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The heat is on – but be cool and stay safe, particularly around rural waterways

With parts of rural Australia expecting another Christmas and New Year scorcher, and with temperatures already breaking some records across the country, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is warning rural Australians to be aware of heat stroke, and to make sure they don't push it too hard when the mercury rises – but instead stay in the shade and keep cool.

RDAA has also warned that those seeking to cool off in inland rivers, dams and lakes should take extra care, with drownings being as much of a danger in inland waterways as at coastal beaches.



“Part of what makes Christmas and New Year unique in Australia are those long summer days, whether we spend them at the coast, down at the local river, or around the house or farm” **RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.**

“But as the temperatures rise, we need to ensure we are staying well hydrated by drinking plenty of water, applying sun protection like broad-brimmed hats and sunscreen, and staying out of direct sunlight and radiant heat so we don't end up needing to be treated in hospital for heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

“While we know that farmwork (and lots of other rural work) doesn't stop over the summer holidays, it is best not to keep working outside in the middle of a scorching summer day – look to work in the early morning and then late in the afternoon and evening, and have the middle of the day off.

“Very importantly, if you are going down to the local river, dam or lake to cool off, follow the same water safety rules you would follow at the coast:

- always closely supervise children around water
- if you are not a strong swimmer, don't swim (just dip your feet in)
- don't eat a huge meal before going for a swim
- don't drink alcohol before going swimming, and don't swim while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs

- don't go swimming alone, and don't swim too far from shore
- wear a life jacket, particularly if you are going to be in a boat or undertaking activities like water skiing
- know what is in the water in inland waterways, to ensure you are not diving or water skiing into shallow areas, rocks and submerged branches.

"Make sure you stay cool as the weather gets warmer, and stay safe around inland waterways, so you can continue to enjoy the great summer days ahead!"

Find more information about heat exhaustion and heat stroke here:

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/heatstroke>

Find more information about water safety here:

<https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/about/campaigns-and-programs/Water-Safety>

Find more information about being SunSmart here:

<https://www.cancer.org.au> (search 'Be SunSmart' once on page)

Photo of Dr RT Lewandowski

[Please click here](#)

Available for interview:

RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski
State specific contacts are also available

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