

Affordability a huge barrier to disadvantaged children when it comes to water safety

Children from Barnardos Australia are set to receive free water safety lessons this Sunday 5 February, as part of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia (RLSSA) and UNCLE TOBYS campaign Operation 10,000.

Through Operation 10,000, in 2012 RLSSA and UNCLE TOBYS are giving 10,000 disadvantaged children free Swim & Survive courses.

The campaign will be launched over 10,000 minutes from Sunday 5 February at Customs House near Circular Quay in Sydney and eight children from Barnardos Australia’s South Coast Centre are participating on the day.

Jan Williams, Deputy Senior Manager, Barnardos Australia’s South Coast Centre says, “Poverty is a significant problem for Australian children and young people and is highly correlated with lack of access to key experiences and learning opportunities. Barnardos works to address this ongoing disadvantage. If it wasn’t for the RLSSA and UNCLE TOBYS, these children wouldn’t have the ability to learn how to be safe in the water.”

Barnardos has been a key partner in the Swim & Survive program from the start.

“As water safety is not taught in the current school curriculum it is children like those supported by Barnardos Australia who miss out and are at serious risk of drowning. Affordability is a key barrier and that is why, with the help of UNCLE TOBYS, we are launching the Operation 10000. We want to ensure disadvantaged children have access to water safety lessons and the essential life saving skills they need – and all Australian children deserve,” says CEO of RLSSA, Rob Bradley.

From Sunday 5 to Thursday 12 February a pool, stage and TV screen will be set up at Customs House and a ‘mother of young kids’ will be present from 8am-6pm each day.

- Ends -

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Notes for editors:

About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos is a non-government, non-denominational child welfare charity that has been helping children in need for over 120 years. Barnardos Australia is one of the largest children’s charities in the country, caring for children and young people at risk of, or suffering the effects of, abuse and neglect. The work of Barnardos Australia focuses on the prevention of abuse and neglect and entry into care. Children and young people of all backgrounds and cultural heritage are helped through a range of welfare programs including crisis care, family support, counselling and permanent foster care.

Our vision is that all children and young people will have caring families, in which they can grow up safely and reach their full potential supported by quality services and engaged communities.

For more information visit: www.barnardos.org.au

About Swim & Survive

Swim and Survive is a comprehensive swimming and water safety initiative of Royal Life Saving that seeks to increase the swimming and water safety skills of all Australian children in order to prevent drowning and increase participation in safe aquatic activity. UNCLE TOBYS is proudly working together with the Royal Life Saving Society - Australia to help children learn to Swim and Survive since 2009.

For more information visit: www.swimandsurvive.com.au