

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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VICTORIANS URGED TO BE CAREFUL DURING EXTREME HEAT

The Andrews Labor Government is pleading with Victorians to heed the warnings this summer and look after themselves and others – particularly the elderly and young children – when the weather heats up.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today joined Victoria's Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Brett Sutton, Ambulance Victoria and the Bureau of Meteorology to promote the *Never Leave Kids in Cars* and *Survive the Heat* campaigns.

The Labor Government's *Never Leave Kids in Cars* campaign warns parents about the dangers of leaving children in hot cars where they are at great risk of life-threatening heatstroke, dehydration and organ damage.

The temperature inside a car can double in just minutes in extreme conditions and a child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's, meaning there is no safe amount of time to leave children unattended.

Between 1 September 2017 and August 31 2018, paramedics responded to 1,587 calls to people 'locked in vehicles' – the majority being children aged under 13. The five local government areas with the most callouts were Casey (113), Wyndham (79), Whittlesea (69), Greater Geelong (60) and Hume (60).

Extreme heat kills more people in Australia than any natural disaster and can affect anybody – during the 2009 heatwave, the number of deaths in Victoria was 374 more than under normal conditions and almost 80 per cent of those deaths were people over 65. During the 2014 heatwave the number of deaths increased by 167.

On a 44 degree day in January 2014, there was a 700 per cent increase in paramedic call outs for cardiac arrests.

The *Survive the Heat* campaign urges Victorians to take heatwaves as seriously as they would any natural disaster.

Simple steps to stay safe during heatwaves include:

- Drinking more water by taking small sips from a drink bottle throughout the day
- Keeping cool and seeking out air-conditioned buildings
- Planning ahead and scheduling activities in the coolest part of the day
- Looking out for most vulnerable – this might be your neighbour living alone or the elderly.

People at the highest risk of heat exhaustion include people aged over 65, people with a pre-existing medical condition, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and babies and young children.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"We want Victorians, especially the elderly and those with medical conditions, to stop underestimating heatwaves – they are just as dangerous as floods and bushfires and we need to be prepared."

"Hot cars can kill. Even if you'll only be a couple of minutes, you should never leave kids unattended in cars."

Quote attributable to Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Brett Sutton

"Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can affect anyone, but isolated elderly people are especially at risk. That is why, as a community, we need to look out for one another and check on your neighbours on hot days."

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