



SWIM CONFIDENT CLUB RESOURCE

HOW TO BECOME A SWIMMING
BODY IMAGE CHANGE MAKER



**A PROJECT FUNDED BY NSW GOVERNMENT
MENTAL HEALTH IN SPORT GRANTS**

IN COLLABORATION WITH BODY CONFIDENT COLLECTIVE

ABOUT SWIM CONFIDENT



HOW THIS PROJECT CAME ABOUT

Swim Confident is a program supported by the NSW Government Mental Health in Sport Grants, a partnership between Body Confident Collective and Swimming New South Wales. The aim of the program has been to create a positive body image culture shift at SNSW for decades to come.

The program has been youth led through the Swimming NSW Youth Advisory Panel and guided by the Swimming Australia Independent Panel Report of 2021 that recommended 46 changes in the sport - many of them relating to body image and body shaming cultures.

WHAT YOUTH SWIMMERS AT SNSW HAVE LEARNED FROM THE PROGRAM



As someone who throughout life frequently had issues with self acceptance and body confidence, i'd like to say it's not a step by step process that you can just follow which makes you fully accept yourself. **Just try to know that loving yourself is challenging but if you can see stuff that you don't like about yourself, it means you have the capacity to know what you do love about yourself.** Look at what's unique about you, everyone is different so love what makes you who you are. Be amazed at what you can do and what you've achieved. Never be scared to celebrate something you're proud of, because an achievement isn't defined by a medal or a piece of paper, it's defined by the strength, the hard work and the determination it took you to accomplish.

• **ARIANA MISSINGHAM**



BODY IMAGE IN SPORT



Body Image is how we feel about our body – this includes our thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions about our own body as shaped by the world around us. Our body image can be influenced by the way people treat us based on our physical appearance, so we can experience very negative body image when we are teased, shamed, or marginalised for our bodies. On the other hand, because body image exists in our mind, and can be independent of the way we look, we have a huge capacity to improve our body image and change environments to be safer

and more inclusive spaces! Exactly what we aim to do with Swim Confident.

Sport has an incredible capacity to improve our body image and the relationship we have with our bodies by the way that we can connect to and appreciate our bodies. However, sport is also one of the biggest risk factors for eating disorder development, and eating disorders are a mental health issue where we experience negative perceptions and punitive thoughts about the way we look and act on these thoughts.

BODY CONFIDENT SPORT GUIDELINES

For more information and a deep dive into the research on body image and in sport have a look at our **Body Confident Sport Guidelines** on the Swim Confident [webpage](https://nsw.swimming.org.au/swim/swim-for-life/swim-confident).
<https://nsw.swimming.org.au/swim/swim-for-life/swim-confident>



INTRODUCING THE

SWIM CONFIDENT CLUB RESOURCE



As part of the Swim Confident program, we hosted a 3-day leadership camp with over 50 motivated youth leaders from around the state. They took part in comprehensive workshops on how to improve their own body image, stand up for others and ultimately how to create change back in their home swimming clubs.

This Swim Confident Club Resource is designed to be a showcase of the incredibly inspiring projects they came up with and to show you how you too can create this change in your own club.

THE FEATURED PROJECTS

- 1 Lauren Oberg** - Shoosh for Parents
- 2 Matthew Jiazi Chen** - Representation Matters
- 3 Janice Barry** - Period Confidence
- 4 Tom Hayhoe** - Uniform for Athletes
- 5 Hailey Unwin** - Body Confident Petition
- 6 Ella McIlwraith** - Swim League
- 7 Regan Smith** - Body Acceptance and Masculinities
- 8 Henry Hughes** - Visibility and Leadership
- 9 Caitlin Parkinson** - Strengths Based Swimming
- 10 Tessa Bealing** - Body Image Role-Modelling
- 11 Jennifer McPartland** - Body Confident Friends and Coaches
- 12 Anna Cockburn** - Awarding Body Confidence



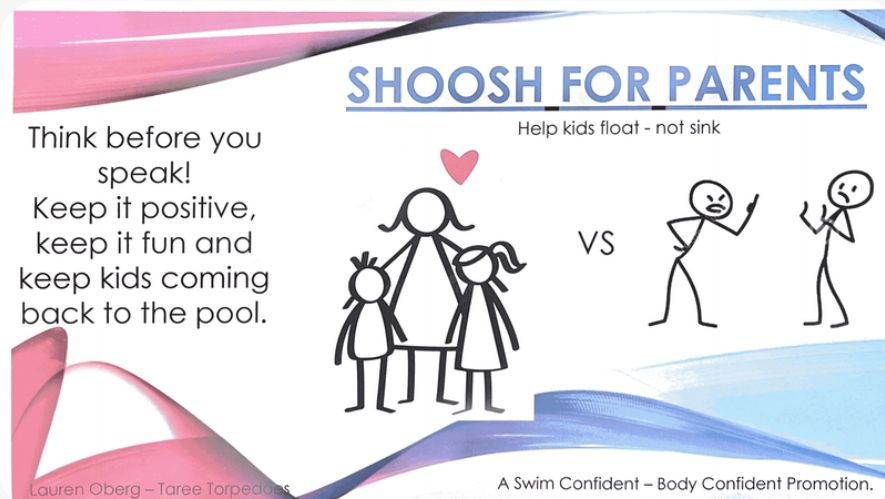


LAUREN OBERG

TAREE TORPEDOES

SHOOSH FOR PARENTS

HELP KIDS FLOAT, NOT SINK



THE PROJECT

The project included a presentation to athletes and parents about the importance of positive words on pool deck. To keep parents and carers accountable Lauren developed a donation jar for people to leave a gold coin when they "peed in the pool" - a super fun and light hearted analogy to describe how our words can create toxic cultures...i.e. don't pee in the pool!

My project is the "Shoosh for Parents" program which is about keeping the pool deck positive and fun for both parents and kids. This in turn will **help grow confidence and keep kids wanting to continue in this sport**. The project is aimed at parents, as you are the ones we look up to and who we model our behaviour on. The aim is to encourage positive words, actions and sportsmanship. And, as the program name suggests - if you can't say anything nice (or encouraging) don't say it at all! I would like to see the "Shoosh for Parents" go national in every sport!

• **LAUREN OBERG**

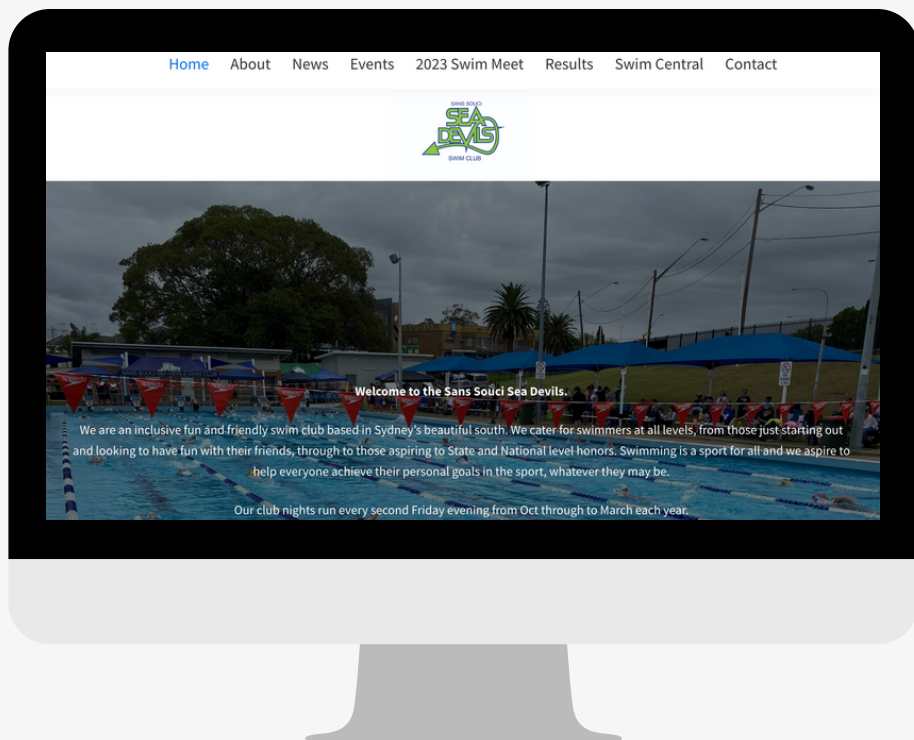
HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

- 1** Talk to parents and athletes about how they can create positive body image cultures through their words.
- 2** Create a jar at your club where parents can donate money when they accidentally mess up.
- 3** Create posters that remind people to not "pee in the pool" and suggestions of how to speak positively to swimmers.



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

CREATING MORE CULTURAL AND BODY DIVERSITY ON CLUB WEBSITES



MATTHEW CHEN

SANS SOUCI SEA
DEVILS SC

THE PROJECT

The project was a modification to Matthew's club website to improve it to include pictures that have more cultural and body diversity to make the club feel more welcoming to everyone. Matthew decided to do this because he wanted to ensure that Sans Souci was not just a club where you could exercise and workout in, but rather a place where you can become part of a caring community. He did this by adding diversity to the photos in both cultural and bodily ways, to vanquish the fear of getting judged or bullied by your background, colour, or shape.

*In my eyes, the current website is now looking a lot better than before, **having introduced photos of more culturally diverse people**, and including shapes of various bodies to incorporate the feeling that Sans Souci Leisure Centre was a place where everyone could belong.*

• MATTHEW CHEN

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

- 1 Reach out to the decision makers at your club and ask for more diversity represented on your clubs website or social media pages.
- 2 You can always take photos like Matthew did, or you can use free stock photos online (places like Unsplash.com) that show all kinds of bodies from all kinds of backgrounds!

JANICE BARRY

CANBERRA AMATEUR
SWIMMING CLUB

PERIOD CONFIDENCE

CREATING CONFIDENCE IN BATHERS
ALL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

THE PROJECT

Janice researched into how swimming clubs could implement period proof swimwear to support people who menstruate to keep training, competing and feeling awesome about their body's natural functioning. She wants all athletes to know that it is safe to swim on their periods and that having regular menstrual functioning is a sign that your body is nourished and not under too much stress. Janice came up with some information to get you started when considering what feels most comfortable for swimmers when they are menstruating.

PERIOD-PROOF SWIMMING OPTIONS

Tampons - these the cheapest option to use when swimming. Tampons are inserted inside the vagina and absorb any blood, they can be removed and discarded into sanitary bins after your session.

Menstrual Cups - are a low waste option placed inside of the vagina and create a suction seal to prevent any blood from leaking. After your session the cup can be removed, cleaned and then used again during your next swim.

Period Swim Wear - a new but awesome option that acts like a pad or period undies. An absorbent layer is inbuilt to a pair of swimmers and prevents leaking. They look like any other pair of swimmers and are super easy to wear.

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

- 1 Run a survey amongst your teammates asking what uniform/competition options they will feel most comfortable in.
- 2 Consider specific options like period-proof swimwear and rash-vests in your clubs colours! Email different brands and get quotes and present these to your club decision makers.
- 3 Approach your club committee and show them the results of the survey and/or quotes. Try and do some research beforehand of different options, styles and prices to make it happen.



UNIFORMS FOR ATHLETES

GIVING SWIMMERS THE OPTION TO
FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THE POOL

THE CONCEPT

Tom's idea was a campaign to introduce club rash shirts to wear at training and other club events. His concept was to encourage non-competitive and junior swimmers to have more options and agency over what they would feel comfortable swimming in. This initiative is yet to be rolled out but we know it will be a success. Try it in your club!

TOM HAYHOE

LANE COVE SC

BODY CONFIDENT PETITION

SIGNING THE PLEDGE TO STOP BODY SHAMING

Body Shame Free Swimming

I pledge that I will...

- Never comment on someone's body negatively
- Do my best to create an inclusive environment for all bodies
- Be kind and compassionate towards my own body

Name

Email

Swimming Club

Role in Swimming

What do you want to change to create safe body image environments in swimming?

Sign the pledge



HAILEY UNWIN

SLC AQUADOT SC

THE PROJECT

Haley developed a petition and got as many of her friends, club-mates and NSW young leaders to make the pledge to create body shame free swimming environments.

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

- 1 Ask your friends and club committee members how you want to shape a positive body image swimming club.
- 2 Develop a pledge and make posters around your swimming club, or build it into your club's policies.
- 3 Promote the pledge online, through a QR code or through a website like Change.com and see how many names you can get.



ELLA MCILWRAITH

DAPTO SC

SWIM LEAGUE

CREATING SUPPORTIVE CULTURES

THE PROJECT

Ella and her teammates came together to plan a swim league event. The aim was for older senior swimmers to demonstrate their leadership abilities and help support junior swimmers about the benefits of swimming and how swimming isn't just about PB's and times. The goal was to create a supportive and encouraging environment for her club.

BODY ACCEPTANCE AND MASCULINITIES

CREATING AWARENESS OF BODY IMAGE IN MALE ATHLETES

THE PROJECT

Regan researched how body image concerns affect male athletes and how he could start to breakdown harmful stereotypes. Regan spoke about what a role model David Popovici is in the elite swimming space. He used David's story of breaking the 100m world record to illustrate how all kinds of bodies are capable of doing great things. He spoke to peers passionately about how all bodies should not be limited in their thinking of becoming the best swimmer they can be.

REGAN SMITH

WESTS ILLAWARRA AQUATIC SC



David Popovici

HOW OTHERS CAN CREATE ACTION

1

Find role models in sport that have all different types of bodies - tall, small, large, lean, different abilities, different nationalities and different cultural backgrounds.



UNDERSTANDING BODY IMAGE

HENRY HUGHES

WARRINGAH AQUATIC SC

JOURNEY ON BECOMING A BODY IMAGE LEADER AND ADVOCATE IN SWIMMING

Understand from your squad what is the common issue you all face, something that can be used as a seedling that can water itself into a broader dialogue. Not every swimmer has the same experience when it comes to body confidence, but we do have a mutual feeling about how we feel about it. This is the bonding power that brings our focus and energy to making sure that everybody feels comfortable within their own body. This is something I was proud to see and talk about at the 2023 SNSW Youth Advisory Camp.

• HENRY HUGHES

THE PROJECT

Henry sought out to immerse himself in his club's body image needs and issues. He found that there was a common ground amongst everyone - that they were wanting to belong. Henry has used this foundation at SNSW to go on to become a body image leader alongside the 2023 Australian of the Year.

STRENGTH BASED SWIMMING

CREATING POSITIVE SWIMMING CULTURES THROUGH STORIES AND POSITIVE PROMOTION

CAITLIN PARKINSON

REVESBY WORKERS SC

THE PROJECT

Caitlin planned a campaign that set out to embrace the differing abilities, values and cultures of the people at her club. She mapped out a comprehensive plan to showcase the lived experiences of all who make up her club. She planned to ask them questions in an interview format about self-care, self-love, resilience and self acceptance whilst promoting a broad range of strengths valued in the club outside of just high performance,



BODY IMAGE ROLE-MODELLING

STRENGTHENING BODY IMAGE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE CLUB

TESSA BEALING

WENONA SC

THE PROJECT

Tessa's project was designed to create a supportive parent and guardian environment around the pool, making it a welcoming place for new and current swimmers in all clubs, even if they have previously experienced negative body comments. Tessa resonated with the fact that 60% of teenagers who quit swimming cited negative comments from other swimmers as a reason for their decision. She used this as a rationale for why she wanted to change her own club culture as she realised it was clear such

comments can have a significant impact on swimmers' confidence and enjoyment of the sport. She hoped that her project would raise awareness of this issue among guardians and swimmers and developed a concept where guardians who have made negative comments would be required to volunteer for an hour at club nights. This would allow them to be closer to the swimmers and feel more connected to the swim program, which could help to eliminate negative feedback from the stands and from swimmers themselves. She believes that this initiative would be beneficial to swimmers of all ages and abilities to help swimmers to feel more confident and enjoy the sport more.

Focus on the sport and the physical activity [rather than your physical appearance] as well as knowing that you are not the only one that may be struggling on the same journey as you... There is always going to be that daunting moment **but just remember to reach out and focus on yourself.**

• TESSA BEALING

BODY CONFIDENT FRIENDS AND COACHES

SHARING KNOWLEDGE WITH FRIENDS, COACHES AND TEAMMATES

THE PROJECT

Jennifer shared all she had learnt on the camp with her coach and friends - giving them more information and knowledge about body image than they already knew. She found it went smoothly and has since seen a cultural shift around her in the way that she and others are spoken to.

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

1

If a big project feels like too much - start with the people that are closest to you! Have a conversation with a friend and simply ask how you can support their body image. In turn you can explore how they can also support you!

JENNIFER MCPARTLAND

MLC MARLINS

I think the people who I talked to benefitted, because I can see a change in the way they treat looks and don't say anything about bodies.

I think that this whole campaign/idea has such good intentions and **is really helping people, especially swimmers, who are struggling with their body image.** This should definitely be something that continues.

• JENNIFER MCPARTLAND

ANNA COCKBURN

YOUNG SC

THE PROJECT

Anna presented to her entire club on presentation night - explaining what body image is and how people can bring body confidence to the club through their own actions. The success of the project meant that they all now have a new found respect, appreciation and accountability to respect each others body image and to stop body commentary or body shaming in the club.



AWARDING BODY CONFIDENCE

CREATING BODY IMAGE AWARENESS ON PRESENTATION NIGHT