company Aussie Aquatics, which managed the Swim Australia program from 2001 to late 2015, will fulfill its commitments to any registered swim schools till 31st July; and then withdrawal from that space.

As Gage explains "for me, that part of my journey has been very fulfilling.

"However, this new chapter in my life – solely focused on helping swim schools – is perfect."

Key to ASSA's role is a desire not to be unduly restrictive, with swim school members free to be aligned with other bodies.

Bringing members and potential members together, ASSA has already convened its first conference, the Business of Swim Schools, over three days (from 15th to 17th August), being held as part of the SPLASH! Expo on the Gold Coast.

It is also backing the International Swim Disability Conference, also part of SPLASH!, being held from 16th to 18th August.

As Urquhart concludes "the time is right for the swim school industry to have a peak body – for swim schools by swim schools."

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Australian Swim Schools Conference 2016



- August** Gold Coast Convention Centre
- 15 - 17th** The 'Business' of Swim Schools stream
- 16th** Australian Swim Schools Awards Dinner
- 17 - 18th** SPLASH! Expo
- 18th** SPLASH! International Swim Disability Conference
- 19th** Tots Swim Teaching stream

