



press clip

Son's death led to the Silent Sentinel

THE drowning death of 15-year-old Nathan Drew at the Salmon Holes near Albany in 2003 inspired his family to save untold other lives with a simple invention, awareness and a great deal of hard work.

Nathan's dad Graeme Drew was named Australia's Local Hero in this year's Australia Day awards for his efforts talking to schoolchildren and lobbying Government authorities to make the area where his son drowned safer for others.

His Silent Sentinel, which is a stand with flotation devices for people swept off the rocks and a beacon to contact emergency services, had been a success in saving three lives.

He is also the inaugural patron of Community Safety Month launched last week at the Burswood Convention Centre.

Mr Drew said there had been 21 downing



Australian Local Hero of the Year Graeme Drew with his invention, a Silent Sentinel.

Picture: Marcus Whisson

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deaths at the place Nathan died, almost three per year, but in the six years since his son's death there had only been one life lost.

The launch celebrated the contribu-

tion of a series of Champions from around the State to preventing injuries in various fields.

Mr Drew said if people could improve their awareness and

were encouraged to change their attitudes, many injuries and deaths could be prevented in all areas.

"I talk to people involved in different projects and we all tell the same story.

"The people who make a big difference are ordinary folk you see walking down the street. I can't imagine them not being there."

He said the first thing was convincing people to be responsible for their own safety.

"You need to talk to people and make them understand the risks, it's about turning the lights on so to speak," he said.

"Then you need to prove the risk to the people with the power to change something like a council or government.

"Once you get that ammunition all the doors open to you and you can make real changes."

Events for Community Safety Month are listed at www.iccwa.org.au.