

28 October 2009

PREMIER COMMITS TO SAFETY CAMPAIGN FOR KIDS

Premier Nathan Rees announced today the Government would sponsor a Children's Safety Campaign to help parents prevent some of the most common accidents and injuries.

"Over recent weeks there have been some very sad cases that have prompted this campaign," said Mr Rees.

"The major cause of children being admitted to hospital from injuries is from falls.

"Between 1999 and 2008, over 470 children under the age of 15 fell from windows or balconies and tragically some of these falls resulted in a child's death.

"This month we have seen two incidents, one resulting in the death of a three year old who fell from the window of a Kogarah apartment.

"Our taskforce headed by Professor Danny Cass, head of trauma at the Westmead Children's Hospital will hold an experts meeting shortly to work through issues including regulations and legislation and report back to NSW Health.

"In the short term we are committing to a range measures that can be put in place quickly.

The campaign will consist of a number of elements:

- a print and radio advertising campaign on preventing window and balcony falls
- new safety information included in *'Blue Books'* provided at hospitals for new parents
- distributing safety brochures and posters to childcare centres, pre-schools, child and family health clinics and offices of Community Services
- working with the taskforce and its recommendations

"NSW Health will review overseas campaigns that have helped to reduce injuries by reminding parents to be more aware of simple things they can do.

Steps parents can take include:

- installing locks and guards so that windows can only open 10cm (these should be easily opened by adults in the case of fire)
- keeping furniture or anything a child can climb on away from windows;
- supervision around windows and balconies.

NSW Minister for Community Services Linda Burney said that with summer approaching, many parents might be tempted to leave windows open while children were playing inside, or at night.

"There are simple and cheap devices available that will allow you to let some fresh air in, but which also make it hard for smaller children to open a window or door enough to fit through.

"Sometimes a reminder is all we need to help minimise potential risks around our homes.

"The campaign will target parents of almost 90 000 children in child care centres across the state.

"As a parent I know that we can't watch over our children 24 hours a day but that's why simple preventative measures are important," said Ms Burney.

| A list of the most common injuries is attached.

CHILDREN'S INJURIES - SOME KEY FACTS

- Motor vehicle accidents and drowning cause the highest number of deaths in children aged 0-14 years each year. Motor vehicle accidents cause almost one-third of injury deaths in children, and drowning close to 20 per cent.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury related hospitalisation for children aged 0-14 years in NSW.
- Over 8,000 children are admitted to hospital each year due to a fall. Of these, more males than females are admitted.
- In younger children, the common types of falls are in playgrounds, bunk beds, on play ground equipment and falls from buildings or other structures.
- Other common injury related hospitalisations are due to :
 - Being struck by an object (over 1700 children per year) and
 - Motor vehicle/transport accidents (over 1400 children per year).
- Injuries such as burns and unintentional poisoning cause a considerable number of hospitalisations each year; over 780 children are admitted for burns and approximately 750 for unintentional poisonings.
- Hospitalisations do not reflect some of the very tragic causes of deaths due to injury in children.

NSW Injury hospital separations (aged 0-14 years) 2004-05 to 2006-07*

Cause	Persons per year		Males		Females	
	Persons per year	%	Persons per year	%	Persons per year	%
Fall	8,181	40.3	5,131	40.2	3,050	40.5
Struck by/against (unintentional)	1,759	8.7	1,269	10.0	490	6.5
Motor vehicle transport	1,460	7.2	1,035	8.1	425	5.6
Fire/Burns	786	3.9	462	3.6	324	4.3
Poisoning (unintentional)	751	3.7	415	3.3	336	4.5

NSW Injury deaths (aged 0-14 years) 2002 to 2006*

Cause	Persons per year		Males		Females	
	Persons per year	%	Persons per year	%	Persons per year	%
Motor vehicle transport	23	31.8	14	31.6	9	32.3
Drowning	14	19.7	9	19.9	5	19.4

- *These tables do not reflect the total number of deaths and hospitalisations.*

Injury-related hospitalisations from balcony/verandah or window falls 1999-2008

Falls from:	< 1 yr of age	1 – 4 yrs of age	5-9 yrs of age	10 – 14 yrs of age
Balcony or verandah	7	195	106	65
Windows	-	63	23	15