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## **UPDATED PRACTICE NOTE NO. 15: WATER SAFETY AND WATER SAFETY WEEK 2010**

The purpose of this circular is to inform councils that an updated version of *Practice Note No. 15: Water Safety* is now available on the Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet's website at [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au) (under 'Publications' and 'Directory of Policy Advice for Councils – Water Safety'). The Circular also advises councils about *Water Safety Week 2010* and encourages councils to undertake relevant initiatives.

### **Water Safety Practice Note**

The Practice Note aims to assist councils carry out their water safety functions in relation to public swimming pools, beaches and other waterways under their care and control. It includes information about:

- the legislative and policy context for councils' water safety functions
- councils' water safety functions, including the performance of regulatory activities and the provision of services
- risk management approaches to water safety
- recommended minimum standards for the training of water safety personnel
- number of trained water safety personnel
- equipment, facilities, signage and other safety considerations
- additional resources.

The Practice Note has been updated to ensure it remains current and relevant to the needs of councils. The updates are based on a review of the Practice Note guided by the Standards Sub-Committee of the NSW Water Safety Advisory Council and feedback provided by councils and other water safety stakeholders. The main updates to the Practice Note are:

- addition of information in the risk management section
- addition of a section on responsibilities of stakeholders other than councils
- clarification of the regulatory and service functions of councils
- addition of information on beach safety, agreements with user groups and maintaining swimming enclosure barriers, rock fishing, water quality, private or 'backyard' swimming pools (provided in the context of where to get further information)
- information on contact organisation details and resources.

Councils should note that minor changes to Appendices 3 and 4 of the Practice Note will need to be made to provide updated information on the recommended competencies for employees and volunteer lifeguards at aquatic facilities and beaches following endorsement of the relevant national training packages currently under review. This is anticipated to occur later in 2010 or early in 2011.

### **Water Safety Week 2010**

The NSW Government's Water Safety Advisory Council will be promoting Water Safety Week 2010 from 24 September – 30 September 2010 to coincide with the official start of the 2010-11 swimming season.

The primary aim of the Week is to increase community awareness of the importance of water safety in the lead up to summer and the swimming season through focusing attention on a range of events held at the State, regional and local levels.

The Week will begin with the traditional 'Raise the Flag' ceremony on Friday 24 September to mark the beginning of the beach swimming season and Surf Life Saving patrols. The week will conclude with the NSW Water Safety Awards to be held on Thursday 30 September. Award nomination forms are available from the Austswim website at: [www.austswim.com.au/nsw.htm#award](http://www.austswim.com.au/nsw.htm#award).

Councils are encouraged to utilise Water Safety Week 2010 to hold water safety-related activities and events, which would normally be held around this time, and to launch or implement any new water safety initiatives.

Examples of initiatives that councils have previously undertaken during Water Safety Week include:

- Free Active Family Fun days at public swimming pools with activities focussing on water safety and survival skills
- Free 'Come and try it' classes in learn to swim, life saving, squad swimming and swimming assessments
- Static displays in council administration buildings promoting the Week and displaying information about pool and beach safety
- Mail-outs to pool owners within their local government area that may include resources relevant to backyard swimming pools, such as *Swimming Pool Laws* and the *Home Pool Safety Checklist*.

Further information about Water Safety Week events, awards and initiatives can be found on the NSW Government's Safewaters website at: [www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au).



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