

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE NEW FACE OF LEARNING TO SWIM IN NZ

Half of all 10 year old children can't swim 25 metres.

25% of them can't even keep afloat.

Learning to swim is NOT a requirement of the school curriculum and as a result, the majority of our children are not receiving the quality of learn to swim education they need.

"It is no surprise, that New Zealanders drown at an alarming rate. Children must learn swim and survival skills, it should be a way of life for New Zealand children" says Matt Claridge, General Manager of Water Safety New Zealand, the lead agency for the Swim and Survive sector in New Zealand. "Unfortunately, not enough of our kids are being equipped with the skills to survive in the water" he said.

In a new partnership with Sealord, New Zealand's iconic seafood company, change is here. Sealord Swim For Life is an overarching, national project established to address a dramatic decline in the swimming ability of our children.

"Survival in and around water is an everyday part of life at Sealord" says Graham Stuart, CEO of Sealord. "Within our organisation and communities, we believe that knowing how to swim is a basic skill that all Kiwis must be equipped with, should we ever find ourselves in a situation where we need to swim to survive."

He continues, "We feel so strongly about this that now, with Water Safety NZ, we are working together to give every child in New Zealand the opportunity to learn the skills to swim and survive in and around water."

In a concerted and collaborative effort to ensure that there is broad and sustained uptake of this new learn-to-swim-to-survive initiative, a co-ordinated informational marketing campaign has been developed.

A new identity has been created for this vital learn to swim partnership, with it's roots being firmly founded in New Zealand - Kautiki. The Swimming Tiki.

"We are a New Zealand company" says Mr Stuart of Sealord, passionately, "So the development of an iconic New Zealand identity for this partnership was critical."

He reveals that "Kautiki is the taonga of the Sealord, Water Safety NZ Swim for Life project and is a visual reminder of how precious our children are and the importance of swimming as a survival skill".



Tiki are unique to Aotearoa/New Zealand and have their origins in our ancient histories. They originate from the most sacred of waters, wai matua, the protective embryonic waters of the mother.

The goal of this new Swim For Life initiative, is to equip New Zealand children with the essential skills to swim 200 metres.

The primary focus of the project is to manage the regional delivery of swim and survive education in schools through working with Regional Sports Trusts and Territorial Authorities.

One of the key tools developed to encourage and support kids skill development is a 'Passport' whereby children who sign up for the initiative are given a colourful booklet that charts their progress on their way to being a competent and confident swimmer. Alongside this, a sophisticated online database has been developed to track each child's progress along 9 stages of learning to swim 200 metres. In addition a public website www.swimforlife.org.nz will provide valuable tips to swim and survive, while also being a place kids can enjoy learning about safety in water.

"Swim schools and schools will access the site and input vital information that we can view at any time to measure the effectiveness of the Swim for Life project and assess progress of age groups, ethnicities, etc" says Claridge. "The data we glean from this tool will assist in the development of essential resources as the project moves forward, so that we may target areas that need most help".

The last word is left to the face of the new project, that will no doubt become the catch cry for all our children learning to swim, so that they may survive.

Swim to survive! Kautiki Kauora!

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