

# MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP  
Federal Member for Wannon



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## TAKE CARE WHEN COOLING OFF AROUND WATER

With the weather already warming up for summer, Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker is urging Western Victorians to maintain constant supervision of children in and around water.

“Australians have developed a lifestyle in and around water. Local beaches, rivers and swimming pools play a large and inviting part in the average Western Victorian’s summer, however it is important to always be alert to the ever-present risk of drowning,” Mr Hawker said.

“Last summer, 32 children lost their lives to drowning. 60% of those drowned in a backyard pool.

“These are disturbing figures, and I urge all local pool owners to take preventative measures and check the backyard pool area. Royal Life Saving has developed a free checklist you can access at [www.homepoolsafety.com.au](http://www.homepoolsafety.com.au), which includes important tips like removing pot plants from around pool fences and cutting back any overhanging branches that might provide a means of entry for any adventurous children.”

Mr Hawker said it’s not just toddlers at risk of drowning, with the majority of drowning deaths in older children aged between 5 and 14 occurring in rivers.

“Teenage boys are particularly at risk, and it is important you give your children, no matter what age, the information and skills to accurately judge the risks posed by natural waterways,” he said.

“In addition, and despite Australia being blessed with beaches that are among the safest in the world, people are still drowning around the coast in unacceptable numbers.

“In 2008-09 there were 94 coastal drowning deaths around the country. This is despite the extensive network of services provided by volunteer surf lifesavers, lifeguards, rescue helicopters, boats, jet skis, cameras and radio control rooms.

“Again, males continue to dominate the drowning figures, and it is interesting to note that 47 per cent of drowning victims live less than 10km from the coastline.

“These figures show that, no matter how familiar you are with the water, you must always treat waterways and beaches with care and respect. If you’re at the beach, swim between the flags, and even if you’re just enjoying a paddle or a fish off the rocks, make sure you know how to swim.

“We are blessed to live in a part of the world with such easy access to recreational water activities. So have fun in the water this summer, but take the necessary care to protect yourself and your family from tragedy,” Mr Hawker said.

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