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CAMPAIGN

New regulations put pool safety first

Leader campaign leads State Government to undertake groundbreaking overhaul of backyard fencing laws

Kate Ashley-Griffiths and Andrew Rogers

BACKYARD pools and spas will have to be fully fenced under groundbreaking reforms proposed by the State Government.

The changes mean houses will no longer be able to form part of a pool barrier and uniform standards will apply for all pools, regardless of when they were built.

They will bring a sense of relief for a Doncaster couple whose son drowned in 2010, after he climbed their fence to swim in the neighbour's pool.

Mohamed Abdelmegeed's death six years ago prompted coroner Heather Spooner to recommend the government investigate making pool fence-

ing laws retrospective, to ensure compliance. Dad Ahmed Abdelmegeed remembered his little boy as a bright and clever six-year-old.

"He had lovely, smiley eyes, a lovely sense of humour.

"One of my dreams is that the rules change, in his honour," he said, when Leader launched the Make Pools Safe campaign last summer.

The campaign called for changes after the drowning death of a Croydon South toddler in his unfenced backyard pool last year.

Less than two months after the campaign was launched, the Government admitted more needed to be done and told Leader in January fencing rules would be reviewed.

Pool and spa owners will be

given a grace period and will have to comply by 2020.

It will cost up to \$3000, on average, to install compliant barriers and safety gates.

The State Government also confirmed changes to the Building Act, which will grant inspectors new powers to enter premises and check whether barriers comply.

A statewide pool register was also being considered, as well as mandatory inspections every three years.

Last week, Planning Minister Richard Wynne said it was time for "a proper overhaul of our regulations".





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Mohamed Abdelmegeed drowned when he climbed over the fence into a Doncaster neighbour's pool.