



MEDIA RELEASE

13 March 2013

New locks on old windows great news for kids and families

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People and Kidsafe NSW today welcomed the announcement that old as well as new strata buildings will have to install safety locks to prevent children falling out of apartment windows.

From May, all windows above ground floor in new strata buildings will be fitted with locks or other safety devices to prevent them opening more than 12.5cm. All older buildings will need to be retrospectively fitted with the devices within five years.

"The Commission has always been a strong advocate for new locks on *all* windows where there is a risk of injury or death to a child," NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People Ms Mitchell said.

"While we would have preferred the timeframe for compliance by older strata buildings to have been shorter, this is still a major step in the right direction towards keeping young children safe.

"Childhood injury is largely preventable yet each year approximately 50 children go to hospital as a result of a fall from a window or balcony.

"Adults need to help make the world a safer place for children and young people and evolve laws and policies to reflect the changes in children's lives.

"It is not just parents who have a responsibility to keep children safe or to make built environments and households physically secure.

"This is particularly important in situations where parents have little control over the construction and security of the buildings in which they live, such as high rise residential units."

Executive Officer of Kidsafe NSW Ms Christine Eskine acknowledged that changes to the built environment can take time, but said communities had strong expectations in relation to child injury prevention.

"Recent community education campaigns and government commitments have created a 'social environment' for change," Ms Erskine said.

"Hundreds of thousands of households will now have to be alerted to the legislative requirement to make residences safe for children within the designated timeframe.

"But I would also encourage parents living in buildings with high windows to consider not waiting too long before fitting window safety devices.

"The impact of injury is felt most by the children and young people who sustain injuries but the impact is also felt by their mums, dads, siblings, grandparents and friends."

Media contact: Michelle Neathercote on 0413 456 080