

state. Most States require boats to be registered with the Maritime Services Board. Regardless of MSB regulations, the prime factor is safety, particularly so if boats are being used in close proximity to bathers who are indistinguishable to boats travelling at speed. Always a hazard to power-boats is the chance of explosions due to petrol fumes building up in the engine compartments. Extreme caution should be exercised and frequent servicing and inspection of fuel lines, unions and electrical wiring should be carried out.

Water ski-ing is another area where consideration should be given to water safety. Fouling of propellers with tow ropes is a common occurrence. Many swimmers and skiers have been mutilated by boat drivers intent on picking up dropped skiers. Also, many skiers have been rendered unconscious or

suffered broken bones after having fallen from skis. Water can be aligned to concrete on impact when travelling at speed. Power-boat drivers should carefully scrutinise the area they are to use looking for submerged objects and be on the look-out for marker bouys denoting that divers are in the area. The application of common sense, the key-note to enjoying the pleasures of all forms of boating, should be to the fore. Water police cannot be expected to check every boat going into the water to ensure that adequate safety equipment is stowed onboard, not left at the launching site or more often in the car boot. In conclusion, a few tips worth mentioning that may save your life:—

\* Always inform someone of where you are boating, giving a precise location and the duration of your stay.

\* Alcohol and water do NOT mix when undertaking aquatic sports.

\* If boating in the sea make certain your craft is carrying adequate safety and distress signalling equipment and a cannister of fresh water.

\* Always wear a life jacket, some activity requires it to be continually inflated.

\* Listen to tide and weather forecasts before venturing on a boating trip.

\* If your boat is radio equipped make contact with a fishing club or radio monitoring agency.

\* Carry sufficient safety equipment for all onboard as well as such items as rope, lights, bucket etc.

**\* LEARN TO SWIM!!!**

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## A word from the waterwise . . .

by Sergeant Alan HOLLAND

Nearly a third of drowning victims in NSW last year were children under 5 years. The disturbing fact that the death rate of youngsters in this age group is rapidly increasing each year is undoubtedly caused by the rising popularity of backyard swimming pools. Children have little say about their fate when exposed to the aquatic environment. All children must be carefully watched when playing near water as most youngsters under nine cannot swim confidently.

They should never be left to wander alone near the water's edge. Allowing children to use plastic rings and floats without adequate supervision is also asking for trouble. Quite often the wind may move them out to deeper water. When they let go of the float they sink out of sight. Although floats help lessen a child's fear of water and help them learn to swim, the use of such aids

should always be supervised and restricted to this purpose.

All children should be taught to tread water and to float. Many times this has helped children to save themselves by remaining afloat until help has arrived. A frightened child is more likely to panic and drown. When enjoying weekends at the beach, a safe practice is to appoint an adult, capable of swimming, to supervise the activities of the children. Others in the group may take turns. Most drownings occur when people swim alone or at lonely unpatrolled areas. This is especially so in country districts where safe suitable swimming areas are not always available. A bather, whether swimming in a dam, river or at the beach, is advised never to swim alone and never to swim in lonely areas without first testing the depth of water and the nature of the bottom. Good swimmers only should

venture in water beyond their depth. There are several causes for swimmers becoming exhausted in the water and getting into difficulty. Firstly at the start of the swimming season many of them lack fitness. Secondly, they fail to realise that cold water drains swimmers of energy very quickly, and finally, distances across water are often deceptive and are usually greater than first anticipated.

The Royal Life Saving Society and the St. John's Ambulance Association conduct classes in resuscitation and knowledge of first aid to assist in the treatment of people suffering from respiratory and circulatory failures. Skills learned by attending classes held by both groups can assist in saving lives other than by drowning. Also, they can be applied in cases of heart attack, electric shock, collapse, epileptic fits, poisoning and severe shock.