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**Media Release**  
For immediate release



## **CALL FOR CENTRAL OTAGO WATER SAFETY TRAINING ANSWERED**

A recent Central Otago Water Safety Forum has highlighted the need for development opportunities for those charged with delivering water safety education.

Annette Godman, Southern Regional Manager, Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) comments, "The most recent Central Otago water safety forum had 46 people attend. This is strong testament that the community recognises the need for relevant water safety education programmes to be implemented in the region. The Water Safety Forums are a national initiative that WSNZ has instigated to facilitate solutions to water safety issues that have specific relevance to a region. In Central Otago it was made clear there is a need for professional development opportunities; in response WSNZ has acted immediately and will deliver professional development in both river safety education and learn to swim and water safety for local teachers and swim instructors in June."

The first opportunity will take place on 9 June 2011 at Cromwell Pools, Cromwell and relates to a new resource developed by WSNZ – Be River Safe.

The need for river safety education is obvious as more people drown in rivers than in any other aquatic environment in our nation. Given the large number of river environments in Central Otago and the likelihood of residents utilising rivers for recreational pleasure, this resource has real application in the region.

Be River Safe is a multi media resource that includes a free DVD and 'tool box' of resources. The professional development session will be led by Steve Brown - a highly qualified, experienced outdoor instructor for Wild Earth Adventures based in Dunedin - and will provide teachers with information on resource content and how they can build a learning programme that meets the needs of their students.

Teachers wishing to attend the Be Rive Safe professional development session should email Cory Sweeney, WSNZ Project Manager at [cory@watersafety.org.nz](mailto:cory@watersafety.org.nz).



High quality learn to swim and water safety qualifications are the basis of the second professional development opportunity coming to the region. Learn to swim and survival skills are at crisis point among New Zealand youth, and WSNZ research indicates swimming ability continues to decline at an alarming rate.

Under the Sealord Swim For Life banner WSNZ is developing strategies to arrest this decline and views the services provided by swim school operators as integral in efforts to improve swimming ability. Traditionally the school system has been the primary venue for learn to swim activity but the failure of the national educational system in this area puts all youth at risk. This inevitably brings more focus and importance to the essential services provided by swim schools.

Ms Godman explains, "WSNZ has been granted the licence for AUSTSWIM delivery in NZ. There is no comparable quality of learn to swim and water safety training or qualifications available to New Zealand based learn to swim teachers. The learn to swim industry in our country has long been envious of the range of accredited training programmes offered through AUSTSWIM. We are aware of considerable demand for access to these programmes and, due to the close working relationship and goodwill that exists between the two organisations, we are scheduling training courses throughout New Zealand and will be hosting our first Central Otago training session on 10 - 11 June 2011 at Lakes Leisure Aquatic Facility."

Ms Godman advises that places on the region's first AUSTSWIM Course are limited and encourages those with an interest in attending to notify Jill Seymour, WSNZ AUSTSWIM Manager at [jill@watersafety.org.nz](mailto:jill@watersafety.org.nz). Further information on AUSTSWIM in New Zealand can be found at [www.watersafety.org.nz](http://www.watersafety.org.nz).

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**For more information or interview contact:**

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## **WATER SAFETY NEW ZEALAND**

Formed in 1949, WSNZ is the national organisation responsible for water safety education in New Zealand.

WSNZ manages drowning prevention and water safety in communities through education. WSNZ administers proven, proactive and preventative education interventions.

WSNZ leads the Learn to Swim and Survive sector in New Zealand. The Sealord Swim For Life initiative is WSNZ's major project. WSNZ seeks to address a dramatic decline in swimming ability of our youth. Sealord Swim For Life is a comprehensive national project established to:

- Provide all children with access to the water;
- Facilitate the delivery of quality swim and survive programmes in primary schools;
- Provide the foundations for the development of a culture that produces generations of New Zealand families that are water safe.

For more information go to [www.sealordswimforlife.org.nz](http://www.sealordswimforlife.org.nz)

