



**Troy Grant**  
Minister for Police  
Minister for Emergency Services

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 15 December 2017

### **NEW WATER SAFETY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AFTER DROWNING SPIKE LAST SUMMER**

Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant today launched a new Government advertising campaign – Be Water Safe, Not Sorry – to increase water safety awareness and deter risky behaviour that could lead to drowning.

Mr Grant said that last summer NSW experienced the highest number of drowning fatalities since 2008-09, with 41 people tragically losing their lives in NSW waterways, including 17 over the nine days between Christmas and 2 January 2017.

“As we enter the Aussie Christmas holidays, I urge people to remember that where there is water, there is danger,” Mr Grant said.

“We want locals and visitors to enjoy our beaches, rivers, lakes and pools this summer and we’re pleading with everyone to look out for one another to avoid tragedy.

“Last summer’s news headlines were marred with water accidents and I call on everyone to act responsibly and remain vigilant. Together let’s make this summer a safe one.”

“Everyone can do their part to ensure families aren’t devastated by the loss of a loved one as a result of drowning.”

The advertising campaign aims to educate people of the very real risks associated with water, and what they can do to ensure they stay safe, including:

- Always supervise small children in or near water – don’t get distracted by your phone, people at your door, or attending to other children;
- Stay sober – don’t drink or take drugs and then go swimming or participate in a water-based activity; and
- Swim at patrolled beaches, where possible – no flags means lifesavers, so don’t overestimate your swimming ability.

The campaign is based on the findings of a report commissioned by the NSW Government from Royal Life Saving NSW, which found that beaches and swimming pools were the leading locations for drowning, accounting for nearly 25 per cent of fatalities each.

A further 34 per cent drowned in inland waterways like rivers, creeks, streams, dams and lakes.

The report also found that 78 per cent of those who lost their life to drowning were men, with young males aged 25-34 years the most at risk.

Importantly, the vast majority of those who drowned were not international or interstate visitors, which is a common misconception.

More than 70 per cent of victims lived within 100km of where they drowned and over 50 per cent were from Sydney. In fact only one overseas visitor lost their life to drowning last summer in NSW.

The Be Water Safe, Not Sorry campaign will be rolled out across print, radio, social media and Spotify, focusing on the most common locations and behaviours that lead to drowning.

For more information on the NSW Government's Be Water Safe, Not Sorry campaign, please visit: [www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au](http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au)

For further information on the Royal Life Saving Summer Drowning Report 2016-17, please visit: <http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/Reports-Current/NSW-Summer-Drowning-Report-2016-to-2017.PDF>

**Media: Douglas Martin | 0438 371 354**