

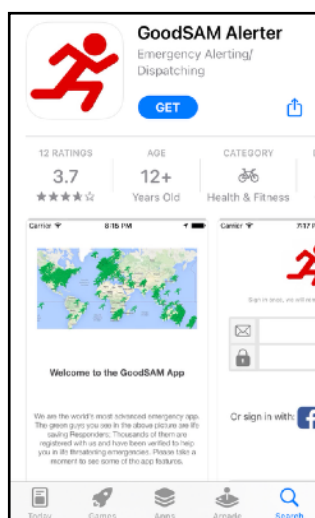
As most of you know, Graham and I both love being in water, as do all of our children and grandchildren. I think in both our families this trait has been inherited from our fathers.

The first time I remember someone being rescued who could not swim was my younger brother Peter who had Down syndrome. We were on holiday in the Kyles of Bute, a beautiful part of the West Coast of Scotland where I learned to swim. Peter was playing on the jetty and fell in. He couldn't swim. My sister Anne, almost 4 years older than me and 5 years older than Peter pulled him out. His first comment? 'Water salty Anne. Water salty!'

Australian lifesavers and others involved with water safety have been concerned that Covid has closed swimming pools and cancelled swimming lessons for long periods of time. However, the near drowning and timely rescue I'm going to talk about, happened to a 7 year old girl who can swim. I quote almost verbatim from the AGE.



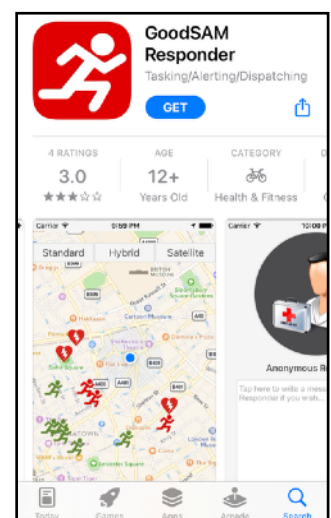
Paul Edbrooke had just driven across the bridge exiting Phillip Island when the sound of sirens started blaring from his phone. The state Labor MP for Frankston had been surfing with his two teenage boys the day before New Year's Eve, but his afternoon was about to take a serious turn.



The siren sound came from an emergency good Samaritan app, GoodSAM. It alerted him to a person drowning nearby. He was only a few streets away, so he rushed to the address in San Remo.

"I went over the fence and saw the mum dealing with an unconscious child," he recalls.

A seven-year-old had been dragged out of a backyard pool. She had no pulse and was lifeless. The MP explained to the girl's family that he was a former firefighter trained in first aid and CPR.



For three minutes, he pumped her chest to no avail. He cleared her airways and pushed hard and fast against the small girl's chest as her family watched.

"Then she just came back," said Mr Edbrooke, who chairs the government's water safety taskforce. Later, she lost consciousness again. But by the time paramedics arrived about 10 minutes later, more CPR had returned her to life and she was breathing and crying.

What was unclear to the politician was that the girl had suffered a heart episode. She was a confident swimmer who attended swimming lessons, but her cardiac problem caused her to sink as she enjoyed a swim in Melbourne's first summer spell of hot weather.

Paramedics and hospital staff were also forced to resuscitate the seven-year-old as she dropped out of consciousness multiple times. She remains in a critical condition.

Royal Children's Hospital trauma director Professor Warwick Teague said her family dragging her out of the pool and Mr Edbrooke's delivery of CPR were "heroic" actions that gave her a chance at life.

"This is a family that has prepared itself well in terms of a child being taken to swimming lessons and supervising the pool," he said. "It speaks powerfully to the fact that we cannot take for granted the dangers of water and the need for constant vigilance, even if we hold dearly to us this very Australian expression, summer life."

Five people drowned in Victoria last month. Mr Edbrooke said that for every person who died by drowning there were 10 occasions when a person was saved. (This is one reason I wanted to share a story of a rescue)

He urged people to join the GoodSAM app, which alerts appropriately trained members of the public to cardiac episodes in the important minutes after 000 is called but before an ambulance arrives.

The parliamentary secretary for emergency services said the event demonstrated the importance of people being trained in CPR. It was also a sad reminder of the dangers of water, he said.

"We bathe in it, make coffee with it and shower in it, but it kills many Victorians each year. It's all preventable," he said, while praising the work of first responders.

This story spoke to me of the need to be alert to how we can help someone every day we live on this earth.

You know that one of our daughters calls my motto - Ephesians 2:10.

*God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.*



Christine Bradbeer