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Pool fence pledge

By Luke Costin

EVERY Victorian pool and spa will be fenced by 2020 as the government heeds repeated calls from the coroner to prevent child deaths.

A statewide pool register is also being considered, giving authorities knowledge of the locations of all pools and spas.

Fencing could cost up to \$3000 per pool with owners given a grace period to fence them off if their pools were built before May 2010.

All pools built since May 2010 require a four-sided isolation fence but those built before that have allowed direct access from the house or any other building.

“We know that bringing pools and spas up to scratch will be a significant cost, but we make no apology for taking action to prevent these tragic deaths,” Planning Minister Richard Wynne said in a statement on Thursday.

The state coroner slammed the “seemingly perpetually inadequate” regulation of Victorian pools in a report, released on Tuesday, on the drowning of a toddler in 2015.

It was the fourth time in five years that the coroner had called for pool safety reform.

The government says it will explore the feasibility of three-yearly mandatory inspections and an education campaign aimed at adults increasing supervision of children near pools and spas.

Coronial data shows adult supervision was found to be inadequate at the time of all 26 child drownings in back-

yard pools in Victoria from 2000 to 2015.

The public will be invited to have their say on the proposed regulations from May 18.