

Media Release

Friday 16th December 2016

Victorian Kids Remain At Risk Until Laws Change

Swim safety advocate Laurie Lawrence has spoken publicly on Channel 7's Sunrise television backing SPASA's Mandatory Pool and Spa Barrier Inspection Campaign.

Sunrise brought to light the fact that 100% of pools in some areas of Victoria are failing to adhere to the safety standards.

"It's absolutely dreadful", Laurie says. "My message has always been 'fence the pool, shut the gate'. The next thing we have to do is make sure that everyone out there makes their pool compliant."

A spokesperson from Life Saving Victoria says that they are "disappointed that successive State Governments have been unable to introduce reforms that have proven to lower drowning and near drowning occurrences in backyard swimming pools. Data is now available that shows regular mandatory compliance inspection of home pools and spas reduces the likelihood of childhood drowning. Since 2012 the Victorian Swimming Pool and Spa safety committee have advocated for:

- Establishment of a pool register
- Regular assessment of pool fences, including at point of sale / lease
- A targeted audit and compliance program
- An awareness campaign
- Mandatory CPR signage

These reforms were endorsed by the then Building Commissioner with no tangible outcomes. Life Saving Victoria, SPASA Victoria and Kidsafe Victoria believe that these measures are essential in order to significantly reduce preventable childhood backyard pool and spa drowning incidents, which are responsible for almost a quarter of all Victorian fatal and non-fatal drowning."

Kidsafe Victoria supports the call for the introduction of mandatory pool and spa barrier inspections in Victoria. "The recent statistics from Knox Council highlights 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.

SPASA Victoria continues to 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**

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."

Until mandatory pool and spa barrier inspections are legislated in Victoria, we will continue to see children at risk of backyard pool drownings.

For more on SPASA's Victorian Mandatory Barrier Inspection Campaign:

<http://www.spasavic.com.au/about-us/pool-spa-barrier-inspections>
<https://au.tv.yahoo.com/sunrise/video/watch/33476249/is-your-backyard-pool-safe/?cmp=st#page1>

For further information please contact:

Kathryn Barres – Marketing Communications Co-ordinator
Telephone: 03 9501 2040 or kathryn@spasavic.com.au

For Comment: Brendan Watkins, CEO SPASA Victoria - **0417 385 929**

