



## MEDIA RELEASE

# There's more to water safety than swimming

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Being able to swim is not enough to keep people safer in water, according to peak swimming and water safety teacher training organisation AUSTSWIM.

Gaining knowledge of aquatic environments such as rivers, lakes and beaches, in addition to learning personal survival skills and recognising hazards, are the key to preventing drowning tragedies.

In a wake-up call to parents and carers, new AUSTSWIM CEO Jennifer Schembri-Portelli said most people who drowned had some idea of being able to swim, they just didn't have the critical water safety knowledge, skill or understanding to save their own lives.

Former Olympic swimmer Matt Welsh, who recently gained his first AUSTSWIM teacher training accreditation, added his voice to the call for better water safety awareness and action this summer.

"Water-based activities are an integral part of the Australian culture," Matt said. "But people must respect the inherent dangers around water and learning water safety knowledge, skill and understanding is a must if we are to prevent drowning tragedies."

Mrs Schembri-Portelli said Royal Life Saving statistics for 2014/15 showed 271 people had drowned in Australian waterways.

"AUSTSWIM recognises their role in aquatic education and the recently introduced Learning Pillars (Knowledge, Skill, Understanding) help define what the teaching of swimming and water safety really means." "AUSTSWIM Teachers are trained to implement the 'think, explore, develop and do' principle to engage and interact with students empowering them to make good decisions in and around water."

**In a world first**, AUSTSWIM has been accredited against **ISO/IEC 17024** for how we train, accredit and licence AUSTSWIM Teachers in Australia. This gives the community further assurance that AUSTSWIM Teachers have the highest accreditation benchmark in aquatics and that AUSTSWIM is committed to providing quality education to reduce drowning, the impact of aquatic accidents and strive for safer swimming and water safety.

"It is vital that when parents are looking for swimming and water safety programs for their children they ensure the teachers they select are AUSTSWIM Licensed," Mrs Schembri-Portelli said.

For more information, contact

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