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TIPS FOR HANDLING THE CHRISTMAS HEATWAVE

The AMA is warning people to stay out of the sun, and drink plenty of water as they enjoy the Christmas festivities, with severe heatwaves forecast across large parts of Australia this weekend.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast severe heatwave conditions from today until at least Christmas Day in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania, and low intensity heatwave conditions continuing in Western Australia, southern and western New South Wales, and Cape York Peninsula in Queensland.

AMA Vice President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that the hot conditions required special precautions, particularly for older people, young children, and pregnant women.

“Heatwaves are responsible for more deaths in Australia than any other type of natural disaster, and it’s important to prepare for hot weather,” Dr Bartone said.

“Stay indoors when possible, and avoid going outside at the hottest times of day. Leave the backyard cricket till later in the day perhaps!

“Aim to drink two to three litres of water a day, and be mindful of the signs of dehydration, such as increased thirst, dry mouth and swollen tongue, weakness or dizziness, and palpitations, feeling confused or sluggish, or fainting.

“Do not leave children or animals unattended in locked cars for any period of time, as the temperatures inside vehicles can rise dramatically in a very short time.

“Call for medical help if you or someone around you may be suffering from heat stress. Ensure you check up on elderly relatives and, for that matter, keep an eye out for elderly neighbours.”

Tips for riding out a heatwave can be found at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/plan-for-an-emergency/heatwave/#during>.

Temperatures are forecast to rise on to 29 degrees Celsius in Melbourne today, before reaching 31C on Christmas Eve and hitting a top of 35C on Christmas Day. Adelaide is predicted to reach 40C on Christmas Day.

In Mildura, temperatures will reach 38C today, ahead of weekend temperatures in the high 30s and early 40s.

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