

DROWNINGS — WATER SAFETY PLANS

763. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the national report released this week by Royal Life Saving Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia, which was the subject of the Minister for Sport and Recreation's brief ministerial statement and which stated that people in regional and remote WA were 2.3 times more likely to drown. Why is the Premier's government allowing cuts to locations for VacSwim sessions offered in small rural towns such as Koorda, Wickepin and Merredin, and maintaining his mean fee increase of 122 per cent for VacSwim lessons?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Obviously, the deaths of people from drowning is a tragedy in Western Australia, as it is around Australia. From memory—I am sorry, but I did not get the exact details of the minister's statement—in any given year around 40 Western Australians drown. Again from memory, around 15 or so are in the ocean and a range are in swimming pools, farm dams, rivers and the like, and there are even some infant drownings in baths and the like in households. It is a terrible tragedy that afflicts many communities across Western Australia. I might ask the member to give me a little notice about the details of anything that happens with VacSwim. I am afraid that I do not know the details of any particular reduction in services in Koorda, but the Minister for Education and Training might be able to give me some advice. I know that in dollar terms there have been some very modest increases in the cost of VacSwim lessons. Again, my recollection is that it costs around \$30 for 10 VacSwim lessons, but I might be slightly out. I will try to get some detail for the member to give her a proper answer by the end of question time or in the next day or so.