

Media Release

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Top Energy aims to keep Northland kids WaterSafe

Last summer, more than 9,000 Northland children received WaterSafe instruction, with 1,506 kids also taking part in the Programme's Beach Safe training thanks to local lines company, Top Energy and Sport Northland.

In this its 8th season, the WaterSafe Programme will soon get underway and thousands more Mid and Far North primary-aged children will improve their swimming skills so they can be safe around water.

Teaching kids graduated learn to swim and personal survival skills, the SwimSafe Programme is designed to allow them to enter and advance through progressive swimming levels at their own pace. Top Energy's sponsorship also enables WaterSafe Instructors to train teachers and parent helpers as Lotto SwimSafe Instructors in participating schools. There are four separate components to the programme, which include;

- 1) Learn to swim & water survival instruction in school pools, using the nationally recognised 5-level Lotto SwimSafe sequential learning programme. Teachers have the opportunity to observe Instructors teaching swimming skills to various ability groups within their class.
- 2) A 6-hour Swim Safe Instructors training course for teachers, which includes practical pool sessions, principles of water safety and risk management, progressive methods of teaching strokes, effective skill teaching methods and swimming lesson planning. In addition, there is a 20-hour practical teaching requirement.
- 3) Assistance in planning and effective aquatic programme in school and/or teaching in-service.
- 4) Day at the beach, to learn how to be Beach Safe – learning about rips, currents, waves, SunSmart and then some fun activities on the beach.

This season, the Top Energy WaterSafe programme will include a 5th element, which is more structured and targeted at those older primary schools kids that have been identified by their schools as being unable to swim. Initially, this 10-lesson programme will focus on selected schools throughout the region, with the intention of expanding it to other schools in the region.

According to Top Energy WaterSafe Senior Instructor, Esther Hone, “We are aiming to ensure that those kids who have slipped through the school system without learning to swim are taught the skills to survive in the water. Swimming is an essential life-skill and working with these kids over 10 sessions will give them a great boost towards gaining these skills.”

Top Energy Chief Executive, Roger de Bray, believes WaterSafe is an effective learning programme that fits well with three other education initiatives his company sponsors in the Far North; The Far North Science & Technology Fair – which is an effective hands-on way to promote science and technology to secondary school students while helping them to develop investigative and problem-solving life-skills; The School-to-work Programme – which provides Scholarships for senior students wanting to get paid part-time work experience while still at school; and the Young Entrepreneur Programme - which provides training and mentoring for senior students and school leavers on how to establish their own businesses.

“Our WaterSafe Programme is a major commitment in keeping our region’s kids safe. With all of our communities close to either beaches, rivers or lakes, making sure they can survive around water is essential”, Mr de Bray said. END.

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