



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

Minister's Message

Take the time to learn about water safety. Teach your kids. It could save their lives.

As a father of three, nothing distresses me more than hearing about another child who has drowned needlessly and another family that has been torn apart forever. It's a fact that children who are educated about water safety are far less likely to meet with such a tragic end.

Laurie Lawrence is a former Olympic swimming coach and preeminent water safety campaigner. His technical expertise and passion for improving the survival skills of our kids in the water has led to the development of this outstanding new educational curriculum for children aged five and under.

The Australian Government aims to reduce drowning deaths by 50 per cent by 2020. But it must be a shared journey with all Australians. Young families, in particular, have a crucial role to play; the *2012–13 National Drowning Report*, produced by the Royal Life Saving Society Australia, identified a rise in the number of deaths of children aged less than four years.

We want Australians of all ages to enjoy themselves in the water and to relish this important part of our lifestyle. It's for this reason the Government supported the development of this new curriculum, which builds upon the highly successful *Living with Water* DVD.

The new educational resources include songs, videos and books to assist with teaching water safety in early childhood settings and will improve water safety at the beach, in homes, on farms and around pools.

The release of these resources is a significant step in the Government's *Saving Lives in the Water* initiative and builds on our other key water safety programmes including:

- the Royal Life Saving Society- Australia's Keep Watch home pool safety campaign and its Swim and Survive programme;
- Surf Life Saving Australia's Beach to Bush, black spots, life saver and public safety education programmes; and
- AUSTSWIM's instructor training and accreditation programmes.

I encourage carers, teachers and early childhood educators to make use of these new resources to keep young children safe in the water.

PETER DUTTON