



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

More Than 10,000 Students to Embark on *SwimSafer* as Programme Rolls Out at All Public Pools

National Water Safety Programme to be instructed at all of SSC's 24 swimming complexes from 5 July

Singapore, 3 July 2010 – With the increase in popularity of water sports among youth in Singapore, parents can now be rest assured that their children will be better equipped with crucial water safety knowledge and water survival skills when the *SwimSafer* programme rolls out on 5 July 2010 at all of Singapore Sports Council's (SSC) 24 swimming complexes.

2 Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), together with Dr Teo Ho Pin, Chairman of the National Water Safety Council (NWSC) and Mayor of North West Community Development District, and Mr Oon Jin Teik, CEO of SSC, officiated the roll out of the *SwimSafer* programme at the SSC's pools in a ceremony at the Geylang East Swimming Complex today.

3 The *SwimSafer* programme replaces the Learn-To-Swim Programme (LTSP) and the National Survival Swimming Award (NASSA) to be the only national water safety programme. *SwimSafer* came about when the NWSC called for a review of the existing national water safety programmes in July 2008, and it was then construed that a single national framework with an emphasis on drowning prevention was needed.

4 Since announcing the introduction of the *SwimSafer* programme in March 2010, the programme has seen a lot of interest from educational institutions and will see more than 10,000 students from 65 primary schools starting on the programme from 5 July onwards.

5 Commenting on the take-up for *SwimSafer*, Dr Teo Ho Pin said, "Every drowning case which takes place in Singapore is one too many. We are very encouraged that the take-up rate for the new programme has been superb since it was announced in March. Even before the start of the *SwimSafer*, more than 60 primary schools with 10,000 students have already enrolled for the programme. We

expect more schools to come onboard next year. We will also partner grassroots organisations to encourage community involvement in the *SwimSafer* to promote active and safe participation in water sports.”

6 Under the *SwimSafer* Instructor Course (SSIC), the SSC has successfully trained the *SwimSafer* syllabus to about 650 existing swim instructors under the National Registry of Coaches (NROC), between April and June 2010. This is to ensure that there will be a pool of ready swim instructors who are *SwimSafer*-certified to instruct students on the programme by the 5 July roll out.

7 "The SSC is happy to support the *SwimSafer* programme and is encouraged by the positive response from the public and our NROC registered instructors during the initial phase of implementation," said Mr Oon Jin Teik, CEO, SSC. "In 2009, we saw a record 12.9 million visits to our facilities, and we have upgraded the safety standards across all SSC operations. *SwimSafer* is the newest advancement of the SSC's holistic work in sports safety, It is critically important that our patrons and the community at large have a greater awareness of safe practices required for the water. *SwimSafer* will help make it possible for everyone to enjoy swimming and, at the same time, learn the required skills for survival and the swim techniques that will enhance and extend their joy of swimming. I urge more people to take up the *SwimSafer* programme and continue to enjoy swimming at our pools."

8 Veteran swim instructor and trainer for people with special needs, Danny Ong said, "Proper water safety and survival training is an extremely important and valuable skill that every individual should possess. *SwimSafer* gives everyone the opportunity, even those with special needs, to master this crucial life skill through a structured and thorough programme."

9 For more information on the *SwimSafer* programme, the public can visit www.ssc.gov.sg/SwimSafer or call the hotline at 6500 5439, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm.

About *SwimSafer*

SwimSafer is a new national water safety programme initiated by the National Water Safety Council, in collaboration with the Singapore Sports Council. The six-stage progressive programme will help children of all ages and abilities develop water safety and swimming skills at their own pace through a positive, fun learning experience. *SwimSafer* is an improvement of the existing National Survival Swimming Award (NASSA) and Learn-To-Swim (LTS) Programme. For more information on the programme, please visit www.ssc.gov.sg/SwimSafer

Have Fun, Swim Safe.

About the National Water Safety Council, Singapore (NWSC)

The NWSC was appointed by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) in 2007 to oversee water safety matters in Singapore. Helmed by Dr Teo Ho Pin, Mayor of North West Community Development Council and Honorary Advisor to the Singapore Life Saving Society, the NWSC is the national coordinating body in driving and sustaining initiatives overseeing water safety. The Council, appointed on a two-year term, comprises members from the people, private and public sectors. Prior to the *SwimSafer*, the NWSC had collaborated with the Ministry of Education and Singapore Sports Council to introduce the Learn-To-Swim Programme for primary school students. The Council recently launched the Code of Practice for the Design and Management of Aquatic Facilities with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) to promote safe water facilities for the public.

About Singapore Sports Council

Formed in 1973, the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) is tasked with developing a holistic sports culture for the nation. The SSC creates opportunities for people to excel in sports; opportunities for people to be engaged in sports as, coaches, officials, volunteers or fans; and opportunities for people to do business in sports as sponsors and investors. The SSC has changed the way Singaporeans view and participate in sports. Through sports, we now have an enhanced national identity thanks to our sports participation programmes; greater national pride as a result of high performance results at international and regional games; and more diversified economic stability through our vibrant sports industry initiatives.

To find out more, visit our websites www.ssc.gov.sg and www.singaporeports.sg

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For a range of photographs, search for “Singapore Sports Council” on www.flickr.com

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