



## Western Weekender Penrith

Friday 12/11/2021

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# SWIM SAFETY

WITH JULIE SHELDRAKE • NEPEAN AQUATIC CENTRE & EVA BORY'S SWIM SCHOOL • 4730 8900

## SwimSAFER week's vital message

It's SwimSAFER week!

As I watch this year's cohort of Year 12 students start to sit their HSC exams, it struck me that when I finished high school I had no idea of the twists and turns in my career that would lead me to very proudly becoming the 2021 NSW SwimSAFER ambassador, on behalf of Swim Australia's annual SwimSAFER week, November 15-21.

Now in its eighth year, nearly 500 registered swim schools will participate in the campaign across Australia. As a swim school we are dedicated to helping families discover the joy of swimming every week and are concerned about the recent increase in drownings, as research revealed 55 per cent of children are not learning to swim, with 27 per cent forced out of lessons due to COVID restrictions and 28 per cent unable to find class availability at their local swim school.

*The SwimSAFER Report*, commissioned by Swim Australia, discovered only 37 per cent of parents

planned to enrol their child in official lessons within the next six months, with 29 per cent planning to teach their child themselves. We support families having fun and helping children outside of lessons become more confident with their swimming skills but the right foundations need to be developed with trained professionals.

Swim Australia advocates that swimming year-round, learning vital water safety skills, and participating in the SwimSAFER Week will help kids become safer,

smarter and stronger in the water, and also in everyday life. The campaign has some high profile ambassadors this year including Olympians Leisel Jones, Brendon Hall and Alexander Graham, and a partnership with PJ Masks to get our little swim students excited about the swim safety messages that their animated heroes will deliver!

Why SwimSAFER, rather than SwimSAFE? Children can never be 100 per cent safe around water – there is always a risk. Which is why

layers of protection are so important – fence the pool, shut the gate, learn to swim, always supervise, and learn CPR.

Not all children are lucky enough to get the opportunity to learn the water safety skills that could save their life. Swim it Forward's mission is to save lives by making learn to swim accessible to as many children as possible across Australia. 55 per cent of Australian children are not currently in lessons, but drowning is still the number one cause of accidental death in children under five, and we saw a 108 per cent increase in drownings since lockdowns in this age group, with hundreds more suffering life altering injuries and disabilities because of a submersion.

For every child we help place into a learn to swim program, the more we lower the risk of drowning deaths.

You can donate to Swim It Forward by visiting [swimsafer.org.au](http://swimsafer.org.au).

Stay SAFER!



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**SwimSAFER Week 2021**

**Swimming is my SUPERPOWER**

[swimsafer.org.au](http://swimsafer.org.au)

ascta Swim AUSTRALIA Swim to Survival Little Swimmers vorgee

365 days Swim SAFER

Disney+ Now streaming on Disney+

The poster features a central image of a swimmer in a blue suit and goggles, surrounded by the PJ Masks characters: Owlette, Catboy, and Gekko. The background is a bright blue pool setting. Logos for '365 days Swim SAFER', 'SwimSAFER Week 2021', 'Swimming is my SUPERPOWER', and 'swimsafer.org.au' are prominently displayed. At the bottom, logos for 'ascta', 'Swim AUSTRALIA', 'Swim to Survival', 'Little Swimmers', and 'vorgee' are shown. The Disney+ logo is also present with the text 'Now streaming on Disney+'.