

drowning detection system

media release



Saturday 10th November, 2007

Mayor launches Poseidon *'The Lifeguards Third Eye'* Australia's 1st Computer Aided Drowning Detection System

The Mayor of Blacktown City Cr Leo Kelly OAM and the Minister for Water Utilities and Emergency Services Hon Nathan Rees MP today joined forces with Poseidon International, Third Watch Australia / New Zealand and the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope to launch Australia's first computer aided drowning detection system.

Poseidon is setting the benchmark worldwide for computer aided drowning detection systems and assists lifeguards in preventing drownings in public swimming pools.

Using a network of cameras above and below the water surface and specialised software, the Poseidon system analyses the activity of all swimmers in the pool. It can alert lifeguards via an audible alarm and a visual display when a swimmer is motionless or having trouble beneath the surface in as little as 10 seconds. It also identifies the exact location of the swimmer in the pool, saving precious seconds in trying to locate the person.

Minister Rees said the Poseidon System is designed to make public swimming pools safer and to assist lifeguards preventing drownings.

"Drowning is a significant cause of death with over 140,000 accidental drownings in public pools occurring worldwide each year". Mr Rees said.

"I congratulate Blacktown City Council for again leading the way with this innovation in public swimming pool safety in Australian and New Zealand leisure and aquatic facilities that will provide world best practice in community safety," Mr Rees concluded

Mayor of Blacktown City, Councillor Leo Kelly, OAM said that the installation of the Poseidon System at Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope is a further demonstration of Blacktown City's commitment to provide best practice in community safety.

"Blacktown City Council recognises that the Poseidon System is designed to assist Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope's lifeguards to save lives through its ability to act as the lifeguards '3rd Eye' by assisting them but never replacing them," Mayor Kelly said.

“Since opening in 2003 Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope has been at the forefront of the aquatic and leisure industry, winning 19 industry and community awards. The Poseidon installation demonstrates that the Centre continues to lead the way in the provision of world best practice operations in Australian and New Zealand aquatic and leisure facilities,” Mayor Kelly added.

“I thank Poseidon International and Third Watch for their continued support and look forward to the Poseidon System enhancing community safety that will benefit the local and wider community,” Mayor Kelly concluded.

BACKGROUND and COMMENTS

Poseidon, the lifeguard’s third eye is:

- A patented technology created in 1995, first sold in France in 2000 and in the US in 2002, Poseidon integrates state-of-the-art technologies in computer vision and aquatic image processing and is a result of a close cooperation between its research and development engineers and some of the leading French laboratories (Ecole Normale Supérieure, CNRS & INRIA).
- Since its first installation in 2000, the Poseidon system has triggered alerts resulting from real accidents and helped lifeguards detect and rescue 8 drowning victims.
- The Poseidon technology is now installed in more than 150 public pools all over the world including: 50 in France, 50 in the rest of Europe (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg and Germany), 50 in the United States of America and Japan.

Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope is:

- The flagship leisure facility for Blacktown City Council that officially opened on 31st January, 2003
- Since opening the mission of the Centre has been to provide the ultimate in affordable leisure and entertainment to the community regardless of age or ability by creating a high quality health and lifestyle environment, fantastic sporting opportunities, a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere and great aquatic fun.
- The facility showcases Blacktown City Council's strategic commitment to offering excellent fitness opportunities and innovative programs to encourage the community to be active. The Centre's success begins with first impressions of inspirational design, underpinned by an innovative management structure, dedicated and talented staff, world class facilities and creative programming.
- Since its inception Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope has proved to be a huge success. More than 4.3 million visitors have walked through the door and experienced the fun and excitement of Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope. The Centre has also quickly become a favourite venue for community events in Western Sydney.
- The centre has become a valuable community venue for residents' associations, schools, sporting clubs, youth services, cultural groups, businesses and educational institutions.
- The Centre has been awarded 19 industry and community awards since opening.

What does Poseidon International Say?

“Australians are well known around the world for their love of swimming. We believe it’s essential to provide the highest safety measures for each and every swimmer that visits a public pool, which is why we’re delighted to be able to bring a revolutionary solution like Poseidon to the Australian public, through the foresight of the Blacktown City Council, in the state of New South Wales”.

We believe this will pave the way for other Councils and Government bodies to see this ground-breaking technology in action and make similar moves to improve swimming pool safety in pools right across Australia.

Thierry Boeglin
International Sales Director
Poseidon Technologies

What does Third Watch Australia/ New Zealand say?

"We applaud the Blacktown City Council for making the bold and innovative decision to install Poseidon", said Mr Whittaker. The incredibly high emotional and financial cost of drownings is all the more distressing because it is completely avoidable and it is great to see that Blacktown Council has the welfare of its constituents in mind. It's impossible for lifeguards to see all swimmers, all the time, particularly in crowded swimming pools'

A swimmer in distress needs to be rescued within 30 seconds to avoid serious brain injury or death. The burden on our lifeguards is immense. Poseidon helps them manage this enormous responsibility by providing a better, faster means of surveillance and detection.

Poseidon provides peace of mind not only for lifeguards, but also for swimmers and parents. Poseidon enables a lifeguard to radically decrease the time it takes to effect a rescue", concluded Mr Whittaker".

Peter Whittaker,
Managing Director
Third Watch Australia/ New Zealand

What does the Royal Lifesaving Society say?

"The Poseidon system is an excellent example of how advances in technology can support the work of our pool lifeguards. The results from overseas seem very impressive and I am sure that the computer surveillance technology will help save lives in Australia too. I believe that this technology will play an important part in aquatic life saving in the future".

Rob Bradley
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Life Saving Society Australia

What does the National Aquatic and Recreation Institute say?

"The National Aquatic & Recreation Institute supports advances in technology & initiatives that increase the ability of aquatic facility staff to detect and react to life threatening situations. As an industry, we encourage our communities to use our recreation & aquatic facilities to enhance their health & wellbeing. Any assistance to our staff in providing effective supervision of our patrons is welcomed".

Lorraine Smith
President
National Aquatic and Recreation Institute

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