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Media Release

For immediate release



15 Drowning Fatalities in January

There were a total of 15 drowning deaths in New Zealand during the month of January according to statistics released by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) today. This figure represents a reduction in drowning deaths when compared with the five year (2003-2007) average for the month of January (18).

Recreational activity accounted for 10 of the fatalities in January with only three classified as *Non-Recreational*. There were two *Other* drowning incidents (Suicide and Road Vehicle).

Of the *Recreational* drowning incidents four were Swimming related, two boating and one in each of Land Based Fishing, Underwater activity, Board Riding and tramping.

Rivers accounted for five (33%) of the drowning sites with Beaches (Surf, Calm Water and Rocky Foreshore) a further four (27%). Three drownings occurred Offshore, one in a Lake and one in a Home Pool.

Three Pacific people drowned in January. There is continued cause for concern at the problematic rate in which Pacific people are drowning in New Zealand. In 2007 11 Pacific people drowned (10% of total toll). Over the recent Christmas Holiday period Pacific people were the largest ethnic category with four of the 10 drownings.

General Manager, Matt Claridge comments; "in order for the drowning toll to continue its downward trend specific attention must be paid to the development of fundamental swim and survival skills along with the ongoing refinement of specific interventions targeting at-risk demographic groups."

WSNZ has already initiated the Pacific Peoples Water Safety Strategy, but in order to address the immediate concerns and highlight the educational opportunities for Pacific people in New Zealand with regard to water safety, a Community Meeting will be held in Auckland on Thursday the 14th of February.

The meeting is for Church Ministers and Community Leaders within the Pacific Community to meet with WSNZ Pacific Peoples Strategy Project Manager Ben Taufua. Discussion around current issues will occur along with exploring opportunities to further engage church and community members in the promotion and development of key water safety messages in the languages of its peoples. The church and primarily church leaders have been identified as the first level to engage through the forum. This has emerged because every Pacific person who drowned this year, had been a member of a local church.

Ben Taufua comments "Pacific water safety education has a great reliance on the community to be proactively involved. Invariably every drowning is preventable, the role of church ministers, community leaders and most importantly parents is one that cannot be undervalued or underestimated in ensuring Pacific people develop skills for life."

...Ends...

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Water Safety New Zealand

Drowning Statistics by Activity January to January 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	Jan-08	
Recreational																						
Land Based Fishing																						
Angling			1	1		3	1							2			1		1	1	1	
Net Fishing					1										1			2				
Shellfishing				1			1		1									1				
Non Powered Boat																						
Canoeing							1															
Kayaking												3		1								
Rafting	2			2		1							1		1					1	1	
Rowing Craft / Dinghy	1	1							3			1					1					
Powered Boat																						
Jet Boat	2	1																				
Jet Skis					1					1										1		
Over 4m	1		1		1	1	1	1	3								2	1				
Under 4m		2		1		3						4	1	1			1					
Sailing																						
Fixed Keel Boat			1	1			1													1	1	
Offshore Sailing																						
Trailer Sailer																						
Underwater																						
Free Diving						1									1					1		
Scuba Diving	1	3	1	1	2	3	1	1				1	1	2				1	1			
Snorkelling	1	1		2			3			1		1				1	1	1	1	1	1	
Water Sport / Recreation																						
Board Riding	1															1				1	1	
Boogie Boarding							1							1		2						
Diving / Jumping		1				1	1				1					1				1		
Other Recreation	1			1	1	2	1					1		1	1			1	1	1	1	
Swimming	5	10	6	2	6	5	3	3	3	11	7	1	2	5	7	8	4		2	4	4	
Tubing						1																
Water Skiing													1	1								
Windsurfing														1								
Total Recreational	15	19	10	12	12	21	15	5	10	13	8	13	6	12	13	13	10	7	9	10	10	
Non-Recreational																						
Immersion Incident																						
Accidental Immersion	7	5	1	6	2	4	2	4	2	2	5	4	5	8	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Rescuing Others	2	2	2	2						1		2		4		3		1	1	1	1	
Occupational Related																						
Commercial Fishing		1	1	1			1	1							1	1						
Total Non-Recreational	9	8	4	9	2	4	3	5	3	2	5	6	5	12	4	7	3	4	3	3	3	
Activity - Other																						
Other Activities																						
Aircraft																						
Homicide														1								
Other Commercial					1			1		1												
Road Vehicle	3	1	5	1		2						1	1		4	1	2	2	1	1	1	
Suicide		1	4	2	1		1	2	2	1	1	4		2		1	2		2	1	1	
Total Activity - Other	3	2	9	3	2	2	1	3	2	2	1	5	2	2	4	2	4	2	3	2	2	
Total Drownings	27	29	23	24	16	27	19	13	15	17	14	24	13	26	21	22	17	13	15	15	15	

