

Low February Drowning Toll

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has released the drowning statistics for the month of February. There were eleven drowning deaths in New Zealand during February. The year to date drowning toll is 20 which represents a 35% decrease in drownings for the same two month period in 2009 (32 deaths).

Five of the February drowning deaths involved swimming incidents, two in rivers and three at beaches again highlighting that the ability to swim and survive is paramount in terms of water safety.

General Manager, WSNZ, Matt Claridge while pleased by the decrease in drowning numbers compared with the same point in 2009 warns against complacency “any comparison that exhibits a decrease in the numbers of New Zealanders losing the lives in the water has to be positive but eleven people drowned this month with poor decision making and a low skill level being major contributing factors.”

A number of recent incidents serve as examples of poor decision making leading to tragedy. WSNZ reminds people to consider their ability and the environment before entering the water.

“Even strong swimmers need to take into account potential hazards when swimming in a particular area and make their decisions accordingly. Risk is compounded for those with little or no swimming ability; this group must seriously question the wisdom of their involvement with any water based activity”.

Claridge continues: “the research is clear; it indicates New Zealand children’s swimming skills are in a poor state. If this, coupled with the ongoing dismantling of learn to swim delivery through the school system continues, more incidents and deaths are inevitable.”

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