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**Media Release**

For immediate release



## Drowning Numbers High in April

There were 13 drowning deaths in April, the highest since 22 were recorded in 1997 according to statistics released today by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ).

The average number of drowning deaths during the month of April (2003-2007) is six. Typically April contributes 13% (2003-2007) of the January to April year to date drowning toll, this year that figure is 30%.

There have been 44 drowning deaths in New Zealand from January through April. The 44 deaths to date this year are below the five year average (2003-2007) of 46. At the same time last year there had been 45 deaths.

The tragic drowning incident in the Mangatepopo Stream in Tongariro Forest Park accounts for seven of the victims included in the April statistics.

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge comments “ordinarily such a significant multiple drowning incident would severely skew the drowning statistics. Obviously for the month of April figures are double the annual average, but when considering the statistics across a lengthier period of time, April’s high is tempered by the significant reductions noted in all other months prior in 2008”.

Of the 13 drowning fatalities in April, 11 were as a result of the victim participating in **Recreational** activity. The remaining two deaths were Accidental Immersion Incidents and thus, **Non Recreational**.

There have been a total of nine **Non Recreational** drowning deaths this year, which is the lowest for the January – April year to date period since 1995. Tempering this is the fact that the highest number of Recreational deaths was recorded (32) since 2003 when 32 were also listed for the year to date period.

Claridge continues “drowning trends are obviously closely matched with behavioural patterns of New Zealanders. The seasons contribute significantly to this, in that the summer months

generally bring about an increase in recreational based incidents and conversely the cooler, winter months attest to reductions in recreational deaths.”

Rivers are noted once again for being a major contributor to drowning incidents in New Zealand with 10 (77%) deaths for the month of April, bringing the year to date total to 18 (41%) deaths.

“Isolated incidents as a result of severe weather conditions will continue to present risks to all New Zealanders. Water safety education is a vital means to reducing drowning incidents. Most importantly; familiarisation, confidence and ability are all contributing factors to enjoying the water safely, regardless of the environment or activity” says Claridge.

...Ends...

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# Water Safety New Zealand

## Drowning Statistics by Activity January to April by Year



### Provisional Statistics

| Activity                      | 1989      | 1990      | 1991      | 1992      | 1993      | 1994      | 1995      | 1996      | 1997      | 1998      | 1999      | 2000      | 2001      | 2002      | 2003      | 2004      | 2005      | 2006      | 2007      | 2008      | Apr-08    |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Recreational</b>           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Land Based Fishing            |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Angling                       | 4         | 3         | 5         | 3         | 1         | 5         | 3         |           | 5         | 1         | 2         | 3         |           | 2         |           | 2         | 3         |           | 2         | 2         |           |
| Net Fishing                   |           |           |           |           | 5         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           | 2         | 2         |           |           |
| Shellfishing                  |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           | 1         |           | 4         |           |           |           | 1         | 3         | 1         | 2         |           | 1         |           | 2         |           |
| Non Powered Boat              |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Canoeing                      |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           | 2         |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Kayaking                      |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 4         |           | 1         | 2         | 2         | 1         |           |           |           |           |
| Rafting                       | 2         | 2         |           | 3         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |
| Rowing Craft / Dinghy         | 1         | 2         |           | 3         |           |           |           | 2         | 4         |           |           | 1         | 1         | 2         |           | 2         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         | <b>1</b>  |
| Powered Boat                  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Jet Boat                      | 2         | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Jet Skis                      |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |
| Over 4m                       | 5         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 4         | 3         | 1         | 1         | 3         |           |           |           | 3         | 3         | 1         | 2         | 1         |           |
| Under 4m                      | 1         | 4         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 3         |           | 2         | 1         | 1         |           | 5         | 3         | 3         | 1         |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |
| Sailing                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Fixed Keel Boat               |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |
| Offshore Sailing              |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Sailing Dinghy                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Trailer Sailer                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Underwater                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Free Diving                   |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           |
| Scuba Diving                  | 2         | 5         | 3         | 1         | 4         | 4         | 1         | 1         | 1         |           | 3         | 4         | 1         | 1         | 4         |           |           | 2         | 2         | 1         | <b>1</b>  |
| Snorkelling                   | 1         | 2         |           | 2         |           | 3         | 4         |           | 2         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 3         | 2         |           | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |
| Water Sport / Recreation      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Board Riding                  | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           | 2         | 3         |           |           | 1         | 2         | <b>1</b>  |
| Boogie Boarding               |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           | 1         |           |           | 1         |           | 3         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Diving / Jumping              | 1         | 1         |           |           |           | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 1         | 2         |           | 4         |           |           |
| Other Recreation              | 4         | 3         |           | 2         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 2         |           |           | 2         | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 4         | 2         | 11        | <b>7</b>  |
| Swimming                      | 9         | 21        | 11        | 5         | 9         | 11        | 8         | 10        | 13        | 20        | 15        | 9         | 2         | 10        | 16        | 11        | 6         | 6         | 5         | 7         | <b>1</b>  |
| Tubing                        |           | 1         | 1         |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Water Skiing                  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Windsurfing                   |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |
| <b>Total Recreational</b>     | <b>33</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Non-Recreational</b>       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Immersion Incident            |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Accidental Immersion          | 18        | 19        | 9         | 15        | 8         | 10        | 7         | 11        | 14        | 13        | 11        | 13        | 12        | 11        | 11        | 7         | 10        | 9         | 11        | 7         | <b>2</b>  |
| Flood/Civil Emergenc          |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Rescuing Others               | 3         | 2         | 3         | 3         | 1         |           |           | 1         | 2         | 1         |           | 3         | 1         | 4         | 1         | 3         | 2         | 1         | 1         | 2         |           |
| Occupational Related          |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Commercial Fishing            |           | 2         | 1         | 5         | 4         |           | 2         | 3         |           | 2         | 1         | 2         |           |           | 1         | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>Total Non-Recreational</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Activity - Other</b>       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Other Activites               |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Aircraft                      |           |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Homicide                      |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           | 2         |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |
| Other Commercial              |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 2         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |
| Passenger Ship                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Road Vehicle                  | 9         | 2         | 6         | 2         | 5         | 5         | 4         | 2         | 4         | 1         |           | 2         | 9         | 1         | 4         | 4         | 10        | 3         | 2         | 2         |           |
| Suicide                       | 4         | 3         | 6         | 4         | 4         | 2         | 7         | 6         | 11        | 3         | 5         | 6         | 3         | 3         | 4         | 5         | 5         |           | 6         | 1         |           |
| <b>Total Activity - Other</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>11</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>17</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>4</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>0</b>  |
| <b>Total Drownings</b>        | <b>67</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>69</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>13</b> |

