

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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This year's drowning statistics highlight the importance of learn to swim and water safety education lessons

Figures released in the Royal Life Saving Society 2010 National Drowning report recently highlighted the alarming increase in the number of drowning deaths recorded in Australian waterways between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010, AUSTSWIM - the Australian Council for the Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety reminds Australians of the importance of learn to swim and water safety education, especially for our children.

Childhood is a time of wonder and mystery, exploration and fun, development and learning, though unfortunately it is also a time when children are naturally attracted to water and vulnerable to drowning, particularly those under 5 years of age .

Drowning remains one of the highest causes of preventable death particularly in children, and 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.

Parents and carers can reduce this risk 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.

AUSTSWIM is the peak industry body for the training and licensing of teachers of swimming and water safety and provides industry standards, advice and support services: teacher advice and support services and community advice for specialist groups including parents.

AUSTSWIM suggests that; when looking for a learn to swim and water safety program for 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.

Based on information from medical and child development experts, AUSTSWIM recommend that at 6 months of age children can join formal classes at the local pool. Formal class participation before 6 months of age is not advisable because not all infants under 6 months are physically or developmentally ready to be in a formal education program.

AUSTSWIM Chief Executive Officer; Gordon Mallett emphasizes that not all swim centres employ teachers with appropriate training and licencing to be teaching learn to swim and water safety programs and encourages parents to ensure their children are being taught by appropriately and currently accredited AUSTSWIM licenced teachers™ and in doing so parents are urged to ask if their child's swimming teacher, is a licenced AUSTSWIM teacher™

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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TEACHING OF SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY**