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MANNINGHAM

Pressure mounts on pool safety

Call for backyard inspections as regulations are reviewed

Samantha Landy

LEADER'S campaign to fix Victoria's outdated pool fencing laws is having far-reaching results.

Following our campaign, launched in December last year, authorities are acting to fix pool fencing laws in a bid to reduce the number of drownings.

Now Victoria's peak real estate body has called for mandatory inspections of backyard pools every two years, saying new government-proposed reforms don't go far enough.

The State Government is proposing four-sided isolation barriers for all pools and spas, no matter when they were built, as part of its review of building regulations, which have just ex-

pired. Under these plans, pool and spa owners will need to comply by 2020. Upgrades are expected to cost owners \$3000.

The Government is also considering a statewide register of all pools and spas, and an education campaign reminding adults that children need to be supervised.

It has not ruled out regular mandatory inspections.

Real Estate Institute of Victoria chief executive Gil King said industry experts were demanding mandatory barrier inspections.

He felt the Government's proposed action ignored this advice and said pool safety checks should be made every 24 months, as they are in WA, NSW and Queensland.

This call has been backed for Victoria by several bodies

including the Swimming Pool and Spa Association, Kidsafe Victoria, Life Saving Victoria, and Aquatics and Recreation Victoria.

The REIV also wants mandatory pool barrier safety certificates, calling this another "proven" lifesaver.

These would be issued by councils or an independent pool barrier inspector, confirming that a pool or spa barrier complied with safety regulations at the time of sale or lease.

Tighter rules have been welcomed by Ahmed and Rania Abdelmegeed, whose son Mohamed, six, drowned in a neighbour's pool when the family lived in Doncaster East in 2010.

They say if these rules save even one other child they are worth it.



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Six-year-old Mohamed Abdelmegeed drowned in a Doncaster East pool in 2010.