



## Illawarra Mercury

Tuesday 16/11/2021

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# Lockdown raises kids' drowning risk

MORE than 50 per cent of kids are not learning how to swim, with a number of them forced out of lessons due to COVID restrictions, new research from Swim Australia has revealed.

The SwimSAFER Report, commissioned as part of the annual SwimSAFER Week, discovered only 37 per cent of parents planned to enrol their child in official lessons within the next six months.

The study also showed 31 per cent of children had been out of swimming lessons for at least six months.

To encourage children's love of the water and pro-

mote the value of swimming lessons, toy company Hasbro is collaborating with Swim Australia to support SwimSAFER week with a campaign featuring heroes from pre-school brand PJ MASKS. Ambassadors Olympic gold medallist Leisel Jones, Olympian Alex Graham and Paralympian Brenden Hall launched the campaign in Unanderra yesterday.

"You might put your child into ballet or soccer but those skills will never save your life," Ms Jones said.

"Learning to swim is crucial, it's non-negotiable."



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**DIVE IN:** Olympic gold medallist Leisel Jones, Olympian Alex Graham and Paralympian Brenden Hall are part of a push to get kids back in the pool.