

Q&A FOR PARENTS - ANGLESEA SLSC

What is Starfish Nippers?

It is a modified and structured nippers program for all abilities that runs alongside a club's Age Group Nippers program and focuses on beach and water safety and awareness and promotes inclusion and diversity. Starfish Nippers was started in 2011 by volunteers at Anglesea SLSC. As at the start of December 2018, around 20 surf and bayside lifesaving clubs from across Australia have signed up to run the program.

Who is it for?

It is designed for young people aged 6 years and above with a disability, including physical and intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties, and can be modified to suit an individual participant's needs so everyone can be included.

What are the benefits?

It has had immense benefits for our Starfish Nippers and their families, trainers, Age Group Nippers and the club overall.

Starfish

Our Starfish love being involved and included in the club and the overall Nippers program. They feel a real sense of belonging and wear their Nippers gear with great pride. In many cases, Starfish have been spectators up until now, watching their siblings participate in the Age Group Nippers program. They are learning life skills from excellent role models (their trainers), increasing their beach and water safety knowledge and improving their swimming and board skills, while developing their fitness and improving their coordination. We see their confidence and skills in the water improve with every session. They love the social side of the program too and are developing confidence socially – they love encouraging each other and having fun together, interacting with their peers and Age Group Nippers and participating actively in the community.

Parents/Guardians/Families

Our parents value highly that all children in the family can participate in the club's Nippers program. They also find networking with other families who are raising a child with a disability invaluable, and provide great support to each other with the challenges they face.

Volunteers/Trainers

Our trainers find the experience valuable and rewarding. Not only have the youth in our club developed more understanding and skills in working with people with a disability, they have developed leadership skills and feel a great sense of making a worthwhile contribution.

Age Group Nippers

Our Age Group Nippers are learning the importance of inclusion and how to connect with people with a disability. They are acting as role models and learning skills in leadership. They find the experience valuable and rewarding.

Club

Our club has been able to keep junior members engaged, and has also benefitted from increased support from the wider community and generous financial donations to help run the program.



Fun & Laughter



Feel Included



Respect & Dignity



Beach Safety



Teamwork

When does it run?

The Starfish Nippers program runs alongside the Age Group Nippers program, from the end of December through the start of January. There are 10 sessions.

What kind of activities do Starfish Nippers do?

Modified Nippers beach and water activities such as games, running, beach flags, games, wading, swimming and boards as well as activities with the club's Age Group Nippers.

What is the maximum number of participants? Why is it capped?

It is capped at 15. Safety is the biggest factor.

What is the Anglesea beach like?

It is a reasonably safe surf beach, however it sometimes has inshore holes and rips.

Why does a parent/carer need to stay on the beach close to the group at all times?

This is critically important in the case of a medical or behavioural problem.

What is the ration of Trainers : Starfish Nippers in the water?

1:1 is the minimum; 2:1 when required.

What qualifications do trainers have? Who can become a trainer?

Our trainers are all volunteer club members who range in age from 16 to 73. Most of them have their Bronze Medallion or SRC. They are very reliable and passionate about supporting the program. Experience working with people with a disability is not required. All trainers must complete an induction program and have a current Working With Children (WWC) card.

What kind of membership do I need? Is there a discount for concession cardholders?

If you are under 18 you can join as a family. If you are over 18 you need an individual membership. Yes, a discount applies for concession cardholders.

Is any financial assistance available for membership?

The club may be able to provide support – please discuss your needs with the Program Coordinator.

Why do I need to provide so much information at enrolment? How is the information used?

As part of the enrolment process, parents are asked to include details on any medical, social or communication issues their child has. This is so we can provide the highest level of safety for your child safe and offer the best possible program suited to their individual needs. It is critically important that you advise us of any changes immediately. The information is kept by the Program Coordinator in a folder on the beach during all sessions.

How is the program funded?

The program is run 100% by club volunteers and we currently receive no government funding. Since starting the program we have received generous support in the form of sponsorship and donations.



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