

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Be Safer Around Water

With the current warm weather and summer fast approaching it is important to be safe around the water.

While swimming is an important part of the Australian culture, and children are naturally attracted to water – drowning remains one of the highest causes of accidental death in children. The 2011 Australian National Drowning Report revealed that swimming pools and bathtubs had the highest number of drownings for children aged 0-4 years. Other drownings in this age group were due to toddlers accidentally falling in to water. AUSTSWIM urges parents and carers to be vigilant in emptying bathtubs, nappy buckets, water bowls, after use and ensure pool fencing is fixed. After all, a puddle of water is enough for a child in this age group to drown. Constant supervision and awareness around the home is vital. A sobering statistic is that for every one child who dies as a result of drowning, there are another four children admitted to hospital, and one fifth will be disabled for the rest of their lives.

AUSTSWIM – the Australian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety and AUSTSWIM Ambassadors Olympic medallists Geoff Huegill and Brooke Hanson are together committed to educating Australians about the importance of learn to swim and water safety and believe it is critical for all Australian children to participate in learn to swim and water safety lessons and recommend 6 months as the age for starting.

That's why 'now' is a great time to enrol your children into learn to swim and water safety lessons.

AUSTSWIM CEO Gordon Mallett urges Australian parents to ensure that children are constantly supervised in and around the water and that they receive regular learn to swim and water safety aquatic education in a fun, engaging and safe environment by appropriately accredited AUSTSWIM Teachers™.

Mr Mallett suggests that; When looking for a learn to swim and water safety program for your children, seek one with a positive and welcoming environment that includes parents as part of the learning process. A well rounded program will also include all the essentials of water safety, water familiarisation, personal water safety, survival knowledge and steps towards stroke development. "AUSTSWIM encourages parents to ensure their children are being taught by accredited AUSTSWIM Teachers™ and in doing so parents are urged to check their child's swimming teachers, AUSTSWIM photo license". Mr. Mallett said.

Parents are an essential part of the learning process, and as the children learn, so do the parents. AUSTSWIM encourages parents to start water familiarisation with your child at home, such as in the bath. With bath-side adult supervision, children can safely explore the buoyancy effect of water, the movement and force of water, and the feeling of water splashing and showering over the body.

Furthermore, parents and carers can reduce the risk of drowning and provide their children valuable skills for life by following actions including:

- Active constant supervision
- Taking their child to learn to swim and water safety lessons
- Learning resuscitation and
- Gaining water safety knowledge and personal survival skills appropriate to the beach, river, lake, dam, creek and home pool environment.

Learning to swim provides you and your children with important skills and the confidence to be able to enjoy water safely. Providing your child with the opportunity to learn to swim and water safety skills will give them the best chance of survival if an accident were ever to happen.

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The following water safety tips are important for parents to remember:

AUSTSWIM 'WATER SAFETY' TIP 1

Water safety begins with you. Be within arm's reach when your family is in, on or around water.

AUSTSWIM 'WATER SAFETY' TIP 2

Regardless of swimming ability no person is drown proof. Ensure that there is adequate supervision **AT ALL TIMES** when your family is in or around water.

AUSTSWIM 'WATER SAFETY' TIP 3

Young children are fascinated by and attracted to water. Recognise or eliminate potential water dangers around your home; nappy buckets, fish ponds, bathtubs, toilets, wading or swimming pools.

AUSTSWIM 'WATER SAFETY' TIP 4

Water's everywhere and it's not always clear, clean and heated. Learn water safety knowledge and personal survival skills for the beach, river, lake and even your pool at home.

AUSTSWIM has over 550 AUSTSWIM Recognised Swim Schools nationally who provide a range of learn to swim and water safety classes catering for ages six months through to adults. Classes are taught by accredited AUSTSWIM Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety™. To find a swim school in your area or if you are interested in becoming an accredited AUSTSWIM Teacher™ go to www.austswim.com.au

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