Robyn Lambley
Minister for Health

**Stinger season starts in the Top End**

30 September 2014

Minister for Health Robyn Lambley is warning Territorians to stay out of the sea as box jellyfish begin to return to Top End waters.

“Stinger Season starts officially on 1 October and as temperatures increase and the humidity rises the sea water becomes warmer and stingers will start to populate the coastline,” Mrs Lambley said.

“We spend a lot of time outdoors and on the water in the Top End so we must be vigilant and take appropriate steps to avoid being stung.

“The warning is especially important for visitors and newcomers to the Territory who may not be aware of the danger.

“Each year about 40 people present to Top End health facilities as a result of stingers.

“Stingers, or box jellyfish, can be found in our sea waters at any time but they are at their peak from now until the end of May next year.

“People launching boats or other water craft should take extra care to avoid being stung.

“Box jellyfish prefer calm conditions so are often at the water’s edge, as well as in tidal creeks and around boat ramps.”

An adult box jellyfish can have 40 or more tentacles, each up to two metres in length and loaded with venom which causes excruciating pain, which can attack the heart and even cause death.

“Children are at greatest risk as the venom injected during a sting has a greater impact due to their small size,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The best advice is to stay out of the sea but if you have to get in the water, cover up with a stinger suit or a shirt and long trousers.”

If someone does get stung they should call for help (call 000), and douse the area with plenty of vinegar if you have it.
If any tentacles are on the skin you can pull them off and take the person to hospital, or if they are really unwell you may have to do CPR or call an ambulance.

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