

SPLASH!

The voice of the Wet Industry

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June/July 2012



Queensland in crisis

Selloff to bolster trust fund

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Pool hall ventilation under
the microscope

OASIS
In the Arabian desert

POOL FENCING
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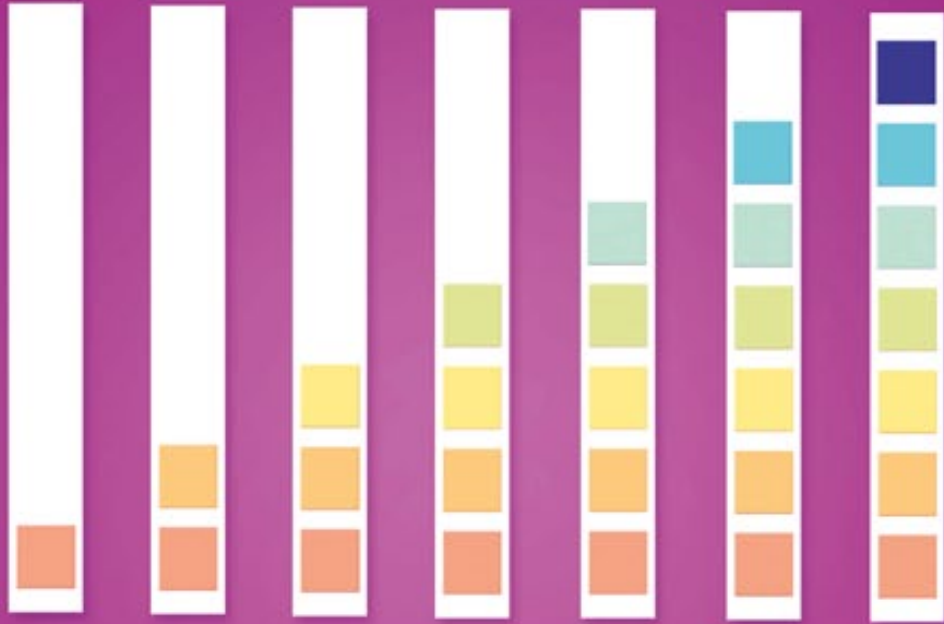
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Welcome to SPLASH!



Sometimes it seems that for every burst of sunshine, there's a cloud waiting just over the horizon.

There has been some good news lately: some handy budget bribes for business from the besieged federal government; an interest rate cut from the RBA (although the banks managed to snaffle a generous chomp before passing it on to us); and even an improvement in retail figures for the first time in ages.

But pool DAs have gone back into hiding after a slight improvement earlier in the year, and the one-time

powerhouse of the industry, Queensland, is in further financial trouble following discrepancies in a trust fund account at SPASA. There is more on that story and the attempts to bring the situation under control on page 8.

There are still a number of big positives to look forward to in the near future. The weather will hopefully continue to improve, and the bureau of meteorology has suggested we should expect a warmer than average winter – though of course, it's summer that really counts.

And then, there's SPLASH! on the Gold Coast to look forward to in July, and the chance to meet old friends, make new ones and keep in touch with the latest ideas in the industry.

Also, this is the last issue of SPLASH! in its old format. Look out next edition for a revitalised magazine that will have a new look, but still bring you all the essential news and interesting features you're used to.

I hope you'll like it.

Chris Maher
 Editor
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This issue's cover

The cover shot shows the swimming pool at the Qasr Al Sarab resort in the United Arab Emirates.

There is more on this project on page 76. The inset shot shows a glass pool barrier. There is more on fencing regulations and technology on page 30.

SPASA Queensland selling office to keep warranty scheme afloat

LAWYERS HAVE BEEN CALLED IN, THE NEWSTEAD PROPERTY IS FOR SALE AND NSPI HAS BEEN MOTHBALLED FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF DISCREPANCIES IN SPASA QUEENSLAND'S ACCOUNTS.

AT issue is more than a million dollars paid out of SPASA's Benefits Trust to the loss-making training body, the National Swimming Pool Institute (NSPI) Australia over a period of seven years.

The SPASA Benefits Trust holds the funds for the Watertight scheme, which is intended to cover defects in work or to enable the completion of an eligible swimming pool in the event a builder dies or the building company is wound up.

SPASA has engaged McKays solicitors to act on their behalf and look into the discrepancies in the accounts, including the movement of money out of the Watertight trust. They have also engaged an independent forensic accountant.

Recently appointed SPASA CEO Adrian Hart says they have concluded their research internally and the forensic accountant will provide a report to their solicitors relating to the discrepancies. Then the report will be given to the external auditor and to the former CEO of SPASA, David Close.

The solicitors have said that at this stage there is no evidence to indicate that any person has attempted to steal funds or personally benefited from these transactions. However, investigations are ongoing and the final situation will only be known once the former CEO, external accountant and external auditors have been presented with

a full brief of the relevant transactions and asked to explain their understanding of them.

In light of this they have contacted Close with the aim of getting his explanation of the transactions. Close has engaged his own solicitors and discussions are continuing.

SPASA Queensland is the trustee of the SPASA Benefits Trust, run by a management committee comprising the SPASA Queensland President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

"I'm unaware that the President, Vice-President or Treasurer had any active hands-on role on a day-to-day basis regarding the finances and running of Watertight or the NSPI," says Hart.

Hart will provide more information once the consultation processes have been completed between the solicitors and the other parties.

WATERTIGHT STILL OPERATING AS USUAL

Hart says that warranties offered by SPASA are not at risk and that consumers who have used SPASA members will continue to have their claims processed.

The trust loaned nearly \$500,000 to SPASA to buy the Newstead office and once the property is sold that money will be returned to the trust.

"I am confident any Watertight claims can be met,"

New SPASA CEO Adrian Hart outside the Newstead property which is listed for more than \$1.6m



says Hart. “It’s business as usual for Watertight. We’re going to put a substantial amount of money back into the trust account, which would cover any liabilities we can foresee.”

The sale of the Newstead property should generate more than \$1.6 million but SPASA must use some of that money to extinguish the existing mortgage.

The property is listed for sale at \$1,688,000 (+ GST). Interested parties can contact SPASA.

“It is a two-storey office building in a near-city Brisbane suburb,” says Hart. It’s a desirable location with trendy James Street nearby, easy access to the city and the

over several months to acquire student subsidies and we’d almost finalised the mining program,” says Hart. “All of which was designed to help NSPI operate as an ongoing viable entity, but we’re now at stage where that won’t be happening at the moment.”

SPASA Queensland also finds itself in a situation where it has to pay out employee entitlements for several staff members who are leaving or have left the organisation. However, adequate provision for the entitlements had not been made, compounding the difficult financial situation.

Hart says he wants to make it clear that SPASA was act-

“There is no evidence to indicate that any person has attempted to steal funds or personally benefited from these transactions.”

airport. It has almost 400m² of office space on 405m² of land including space for up to 12 cars.”

SPASA is also selling two vehicles so it can extinguish lease arrangements.

“We’ve taken a slash and burn approach to any excess costs and that’s just a prudent thing to do,” he says.

NSPI IN ABEYANCE

NSPI has lost all its staff and SPASA is now in the process of “mothballing” the RTO.

“With the departure of key staff, we’ve taken a short term strategic decision to mothball the operations,” says Hart. “This will give us time to assess once we’ve moved to a new location and consider what’s best for the future.”

The staff members have accepted similar roles with other RTOs.

“We’d spent a lot of time

ing on behalf of its members by established a licensing pathway and training program when it set up NSPI years ago, and if that hadn’t happened there wouldn’t be a licensing outcome.

Hart believes the organisation will survive.

“We’re consolidating as a necessary step,” he says. “Once we get over this current financial difficulty which will be resolved with the sale of the building, we’ll be able to continue to provide support for the members and benefits for the consumers who use them.”

He says that generally, the members have shown support for SPASA to continue, and that he personally has a commitment to see the Association through these issues.

“Then it will be up to the members to decide the structure of the organisation moving forward.”

Blue Haven parent company under voluntary administration

RECENT MEDIA REPORTS SAYING BLUE HAVEN HAS GONE INTO RECEIVERSHIP ARE NOT CORRECT.

CONTRARY to some media reports, Blue Haven is not under administration nor in receivership – however, restructured parent company Pool and Spa Builders has been placed in administration.

The recent media reports stating that Blue Haven has gone into administration (and some reports stating that it has gone into receivership) are unfounded according to information from both Blue Haven and Cor Cordis Chartered Accountants.

In a statement, Blue Haven says it is still an extremely viable business which maintains the title as Australia’s largest pool builder.

The recent administration of Pool and Spa Builders (Aust) Pty Limited was a voluntary appointment by the company to facilitate the retirement for long-time industry pool builder, Ray Awadallah. Pool and Spa Builders had not traded for more than 12 months and has remained dormant during this period.

The company says that appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure that any matters arising are dealt with in the course of the company’s closure. Additionally, staffing, financial and warranty obligations have all been honoured well in advance of the company’s administration, according to the statement.

Blue Haven also says that the independent Blue Haven franchise owners are unaffected by the closure and will continue to trade under the Blue Haven Pools brand.

Insolvency specialist Cor Cordis is handling the administration of Pool and Spa Builders (Aust) Pty Limited.

Jason Tang from Cor Cordis says that Pools and Spa Builders Pty Ltd had previously traded as Blue Haven Pools, but had not done so following a restructuring about 12 months ago. At the time Cor Cordis was appointed, the company was not a trading or employing entity.

Tang says that as with most cases when a company goes into voluntary administration, it is because the company has trouble paying its debts. Cor Cordis will prepare a detailed report to be released to creditors.

Tang says media reports fuelling the public perception that Blue Haven is in trouble are not correct.

“Blue Haven Pools as we understand it is not the entity which is in administration,” he says. “Also, some reports have said Pool and Spa Builders is in receivership – that is not correct, it is under administration.”

Cor Cordis is essentially responsible for the company’s affairs during this interim period, and any relevant concerns can be directed to them on (02) 8221 8433.



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Budget benefits small business

TAX LOSSES TO BE “CARRIED BACK” INTO PRIOR YEARS; MORE ASSETS CAN BE IMMEDIATELY DEDUCTED.

THE Federal Government has offered a new business tax relief initiative which enables businesses to use losses from a current financial year to claw back tax from the profits of previous years.

The Federal Government says this measure is to help with the multi-speed economy, of which retail, manufacturing and construction are particularly susceptible, while mining is streaking ahead.

Currently, businesses are able to “carry forward” their tax losses to offset future profits and reduce future tax liabilities. This new initiative will allow businesses to also “carry back” their losses, to offset past profits and get a refund of tax previously paid on that profit.

As part of the loss carry-back, from July 1, 2012, companies will be able to carry back up to \$1 million worth of losses to get a refund of tax paid in the previous year.

From July 1, 2013, companies will be able to carry back up to \$1 million worth of losses against tax paid up to two years earlier.

The Government will release a discussion paper about the introduction of the loss carry-back shortly.

Other tax changes for small business include the ability to immediately deduct the cost of any new business assets costing less than \$6500. This measure will apply from July 1, 2012, and applies to multiple purchases. In addition, businesses will be able to write off assets costing more than \$6500 in a single pool (15 per cent in the first year, 30 per cent in each subsequent year).

Small businesses will be able to also immediately deduct the first \$5000 of a new or used motor vehicle, purchased from July 1, 2012.

The government says that while Australia’s economic fundamentals are strong, the economy is in transition, creating major challenges for many businesses that aren’t in the fast lane of the mining boom. Cautious consumer sentiment and the high Australian dollar are having a particularly deleterious effect

on some parts of the economy.

The initiative, which has been costed at \$700 million in its first four years, is estimated to benefit nearly 110,000 businesses who will have greater access to legitimate tax deductions when they are making losses.

The government says it will encourage companies to adapt to changing economic conditions and take advantage of new opportunities through investment, while helping struggling companies adjust to the challenges and opportunities of the patchwork economy by improving cash flows and reducing disincentives for businesses to take sensible risks.

The measure was a recommendation of the Future Tax System review. It received strong support and was developed further in close consultation with business representatives and tax experts through the Business Tax Working Group, which recommended the measure in its Final Report on the Tax Treatment of Losses.

Rate cut gives half smile

WHILE AN INTEREST RATE CUT IS GOOD NEWS FOR BUSINESS, IMPROVED RETAIL EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDING FIGURES MEAN IT MIGHT BE THE LAST FOR A WHILE.

RETAILERS and homebuyers will benefit from the Reserve Bank’s cash rate cut by 50 basis points to 3.75 per cent – the biggest cut made since February 2009.

Unfortunately the banks have kept a substantial part of the cut to themselves. While some overseas borrowing costs for Australian banks have increased, most analysts seem of the opinion that the banks are keeping more of the cuts than necessary.

Reserve governor Glenn Stevens says the RBA’s decision was necessary following somewhat weaker than expected economic conditions, while inflation has moderated.

Australian Retail Association president Roger Gillespie said the RBA delivered the rate cut the retail industry needed but the banks shouldn’t grab a slice of it.

“Over the past couple of months, retailers have paid for the big banks’ greed after they raised interest rates despite the RBA’s hold on the cash rate in March and April.

The ARA is calling on the RBA to consider at least two more rate cuts over the next couple of months to give retailers the confidence boost they’ll need over this time.

However, an unexpected jump in retail sales figures, better than expected unemployment figures and improved numbers on building approvals means that further cuts may be a way off.

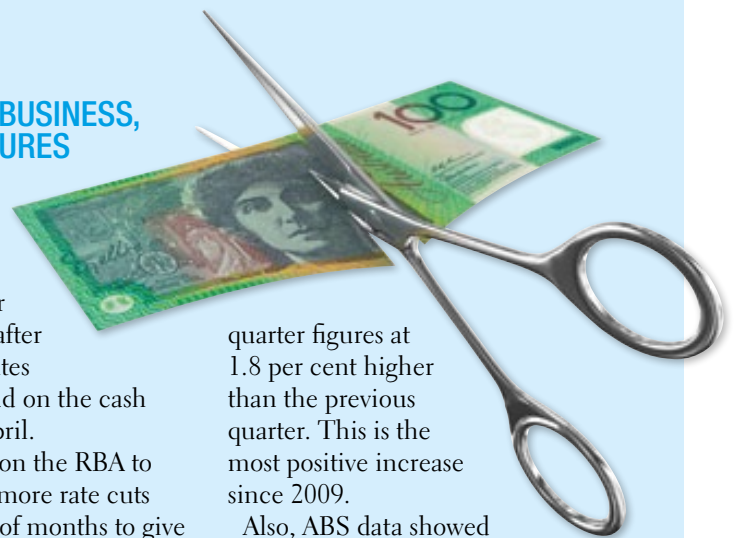
Retail sales were up 0.9 per cent in March – even though only a 0.2 per cent rise was expected. The puts the

quarter figures at 1.8 per cent higher than the previous quarter. This is the most positive increase since 2009.

Also, ABS data showed March building approvals were up 7.4 per cent when a rise of only three per cent was expected.

Economists say the data suggests both retail and building may be looking at a better future from here on in.

Employment figures for April show that more than 15,500 full-time jobs were created in that month plus 26,000 part-time jobs, seeing the unemployment rate drop below five percent.





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The **Micron ECO** allows you to enjoy the convenience of backwashing your pool, whilst using 30% less water. Its hydraulic efficiency facilitates the use of energy saving pumps.



The **Opal XL** cartridge filter eliminates backwashing, saving you water. Its oversized filter cartridge, minimises filter maintenance.

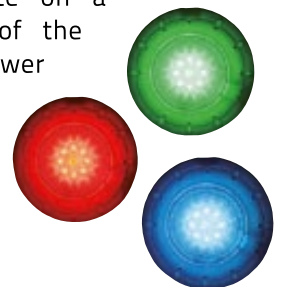
Admiral robotic pool cleaners, ensures your pool will be sparkling and effortlessly clean using less power than required to illuminate one halogen pool light.



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Poolrite to remain Australian manufacturer – for now

DESPITE MOVING THE OPERATIONAL HEAD OFFICE TO FRANCE, ROSS PALMER SAYS THEY WILL CONTINUE TO MANUFACTURE IN AUSTRALIA FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST.

Poolrite recently had a win when its MagnaPool mineral system was installed as the disinfection system for the Venetian Hotel Terme di Relilax, a well known Italian thermal spring spa resort. The resort recently installed a state-of-the-art Biodesign swimming pool filled with the patented MagnaPool mineral water blend of magnesium and potassium, adding to the list of the resort's therapeutic charms.

POOLRITE CEO Ross Palmer has committed to keeping his plant in Brisbane despite what he calls a “hostile” local environment for Australian manufacturers.

Recently, Poolrite moved its headquarters to Saint Quentin Fallavier in Lyon, France, where Global Group General Manager Marc Lucien runs the operational headquarters. (See Industry Moves on page 24 for more on Poolrite's staff changes).

“We're still an Australian company but since the show in Barcelona we've had enquires from 31 countries around the world,” says Palmer. “The reality is, there are 20 million residential swimming pools in the world – one million of them are in Australia.”

Palmer remains CEO of the company and splits his time between Brisbane and Lyon, as does Lucien and new international sales manager Xavier Vidal.

Palmer says that Poolrite's manufacturing base will remain in Brisbane for the foreseeable future.

“That is our plan,” he says. “But I'd be less than honest if I didn't say we were evaluating where we should be in the future. If it was purely about money I wouldn't have built this plant

here. It's a hostile environment for manufacturers here.

“We've got a government in this country who believes in free trade. It's free trade but not fair trade.”

Palmer says that most of his competitors get their products made in China, where they receive subsidies especially in plastics and injection moulding.

“Most of our competitors are large multinationals, and we consider ourselves – apart from Poolstore International – to be the only full line manufacturer that is Australian owned and Australian made.

“We hope to keep it that way, but as each year goes by our government has got an unrealistic view of free trade. The concept of free trade is fine, but there are tariff barriers that prevent a lot of service providers like accountants and lawyers from feeling the cold winds of free trade. I could get my legal work done in the Philippines or India for \$30 per hour, but it's not acceptable, you know what I mean?”

“It's conceivable if things don't change, we could easily move our operations offshore to China. It would be a shame. But then we could be a part of these subsidies.”

Iluka needs pool to survive the sharks

A lack of swimming pools in the NSW north coast town of Iluka is putting children's lives at risk, according to Iluka Public School deputy principal, Phil Bradmore.

In a recent article in the Clarence Valley's Daily Examiner, he complains that the local river often has bull sharks swimming in it, posing a serious risk for the swimming team.

As there is no local pool, they must train in the river which is also known for its stingrays and dangerous tides, and is highly utilised by recreational craft and the Iluka/Yamba ferry, which pose further risks for the schoolchildren.

Bradmore estimates a pool will cost about \$3 million, but believes it would be a valuable health and safety initiative for the community.



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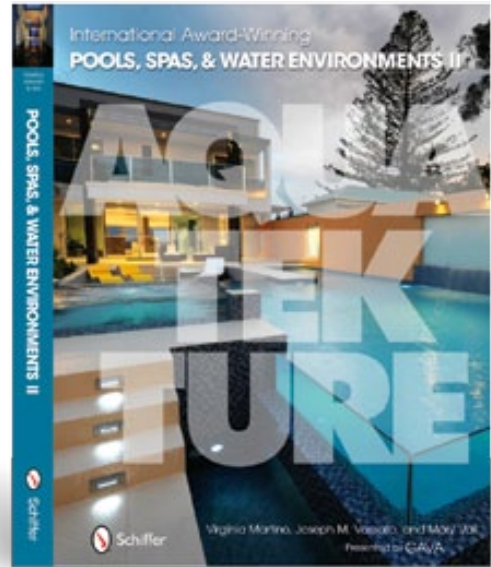
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BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

WE had so many entries the last time we gave away a copy of the GAVA winner's showcase that we decided to give away another copy.

This coffee table book is the second in the series from the Las Vegas based corporation that hosts the annual GAVA Awards competition. The full-colour, coffee table edition is authored by Mary Vail, Joe Vassallo and Virginia Martino.

Architects, landscapers, artists, designers, inventors and contractors from around the world masterfully incorporated fountains, fire, mosaic designs and acrylic panels, securing their place as a GAVA winner, including Cameron Leth of Polar Pools in New South Wales, Australia who captured the coveted front cover of the book.

You can experience the water jets streaming skyward, the stillness of an infinity edge and 48 other award-winning pool, spa and water environments, while meeting the visionaries who designed and built them.

The GAVA Awards celebrate AquaTektore – the discipline of designing, engineering and erecting water environments and ancillary components in harmony with nature and with consideration to function, space and aesthetics.

For further information go to www.gavaawards.com or visit www.facebook.com/gavaawards.

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SPLASH! has a copy of International Award Winning Pools, Spas, & Water Environments II to giveaway. Details will be in an upcoming eNews. To be in with a chance, make sure you are subscribing to the free newsletter. Simply go to www.splashmagazine.com.au and click on the eNews Registration button.

Industry calendar

FUTURE INDUSTRY DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

2012

- May 30-Jun 1 NSPF (US) Instructor Training School, Singapore
- June 4 Australian Water Safety Conference, Brighton Beach, Sydney
- Jun 5-8 IAAPA Asian Attractions Expo, Hong Kong
- July 8 Australian Pool Life Saving Short Course Championships, Alice Springs
- July 13-15 National AUSTSWIM Aquatic Education Conference, Gold Coast
- Jun 15 SPASA NSW Trade Day, Rosehill Gardens
- Jun 16 SPASA NSW Awards Night, Le Montage, Leichhardt
- Jun 27-29 DesignBUILD, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre
- Jun 30-Jul 1 SPASA SA Pool and Spa Show, Adelaide
- Jul 21 SPASA WA Awards Night
- July 24 ALFA Queensland State Conference, Gold Coast
- July 25-26 **SPLASH! Pool and Spa Trade Show, Jupiters Gold Coast**
- July 26 SPLASH! Environmental Awards Gala Dinner, Gold Coast
- July 28 SPASA Qld Awards Night
- Aug 11-12 Melbourne Spa & Pool Show at MCEC (Winter Show)
- Aug 25 SPASA Victoria Awards of Excellence Gala Dinner
- Sep 6-8 Waves, New Delhi, India
- Sep 8-9 Get Ready for Summer Consumer Expo, Perth
- Sep 20 Bob Stanley Memorial Golf Day, Camden Lakeside
- Sep 23-25 Middle East Pool and Spa Exhibition, Dubai, UAE
- Oct 7-9 International Exhibition for Pool & Spa, Qatar
- Oct 9-12 Interbad, Stuttgart, Germany
- Oct 10-12 World Aquatic Health Conference, Norfolk, Virginia, USA
- Nov 13-16 Piscine, Lyon France
- Nov 13-16 Aqualie, Lyon France

2013

- May 21-22 Piscine SPLASH! Asia Pool and Spa Trade Show, Suntec Singapore

More details, dates and links are available at splashmagazine.com.au.

These dates are subject to change and should be checked with the relevant organisation. Please send calendar submissions to chrismaher@intermedia.com.au



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Pool DA figures for March and April

NUMBERS CONTINUE TO DECLINE.

LATEST swimming pool Development Application (DA) numbers show a 15 per cent decline comparing year-to-April 2012 with 2011 figures.

The two-month comparison also shows DA numbers down by 14 per cent, reversing the good figures from the previous reported period.

Queensland, too, has taken another dip after showing improvement in January and February. The March and April figures show it down by a whopping 60 per cent over the same two months last year, while its year-to-April figures are down 58 per cent.

Again, Victoria has shown improvement in the two-month comparison with a 19 per cent rise in numbers; South Australia also had an increase of 17 per cent, but off a smaller base than Victoria.

All other States showed a decline over the two-month comparison, and all states showed a decline on the year-to-April figures: New South Wales, with a three per cent decline; Western Australia (-9 per cent); Victoria (-6 per cent) and South Australia (-18 per cent).

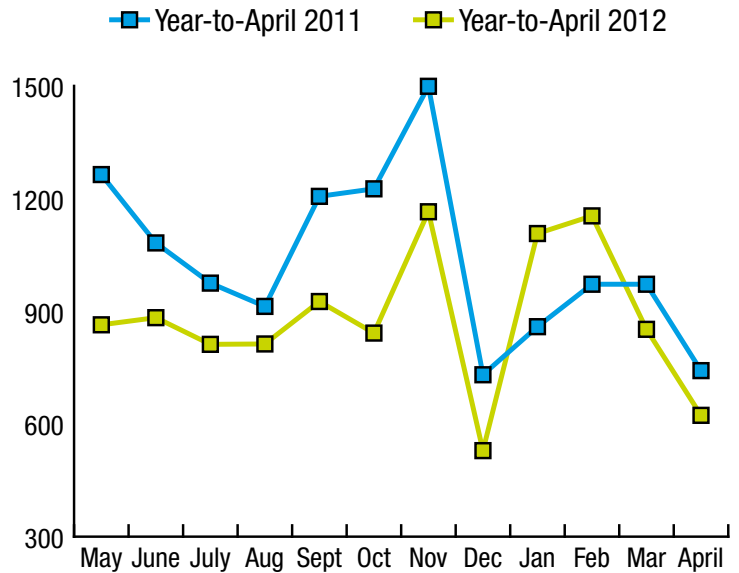
It should be taken into consideration that comparisons of DA numbers against other data indicate that some figures could be considerably higher – though they would not necessarily affect the comparison percentages.

Additionally, these figures would exclude most renovations, pool projects that are included as part of a new home, or smaller projects under the cost threshold – these projects are estimated to be an additional 30 per cent, meaning total numbers could be considerably higher than the quoted DA figures – by some estimates, they could be double.

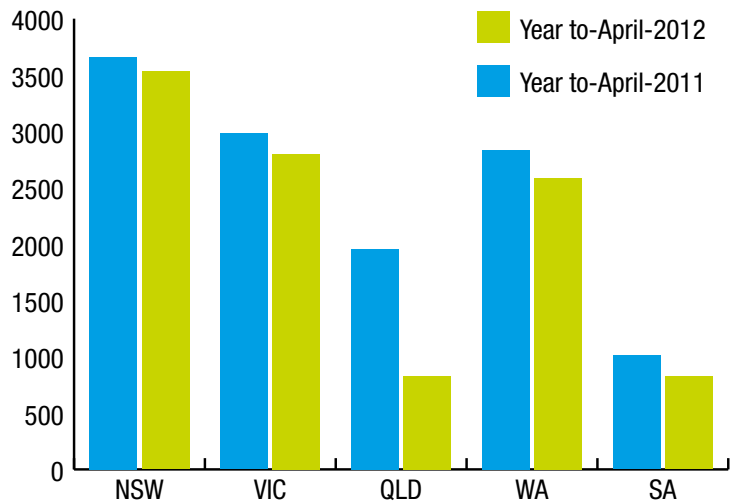
However, while these quoted figures may miss some swimming pools, spas and renovations, they do give an indication of how the market is trending.

For further information and more complete reports, call Cordell Information on 1800 80 60 60.

Comparison of Australian pool approvals Year-to-April 2012 with Year-to-April 2011



Pool Approvals by State



Housing growth for Sydney

UP to 90,000 home sites could become available in Sydney's outskirts. An undersupply of suitable land has long been blamed for Sydney's stagnated home growth, high real estate prices and barely manageable rents. Another major impediment to increased housing is the lack of infrastructure, including roads, rail and services.

Development group Cardno has identi-

fied land where it believes up to 90,000 homes could be built quickly. Cardno conducted an audit of holdings bigger than 10 hectares, all within a kilometre of main roads or rail lines, and within a kilometre of major power lines.

The land lies outside the north-west and south-west growth centres earmarked by the previous government for new housing. The new housing

sites include a tract to the west of Campbelltown.

If nothing else, the Building Blocks report should stimulate debate. Unfortunately, some of the sites highlighted are also earmarked by the Federal Government for Sydney's second airport – although the State government prefers to locate the second airport outside NSW in the ACT.

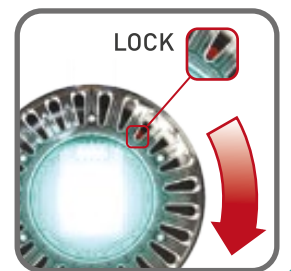
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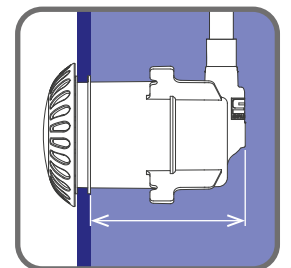
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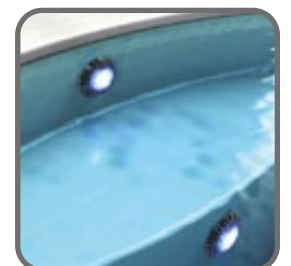
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Around the globe



WORLD'S BIGGEST FLOATING POOL

THE Belgian city of Antwerp will soon be home to the world's largest floating pool. Called the Badboot, it is a 120m long tourist attraction that doubles as a skating rink in winter. It is currently being converted from an old ferry that was otherwise destined for scrap. It should be completed in August and will also include restaurants and bars. The city has a contract with the developer for 10 years. After that time, if Antwerp no longer wants the pool, the owners can float it downriver to a new location.

POOL TECHS FREED FROM SALES TAX

POOL maintenance was one of the 27 services targeted for a new sales tax in California, meaning that pool service professionals would have been required to add sales tax to their monthly invoices for pool services. The California Spa & Pool Industry Education Council (SPEC) took active opposition to the proposal and met with the author of the bill to explain how it would adversely affect the pool service industry, ultimately convincing him to remove pool maintenance from the list.

INDIAN BALCONY POOLS COURT CONTROVERSY



A new plan for a residential skyscraper in Mumbai has residents both excited and worried. One of the key architectural features of the 37-storey Aquaria Grande tower is the series of stunning balcony swimming pools, perched precariously over Mumbai's busy streets. However, much has been made of the danger to swimmers who could potentially float over the side, and the final design is yet to be approved.

US LOOKS UP

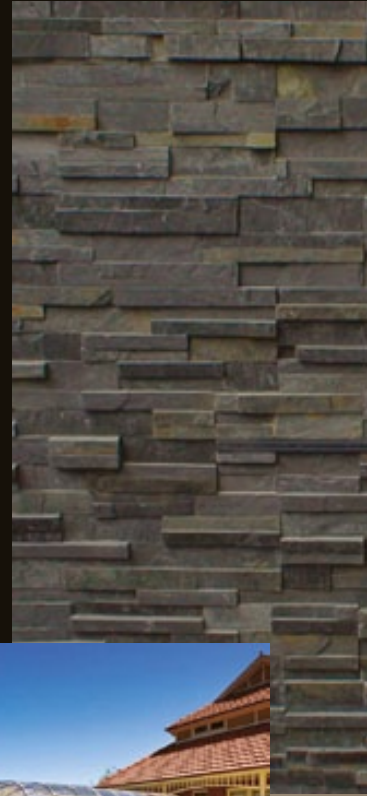
AQUA magazine's State of the Industry report which looks at the US swimming

pool and spa construction industry, has found that significant gains were made in 2011, which seem to be continuing in 2012. The Aqua builder's survey found 59.2 per cent of pool building companies reported better revenues and 47.3 per cent reported an increase in the number of projects, all marginal improvements over last year's survey. According to the report's author, the phrase "cautiously optimistic" appears to have become a mantra among the builders. For more information go to aquamagazine.com.au or go to splashmagazine.com.au for a Quicklink to the relevant page.

VGB LAWSUIT SETTLED

THE first entrapment lawsuit in the US has been settled. Citing the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB), the family of 56-year-old Bill Stock settled the case for an undisclosed sum. Stock was a paraplegic who was trapped by his foot in a suction grate in the Hilton's Village Beach Resort in Hawaii. Eventually three adults managed to free him, but he died the next day. The family sued the Hilton, the engineering company and the building company amongst others.

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For a truly sophisticated and stylish finish the powerful Savi Melody is the only choice, with a LED housing diameter of just 37mm. The Melody has a range of exciting "shows" and vibrant colours and is compatible with remote control systems.



Savi Buddy Light

The Savi Buddy light is the latest addition to the Compu Pool suite of pool lighting. A simple to install and economical light that assembles into standard 40mm or 50mm pipe. The simple bulb replacement system allows the homeowner to choose white or colour LED lighting.



Wall Mounted Light

The Compu Pool wall mounted light provides brilliant LED colour lighting. Suitable for all pool surfaces this simple to install light eliminates the need for a niche and can be easily retro-fitted. Comes standard with a remote control to effortlessly choose the colour mode.

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Questions?

CPSISC responds to qualification questions

The training council and SPASA Australasia have added to the debate on national qualifications.

CONSTRUCTION and Property Service Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) Project Steering Committee Chair, Lindsay McGrath and SPASA Australia President Manfred Wiesemes have both responded to the article in the previous issue of **SPLASH!** regarding the proposed national qualifications.

In that article (**SPLASH!** April-May 2012, page 20), SPASA NSW CEO Spiros Dassakis criticised the CPSISC committee for promoting competencies that are far too basic for the levels of certificate being offered.

As well as being Chair of the CPSISC Project Steering Committee for the proposed certificates in Swimming Pool and Spa Service, McGrath is also CEO of the Swimming Pool Retail Association of Australia (SPRAA) and President of SPASA South Australia.

McGrath says a SPRAA survey of industry personnel identified training as the most important value-add their industry body could provide.

"SPRAA investigated the options available to national members and realised that the issue wasn't if training was available, but that without a career path development the industry cannot grow and flourish," he says.

Therefore, he says, SPRAA put in place a process so field and retail technicians could be measured and recognised by the Federal authorities as an industry – not as individual and unidentified "labourers".

"It was also acknowledged by the Skills Council that nationally recognised qualifications were needed," he says. "Thus we stand at the current stage of the process to improve the industry."

ANSWERING THE CONCERNS

McGrath doesn't agree with Dassakis's contention that the process was rushed.

"The process was initiated more than two years ago," he says. "The industry was interviewed in April 2011 along with all relevant government authorities local, State and Federal, TAFEs, RTOs, industry bodies, licensing groups etc."

He says the Steering Committee was formed with representation from SPRAA, SPASA Australia, SPASA WA, SPASA SA, licence and training providers, the Royal Life Saving Association, separate registered training organisations for technicians, commercial pool operators and State and Federal Government training providers. Officials in health, training, and local government were also consulted in other forums.

"Rigorous and well sponsored series of national workshops took place in most capital cities and drew on the accumulated wisdom of the swimming pool and spa technicians around the country," he says. "Each stage has been posted on the CPSISC website for public consultation and we have received numerous proactive input from worldwide contributors."

Regarding the criticism that the qualifications are too basic, he says that

they follow the Australian Qualifications Framework issued by Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment in July 2011.

Further, he says that the criticism that there is duplication and combining of units is really an issue of miscommunication.

"There might appear to be duplication in the competencies," he says. "But that is because we are talking about qualifications, not course material or licences. It only appears that there are duplications."

"While licenses, courses and qualifications are related, they're all separate creatures."

McGrath says that a qualification is basically a job description – a list of tasks you need to be competent at so you can do your job properly.

"They are not course units. It is up to the RTOs to write the courses based on the qualification criteria, so that all those tasks can be met. Any apparent duplication would disappear at stage."

"All the questions about duplication and certificate levels will be answered by the market once the courses are written and taught by the RTOs, including SPASA NSW which is the biggest RTO in the industry."

"There has been some confusion about the processes, but that's understandable as we were a bit confused ourselves when we started out on this road. We've been very lucky on the committee to have Therese Nolan who has a PhD in Education as

well as being a pool shop owner. She's the one who originally said to us, hey, you have to go through this in the proper way to get the desired outcome. And so we've followed this process of setting up the qualifications."

McGrath says he is pleased that the process is stirring up passion in the industry, and he encourages all industry members to go to the CPSISC website (www.cpsisc.com.au) and have a voice.

"I encourage everyone to submit feedback," he says. "Even though the formal close date is May 3, the committee will still be meeting for a few weeks after that date. If someone submits comments they will certainly be taken into consideration."

"At the end of the day, I'm happy for people to add input, even if it means challenging the process, because it gets them involved. If this debate means even two more industry people go online and add their input, then it will be a good thing."

COMMENTS FROM SPASA AUSTRALIA

Meanwhile, Manfred Wiesemes has also responded to the abovementioned SPLASH! article.

As well as being President of SPASA Australia, long-time industry pool builder Wiesemes also sits on the board of SPASA NSW, and had previously been the president of that organisation.

He concurs with all of Dassakis's comments in the article, saying Certificate IV doesn't need to be included in a technicians' course. He also makes a forceful case for raising the bar with training – not only for pool and spa technicians, but also for pool builders. In particular, he believes that pool builders' licences are too easy to come by.

With regard to the new national qualifications for pool and spa technicians, he is particularly concerned that fencing regulations and inspections should be included in the competencies.

"I think it's most important that fencing be included for pool technicians," he says. "They visit pools all the time – and once educated they can spot defects easily. Fencing should definitely be included."

"They're basically the first contact for compliance and fencing. And fencing is a big issue – children are drowning, and often the fencing is blamed. The technicians could simply say, I noticed your fence gate is not operating properly, or that your fence doesn't comply. It would be great if they could put the customer in the picture about what the rules and regulations are."

When SPLASH! put that question to McGrath, he said that a number of industry people want to include fencing regulations and inspections in the competencies.

"We are looking at that," McGrath says. "The problem is, we can get the skill set acknowledged but you will still have to apply to the government to get a licence."

"CPSISC has nothing to do with licences. They are all state-based. And fencing is difficult because it is an issue that goes across council, state and federal governments."

"We talk to many people in the industry and they seem to be hoping there'll be some sort of magic button to press and get licences, but that's not the case. First we need to get the qualifications set up, then the RTOs can draw up the course material, but it will be up to the governments to administer licensing."

TRAINING FOR BUILDERS

Currently, Wiesemes spends a lot of time doing building inspections, and he despairs at some of the workmanship he comes across.

"I spend my life at the moment doing building inspections and some days I can't believe what I see," Wiesemes says. "And these are people who've been in the game for a long time! They're still doing it the same old way, and it shows up the lack of training. But no-one's ever shown them the right way to do it, so it's not really their fault – there's been nothing in place."

"I think a builder should have not just Certificate IV but also Certificate III, because that's the basic part of the learning. The way that I see it is that the basic competencies for Certificate IV is about how to read a plan and run a business. It doesn't teach you any of the fundamentals."

Wiesemes believes training is the biggest issue facing the industry at the moment.

"SPASA NSW is an RTO and we've got all the training in place and we've offered it to all the other States. At this stage we've heard nothing from any of the other States about taking it up, though."

"I want to reiterate that training is possibly the most important thing a builder can do, and it's their responsibility to update that training and keep up their CPD points. Things are changing all the time and it can be a struggle to keep up, but it's in their best interest to do it."

Go online to have a voice. A direct link to the relevant CPSISC submissions page is available as a Quicklink at splashmagazine.com.au.

IQ to teach SPASA chemical course

INTERNATIONAL Quadratics (IQ) and SPASA NSW have reached an agreement whereby IQ will offer and conduct the SPASA3001A – Unit of Competency (Chemically Treat Swimming Pools & Spas) for the Certificate III in Swimming Pool Repairs, Servicing and Interior Finishes. This Unit is one of the compulsory units required to achieve a licence to service pools and spas.

SPASA NSW has been a pioneer in education and training for the swimming pool & spa industry since 1997 and has been an accredited Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the past three years, offering National Accredited Training to the swimming pool industry including Certificate III and Certificate IV courses. In total, SPASA has educated more than 5000 industry members with 2200 achieving formal qualifications.

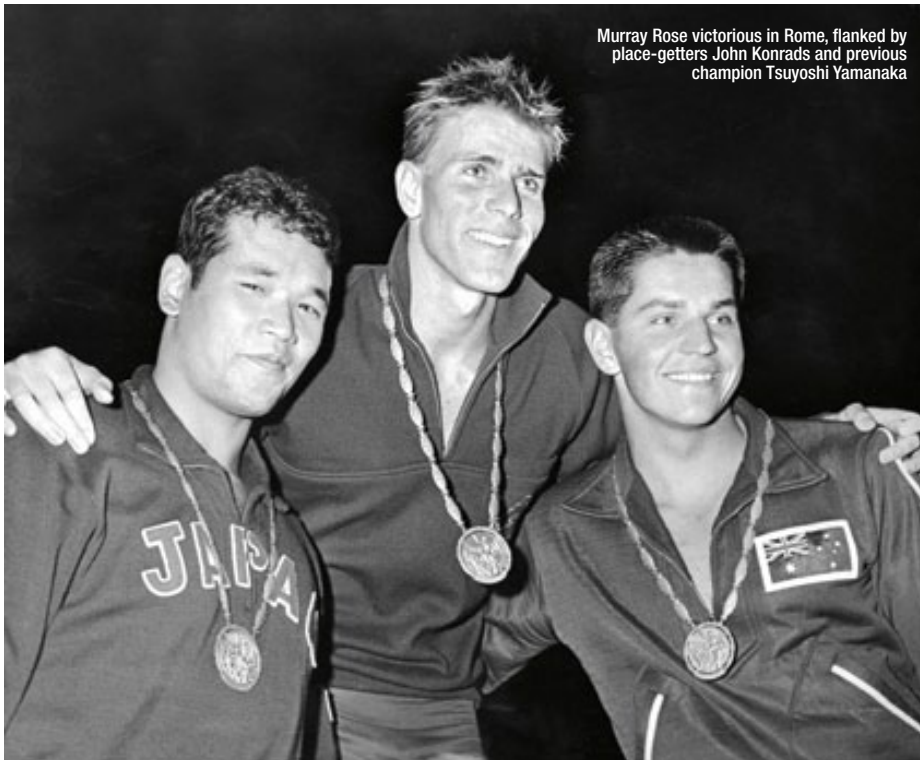
For the past three years, IQ has conducted their own courses ranging from Basic Pool Chemistry for new retail employees through to Advanced Pool Chemistry and Problem Solving aimed at pool professionals who would like to increase their chemistry knowledge.

CEO Spiros Dassakis says SPASA is impressed with IQ's commitment to training and education as well as their desire to become a conduit in providing the pool and spa service sector with formalised qualifications.

"International Quadratics' chemical experience, along with Chris Smith as a qualified trainer, makes them an ideal partner."

IQ will conduct courses in June in NSW followed by all states of Australia. For more information call Chris Smith on (02) 9774 5550 or email chris@interquad.com.au.

Industry moves



Murray Rose victorious in Rome, flanked by place-getters John Konrads and previous champion Tsuyoshi Yamanaka

SWIMMING LEGEND PASSES AWAY

MUCH loved and respected “Seaweed Streak” Murray Rose died in April. He was 73 years old.

Rose was the star of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, winning gold medals in the 400 metres freestyle, 1500 metres and 4 x 200-metre freestyle relay. His win in the 1500 was particularly exciting, as he had to stave off a late charge from the champion Tsuyoshi Yamanaka. The race was swum on the 15th anniversary of Pearl Harbour, and crowds filled the stadium while millions listened at home on their radios and even on the budding technology of television.

He later said the race epitomised the Olympic spirit as enemies in a terrible war were now competing with friendly rivalry in the pool. American George Breen took third place.

Rose had once been voted Australia’s greatest male Olympian. He came to Australia as a babe-in-arms from Birmingham UK with his parents in 1939. At the age of five, coach Sam Herford identified him as a future champion as he saw him swimming the dog paddle in Redleaf Pool at Double Bay, Sydney. Herford oversaw his development from nipper to world champion.

He was of particular interest to the media, as he was an excellent physical specimen and also a vegetarian, subsisting on a diet of fruit, nuts, wholemeal bread, porridge, soybeans and Irish kelp – earning him the name the Seaweed Streak.

He also excelled in Rome, but his magnificent swimming career was cut short by an attempt at a film career in Los Angeles, where he followed previous Australian champion swimmer Annette Kellerman and athlete Snowy Baker, as well as famous swimmer and Tarzan star, Johnny Weissmuller. He gained an athletic scholarship at Stanford and studied acting at UCLA. This caused him to miss an Olympic trial, and was not allowed to compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

He appeared as an Aussie big-wave surfer called Swag in the 1964 film Ride the Wild Surf; and had a small part in Ice Station Zebra. While his acting career didn’t take off, he worked as a sports commentator, staying in the US and marrying twice.

He later returned to Australia and in 2000 he was one of the flag bearers at the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony. He had a daughter Somerset with his first wife, Bobbie, and a son Trevor with his second wife ballerina Jodi Wintz, both of whom survive him.

CHANGES AT POOLRITE



Marc Lucian

MARC Lucian has responsibility for Poolrite Europe and now has expanded his role to become Global Manager of Poolrite, based in Lyon. Lucian

comes from a managing background in retail for international clothing brand Catimini and has already put Poolrite Europe on the map.



Xavier Vidal

ORIGINATING from Barcelona, Xavier Vidal joins the Poolrite team in the role of International Sales Director. He has more than 20 years

experience in the pool industry with AstralPool and Saci Pumps as export and sales manager. He has a Masters in Business and a passion for engineering and technology.



Melissa Hudson

MELISSA Hudson embarks on her eighth year at Poolrite stepping up from manufacturing operations to National Sales Manager. She is a former business

owner and has almost two decades experience in the retail fashion industry. She will work closely with branch managers, production staff and the rest of the Poolrite family.

SPASA SA COMMITTEE

RE-ELECTED committee members are Lindsay McGrath from BioLab, President; Mark Dimech from Pinnacle Paving & Pool Coping, Vice President; Roger Russell from Freedom Pools; and Richard Johnston from Adelaide Balustrade and Fencing. New committee members are Dave Eyles of Natural Pools; Elizabeth Bartley from the Spa and Sauna People; Trent Moran from Classic Pools; and Ross Starkey from Summertime Pools.

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National business names register

A new national registration service has been established. The new service will be managed by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and will allow businesses to register, maintain and search business names through a single national online register.

This service will replace the current state and territory services, so that businesses only need to register their name with a single national register.

Generally, existing registered business names in the states and territories will be automatically transferred to the new register. Existing business name holders should not need to do anything, as ASIC will contact them when it is time to renew their name.

Now you should be able to register a new business name online and in most cases receive confirmation of your registration straight away, using the new online check name availability search.

Costs for registering a national business name are significantly cheaper under the new online system: \$30 for one year or \$70 for three years.

For more information go to the ASIC website or go to splashmagazine.com.au for Quicklink.

Take care with excavators

WORKCOVER NSW has issued an urgent warning to businesses and workers following the notification of a third serious incident involving an excavator in less than two months.

Workplace Health and Safety Division GM John Watson says the most recent incident related to a 20-year-old man hit by an excavator bucket in Dapto, causing suspected serious and permanent injury.

“Also, in the past two months two workers have suffered fatal injuries on demolition sites in Sydney after buckets fell off excavator booms,” Watson says. “Incidents such as these are avoidable. Workers must pay constant attention when working with and around excavators.

“These tragic events have far-reaching consequences for friends, families, and communities. We want all workers to return home safely to their families at the end of every working day.”

Watson says there are a number of actions businesses and workers can take to improve safety when working on and around excavators: excavator operators need to know how to operate the specific quick hitch on the excavator they use, whether it is automatically secured or by manually inserting a pin.

“Quick hitches should be maintained and in proper working order,” he says. “Ensure people are not exposed to risks by establishing an exclusion zone when the excavator is in use.”

WorkCover recently published a safety alert on working with excavators. Go online to splashmagazine.com.au for a Quicklink to the relevant page or call 13 10 50 for more information.

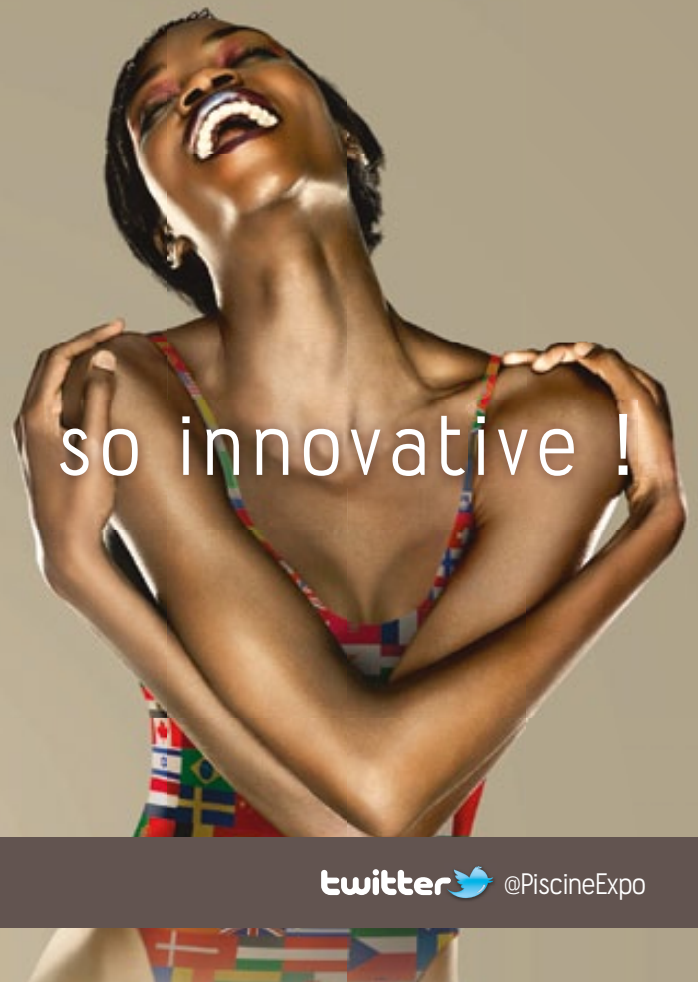
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Maui swim vests recalled

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has accepted a court-enforceable undertaking from Brand Direct International Pty Ltd after it supplied children's swimming aid vests which did not comply with the mandatory product safety standard.

"The Maui brand swimming aid vests, which came in two sizes, failed to comply with the safety warning labelling requirements of the mandatory product safety standard," says ACCC Chairman Graeme Samuel. The standard is based on AS 1900-1991 Flotation toys and swimming aids for children.

"The ACCC found the vests during a routine product survey. Contrary to the standard, the vests were not marked with the intended body mass range. Further, the safety warning on one of the vests was not in a contrasting colour, making it difficult to read," says Samuel.

"Brand Direct imported approximately 4000 vests, which were distributed to Big W stores in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

"The ACCC was particularly concerned that Big W, once alerted by Brand Direct that there may have been a problem with the vests, continued to sell them for another week until it received written notification from Brand Direct requesting that the vests be withdrawn from sale."

Pool pump makes big noise for whistleblower

THE woman who brought the scandals of the Health Services Union (HSU) to light, former national secretary Kathy Jackson, has a problem of her own.

Her swimming pool pump had been causing unreasonable noise according to Boroondara City Council, and they say she has done nothing to improve the situation.

According to a report in the *Age* newspaper, the magistrate was unimpressed that the case had been brought under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, as the magistrate himself has a pool pump next door and you "just have to get used to it"

She had failed to attend court on previous occasions over this matter, and had been required to move the pool plant away from the property boundary and enclose it in a soundproof box. She faces fines of up to \$14,000 if she does not deal with the matter.

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The great barrier beef-up

Veda Dante looks at the latest in pool barrier legislation in Australia and New Zealand and finds that many jurisdictions are beefing up swimming pool security.

Drowning remains the leading cause of accidental death in Australian children aged under five. Most of these drownings occur in places other than swimming pools; nonetheless, swimming pool drownings represent the largest category (12 pool drownings out of a total of 28 drownings).

This is a 25 per cent decrease on the five-year average for the category. This shows that some progress is being made, but there is still a way to go to make swimming pools safer for young children.

Supervision is a fundamental part of the equation, but pool fencing also has a vital role to play.

Local councils shoulder the responsibility for administering the state-based regulations mandating pool barrier protection. Additionally they have to – or some will soon have to – administer new laws on compulsory inspection.

In a nutshell: Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and New Zealand have instituted compulsory pool registrations, while New South Wales recently detailed a number of options to strengthen the laws around backyard swimming pools and spas in an effort to save young children's lives.

The register in Queensland is state-based, with an inspection and a pool safety certificate required when selling or leasing a property with a pool; in Western Australia, inspections are required every four years by council-appointed pool inspectors; in the Northern Territory all pools over 30cm deep require an inspection by a specialised NT government representative; and in New Zealand every pool owner is required to register the existence of a swimming or spa pool with local councils.