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Home > NEWS > Minister Pike makes a splash in Dubai

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Students in the United Arab Emirates will be able to learn to swim the Australian way following the launch of the AUSTSWIM Training Package by Bronwyn Pike M.P., Minister for Education, Skills and Workforce Participation, State Government of Victoria, in Dubai.

The latest evolution of the AUSTSWIM Teaching Swimming and Water Safety textbook won the Australian Educational Publishing TAFE and Vocational Single Title Textbook Award in 2009 and will be used for the first time in the new format in the Middle East.

Ms Pike said that learning to swim and how to stay safe in the water was something that has been part of the Australian way of life for generations.

"Water safety is an important issue and I am pleased that the tremendously successful AUSTSWIM program has been brought to the Middle East," Ms Pike said.

"AUSTSWIM is another Victorian innovation that has taken to the world since it commenced teaching children to swim 30 years ago. It is one of the many examples of Victorian involvement in the UAE – including the Victorian International School in Sharjah."

"Since the original launch of limited AUSTSWIM programs in the region in 2008 AUSTSWIM has trained more than 200 swimming teachers, with over 100 becoming fully qualified as AUSTSWIM teachers of swimming and water safety."

The first course to be held in the Middle East using the new text book has started at the Dubai British School with participants from a wide variety of backgrounds, including mothers, students, teachers, swimming coaches from the UAE and beyond.

The latest evolution of the AUSTSWIM Training Package was officially launched by Ms Pike M.P., Minister for Education, Skills and Workforce Participation, State Government of Victoria and Kirk Marks, the Chairman of AUSTSWIM.

"I congratulate Kirk Marks for his work and the Victorian Government Business Office here in Dubai for facilitating the program," Ms Pike said.

Further courses are planned for the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and later in the year in Lebanon which will include teaching infants, adults and people with disabilities.

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