
Thursday 10 March 2016

Victorian Coastal Drownings On The Rise

Life Saving Victoria and Ambulance Victoria are urging beach goers this Labour Day long weekend to take extra care in the water following an increase in coastal drownings.

17 people have lost their lives at Victorian beaches this financial year which is 7 more drowning deaths than the average over the previous five year period.

In total 28 people have fatally drowned since July, which is one more than the average for the previous five year period.

Thousands of people are expected to hit Victorian beaches this weekend as the weather warms up again.

Life Saving Victoria's Lifesaving Operations Manager Greg Scott said it's a timely reminder about the importance of swimming between the red and yellow flags.

"We always recommend swimming at a patrolled beach where possible and never swim alone," Mr Scott said.

"It's important to understand the conditions and check the weather forecast for any wind changes. Assess the conditions and your abilities and whether your activities are appropriate for the conditions."

Mr Scott said it's also imperative, yet difficult, to know how to identify and avoid a rip current.

"Characteristics of a rip current is that there tends to be deeper dark water, fewer breaking waves, sometimes sandy coloured water extending beyond the surf zone and debris or seaweed," Mr Scott said.

"If you're caught in a rip current, stay calm, raise an arm and call out to seek help.



For further information & interviews contact
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“We advise to float with the current or swim parallel to the beach. Reassess the situation – if what are doing isn’t working, try another option until you return to shore.”

Ambulance Victoria South Coast Group Manager Eddie Wright echoed the water safety messages.

“Australians love taking to the water, particularly when the weather is nice and we don’t expect the Labour Day long weekend to be any different,” Mr Wright said.

“Our paramedics unfortunately attend drownings and see the consequences of them as part of their role.

“Sadly, paramedics have attended a number of drownings and near-drownings at costal locations in the last few months.”

To check for patrolled beaches in Victoria please visit beachsafe.org.au



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