



Media Release Draft

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## **Fifty Australians a Week Injured by Toppling Furniture and Televisions**

**An estimated 2,600 Australians receive hospital treatment for injuries caused by toppling furniture and televisions each year, equating to approximately 50 people per week.**

Since 2001 at least **22** children under the age of 9 have died in Australia from toppling furniture or televisions, with **children under 3** years of age at greatest risk.

The ACCC, in partnership with Kidsafe, has launched a national awareness campaign urging parents to check their homes for dangerous and potentially deadly situations caused by unstable furniture including bookcases, drawers, wardrobes, sideboards and TVs.

Melanie Courtney, CEO of Kidsafe Victoria, said that children's curiosity and lack of awareness of danger placed them at increased risk of injury from TV and furniture tip overs.

"Children are naturally inquisitive and common household furniture can look very different and interesting from a toddler's perspective – for example, they may see items of furniture like bookcases and shelves as a ladder to gain access to reach an item that is stored up high."

"This is why it's important that anyone who has young children in their home – either living there or visiting – is aware of the dangers", said Ms Courtney.

ACCC Acting Chair, Delia Rickard, said tip-over accidents happen quickly and reinforced the importance of parents and carers securing furniture to make their homes safer for children.

"We strongly encourage parents and carers to check every room in their home for toppling hazards and anchor any tall or unstable furniture or large TVs."

"If you don't have anchor kits, you can buy them cheaply at hardware stores or furniture retail outlets", said Ms Rickard.

Warwick Teague, Director of the Trauma Service at the Royal Children's Hospital, said that falling furniture can not only strike a child, but can trap and crush them underneath and cause life threatening injuries or death

"Common injuries from TV and furniture tip over incidents result from significant blunt force trauma and include broken bones, brain injuries, crushed chest cavities and even death by asphyxiation", said Dr Teague.

The new awareness campaign features the story of toddler Blake Shaw who was killed when a freestanding bookcase fell on him in August 2016. Blake's death provides a tragic reminder to all parents and carers to anchor unstable furniture and large TVs.

Ms Rickard said that the ACCC will continue to work with retailers to increase awareness about the dangers posed by unstable furniture. This includes ensuring retailers supply appropriate anchoring devices to consumers, better in-store signage is displayed, and warning labels are affixed to products.

### **Furniture safety tips**

### Buy Safe

- Purchase low-set furniture or furniture with sturdy, stable and broad bases.
- Look for furniture that comes with safety information or equipment for anchoring it to the walls.
- Test the furniture in the shop - make sure it is stable. For example, pull out top drawers of a chest of drawers and apply a little pressure to see how stable it is. Make sure the drawers do not fall out easily.

### Use Safe

- Attach, mount, bolt or otherwise secure furniture to walls and floors.
- Do not put heavy items on top shelves of bookcases.
- Secure televisions to the wall.
- Discourage small children from climbing on furniture.
- Do not put tempting items such as favorite toys on top of furniture that encourage children to climb up and reach.
- Do not place unstable furniture near where children play.
- Put locking devices on all drawers to prevent children opening them and using them as steps.

ACCC Research Report - [Consumer awareness of furniture stability risks and prevention](#)

### **Media Enquiries:**

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