



# Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Victorian Headquarters • 168 Sturt Street, Southbank Victoria 3006

## SES warns: playing in floodwater exposes you to more than just the threat of drowning

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**From:** Victorian Headquarters

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**2012 brought more record-breaking floods across Victoria and now the State Emergency Service (SES) is launching two brand new public safety campaigns highlighting the hidden dangers posed by floodwater and encouraging Victorians to be more aware of their local flood threat.**

Over 98 per cent of flood-related deaths in Australia from 1998-2007 were caused by people voluntarily entering floodwater. Men aged 10-29 are hugely over-represented in this figure. The new SES campaign targeting this at-risk group will launch as part of Floodsafe Week 2013.

On top of the risk of drowning, playing in floodwater exposes children to a range of dangers- including toxic chemicals, animal faeces, decaying animals, garbage, broken glass and twisted metal.

Children who come into contact with floodwater – let alone play or swim in it – are exposed to E.Coli infection, diarrhoea, hepatitis, infections and dermatitis to name a few.

SES CEO Mary Barry said the focus of Floodsafe Week 2013 was on keeping children safe.

“Playing in floodwater is extremely dangerous. Parents and children need to be aware of what’s in that water to prevent unnecessary harm or illness. If you wouldn’t let your child play in a shed full of chemicals or a garbage dump, you shouldn’t let them play in floodwater. It’s filthy, disgusting stuff.”

Victoria SES will host a range of activities across the state during FloodSafe Week.

**Official Launch – Metropolitan:** Minister for Police and Emergency Services Kim Wells will officially launch the Week at Queensbridge Square, Southbank Promenade at 10.30am, Saturday 4 May- including a ‘fresh’ look at the contents of floodwater

**Official Launch – Regional:** Local school children will help launch the Week at Sound Shell, Victory Park, Traralgon at 11am, Monday 6 May

**Targeting young males:** Videos targeted at young men who engage in risky behaviour around floods will appear online

**Press and online campaign:** using results of new research, the press and online campaign will inform parents about what their kids are really in when they enter floodwater

**SES goes mobile:** launching a responsive version of [ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au) to make it easier to find emergency warnings and preparedness information on your mobile or tablet

**Flood Intelligence tools:** The first round of Local Flood Guides are being launched, putting easy to understand flood data in the hands of Victorians

**For schools:** We’re launching a suite of online tools for kids, students and teachers to engage them in the flood safety message

**Local events:** SES volunteers will host a range of events in their communities across the state throughout the week. For a full list of events visit [www.ses.vic.gov.au/floodsafeweek](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/floodsafeweek)

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