Media Release

Matt Conlan
Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing

New partnership to improve water safety

13 June 2014

Programs to prevent drowning will receive a boost with the transfer of the Government’s Water Safety Unit to the Royal Life Saving Society of the Northern Territory (RLSSNT) from 1 July.

The RLSSNT has a proud history of providing programs, services, education and training around water safety since the Northern Territory Branch was established in 1965, and has played a crucial role in reducing drowning deaths in the NT.

The RLSSNT has also run the Water Safety Awareness Program, a Northern Territory Government initiative, since it was introduced in 2002, providing five free water safety lessons to Territory children under five.

“This new partnership is a significant step in our fight to prevent drownings in the Territory,” said Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing Matt Conlan.

“Swimming lessons and promoting water awareness are absolutely key to reduce drownings and the RLSSNT has the expertise and are best placed to continue delivering these vital services.

“Combining the activities of the Water Safety Unit with RLSSNT will not only strengthen the work of the unit, but will provide opportunities to expand current water safety education programs.”

Under the new partnership, RLSSNT will coordinate and deliver water safety education sessions in schools, develop, coordinate and implement Water Safety Week annually, coordinate the Pipes and Drains campaign annually, and provide secretariat support to the NT Water Safety Advisory Council, and report outcomes to the Government.

The organisation will receive additional funding of $209,000 by the Government on top of its current funding of $150,000 a year to carry out the new services.

“I commend the Government’s commitment to water safety and I believe this partnership will strengthen these vital programs across the NT,” said Floss Roberts, Executive Director RLSSNT.

“Keeping our community safe, in, on and around water is our number one priority.”

RLSSNT will continue to run the Water Safety Awareness Program, which is a pre requisite for the NT Government’s new $200 Learn to Swim Vouchers for toddlers under 5 who are not at school.
From 1 July, Parents will be eligible apply for two $100 vouchers a year for each child who has completed the Water Safety Awareness Program. Further information on the Learn to Swim Vouchers is available by calling 1800 817 860 or at: www.sportvoucher.nt.gov.au

**Media Contact:**

Lisa Andrews (Minister Conlan) 0401 579 963

Floss Roberts (RLSSNT) 0408 857 880