

## 2009 Drowning Report

There were a total of 98 drowning deaths in New Zealand in 2009. Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has announced the annual drowning toll and released official statistics from DrownBase, the world's leading integrated drowning database.

The 2009 toll is the second lowest toll since records began in 1980 and the same as in 2008. There were 2.4 drowning deaths per capita (100,000) in 2009. Drowning is the third highest cause of accidental death in New Zealand, behind road vehicle crashes and falls. The drowning toll for New Zealand is still twice that of Australia, on a per capita basis.

The average drowning toll for the decade 2000 - 2009 is 116 deaths per annum.

Decade	Average Drowning Deaths Per Annum
1980s	181
1990s	143
2000s	116

Table 1. Average drowning deaths per annum per decade 1980-2009.

The effect of education, awareness and prevention initiatives delivered over 30 years is reflected in a steady decline in annual drowning deaths.

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge says 30 years of drowning data paints a very clear picture, the water safety sector has been successful in delivering initiatives to the community that have benefitted through a reduction in drowning.

The major concern for WSNZ is what these statistics will look like in another 30 years time, as the potential outcome of the epidemic of failing learn to swim provision becomes greater. Critically, children must learn swim and survival skills or one day be faced with a life threatening drowning incident.

## 2009 Drowning Summary (refer attached 2009 Drowning Report for further analysis)

### ACTIVITY

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Five Year Average (2004-2008)</b>
Recreational	53 (54%)	60 (53%)	52 (47%)
Non Recreational	28 (29%)	30 (27%)	32 (30%)
Other	17 (17%)	7 (7%)	25 (23%)

Table 2. 2009 Drowning - Activity

### ENVIRONMENT

<b>Environment</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Five Year Average (2004-2008)</b>
Rivers	(20%)	(40%)	(35%)
Inland Still Waters	16 (16%)	9 (10%)	9 (8%)

Table 3. 2009 Drowning . Environment

### ETHNICITY

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Five Year Average (2004-2008)</b>
Maori	24 (25%)	18 (19%)	24 (22%)
Pacific Peoples	9 (9%)	9 (9%)	8 (7%)

Table 4. 2009 Drowning - Ethnicity

### AGE

<b>Age</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Five Year Average (2004-2008)</b>
00-04 years	9 (9%)	7 (7%)	7 (6%)

Table 6. 2009 Drowning . Age

## GENDER

Gender	2009	2008	Five Year Average (2004-2008)
Male	83 (85%)		83 (76%)
Female	15 (15%)		26 (24%)

Table 5. 2009 Drowning . Gender

There is concern for the increase in *Powered Boating* related drowning with 12 in 2009 compared with recent year figures of five (2008), six (2007), 8 (2006) and 5 (2005). The five year average (2004 . 2008) is six. Furthermore, *Underwater* related drowning (Scuba Diving, Snorkelling and Freediving) have nearly doubled from five (4%) in 2008 to nine (9%) in 2009.

Claridge continues: Water safety education, awareness and prevention initiatives continue to work towards providing New Zealanders with the skills and knowledge to enjoy the water safely. The recreation based drowning toll is often driven by ignorance and a blasé attitude to safety. This is the case once again, with a high number of boating incidents and more males drowning than expected.+

The message to boaties is take a Coastguard Boating Education course, for males; make sure you know what you're doing before attempting a new activity, it's often beneficial to ask for advice about fishing and diving. For parents, quite simply, take a role in helping your children enjoy the water for life. Help them learn to swim and develop survival skills, ensure they have a positive attitude to water safety from a young age.+

Claridge concludes Water safety should be an inherent part of our culture; it shouldn't be limited to a fad or trend for two . three months of the year when good weather and holidays coincide.+

õ Endsõ

See attached for:

### 1. 2009 Drowning Report

#### For more information or interview contact:

Matt Claridge

General Manager

Phone: (04) 801 9600

Mobile: (027) 478 1836

Email: matt@watersafety.org.nz

