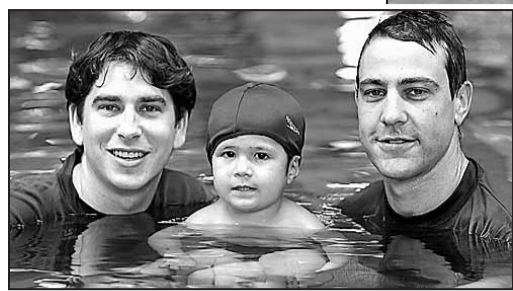


Online help for learners



Basic tips to avoid swim tragedies

A WEBSITE that teaches the basics of child water safety has given parents another avenue to help avert pool tragedies.

The Uswim site, developed by Brisbane swim teachers Ben Douglas and Nick Folley, was originally aimed at providing online classes to people in rural Queensland.

"It's grown a lot from there, but we've kept to four simple steps that parents can follow to see just where their kids are in (pool safety) ability," Mr Douglas said.

"We don't see it as a replacement for learn-to-swim classes, but it's another tool which hopefully will give kids the skills to be safe and confident in the water."

The pool safety message has the backing of Seoul Olympics 200m freestyle gold medallist and TV commentator Duncan Armstrong.

"We have too many drownings ... and that's why we need people



CONFIDENCE: Harper Rees uses a kickboard; and Harper with swim teachers Nick Folley and Ben Douglas (inset) Pictures: **Jono Searle**

like Laurie Lawrence with his Kids Alive! Do the Five program and the Uswim program to provide different avenues, depending on your lifestyle, to ensure parents have water safety solutions," Armstrong said.

Lisa Beaumont's son, Harper Rees, has been learning to swim using the techniques outlined by Uswim.

Ms Beaumont said the website provided useful information which could help parents teach their

children to be safe in the water. "Parents need to know what level their child should be at so they are able to feel confident about them being around water."

Nicole Jennings has been taking her five-year-old son Ethan to swim classes since he was 10 months old, and says online guides give her confidence to pass on safety skills.

"It's important that you and your child are confident in the water," she said.

Brett Judge

Re-check on pools

Campaign spurs action

Sarah Vogler

ROUTINE pool re-inspections will be introduced by some Queensland councils as a result of *The Sunday Mail's* Safe Summer pool safety awareness campaign.

Pools in Gladstone and the Sunshine Coast will be re-checked. Safety reviews may be considered in Redlands, Toowoomba and Bundaberg, depending on budgetary and legal considerations.

But Brisbane City Council, which has more than 85,000 pools in its area, and Logan City, with 13,000 pools, said they were not considering an audit of pool safety requirements.

Pool-safety advocates say laws are being widely ignored with many pool owners deliberately adjusting fences and gates after an inspection, and others failing to maintain safety devices.

Houses with pools are routinely sold without any safety inspection required.

The Sunday Mail, which has backed pool re-inspections as part of the Safe Summer campaign, surveyed 25 councils in the most populated areas of the state. Some pools have not been safety-inspected for more than five years.

Gladstone and the Sunshine Coast regional councils have scheduled re-



inspections. Bundaberg Regional Council said a program could be considered under next year's budget.

Toowoomba Regional Council, where there are about 3000 registered pools, has made about 300 new inspections this year. A spokesman said the council would investigate re-inspections.

The Gold Coast, which has the state's second-highest number of pools, did not respond to *The Sunday Mail*.

In Redland City, where there are about 14,000 domestic pools, more than 1340 pool safety inspections have been made over the past two years, with the vast majority being new applications.

Brisbane City Council families and community services chairwoman Geraldine Knapp said current laws allowed for re-inspections if councils wanted to conduct them.

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