Tuesday, 12 January, 2016

NO EXCEPTIONS, NO EXCUSES - NEVER LEAVE KIDS IN CARS

The Andrews Labor Government and Kidsafe are working together to increase parents’ and carers’ awareness of the dangers of leaving children in parked cars with the No Exceptions, No Excuses campaign.

Despite recent heat warnings, severe penalties and record-breaking summer temperatures, children are still being left unattended in parked cars, putting them at risk of serious heat-related injury or death.

Since releasing annual figures in December, Ambulance Victoria has revealed that Victorian paramedics were called to 225 cases of children left in cars during December 2015 – up from 161 the year before.

On one of the busiest days – which saw the temperature reach 37 degrees - Victorian paramedics responded to 13 call outs to children left in cars.

Acting Premier James Merlino today joined Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos and campaign ambassador Rebecca Judd at The Glen shopping centre in Glen Waverley to highlight the dangers of leaving kids in cars.

This year’s campaign reminds parents how easy it is to vastly underestimate the time it can take to run a quick errand or duck into a shop. Within minutes, a car’s temperature can more than double.

On a typical Australian summer day, the inside of a parked car can be 20 to 30 degrees hotter than outside. With a young child’s body temperature rising three to five times faster than an adult’s, they are at greater risk of life-threatening heatstroke, dehydration and organ damage.

In extreme circumstances, children have had to be rescued by Fire Officers as well as treated by Ambulance Victoria paramedics. There is no safe period of time to leave a child alone in a car.

The campaign includes radio and online advertising as well as billboards around shopping centres and social media messages. Local community events at shopping centres, posters in early childhood services like kindergartens, early childhood centres, GPs and hospitals and maternal and child health nurses will also help spread the message.

In Victoria, it is against the law to leave children unattended in a car. Parents or carers could face fines of nearly $3,700 or up to six months’ jail, or both.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

“We are urging the community to heed this message and take it seriously.”

“We continue to face hot conditions this summer - there are no excuses for leaving kids in cars.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

“When you leave your child in a car, you are putting them at risk of serious injury or death.”

“If you are travelling with a child and you need to get out of the car - even for just a moment - make sure you take your child or children with you. No exceptions, no excuses.”

Media Contact: James Gunn 0437 483 981 | james.gunn@minstaff.vic.gov.au