



09 May 2017

Knox Leader, Melbourne

Author: Suzan Delibasic • Section: General News • Article type : News Item  
Audience : 57,937 • Page: 4 • Printed Size: 142.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: VIC • Country: Australia  
ASR: AUD 695 • Words: 250 • Item ID: 771051309

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**KNOX**

## Leader campaign leads to overhaul of pool fencing laws



**Suzan Delibasic**

BACKYARD pools and spas will have to be fully fenced under groundbreaking reforms proposed by the State Government.

The changes mean houses will no longer be able to form part of a pool barrier and uniform standards will apply for all pools, regardless of when they were built.

Leader launched a Make Pools Safe campaign last summer, calling for changes after the drowning death of a Croydon South toddler in his unfenced backyard pool.

Less than two months after the campaign was launched, the government admitted more needed to be done and told Leader in January fencing rules would be reviewed.

Pool and spa owners will be given a grace period and will

have to comply by 2020.

It will cost up to \$3000, on average, to install compliant barriers and safety gates.

The State Government also confirmed changes to the Building Act, which will grant inspectors new powers to enter premises and check whether barriers are compliant.

A statewide pool register was also being considered, as well as mandatory inspections every three years.

Last week, Planning Minister Richard Wynne said it was time for “a proper overhaul of our regulations”.

The Coroner had last week called for urgent reforms after yet another backyard drowning inquest into the death of a Melton South toddler at a rental property.

It is the fourth time since 2012 the Coroner has recommended the government introduce new laws, including a statewide pool register.

People can comment on the proposed changes from mid-May.