

9 July 2007

## Media Release

For immediate release



# Drowning Toll for 2007 Increases

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has released drowning statistics for the year to date. There were five drowning deaths during the month of June which raises the 2007 year to date drowning toll to 53. At the same time last year a record low of 46 drowning deaths had occurred in New Zealand, on the way to a record low annual toll of 89.

There have been 24 Recreational related drowning deaths this year along with a further 29 Non Recreational drowning deaths.

The lowest recorded number of Recreational drownings for the first six months of the year occurred in 2001 when there were 19. The highest on record is 52 in 1985.

The activities with a noticeable increase include Water Sport/Recreation with 10 drownings for 2007 as a result of swimming, diving/jumping or board riding, compared to six for the same period in 2006.

There have been five preschool drowning deaths this year all of which are Non-Recreational based. Of the seven drownings in the 25 – 34 years age grouping, six are recreational based, consistent with expected behavioural norms.

WSNZ General Manager Matt Claridge comments: “a drowning incident is always a tragedy but when the incident occurs around the family home or to a small child there is significant impact on family and the community. Bath, home pool and spa pool drownings are effortlessly negated through supervision and fencing solutions.”

Both Maori and Pacific People are over represented in Recreational drowning statistics. Two thirds of all Maori and Pacific People drowning deaths are Recreational based and often involve the gathering of kaimoana/seafood. Conversely one quarter of all New Zealand Europeans who drown do so whilst partaking in recreational activity.



Claridge continues: “recent market research indicates that the level of awareness of drowning as a social issue in New Zealand is very low, however on the whole, drowning deaths are trending downwards when looked at over a consistent period of time. The increasing presence of recreational based drowning deaths amongst Maori and Pacific communities is an area that WSNZ will seek to address along with enhancing the increasingly important Swim For Life campaign aimed at encouraging all New Zealand children to develop swim and survival skills.”

The top three regions for drowning on a per capita basis (per 100,000 of population) for the year to date are;

- The West Coast (6.4 drownings per 100,000)
- Waikato (2.9 drownings per 100,000) and
- Taranaki (2.9 drownings per 100,000)

“Unfortunately the drowning issue continues to affect regional New Zealand across a variety of activities and environments. The presence of WSNZ Regional Water Safety Coordinators working with communities to develop and implement Regional Water Safety Plans is an important priority in embracing drowning prevention and the water safety education needs of the community” says Claridge.

...Ends...

**For more information or interview contact:**

**Matt Claridge**

General Manager

Phone: (04) 801 9600

Mobile: (027) 478 1836

Email: [matt@watersafety.org.nz](mailto:matt@watersafety.org.nz)



# Water Safety New Zealand

## Drowning Statistics by Activity January to June 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      | Jun-07   |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Recreational</b>           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Land Based Fishing            |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Angling                       | 3         | 4         | 3         | 7         | 4         | 2         | 7         | 4         |           | 5         | 1         | 2         | 3         | 1         | 5         | 1         | 3         | 4         | 1         | 2         |          |
| Net Fishing                   |           |           |           |           |           | 6         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 2         |           |           | 2         | 2         |          |
| Shellfishing                  |           |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           | 2         |           | 4         |           |           | 1         | 4         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 1         |           |           |          |
| Non Powered Boat              |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Canoeing                      |           |           |           | 1         | 1         | 2         |           | 2         |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Kayaking                      |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 4         |           | 1         | 2         | 2         | 1         |           | 1         |          |
| Rafting                       | 2         | 2         | 3         |           | 3         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |          |
| Rowing Craft / Dinghy         | 1         | 1         | 2         |           | 3         |           |           | 1         | 3         | 4         |           |           | 1         | 2         | 3         | 2         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 2         | 1        |
| Powered Boat                  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Jet Boat                      | 1         | 2         | 3         |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |          |
| Jet Skis                      |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1        |
| Over 4m                       | 2         | 6         | 3         | 3         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 2         | 5         | 3         | 1         | 3         | 4         | 1         | 1         | 3         | 3         | 4         | 6         | 2         |          |
| Under 4m                      | 3         | 2         | 5         | 3         | 3         | 5         | 3         |           | 2         | 1         | 3         | 2         | 5         | 4         | 5         | 1         |           | 2         |           |           |          |
| Sailing                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Fixed Keel Boat               |           |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 1         | 2         | 1         |           | 2         | 2         |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |          |
| Offshore Sailing              |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 2         |           |           |          |
| Sailing Dinghy                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Trailer Sailer                | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Underwater                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Free Diving                   |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         |           |           | 1        |
| Scuba Diving                  | 3         | 2         | 5         | 4         | 2         | 4         | 4         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 1         | 3         | 5         | 1         | 2         | 5         |           | 1         | 2         | 2         |          |
| Snorkelling                   | 1         | 1         | 2         |           | 2         |           | 3         | 4         |           | 2         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 3         | 2         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 1         | 1         |          |
| Water Sport / Recreation      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Board Riding                  |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           | 2         | 3         |           |           |           | 1        |
| Boogie Boarding               |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 3         |           |           |           |          |
| Diving / Jumping              | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           |           | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 1         | 2         |           |           | 4        |
| Swimming                      | 7         | 9         | 21        | 12        | 5         | 10        | 11        | 11        | 11        | 13        | 21        | 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>27</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Non-Recreational</b>       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Immersion Incident            |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Accidental Immersion          | 21        | 24        | 24        | 13        | 18        | 10        | 15        | 10        | 18        | 15        | 20        | 15        | 15        | 17        | 15        | 16        | 9         | 17        | 13        | 15        | 3        |
| Flood/Civil Emergenc          | 4         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Homicide                      |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           | 3         |           |           | 2         | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |          |
| Non-Water Related R           | 4         | 4         | 3         |           | 2         | 2         | 3         | 2         | 2         |           |           | 2         | 2         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         | 4         | 2         |          |
| Rescuing Others               | 1         | 3         | 2         | 3         | 3         | 1         |           |           | 1         | 2         | 2         |           | 3         | 1         | 4         | 1         | 3         | 2         | 1         | 1         |          |
| Suicide                       | 7         | 5         | 8         | 13        | 11        | 10        | 5         | 10        | 7         | 12        | 7         | 8         | 9         | 6         | 5         | 4         | 5         | 9         | 2         | 5         |          |
| Occupational Related          |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Commercial Fishing            | 7         |           | 3         | 2         | 5         | 5         | 1         | 2         | 5         |           | 3         | 2         | 3         | 3         |           | 1         | 2         |           |           |           |          |
| Other Commercial              |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         | 1         |           | 2         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           | 2         |           |          |
| Transportation                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Aircraft                      |           | 1         |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Passenger Ship                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |          |
| Road Vehicle                  | 10        | 11        | 3         | 12        | 5         | 12        | 8         | 5         | 6         | 6         | 3         | 1         | 2         | 11        | 4         | 4         | 10        | 12        | 3         | 5         | 1        |
| <b>Total Non-Recreational</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Total Drownings</b>        | <b>81</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>75</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>71</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>78</b> | <b>58</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>5</b> |



# Drowning Deaths Fact Sheet

## January – June 2007



Provisional drowning statistics from DrownBase™, the official database of Water Safety New Zealand, indicates that 53 people have drowned in New Zealand for the six month period to June 2007

### Activity Breakdown

|    |     |                          |
|----|-----|--------------------------|
| 24 | 45% | Immersion Incident       |
| 6  | 12% | Boating                  |
| 5  | 9%  | Swimming                 |
| 5  | 9%  | Transportation           |
| 4  | 8%  | Land Based Fishing       |
| 4  | 8%  | Underwater               |
| 5  | 9%  | Water Sport / Recreation |

### Site breakdown

|    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 14 | 26% | Beaches                                       |
| 12 | 23% | Inland Waterways (rivers, creeks and streams) |
| 8  | 15% | Offshore                                      |
| 7  | 13% | Inland Still Waters (lakes)                   |
| 5  | 9%  | Tidal Waters                                  |
| 4  | 8%  | Home Pools                                    |
| 3  | 6%  | Domestic Environment                          |

### Ethnicity breakdown

|    |     |                 |
|----|-----|-----------------|
| 24 | 45% | Caucasian       |
| 14 | 27% | Maori           |
| 2  | 4%  | Asian           |
| 6  | 11% | Pacific Peoples |
| 1  | 2%  | Other           |
| 6  | 11% | Unknown         |

### Gender

|    |     |        |
|----|-----|--------|
| 36 | 68% | Male   |
| 17 | 32% | Female |

### Age breakdown

|    |     |                    |
|----|-----|--------------------|
| 5  | 9%  | 00-04 years of age |
| 2  | 4%  | 05-14              |
| 7  | 13% | 15-24              |
| 7  | 13% | 25-34              |
| 8  | 15% | 35-44              |
| 10 | 19% | 45-54              |
| 4  | 8%  | 55-64              |
| 10 | 19% | 65+                |

*DrownBase Statistics As At 30-6-07*

