



## Tambo 2008 - Outback Aquatic Safety

Tambo, located on the Landsborough Highway approximately 1000km north west of Brisbane was settled in 1863 and is considered to be the oldest town in central Queensland. Tambo has a



variety of aquatic environments within its surroundings including the Barcoo River, local dam and a local swimming pool complex that includes a 25 metre swimming pool and a Wading Pool, Kiosk and associated structures. They also have a local dam which is used for many local activities such as water skiing. Many of the



properties on the outskirts have their own waterholes and dams.

At the beginning of 2008, I conducted an infant swimming program in Tambo for parents and their children. The purpose of the visit was to provide education to parents and practical applications on teaching water safety skills to their children as the town had no qualified swimming instructors.

After a successful program, I returned again in December 2008 to continue this program but also deliver a number of other aquatic programs to the community. These included lessons for Tambo Swimming Club and an educational talk for Tambo State School about safety around their dam.



I extended the infant program to include a visited to the local dam. The motivation behind this for me was my role as a swimming teacher should extend past the context of the pool environment. Often we get caught up in teaching water safety within the pool context and forget the children associate skills they learn to the context that they learnt them in. Just because a child can swim or



has learnt safety skills in pools does not necessarily means this skill will easily be transferred to a different environment or a different situation. The education of safe practices and the practicing of survival and rescue skills for parents and their children in other aquatic environments that are around them and familiar to them is just as important.

The school outing to the dam included around 50 students from prep to year 9. Students learnt and showed a good understanding of the hazards and dangers of the dam. Then they participated in practicing survival skills and rescue techniques with the main emphasis on safe practices around the dam.



With the recent drowning events in Australia it has reinforced how valuable not only is it for children to learn how to swim but about educating both parents and children about the safety around all aquatic environments within their community.

We, as swimming teachers, together with parents and the community should be teaching and giving our children swimming and water safety skills through experience in a variety of aquatic environments. This should be coupled with the number one prevention of drowning - supervision!



Alina Graham, a Director of *Qualified Aquatic Programs and Training* has been in the aquatic industry for over 17 years. As a presenter of AUSTSWIM and Royal Lifesaving, she is an advocate of teaching of water safety skills not just in pools but in any aquatic environment.