Media Release

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Pool, spas and safety barriers must meet Australian Standards

As summer approaches, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is reminding building practitioners of their obligations when building, installing or renovating a swimming pool, spa or safety barriers.

In Victoria, construction and installation of swimming pools, spas and safety barriers are subject to strict requirements under the Building Regulations 2006, which detail mandatory requirements to meet the Australian Standard.

VBA Director of Technical and Regulation Jarrod Edwards said that by ensuring work complies with the building regulations, practitioners can play a vital role in improving safety outcomes around pools and spas.

“Non-compliance can increase the risk of drowning and lead to prosecution by the VBA,” Mr Edwards said. “Builders who engage in the construction of a pool or spa and associated safety barriers must be across the standards.

“Part of the VBA’s role as the building and plumbing regulator is to increase awareness among practitioners and consumers of the regulations and the need for compliance. This includes providing information on the installation of swimming pools, spas and barriers, such as Practice Note PN-05-2014-Swimming pools, spas and safety.”

A person building or installing a swimming pool or spa must be registered as either a Domestic Builder-Unlimited (DB-U) or a Domestic Builder-Limited Swimming Pools (DB-L S). A Domestic Builder-Limited Gates (DB-L G) can complete works relating to the installation of inground or aboveground pools or spas, including paving and fencing.

Swimming pool and spa regulations in Victoria include requirements that:

- A building permit, issued by a registered building surveyor, must be obtained to construct a pool or spa and the associated safety barriers.

- A registered builder must be engaged under a written domestic building contract to carry out building work in excess of $5000 (including labour and materials).

- All swimming pools and spas more than 300mm (30cm) deep must have a safety barrier that meets the Australian Standard. This rule also applies to inflatable or relocatable pools and spas.

- During construction it is the builder’s responsibility to provide a temporary barrier. Once construction is complete it becomes the property owner’s responsibility to ensure their pool is safe, and that a compliant temporary barrier remains in place until a permanent, compliant barrier is installed.

- Safety barriers must not be installed near structures that children can use to climb to access the swimming pool or spa.

Mr Edwards said compliance with the regulations in relation to swimming pools, spas and safety barriers is essential to protect and save lives.

“The person in charge of the building work must ensure the necessary permits for a pool or spa are obtained. This also applies to safety barriers - either temporary or permanent - which must be in place at all times. These simple measures will save young lives at risk of drowning and ensure that Australian Standards are met.”

For more information on swimming pools and spas refer to the VBA’s information sheet About swimming pools, spas and their safety barriers or visit, www.vba.vic.gov.au.

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