

Apollo Bay SLSC Nipper Handbook

Season 2025/26



Welcome

Welcome to the 2025–26 Apollo Bay Nippers Program,

On behalf of the Apollo Bay Surf Life Saving Club (ABSLSC), I am delighted to welcome you to another exciting Nippers season.

At ABSLSC, our goal is to encourage every child to do their best, build confidence, and develop to their full potential while learning new skills and, most importantly, having fun. Our vision is to provide a safe, supportive, and friendly environment where both Nippers and parents/guardians can grow their knowledge of the beach, surf, and surf lifesaving.

This year we expect to welcome around 180 children into the program. Key dates and session times are included later in this handbook (please note that session times may be subject to change).

For families joining us for the first time, rest assured—we'll take great care of you and your Nippers. Our program is community-driven and supported by over 60 dedicated volunteers. If you haven't yet signed up to help, we encourage you to get involved. Please speak with a team member on bag collection day about how you can contribute—every role helps ensure the smooth and successful running of the program.

This handbook contains all the important details for the summer. A few changes have been made since last year. These changes have been outlined in this guide.

If you have any questions at any stage, please email through to nippers@apollobayslsc.com.au or don't hesitate to find me on the beach for a chat.

Cheers,
Mark Oxnam
Nipper Coordinator





Key Contacts

The Nippers program is made possible thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, including water safety personnel, age managers, and many others who contribute their time and energy. The key contacts for each age group are listed below.

We are always seeking **Age Group Managers and Assistant Age Managers** to help support the program. This role comes with plenty of guidance and is a rewarding way to be involved in your child's Nippers journey. If you're interested in joining the team, please reach out at nippers@apollobayslsc.com.au.

To assist with membership enquiries or troubleshooting with the registration process, please reach out to Colleen on: secretary@apollobayslsc.com.au.

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About Lifesaving

The primary mission of Victorian lifesaving clubs is to provide a safe and enjoyable aquatic experience for all visitors to our beaches. Over the summer period (usually the end of November through to Easter) lifesaving clubs and lifeguards provide beach patrols at over 60 Victorian beaches on weekends and public holidays.

Victoria's coastline and inland waterways are unique and their recreational opportunities endless. Life Saving Victoria is keen to ensure that all visitors are aware of their own abilities and the potential dangers at the beach. Lifesaving clubs train volunteer lifesavers in aquatic rescue and resuscitation techniques as well as offering water safety education to the general beach going public.

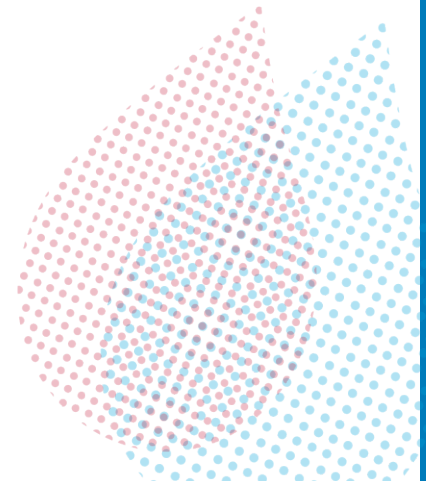
Since the early 1900's lifesaving clubs have been an integral part of Australia's coastal and inland waterways, with volunteers providing education and training in lifesaving activities, as well as providing the iconic 'swim between the red and yellow flags' patrolled areas. Lifesaving clubs harness the support of local communities and use a network of support services.

Life Saving Victoria

Life Saving Victoria (est. 2002) is an initiative of the Royal Life Saving Society Australia Victoria Branch (est. 1904) and Surf Life Saving Victoria (est. 1947).

Life Saving Victoria's mission is to prevent aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities and has the vision that all Victorians will learn water safety, swimming and resuscitation and be provided with safe aquatic environments and venues.

Its vision to allow all Victorians will enjoy our aquatic environment after learning water safety, swimming, and resuscitation.





Key Dates & Times

ABSLSC Nippers is an “intensive program”, running from late December to early January each year.

The key dates include:

- Nipper bag collection and swim assessment occurs on Friday 26th December 2025 between 3:00pm and 6:00pm.
- The first Nipper session commences the next day on Saturday 27th December 2025. U11, U12 & U13 start first with a 7:45am arrival for an 8am start. U8, U9 & U10) follow at a 9:15am arrival for a 9:30am start.
- There are six sessions in total, between Saturday the 27th of December to Sunday the 4th of January 2026. The very informal Club Champs occurs on Saturday 5th January.

There will also be several social activities that occur throughout the program at the clubhouse, including:

- Welcome to Nippers Night
- Nippers Carnival Night (discount prices for Nippers with proceeds kindly donated back to the club)
- New Years Eve celebration Night
- End of Season Disco

Details on these events will be confirmed at the start of the program.

Session	Date	U8, U9 & U10	U11, U12 & U13	Functions
Bag Collection & Assessment Swim	Friday 26-Dec-25	See below	See below	
Session 1	Saturday 27-Dec-25	9:15 am arrival for 9:30 am to 12:00 pm	7:45 am arrival for 8:00am to 11:00 am	Welcome Night
Session 2	Sunday 28-Dec-25			
Session 3	Monday 29-Dec-25			Carnival Night
Session 4	Wednesday 31-Dec-25			New Years Eve
Session 5	Thursday 1-Jan-25	11:45 arrival for 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	10:45 am arrival for 11:00 am to 1:30 pm	
Session 6 (Club Champs)	Saturday 3-Jan-25	TBC	TBC	
Session 7 (Including presentations)	Sunday 4-Jan-25	9:15 am arrival for 9:30 am to 11:30 am	8:45 am arrival for 9:00am to 11:30 am	Disco

Nipper Uniform Collection & Swim Assessment	Friday 26-Dec-2025	3:00 pm to 6:00 pm	A - H: 3 - 4 pm I - Q 4 - 5 pm R - Z: 5 - 6 pm
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1. Session Times:
Please note that session times may be subject to minor adjustments throughout the program. This can be due to weather / water conditions.
2. Swim Assessments (U9–U13):
This season, swim assessments for Under 9 to Under 13 Nippers will take place immediately after uniform collection. Participants should arrive wearing bathers and wetsuits and proceed directly to the beach for their swim.
 - o For those unable to attend collection day, the club will open early on the 27th (prior to the first session) to allow uniform collection.
 - o Alternate arrangements will also be available for the swim assessment as required.
 - o Please note: Under 8 Nippers are not required to complete a swim assessment and therefore do not need to attend the beach after uniform collection.
3. No Session – Friday 2nd January:
There will be no Nippers session on Friday 2nd January, to avoid a clash with the LSC Cosy Corner Carnival in Torquay. Any Nippers wishing to represent ABSLSC at this carnival are encouraged to register their interest with their Age Manager during the first or second session.
4. Club Championships:
Finalised times for the Club Championships will be confirmed prior to the start of the Nippers program. Traditionally, the Under 13 group begins earlier, with staggered start times for other age groups to minimise waiting periods. Please note that this event typically runs a little longer, finishing around 12:30–1:00 pm.
 - o If water conditions are unsuitable, beach events will still proceed as planned, while water events will be rescheduled to the following day.

What to expect at Nippers

The main aims of the Nippers Education Program are to:

- Develop surf awareness.
- Increase confidence and skills in beach related activities.
- Encourage enjoyable and healthy participation.
- Instill and re-enforce SunSmart philosophies.
- Meet new friends.

Your Nipper(s) will also learn new skills on the beach and in the water, as well as key education areas and water safety. Nipper skills builds progressively on skill development from U8-U13 in beach, water and lifesaving activities. The activities are designed to provide Nippers the skills to be safe around open water and prepare them to complete their Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) and then Bronze Medallion.

Beach Activities	Water Activities
• Beach Sprints • Beach Relay • Beach Run • Beach Flags • Nipper Games	• Wading • Dolphin Diving • Surf Race • Boards • Run-Swim-Run • Board Relay • Ironman/Ironwoman • Board Rescue - U12+ • Tube Rescue - U12+



What to bring to Nippers

All nippers must wear the club/age group cap whilst the Nipper Education Program is running.

The use of high visibility (pink) Lycra tops is also mandatory for all open water-based activities in the junior program. This includes swims, board paddling and wading. The high visibility tops are to be worn over the top of wetsuits.

Your child will need to have the following items each session:

- Bathers
- Long sleeve rash vest or protective top
- Wide brim or bucket style hat
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle filled with water
- Club cap or age group cap
- Towel
- Dry clothes for after the nipper program session
- Wetsuit (optional)
- Goggles (optional)
- Money for the BBQ after Nippers (compulsory!!!)



**PLEASE LABEL
ALL
BELONGINGS
CLEARLY**

Preliminary Swim Evaluation

The ability to swim competently is an integral part of making children safe at the beach as well as allowing them to actively participate and enjoy lifesaving activities.

However, we also recognise that swimming in the ocean is a new experience for many children and that even competent pool swimmers can find this challenging at first. Our aim is to encourage children and to help develop their confidence and skills swimming in the ocean, as well as provide surf and inland waterway education.

Preliminary swim evaluations are a **mandatory LSV risk management procedure** that is in place to ensure nippers are fit and able to meet the minimum requirements for safety of the nipper program. The evaluations consist of floatation, submersion & propulsion tests which differ for each age group. The tests are summarised on the following page.

ABSLSC completes these evaluations on the Uniform Collection Day so we can determine how many Nippers can go in the water at once and if anyone will need extra support in the water activities. There is no swim assessment for those participating in the Under 8s program.

If your child does not meet the minimum requirements, we will strive to provide one-on-one water safety support but only if there is sufficient number of water safety available. If this one-on-one water safety support cannot be provided, your child will need to be restricted to land-based activities only. We note that parents cannot be classified as a support person unless they meet the LSV 'water safety requirements' e.g., completed their bronze medallion, wear the appropriate high visibility rash tops, etc.

Important Notes:

- **Nippers is not a learn-to-swim program. Parents / guardians should enroll their children in “learn to swim” classes depending on their current ability.**
- **ABSLSC requires the evaluation to be completed in the ocean at Apollo Bay (not at a swim centre) so we can assess the child's ability to swim in ocean conditions.**
- **Nippers can wear wetsuits and goggles for the evaluation if they wish.**

Preliminary Swim Evaluation (U8 to U10)

Age Group	Propulsion Requirement	Flotation Requirement	Submersion Requirement
Under 8s Water depth: Chest height of participants.	Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by underwater swim (distance 3-5 metres)	Back float for minimum 1 minute, recover to stand.	Submerge to touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands.
Under 9s Water depth: Over head height	Swim any stroke (distance 35 metres)	Front to back float 5 seconds each side. Tread water 1 minute.	Submerge to touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands.
Under 9s Water depth: Over head height	Swim any stroke (distance 50 metres)	Front to back float 5 seconds each side. Tread water 1 minute.	Submerge to touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands.

Preliminary Swim Evaluation (U11 to U13)

Age Group	Propulsion Requirement	Flotation Requirement	Submersion Requirement
Under 11s Water depth: Chest height of participants.	Swim any stroke (distance 75 metres)	Front to back float 5 seconds each side. Tread water 2 minutes.	Submerge: - Touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands. - Complete forward or backward roll.
Under 12s Water depth: Over head height	Swim any stroke (distance 125 metres)	Front to back float 5 seconds each side. Tread water 3 minutes.	Submerge: - Touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands. - Complete forward or backward roll.
Under 13s Water depth: Over head height	Swim any stroke (distance 150 metres)	Front to back float 5 seconds each side. Tread water 1 minute.	Submerge: - Touch the sand at the bottom of the water with hands. - Complete forward or backward roll.

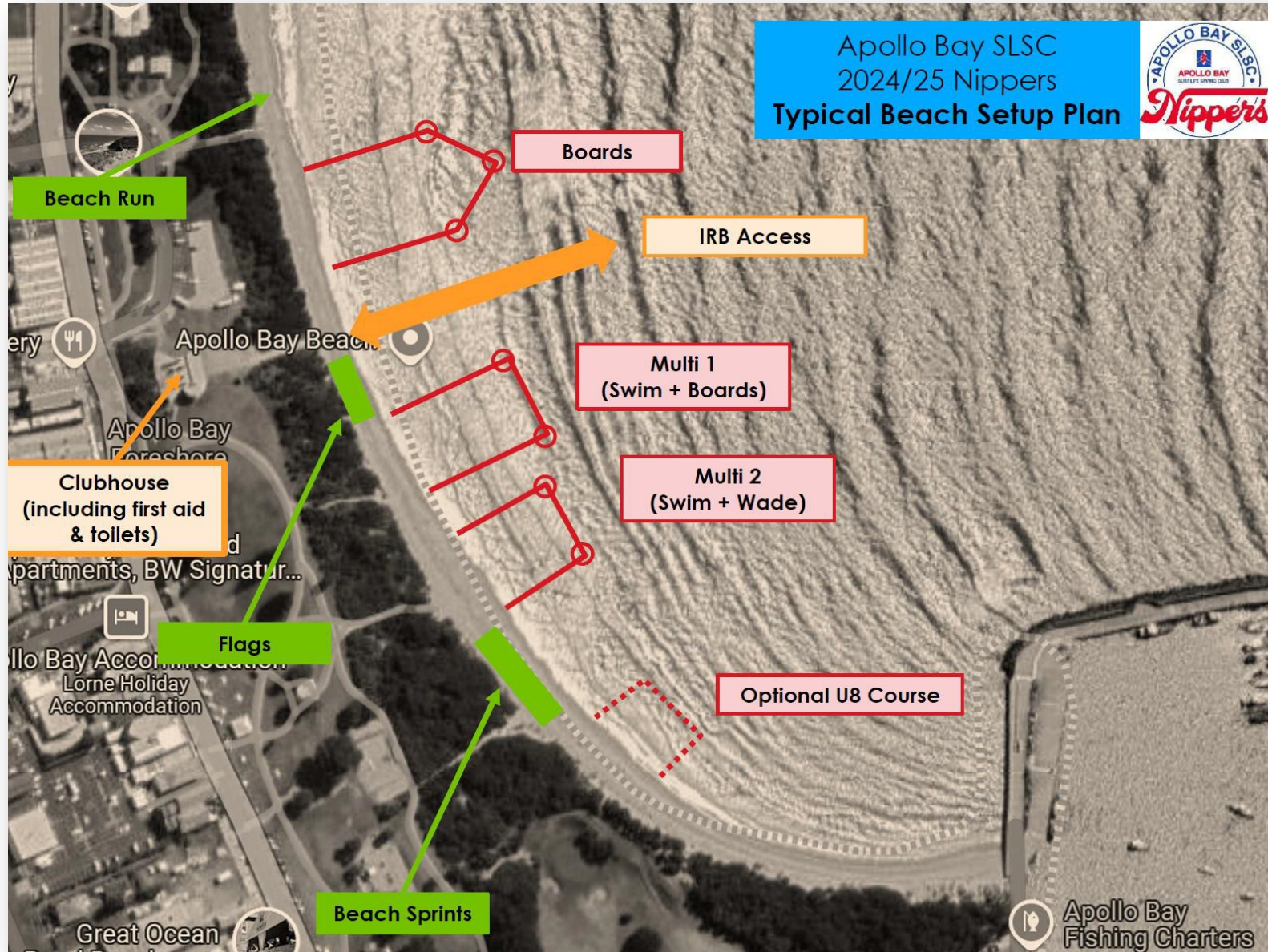
Nipper Program

- A copy of the program will be shared in the lead up to Nippers commencing.
- The program may vary depending on weather (water) conditions. Age Group Managers will communicate any changes to the program.
- Each Nippers group is responsible for cleaning the clubhouse at the end of the Nippers session. The U8 group has the first session followed by U9, U10, etc. for subsequent sessions.

The key cleaning duties include (from): ensuring all Nipper boards are washed and stacked neatly, cleaning the floors in the male and female bathrooms in the clubhouse, assisting with BBQ cleaning if required, etc.

All groups will assist with the end of program clean post presentation.

Example Beach Setup Plan



Parent / Guardian Involvement

It is highly recommended that at least one nipper parent / guardian is present on the beach at all times whilst the program is running.

There are also many other opportunities for parents / guardians to be involved and assist the running of the Nippers program. Some of the roles that are critical for the success of the program are outlined below. Please contact the Nipper Coordinator if you are able to assist in these roles this year or next year.

Role	Overview	Pre-requisites
Age Manager	An Age Manager has the overall responsibility of a Nipper Age Group and an introduction role to support the running of the program. They are responsible for facilitating the development of surf lifesaving skills and for the overall safety and wellbeing of their age group. Age Managers are required to complete an online or face to face course, child safe awareness course and then complete 2 practical sessions prior to gaining accreditation. Click here for instructions of how to access the Age Manager Online course. Click here for instructions of how to access the Safeguarding Children and Young People Awareness Course	• No lifesaving experience necessary • Be 18 years or older • Be a financial member of a Life Saving Club • Hold a current Working with Children Check with details recorded in SurfGuard • Completed the online child safe awareness course • Completed the online or face to face Age Managers Course • Undertake a minimum of two on-the-beach mentoring sessions with an Age Manager Mentor

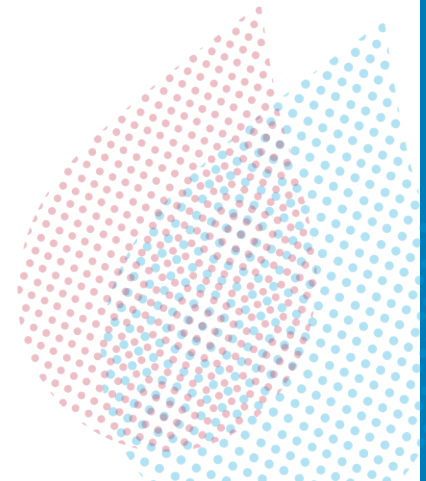
Parent / Guardian Involvement

Age Manager Assistant	The age manager assistant award is to formally recognise younger members aged 13-17 yrs who help with nippers and making sure they have the necessary skills to assist with facilitation. Age manger assistants can support age managers with education or coaching elements. The age manager assistant award allows age manager assistants an option to complete their CPR, Radio Operators Certificate or First Aid Certificate with the support and guidance of their mentor/club.	• Must be assigned an over 18 qualified Age Manager as mentor by the club. • Must create their own individual SLSA Members Area Account. • Complete the online observers award via SLSA Member Area. • Complete 2 on the beach training sessions with Age Manager Mentor • Attend an online Age Manager Assistant Course with LSV
Water Safety	Water safety requirements are 1:5 therefore the number of water safety personnel will determine the number of nippers who are able to enter the water at any one time.	• Bronze Medallion or SRC • Be a financial member of a Life Saving Club • Hold a current Working with Children Check with details recorded in SurfGuard • Complete the online child safe awareness course
BBQ*	Parents who cook the BBQ for post nipper sessions	• Hold a current Working with Children Check with details recorded in SurfGuard
Nipper Admin Assistance	Assisting the Nippers Coordinator with administration of the Nippers program	• Hold a current Working with Children Check with details recorded in SurfGuard

LSV Code of Conduct

General Code of Conduct Members and all people involved in any way with SLS will:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others – treat others as you would like to be treated yourself
- Be ethical, considerate, fair, courteous, and honest in all dealings with other people and organisations
- Be professional in, and accept responsibility for your actions
- Be aware of and always follow – SLS' standards, rules, policies, and procedures and promote those standards, rules policies and procedures to others
- Operate within the rules and spirit of the sports, including the national and international guidelines that govern SLS
- Understand the possible consequences of breaching the Codes and/or this Policy
- Report any breaches of the Codes or this Policy to the appropriate PPA
- Refrain from any form of abuse, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation towards others
- Raise concerns regarding decisions of PPA through the appropriate channels and in a timely manner
- Provide a safe environment for the conduct of activities in accordance with any relevant SLSA policy
- Show concern, empathy and caution towards others that may be sick or injured
- Be a positive role model to all
- Respect and protect confidential information obtained through SLS activities or services; whether individuals and/or organisational information
- Maintain the required standard of accreditation and/or licensing of professional competencies, as applicable to the role(s)
- Ensure that any physical contact with others is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development
- Refrain from intimate relations with persons over whom you have a position of authority
- Agree to abide by the Codes
- Maintain a duty of care towards others
- Be impartial and accept the responsibility for all actions taken.



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