

Gladstone Aquatic Centre is happy to present you with your complimentary copy of Laurie Lawrence's *Living with Water: A Comprehensive Guide to Water Safety for Under 5s*

Last year, there were 50 children (0-17) who drowned in Australia. Nearly two-thirds were under the age of five<sup>1</sup>. Enrolling your child in swimming lessons from an early age is not only a fun, healthy activity but a safety measure as well.

Childhood is the best time to prepare children for a life of safe aquatic participation. These experiences will enable your child to increase their own confidence and further develop cognitively, socially and physically<sup>2</sup>. Some benefits of baby and pre-school swimming include:

- Early mastery of water skills give pre-school age children a head start in learning to swim,
- Learning to swim builds children's confidence and independence in a pleasant social setting. Young children or babies taking part in lessons improve their cognitive skills as they follow the teacher's instructions - responding for example to verbal cues for breath-holding,
- Babies less than one year old accept the water more readily than older children. Children who become familiar with water early attending lessons in a supportive and fun environment, are far less likely to develop fear of the water,
- The gravity-free environment of the pool means that pre-school age children can exercise a bigger range of muscles in the water,
- Water helps improve coordination and balance because babies and toddlers must move bilaterally to maintain their equilibrium,
- Babies usually eat and sleep better on swimming days because of the relaxing and appetite-stimulating effect of warm water combined with gentle exercise,
- Doctors often recommend swimming for children with asthma,
- Babies and toddlers flourish in the attention their parents lavish on them during swimming lessons; as babies and toddlers learn how to manoeuvre in the water on their own, independence and self-confidence blossoms,

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<sup>1</sup> *The National Drowning Report 2009* Royal Lifesaving Society of Australia

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.australianswimschool.com/uploads/Our\\_Infant\\_Program\(1\).pdf](http://www.australianswimschool.com/uploads/Our_Infant_Program(1).pdf)

- Swimming provides babies with lots of skin-to-skin contact with their parents that psychologists say deepens the bond between parent and child,
- A child who is involved in swimming lessons will develop their social and emotional skills through involvement with other children,
- Swimming helps improve muscle development, cardiovascular systems, coordination and fine motor skills. Children who have swimming lessons at an early age, if parents continue these lessons, can coordinate their motor movement much better than those who don't swim,
- Through talking about their movement skills in the water, their language skills are developed, and
- Swimming lessons are a great way to bond and build a strong relationship with your child.

Gladstone Aquatic Centre staff are AustSwim / Swim Australia accredited and have the expertise to determine the right lesson program for your child. Lessons are based on a progressive format with small class sizes. Lessons commence at 6 months of age through levelled lessons to stroke development and squad training. Lessons are held every week day in the heated, all-weather, Sister Kenny Memorial pool, part of the Gladstone Aquatic Centre complex.

For your free copy of " Laurie Lawrence's *Living with Water: A Comprehensive Guide to Water Safety for Under 5s* " and book swimming lessons for your child call Gladstone Aquatic Centre.

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