Mornington, Geelong, Boroondara top pool builders in the state
VBA says know the pool and spa regulations before you dive in

As Victoria moves into summer, new figures from the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) show that 10 municipalities account for almost half of the swimming pool and spa permits issued in Victoria in the past year.

In the 12 months to September 2014, building surveyors issued 6,498 building permits for swimming pools and spas in Victoria. Of these, 2,784 involved projects in Boroondara (491), Mornington Peninsula (491), Greater Geelong (316), Bayside (312), Casey (245), Stonnington (202), Greater Bendigo (196), Glen Eira (189), Manningham (177), and Yarra Ranges (165).

The VBA’s Director of Technical and Regulation, Jarrod Edwards, said the number of permits issued is a good guide to the popularity of pools with Victorian homeowners.

“Building and installing a pool or spa can cost thousands of dollars, so many people will be buying inflatable pools and spas as a cheaper alternative. However, they may not realise that inflatable pools can still pose a serious safety risk for young children if they aren’t properly fenced,” Mr Edwards said.

“The VBA is concerned that when people are buying a pool or spa, they are not aware that all swimming pools and spas that can hold more than 30cm of water must have a safety fence or barrier that complies with Victorian building regulations. This includes inflatable and relocatable pools.”

Swimming pools account for more drowning deaths in Australia than beaches, according to the Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report. Four people drowned in Victorian swimming pools in the 12 months leading up to July 2014.

“Any pool or spa owner who doesn’t comply with swimming pool fencing regulations is putting their family and friends at risk. They also risk fines of more than $7300.”

“Having a safety fence or barrier around your swimming pool or spa is essential for safety, especially for young children as well as older people, as new figures have shown.”

Mr Edwards said pool gates should never be propped open, and there should not be any climbable trees or other objects near the fence that can be used by a young child to climb on and get over the fence, or reach and unlatch a pool gate.

“The VBA is writing to pool and spa retailers and working with the Swimming Pool and Spa Association (SPASA) to ensure retailers understand pool safety regulations and explain the requirements to their customers.”

For more information about swimming pool regulations and for a copy of the VBA’s brochure ‘About swimming pools, spas and their safety barriers’, visit www.vba.vic.gov.au

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