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For Immediate Release



## SIX DROWNINGS IN OCTOBER

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) today announced that six people lost their lives in drowning incidents in the month of October. All the victims were males with four being aged over 70 years and two incidents having alcohol as a contributing factor.

The drowning toll to date for 2010 now stands at 65.

Matt Claridge, General Manager, WSNZ remarks on the incidents, "Despite this year's toll being down on the 5 year average (2005-2009) of 86 it is disappointing to see inappropriate behaviour being the cause of the majority of these deaths.

"Any water based activity carries risk and people, especially those of advanced years, need to understand this and act accordingly. It is simply too dangerous to undertake recreational activity in the water alone when there is no one to hear a cry for help or assist in a emergency".

Alcohol use in and around water is also a major issue and the organisation warns against mixing the two.

"Alcohol and water are a deadly combination. Any use of alcohol when planning on enjoying water based activity is a form of alcohol abuse. Simply put, it is stupid and dangerous!"

Ends...

### For more information or interview contact:

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## **WATER SAFETY NEW ZEALAND**

Formed in 1949, WSNZ is the national organisation responsible for water safety education in New Zealand.

WSNZ targets drowning prevention and water safety in communities through education. WSNZ oversees proven, proactive and preventative education interventions. In addition, WSNZ prioritizes leadership, collaboration and enabling the water safety sector with resourcing, research, planning and communication.

WSNZ is the lead agency for the Swim and Survive sector 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. The Sealord Swim For Life initiative is an overarching, national project established to:

- Provide all children with access to the water;
- Facilitate 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.

