

### **Inquest into the death of a six year old child known as 'A'**

On 24 September 2012, A, a six year old child, was swimming in the pool in the backyard of his foster carers' residence with two other children. A could not swim and was wearing a flotation device. A's foster carer was overlooking the pool but failed to observe A removing his flotation device. A was seen to be floating face down in the pool by the other children who removed him from the water. A was transported to hospital but despite treatment remained unresponsive and died on 27 September 2012.

Coroner Jane Bentley handed down her findings of inquest on 27 May 2015.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

The departments named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

#### **Recommendation 1**

I recommend the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services consider updating the *Child safety practice manual* to require child safety officers to record information pertaining to a child's swimming ability in the child information form.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 23 November 2015 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:

The department will update the *Child safety practice manual* that requires child safety officers to record information pertaining to a child's swimming ability in the child information form. In order to give full effect to this recommendation, the department also proposes to amend the:

- client information form so that information about a child's swimming ability is uniformly recorded
- client information form in the Integrated Client Management System (ICMS), which is the core system for managing information about clients and their placements with carers and care services, so that it is electronically generated and automatically saved in the clients electronic records
- conclusion of placement form so that carers can provide updated information on the child's swimming ability when the child leaves or transitions from their care to another placement.

The department has drafted changes for inclusion in the client information form. These changes incorporate information about a child's swimming ability and, where required, how risks are to be managed by the carer when the child is in, on or near water.

An electronic version of the amended child information form will be developed and tested prior to being available for use by child safety officers, then uploaded onto the ICMS.

The conclusion of placement form will be amended and published in the *Child safety practice manual* to enable access by departmental staff and on the department's website under 'foster care', for easy access by foster and kinship care services and foster carers.

Amendments to the *Child safety practice manual* will be made when the new client information form has been integrated into ICMS, which is expected at the end of 2015.

**On 29 June 2016 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:**

The department updated the *Child safety practice manual* to require child safety officers to record information pertaining to a child's swimming ability in the child information form. In order to give full effect to this recommendation, the department has also amended the:

- child information form, so that information about a child's swimming ability is uniformly recorded
- conclusion of placement form, so that carers can provide updated information on the child's swimming ability when the child leaves or transitions from their care to another placement.

The department also proposes to upload the child information form in the integrated ICMS, which is the core system for managing information about clients and their placements with carers and care services, so that it is electronically generated and automatically saved in the client's electronic records.

An electronic version of the amended child information form will be developed and tested prior to being available for use by child safety officers, then uploaded onto the ICMS.

**Recommendation 2**

I recommend the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services consider providing training to all child safety officers in relation to the identification of water hazards, water safety and appropriate levels of supervision of children around water hazards.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 23 November 2015 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:

The department is exploring options with industry leaders with expertise in water safety and injury prevention to ensure the response appropriately meets the requirements of this recommendation.

**On 29 June 2016 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:**

The department collaborated with an industry leader in water safety to develop an online training resource for child safety officers to raise their awareness of water safety dangers. This training module was released on 1 April 2016.

Consideration is being given to whether this module will be *mandatory* for all child safety officers to complete or *highly desirable*.

**On 23 December 2016, the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth and Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence responded:**

This module has been made mandatory to complete for child safety officers, child safety support officers, child safety team leaders and staff within placement services units.

**Recommendation 3**

I recommend the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services consider requiring all foster care agencies to provide support workers and foster carers with training on the identification of water hazards, water safety and appropriate levels of supervision of children around water hazards.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 23 November 2015 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:

This recommendation is linked to the training that will be provided for child safety officers under recommendation two. The department has made initial contact with Foster Care Queensland who will work with the department to further progress this recommendation.

**On 29 June 2016 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:**

The training developed for child safety officers under recommendation 2 is being adapted for use by foster and kinship carers to support consistency of practice between the department and carers. The draft training module will be provided to Foster Care Queensland and a selection of foster care support services for feedback prior to finalisation.

Training module to be drafted and feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.

The modules will be uploaded to department's care training web page by 30 June 2016.

**On 23 December 2016, the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth and Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence responded:**

The Water Safety Awareness package for carers has been completed. The [training material](#) is available online at for direct access by foster and kinship care services and placement service units for their on-delivery to foster and kinship carer support staff and carers.

The department will consider the feasibility of mandating the training for all foster and kinship carers and staff within funded foster and kinship care services.

**On 13 July 2017, the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth and Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence responded:**

The Water Safety Awareness package now forms part of the department's foster and kinship carer training package.

The package is also available [online](#) for use by foster and kinship care services and placement service units for their on-delivery to foster and kinship carer support staff and carers of children and young people who may be at risk from water hazards.

#### **Recommendation 4**

I recommend the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services consider amending the household safety study form to include a requirement that water safety and supervision is discussed with foster carers and an appropriate publication (such as *The ABC of pool safety* published by the Department of Housing and Public Works) is provided to them at the time of completing the study.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 23 November 2015 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:

The department is reviewing the household safety study form to make this amendment and other content improvements (unrelated to water safety and supervision).

The department will explore whether the Department of Housing and Public Works' publication entitled *The ABC of pool safety* is the preferred publication to provide to carers. The department will explore other publications of a similar nature and consult with industry leaders with expertise in water safety and injury prevention.

**On 29 June 2016 the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:**

The department amended the household safety study form to make content improvements related to water safety and supervision and to request a copy of *The ABC of pool safety* be provided to potential carers at time of completing the study.