

## Outback Lifesavers returns in 2025

Registrations are now open for Outback Lifesavers 2025, the popular water safety program for young people.

Back for its fifth consecutive season, Outback Lifesavers teaches children aged 6-12 years how to be water-wise and rescue-ready.

It will be held at Oasis Aquatic Centre from Monday 20 January to Friday 24 January 2025, with one-hour sessions held each weekday morning between 9am and 10am.

Council's Oasis Aquatics Supervisor Sonya Dalgliesh said the program is a partnership between Wagga Wagga City Council and Royal Life Saving NSW.

"It's designed to provide children with greater skills and understanding of safety around water, particularly inland waterways – plus it's a whole lot of fun!" Ms Dalgliesh said.

"All the activities will be held in the outdoor pool to simulate the risk of open waterways, and they're facilitated by swim teachers and lifeguards to ensure the safety and protection of children in the program. Safety is paramount!

"The importance of teaching children to swim and survive in rivers is highlighted in the National Drowning Report 2024, which indicates 25 per cent of all drownings occur in rivers.

"It's essential we teach our local kids how to have fun in the local water ways and have the skills to rescue and identify risk."

Royal Life Saving NSW Riverina Manager Verity Smith said the program is all about active fun!

"It involves games and activities to help children develop their skills and understanding of safety around water, whether this be swimming at their local pool, or in an inland waterway such as rivers, lakes and dams," Ms Smith said.

"We want participants to be able to identify any dangers when swimming with friends, and to pass on that knowledge to build a future generation of community lifesavers."

Before the teaching and activities begin, each participant will be assessed on their swimming skills and placed into groups according to their ability. This approach ensures the program accommodates various skill levels while making sure each participant feels comfortable and supported.

"We want the young members of our community to enjoy a safety-first summer," Ms Smith said.

“With that in mind, we’re asking all residents and visitors to be vigilant, be aware and be smart about the decisions they make around water this summer.

“Don’t go swimming alone, don’t underestimate the risks, understand your limitations and always encourage others to follow safe practices in order to remain safe around the water.”

This broader water safety message is echoed by Council as the hot days of summer start to take hold across the Wagga Wagga region.

Council’s Recreation Coordinator Josh Walsh said he wanted everyone to enjoy the city’s wonderful water resources – from the magnificent Murrumbidgee to the Oasis Aquatic Centre – but to please be careful around water.

“Especially when swimming or boating at the Murrumbidgee River,” Mr Walsh said.

“The waters of the Murrumbidgee can be cold and the current fast, and there might be many hidden dangers like submerged branches just below the surface.

“We urge residents and visitors alike to check conditions before entering the water, and to wear a lifejacket if using watercraft.”

Mr Walsh said life-saving equipment is available to the public at the Wagga Beach, including two life-rings and a defibrillator (AED) available at the beach, and one life-ring located at The Rocks.

“Sometimes the life-rings are misused for recreational activities, but they are only for use in an emergency; they could make the difference in a life-or-death situation.”

For more information about Outback Lifesavers 2025 and to register visit <https://oasiswagga.com.au/programs/outback-lifesavers>

For more information about water safety, visit: [www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/riversafety](http://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/riversafety)

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**Media Opportunity:**

**What:** Registrations officially open today for Outback Lifesavers 2025, so get in early and book your spot now.

**Who:** Oasis Aquatics Supervisor Sonya Dalglish, Council’s Recreation Coordinator Josh Walsh, and Royal Life Saving NSW Riverina Manager Verity Smith.

**When:** Wednesday 11 December 2024 at **9.15am**.

**Where:** Oasis Aquatic Centre – meet at the shallow end of the 50m outdoor pool.

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Contact 6926 9190 or [media@wagga.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@wagga.nsw.gov.au)

## About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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