

Swim teachers

STATISTICS show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 3.6 times more likely to die from drowning than the general population.

Knowing this statistic Mid Coast CONNECT facilitated an innovative partnership between the Royal Life Saving Society, Greater Taree City Council and Chatham High School to provide local Aboriginal students with the opportunity to qualify as swimming instructors.

Seven local Aboriginal students have recently completed the AUSTSWIM Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety accredited course.

The AUSTSWIM course work was completed during their school sporting timetable and the students now need to complete the practical work competency component in order to be fully qualified.

"I am overwhelmed with the support from RLSS, Chatham High School, GTCC's Woombarra Wunggan Youth Services and the



In the swim from left: Matt Taupe, Natalie Pearson, Kayla Edwards and Felicity Paulson.

Manning Valley Aquatic Centre towards this program," Mid Coast CONNECT's partnership broker, Gayleen Burley said.

"The services worked collaboratively to ensure the Chatham High School students were supported throughout their training.

"The students showed enthusiasm and determination through-

out the course and have expressed an interest in progressing with their training and potentially work within the local aquatic industry in the future".

Jason Phillips, RLSS's northern regional manager stated that "Royal Life Saving's NSW Indigenous Training Units provide



The whole crew from left: Matt Taupe, Natalie Pearson, Kayla Edwards, Felicity Paulson, Jason Phillips (Royal Lifesaving Society instructor) Natalie Pearson, Barb Muxlow (Austswim instructor) , Dominique Clarke (GTCC's Woombarra Wunggan Youth Services).

vital water safety education and training to indigenous communities across the state.

"We are pleased to be able to offer a variety of courses preparing candidates to assist in an emergency, or to gain an exciting career within the aquatics indus-

try. I will continue to encourage and support the students to further their education and career opportunities in the aquatic industry - it was a pleasure to work with such enthusiastic individuals."