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**Media Release**

For immediate release



## **Preschool Drowning Issue Still Remains**

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has released the drowning statistics for April 2007. There were eight fatal drownings in New Zealand, the highest recording for the month of April since 2002.

There were three recreational related drowning deaths including the tragic deaths of two children whom drowned, when the boat they and their family were on sunk.

There were five non recreational related drowning deaths in April. Two of which were 11 month old children in separate home swimming pool incidents.

WSNZ Operations Manager Matt Claridge comments “the circumstances around any child drowning are typically awful, nonetheless both types of drowning serve as a reminder as to how vulnerable the young can be around all forms of aquatic environments.”

WSNZ has just released a significant report investigating home pool fencing, completed by the Injury Prevention Research Unit of Otago University. The report, commissioned by WSNZ, surveyed local authorities regarding compliance with and enforcement of the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 (FOSPA 1987). It is a follow up report to the previous survey conducted in 1997.

The report indicates that the total number of home pools in New Zealand is estimated to be 73,673, at a rate of 50 pools per 1,000 dwellings and 18 pools per 1,000 population. This is an increase since 1997 when there were estimated to be 55,150 pools in New Zealand.

In total, 70% of the responding local authorities reported difficulties in enforcing the FOSPA 1987. These difficulties are still associated with defining the immediate pool area, perimeter fencing and access via house doors.

A substantial improvement in the proportion of pools recorded as compliant, now at 71% compared with 43% in 1997. Also a dramatic increase is noted in the number of local authorities

reporting that they have a programme of reinspection to ensure continued compliance with the FOSPA 1987 (1991, 25%; 1997 30%; 2006 66%).

Claridge continues “the survey indicates quite clearly that there are still issues surrounding the enforcement of the FOSPA 1987. The publication of Standard NZS 8500:2006 – Safety Barriers and Fences Around Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs (2006) provides clear and pragmatic guidelines for home owners, pool builders and local authorities to effectively manage compliance and enforcement of the FOSPA 1987.”

“The fact that small children continue to drown in home pools in New Zealand is a tragedy. Given the increasing number of home pools and evolving design concepts with housing it is vital that the Pool Safety Standard is used as the benchmark for ensuring home pools comply with the FOSPA 1987. Toddlers are unable to make decisions concerning their own safety and should not be placed in, or have the opportunity to be in a situation where they are beside a pool unsupervised. Restricted access to the pool area is a positive move for home swimming pools in New Zealand.”

A copy of the pool fencing report can be downloaded at [www.watersafety.org.nz](http://www.watersafety.org.nz)

...Ends...

**For more information or interview contact:**

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# Water Safety New Zealand

## Drowning Statistics by Activity January to April by Year



### Provisional Statistics

Activity	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Apr-07
<b>Recreational</b>																					
Land Based Fishing																					
Angling	2	4	3	5	3	1	5	3		5	1	2	3		2		2	3		2	
Net Fishing						5									1	1			2	2	
Shellfishing			1	1	1		1			4				1	3	1	2		1		
Non Powered Boat																					
Canoeing				1	1			2		1	1				2						
Kayaking						1					1		4		1	2	2	1			
Rafting	1	2	2		3		1							1		1					
Rowing Craft / Dinghy	1	1	2		3				2	4			1	1	2		2	1	1	1	
Powered Boat																					
Jet Boat	1	2	2																		
Jet Skis						1					1									1	
Over 4m	1	5	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	3	1	1	3				3	3	1	2	<b>2</b>
Under 4m	3	1	4	1	2	1	3		2	1	1		5	3	3	1		2			
Sailing																					
Fixed Keel Boat			1	1	1		1	1		1						1					
Offshore Sailing																					
Sailing Dinghy																					
Trailer Sailer	2																				
Underwater																					
Free Diving							1								1	1		1		1	
Scuba Diving	3	2	5	3	1	4	4	1	1	1		3	4	1	1	4			2	2	
Snorkelling	1	1	2		2		3	4		2	2	1	3	3	2		1	1	1	1	
Water Sport / Recreation																					
Board Riding		1												1		2	3			1	
Boogie Boarding								1							1		3				
Diving / Jumping	1	1	1				3	1	1	1	2	2	1	1		1	1	2		4	<b>1</b>
Swimming	7	9	21	11	5	9	11	8	10	13	20	15	9	2	10	16	11	6	6	5	
Tubing	1		1	1			1										1				
Water Skiing														1	1						
Windsurfing													2								
<b>Total Recreational</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Non-Recreational</b>																					
Immersion Incident																					
Accidental Immersion	19	18	19	9	15	8	10	7	11	14	13	11	13	12	11	10	7	10	9	10	<b>3</b>
Flood/Civil Emergenc	4																				
Homicide				1	1					2				1	1				1	1	
Non-Water Related R	3	4	3		2	1	2	1	2			2	1		1	1		1	4	2	
Rescuing Others	1	3	2	3	3	1			1	2	1		3	1	4	1	3	2	1	1	
Suicide	3	4	3	6	4	4	2	7	6	11	3	5	6	3	3	4	5	5		5	<b>2</b>
Occupational Related																					
Commercial Fishing	7		2	1	5	4		2	3		2	1	2			1	2				
Other Commercial						1		1	1		2		1						1		
Transportation																					
Aircraft				1		1															
Passenger Ship																					
Road Vehicle	5	9	2	6	2	5	5	4	2	4	1		2	9	1	4	4	11	3	2	
<b>Total Non-Recreational</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Drownings</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>

