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**Media Release**  
For immediate release



## **Shipshape For Summer: Safety First Message For Kiwi Boaties**

A new ad campaign about to hit television screens reminds New Zealand's thousands of boaties and fisherman that safety must be the first priority while enjoying the water this summer.

A total of 27 people have drowned in the year-to-date as a result of recreational boating and fishing activities – a figure that concerns Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) CEO Matt Claridge. This compares to 18 fatal incidents from similar activities at the same time last year.

"Kiwis love their fishing and boating, but they don't have to die doing it. It is vital boaties and fishermen take these safety messages aboard," said Mr Claridge.

The ad campaign is the result of a partnership between TVNZ, New Zealand Post and WSNZ and begins over Labour weekend.

Mr Claridge says Labour weekend is seen by many as the traditional start of a new fishing and boating season so it's logical to get these messages out now.

The ads will provide a timely reminder of the importance of a favourable marine weather forecast, appropriate life jackets for all passengers and the need to have reliable means of communication at hand.

"People are aware of the important safety considerations required for most water-based activity. However, the issue we have at this time of year is that people are coming off a long cold winter and are champing at the bit to get back to their favourite pastimes.

“This enthusiasm to get out on the water can often lead to overlooking the most basic of safety precautions; this can and often does directly contribute to a tragic outcome,” Mr Claridge said.

In addition to the messages contained in the TV ads, WSNZ encourages skippers of any craft to acknowledge and act upon their responsibility to ensure the safety of all onboard is the number one priority; a position which can be summarised by the statement: ‘If in doubt, don’t go out!’

The ad screening this weekend is the first in a series developed as part of the ‘Our Way of Life’ campaign which will deliver practical resources and televised water safety messages to the country in a package worth up to \$1.3 million dollars per annum.

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### **Our Way Of Life: National Water Safety Communications Campaign**

TVNZ and New Zealand Post have partnered with WSNZ to deliver a water safety communications campaign across New Zealand.

‘Our Way of Life’ is the campaign theme.

Our Way of Life communicates that New Zealanders, by virtue of who we are and where we live, are predisposed to enjoying aquatic based activities and environments. The objective of the campaign is to encourage participation in all things aquatic, the associated benefits of this, but with the underlying message that all aquatic activity requires that safety is the first priority.

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### **About Water Safety New Zealand**

Formed in 1949, WSNZ is the national organisation responsible for water safety education in New Zealand. WSNZ has a vision to ensure that all people in New Zealand will have the water safe attitudes, skills and behaviour necessary to use and enjoy the environment.

WSNZ manages the delivery of education based drowning prevention and water safety initiatives into communities.

WSNZ is the lead agency for Swim and Survive activity in New Zealand. The Sealord Swim For Life initiative is WSNZ’s major project. WSNZ seeks to address a dramatic decline in swimming ability of our youth.

Sealord Swim For Life is a comprehensive national project established to:

- Provide all children with access to the water;
- Manage the delivery of quality swim and survive programmes in primary schools;
- Provide the foundations for the development of a culture that produces generations of New Zealand families that are water safe.

For more information go to [www.sealordswimforlife.org.nz](http://www.sealordswimforlife.org.nz)