

# Media Release



**Government of South Australia**

Office of Consumer and  
Business Affairs

Contact: **Carolyn Warman**  
Phone: (08) 8204 9507  
0417 815 800

**Education and  
Information Services**

Ground Floor  
Chesser House  
91-97 Grenfell Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1719  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 225

Tel 08 8204 9516  
Fax 08 8204 9509

[www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)

30 December 2009

## **Warning to pool owners to avoid horrific injuries**

Pool owners are urged to make sure that skimmer box covers are adequately secured at all times, after a Western Australian boy suffered serious injuries from sitting on a skimmer box.

Skimmer boxes are connected to swimming pool pumps and have powerful suction. When the four year old boy sat on a skimmer box vital internal organs were sucked from his body. The boy is expected to recover, but other children who've sat on skimmer boxes over the years unfortunately have not survived.

Deputy Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Anne Gale, said "Pool owners need to check that their skimmer box covers are firmly fastened to prevent life threatening injuries from occurring to children in the warm weather leading up to New Year."

"Children love spending time in swimming pools during the summer months, and we don't want their fun to end in tragedy."

Many in-ground fibreglass pools built in the 1980's had skimmer boxes incorporated into the moulding of the pool, with the design resembling a seat and having an easily removable cover. Such pools have been banned from supply in South Australia since 1989, and the current Australian standard for swimming pools (introduced in 2003) sets out requirements for the design and placement of skimmer boxes.

It seems that the recent Western Australian incident occurred in a swimming pool that was nearly 30 years old with a seat-style skimmer box.

"Older pools may not comply with the current safety standard for swimming pools, and so I urge pool owners to check that the skimmer box covers are securely fastened."

If the cover cannot be adequately secured, consumers are advised to have the cover modified.

Ms Gale warned pool owners that anytime an old or new skimmer box cover is removed for cleaning or maintenance children should be kept well away from the box, until the cover has been re-secured using the locking devices.

"I encourage pool owners to be vigilant in supervising children around swimming pools at all times, and to make some simple checks to reduce the safety risks to pool users."

For more information about skimmer box safety consumers can contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs' safety section on 8152 0732, or 131 882 for country callers, or visit the website at [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)