

Media Release

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New Government Primary School Swim Goal Applauded – But What About our Toddlers?

The Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Victoria (SPASA) calls for Mandatory Pool and Spa Barrier Inspections. Since the Introduction of Mandatory Inspections in WA in 1992, there has been an 80% Reduction in the rate of Toddler Drownings.*

SPASA has ramped-up its child safety initiative to lobby the Victorian Government to legislate the mandatory inspection of pool and spa barriers in Victoria.

“SPASA Victoria is strongly of the view that inspections of pool and spa barriers should be mandatory in Victoria in order to improve safety outcomes,” says CEO, Brendan Watkins. “We implore the Victorian Government to pass legislation to:

1. **Immediately make pool barrier compliance certification mandatory for all properties sold or leased in Victoria**
2. **Introduce a mandatory barrier inspection protocol that ensures all residential properties with a pool or spa in Victoria are inspected every three years**

“The recent experience in Queensland and NSW has been that the development of a swimming pool register and appropriate inspectors course has taken up to five years to develop and implement. Hence the need to introduce the immediate inspections at lease or sale of properties.”

SPASA maintains a ‘safety first’ approach. “Swimming pools are wonderful additions to the lifestyle of any Australian home. Exercise - and the social capital provided by a pool or spa - is immeasurable. We just want to promote the safest possible outcome for our kids.”

“Our members are in the field seeing backyard pools seven days a week and many, many pool barriers have not been maintained and are not safe. The recent media coverage regarding barrier inspection failures by local Councils underlines this fact. Mandatory pool barrier inspections will keep our kids safe,” Watkins said.

Pool and spa barrier inspections are currently mandatory in only three states - NSW, QLD and WA. Since the introduction of mandatory barrier inspections in WA in 1992, there has been a 58.7% decrease in the average number of toddler drowning deaths.

Knox Council recently inspected 100 backyard pools and found the ‘vast majority’ did not comply with State Government standards. Among problems were rundown fences and gates that didn’t work properly, as well as vegetation that had grown too close to barriers which made a climbing risk.

“As responsible industry leaders, SPASA Victoria will campaign tirelessly until pool and spa barrier inspections are legislated in Victoria”, says SPASA Victoria CEO, Brendan Watkins.

*8.7 deaths per 100,000 people in 1992 down to 1.66 deaths per 100,000 people in 2016 (Source: Royal Life Saving Society WA Inc)

Endorsements:

Kidsafe Victoria supports the call for the introduction of mandatory pool and spa barrier inspections in Victoria. "The recent statistics from Knox Council highlight the need to have a co-ordinated, State-wide system in place where pool and spa barriers are regularly inspected," said Jason Chambers, Kidsafe Victoria General Manager.

CEO of **Aquatics and Recreation Victoria**, Anthony McIntosh says, "Victoria's aquatics and recreation industry is very supportive of SPASA's proposed measures, which will unquestionably prevent fatal and non-fatal drownings every year. For pool owners with existing pool barriers, to have the discipline to maintain these to a safe standard over the life of the pool will make an enormous difference to the safety of the pool - week in, week out."

Reference:

<http://www.spasavic.com.au/about-us/pool-spa-barrier-inspections>

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