Brutal truth to keep kids out of drains

By DAMIEN McCARTNEY

THE family of a boy killed in a raging stormwater drain have thrown their support behind a shocking new ad campaign.

Jason Baird, the father of eight-year-old Richard, who died after being swept more than 500m down a Gray drain in January, said the new ad was “nearly perfect”.

“It’s a lot more real – it shows real kids in a real-life situation in the way they’re playing and what they’re doing,” he said.

The ad, which aired for the first time last night, depicts a group of friends out playing who get caught in a storm. They begin playing around a drain, where one of them falls into the rapidly flowing water.

The footage is shot from the point of view of the boy being swept away, and shows the boy losing sight of his panicking friends as he is taken further into the drain.

In his report into the inquest of Richard’s death, Territorial Coroner Greg Cavanagh said one of Richard’s friends – who was present on the day of the accident – referred to the previous “Don’t Play in Pipes and Drains” campaign. He even sung part of the jingle.

Mr Baird said the cartoon ad, which showed cartoon characters singing a jingle, went over the heads of school kids. “The message didn’t sink in – it was just another cartoon on TV,” he said.

Mr Baird said the new campaign, which will feature TV, radio and print ads, was launched by the Territorial Government yesterday.

Recreation Minister Matt Conlan said the ads were “quite confronting”.

“We light the Jewish spirit in the soul,” Mr Andruiser said.

Mr Spigler said:

“Gone are the cartoons and feel-good commercials, we’re ramping it up this year,” he said.

He said the campaign targeted not only kids, but mums and dads too. He urged anyone who sees children playing in pipes and drains not to be afraid to tell them to “get the hell out.”

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