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Pools scrutiny

Call for regular checks

SAMANTHA LANDY

VICTORIA'S peak real estate body has called for mandatory inspections of backyard pools every two years, saying new government-proposed reforms don't go far enough.

The state government is calling for four-sided isolation barriers for all pools and spas, no matter when they were built, as part of its review of regulations just expired.

Under those plans, pool and spa owners will need to comply by 2020 and updates are expected to cost owners \$3000.

The government is also considering a statewide register of all pools and spas, and a new education campaign reminding adults of the need to supervise children.

It has not ruled out regular mandatory inspections.

"Everything is on the table," said Planning Minister Richard Wynne. "One drowning death is one too many, which is why we're embarking on an overhaul of the regulations.

"Bringing pools and spas up

to scratch will be a significant cost to owners, but we make no apology for taking action to prevent tragic deaths."

REIV chief executive Gil King said industry experts were demanding mandatory barrier inspections. He felt the government's proposed action ignored this advice.

He said pool safety checks should be made every 24 months as in WA, where toddler drownings had fallen 80 per cent since such checks were introduced in 1992.

That safety measure, also in place in NSW and Queensland, is backed for Victoria by several bodies including Swimming Pool & Spa Association, Kidsafe Victoria, Life Saving Victoria, and Aquatics and Recreation Victoria.

REIV also wants mandatory pool barrier safety certificates, calling that another "proven" lifesaver.

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