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Media Release

For immediate release



Low March Drowning Toll

A spate of non recreational drowning deaths in New Zealand for the month of March have provided the only blight on an encouragingly low monthly drowning. Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has released the monthly drowning statistics for March which indicate six New Zealanders drowned.

The first two months of 2007 raised cause for concern as fatal drowning numbers soared back to levels equivalent to that recorded in the same months in 2005. A record low toll of 87 drowning deaths was recorded for 2006 – 25% below 2005.

Only one recreational drowning death occurred during March, whilst Rock Fishing.

Non Recreational drowning deaths occur as a result of the victim partaking in an activity that is for purposes other than that of recreation which may or may not be directly associated with the water. Two of the five non recreational drownings were as a result of a slip, trip or fall.

There was one homicide and one suicide, with the final drowning as a result of a road vehicle crash.

WSNZ Operations Manager Matt Claridge comments “it is pleasing that summer has wound up with what could be considered a favourable month for drowning outcomes. As we are well aware, aquatic activity is still prevalent during March, so to have so few drowning deaths directly associated with recreational aquatic activity is a satisfying achievement.”

Claridge confirms that “there is no room for complacency when in or around water, as indicated by the number of non recreational drownings. A large number of New Zealanders will still be involved with activities such as fishing and boating for which simple and basic safety concerns need to be considered and acted upon along with most importantly ensuring that swimming and survival skills of those involved are more than just basic.”

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