

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



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## **DON'T BE THE UNSINKABLE GUY, RETHINK BEFORE A DAY ON WATER**

A new advertising campaign is warning men in Victoria not to think they are an 'Unsinkable Guy' in a push to reduce drowning deaths across the state.

A staggering four out of five drowning deaths in Victoria over the past 10 years have involved men aged 25 to 64.

Inflatable 'unsinkable guys' feature in the TV, radio, print, digital and social media campaign to highlight a number of the dangers that led to 61 drownings in 2020-21.

Close to one third of all drowning deaths in the state over the past decade involved alcohol.

The advertising campaign commences on Sunday as part of a new summer water safety messaging this year to reach at-risk groups in the community in the hopes of a safer summer.

The campaign is built on extensive research that shows men often underestimate drowning dangers to themselves, despite looking out for others. The campaign asks them to rethink their risks around the water.

The research shows that men are also less likely to heed water safety messages.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today also launched a new Victorian *Water Safety Strategy* to encourage people to safely enjoy activities in and around the water and to drive drownings to zero.

Drowning related deaths are a risk across the community, with the Strategy aimed at reducing the risk at beaches, lakes, rivers and dams, at home, as well as public and private pools and ponds.

The new Water Safety Strategy for 2021-25 maps out steps to tackle a range of contributing factors such as the growing number of people visiting the water, demand for water safety education programs, and education for people using recreational vessels.

The Government is investing \$8.5 million with Life Saving Victoria for critical water safety initiatives to help reduce the number of drownings in Victoria and support the extension of the lifesaving season in 2021-22.

A further \$71.5 million is supporting swimming lessons and resources for primary school children.

The *Water Safety Strategy* can be found at [vic.gov.au/victorian-water-safety-strategy](https://vic.gov.au/victorian-water-safety-strategy).

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes**

*"Nobody is unsinkable – too many Victorians have been lost to water tragedies who could still be with their loved ones today."*

*"We're urging all Victorians to be alert to potential risks around water so that we can all have a safe and fun summer – but particularly men who tend to underestimate and misjudge the risks to themselves."*

*"We want all Victorians to enjoy our beautiful waterways this summer, but we also want them all to come home – the Unsinkable Guy reminds us all that there are still risks around water."*

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