



19 September 2012

### **Pool safety is paramount**

With approximately 2, 350 residential swimming pools in the City of Nedlands it is paramount that the safety is in line with the relevant legislation. Many Australian families have backyard pools and as we head into the spring and summer months it is an ideal time to remember that drowning is the biggest cause of accidental death from zero to five-year-olds.

“It is important for parents to remain alert during the summer months and Christmas holidays as their children play and swim with friends and family in their backyard swimming pools”

“Drowning continues to be a significant problem in Australia and can be easily prevented,” said Mayor Hipkins.

The Royal Life Saving Society regularly conducts resuscitation course and it is advised from the City of Nedlands that parents take all of the necessary steps in preventing and protecting their children from the risk of drowning.

This year the city is currently carrying out its round of required inspections of approximately 790 swimming pools. All pools in WA are required to meet a certain safety standards. The City is finding that certain minor issues are common across a majority of pools inspected so far.

If the following items were considered it would enable a more efficient and effective inspection that will maintain WA’s low swimming pool incident rate.

The City of Nedlands are bound by legislation that requires every swimming pool in the City to be inspected by an authorised person to ensure safety is not only maintained but upgraded to the currently adopted Australian Standard (AS 1926.1 1993).

In the past, this has been carried out by inspectors contracted by the City. From this year the City is carrying out these inspections using a suitably qualified employee and we are already finding that a number of pools and enclosures are not safe to current standards.

**Pool owners should be aware that regulations are periodically upgraded and pools which once met requirements may not now comply with new regulations.**

The authorised employee and therefore the City have no choice but to ask for remedial work to be done.

Common issues that have been apparent are as follows:

- Gates/Doors not self closing and latching from all positions
- Climbable objects within 1200mm (arch) of the pool fence – including trees/branches, flower pots, tables etc
- Fence height at a minimum height of 1200mm
- Pool gate to swing away from pool area
- Gate latch to be at 1500 mm height (or shielded on the inside of gate)
- Windows which open onto pool area can only open a maximum of 100mm (or have a protective screen in place)
- Door which opens onto the pool area, latch to be 1500mm above floor level

The above are just general items, for more information visit the State Government Building Commission website <http://www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au/docs/brochures/poolspasfactsheet.pdf>

Let’s keep our children safe these summer holidays.

ENDS