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Hannah's Legacy – Government responds to pool safety campaign

THE parents of a young backyard drowning victim have welcomed the Premier's announcement of a wide-ranging review of pool safety laws following an intensive lobbying campaign.

Katherine and Andrew Plint of Laidley west of Brisbane, have actively sought improvements to pool safety since last year's tragic death of their two-year-old daughter Hannah.

Today Premier Anna Bligh announced her government would set up an advisory committee to look at key areas of pool safety, including a statewide register of pools.

"We already have some of the toughest pool safety laws in the country but that does not mean they can't be improved," Ms Bligh said.

"The review will also address concerns that pool fencing laws are not being adequately policed by local councils," she said.

Mr Plint said it was wonderful the government was finally going to do something about the state of pool safety laws in Queensland.

"We're happy to support the taskforce as long as the recommendations are adopted in a timely and reasonable manner," he said.

"These recommendations have been around for a while and we would like to think they would be enshrined in law as soon as possible."

"We would hope to have them in place by July 1st, 2009 so we can start saving lives before next summer and before the next election," Mr Plint said.

As well as the pool register, the taskforce will consider introducing mandatory ongoing inspections of swimming pools to ensure compliance, and inspections at the point of sale.

Ms Bligh said a single state-wide standard to replace Queensland's existing 11 pool fencing standards would also be considered.

Mrs Plint has previously spoken out about the lack of pool safety compliance in Queensland and the poor follow-up by local authorities.

"I regularly see homes being advertised for sale, that have pools that actually breach regulation. It's very hard to get anyone to do anything about them," she said.

Emotionally upset Mrs Plint said *"its about time and Hannah's Foundations advocacy has been pushing this for just on six months. I hope that once the new legislation is passed and enforced that people will believe that lives can be saved with the voice of the people who have lost their own children in tragedies such as ours. We don't want any family to suffer this incredible loss and live with heavy hearts every day for the rest of their lives. This is not just because of our daughter Hannah but for every child lost to drowning across the country. Our job isn't done we now have to campaign NSW and VIC into the same legislation changes.. I am a mum on a mission and I wont stop until this is done and the stats for drowning in the toddler age group in ZERO"*.

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The Coronial Inquest into Hannah's death on October 4, 2007, will be held this week.

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