

Media Release

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Keep kids in sight around water this summer

South western Sydney residents are being urged to ensure the safety of children in and around the water this summer, particularly if they are new to Australia.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Director of Population Health, Dr Stephen Conaty, said children could drown silently and in a very short space of time.

“It is so important for everyone to keep an eye on children, whether it is around the backyard pool, at the beach or at a public pool,” he said.

“Australians love spending their summer in and around the water, and many of our newest residents come from countries that don’t have the same water culture and water awareness.”

Dr Conaty said all parents, whether they were new to Australia or had lived here all their lives, needed to ensure that their children could swim and float in water.

“Children can begin to learn to swim at a very young age, and even the ability to float could save their lives,” he said.

“All children should be taught how to swim, particularly if they and their family are newly arrived in Australia.

“If a child gets into difficulties in the water, the more they can do to sustain themselves until help arrives, the more likely it is they will survive.”

Drowning is one of the main causes of death for children under the age of five, and in NSW an average of 13 children aged between 0 and 17 died each year between 2002 and 2015.

Another 84 children were involved in non-fatal drowning incidents.

Dr Conaty emphasised the importance of parents and family members learning CPR and knowing what to do in the event of a drowning incident.

“It is also important to ensure that your backyard pool complies with Australian safety standards for pool fencing,” he said.

“Always know where your children are and make sure someone is always watching them and is close enough to quickly come to their aid if need be.”

Water Safety Tips:

- Ensure backyard pools are surrounded by a pool fence compliant with Australian standards

- Always supervise children when they are in or near the water and be close enough to be able to help them
- Teach your children how to swim and how to behave in and around water
- Learn CPR and know what to do in an emergency – keep a resuscitation chart clearly displayed in the pool area

Source and more information: www.kidsafensw.org, www.surflifesaving.com.au,
www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au.