



MEDIA RELEASE

DR CRAIG EMERSON

Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy
Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs
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NEW PUSH TO STRENGTHEN CONSUMER SAFETY

Australian consumers now have access to a new internet site which will help them make safe purchases for their families, Consumer Affairs Minister Craig Emerson announced today.

The www.productsafety.gov.au site contains extensive advice on everything from baby products and furniture to clothes and confectionery.

Dr Emerson said the website filled a gap in consumer information by bringing it together and making it easily accessible regardless of a consumer's location.

He said the website, developed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, in conjunction with state and territory consumer affairs authorities, enables consumers to make inquiries, complaints and reports about products.

"All visitors to the site can also sign up for automatic email updates which they can customise according to their own needs or areas of interest," Dr Emerson said.

"This site lets consumers keep up to date with risks associated with unsafe or misused products, how to choose safe products, and current safety issues that national, state and territory regulators are watching.

"Consumers can also find a full list of product safety bans and mandatory standards, product safety tips, myths, interesting facts, statistics, injury case studies, copies of the latest media releases, and legal cases related to product safety.

"And local and overseas suppliers can easily get the information they need to ensure they make, buy and sell safe products.

"We know from the manufacturers, product testers, retailers and industry associations who tested this website during its development that they too are very keen to have all the information they need about Australian bans, mandatory standards and emerging issues in one on-line location.

“And these suppliers are also very happy that by January 2011 – thanks to the Rudd Government’s Australian Consumer Law - they’ll only have to understand and comply with one set of national laws.

“Today’s launch of www.productsafety.gov.au is in line with a 2006 Productivity Commission recommendation for a streamlined, national product safety system.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- Everyday household items can cause serious injury or death if misused. Every year, 38 people suffering burns from hot water bottles are admitted to Victorian hospitals.
- On average, 19 Australians, mainly men, die after falling off a ladder each year. More than a third of these deaths occur while the victim is working around the home.
- The peak age for general do-it-yourself injury is 30-34 years; the danger age for ladder injuries is 50-plus.
- An estimated 200 Queensland children under five are injured every year in incidents involving prams or strollers.
- Some sunglasses have been recalled because their lenses make it hard to properly identify colours, meaning drivers could mistake red for green.
- Between January 2000 and June 2007, there were 320 hospital admissions recorded in Victoria due to injuries arising from the use of vehicle jacks, with 53 per cent of these occurring at home.
- At least 15 Australian children have been strangled by blind and curtain cords since the early 1990s. The ACCC has been working with state and territory consumer product regulators to run a campaign on this issue and it’s highlighted on the new website.

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