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**Media Release**

For immediate release



# Small Children Continue to Drown in New Zealand

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has confirmed there were nine drowning deaths for the month of August in statistics released today. The average August monthly toll over the last five years is 10.

In August, there were six Non-Recreational drowning deaths, of which five were Accidental Immersions. These include three resulting from fall's or slip's and two where preschool children drowned in a home environment (Swimming Pool and Bath). Accidental Immersions (22) contribute to over half of all Non Recreational drowning deaths, the highest in New Zealand for the year to date since 2002.

The three Recreational drowning deaths involved; non-powered craft (kayak and dinghy incidents) and one swimming related incident.

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge comments; "the prominence of Non Recreational drownings is not unexpected at this time of year as activity levels drop off through winter. However, we are now officially into spring, which will bring with it a large increase in aquatic based recreation and the habitually popular summer pastimes of boating and fishing."

This year there has been six drowning deaths occur in a Domestic setting, the highest since 2001, with the established problem areas of the home swimming pool, spa pool and the bath featuring.

Thus far in 2007, seven (over 10%) drowning victims have been aged less than 5 years. Five of these occurred in or around the home, including three in a home swimming pool, one in a bath and the remainder in a bucket. The annual average drowning toll (2002-2006) for children under the age of five is eight.



Drowning hospitalisation data indicates that in 2006, 29 children under the age of five were hospitalised as a result of suffering the effects of submersion in water.

Claridge remarks that “the drowning rate of children under five years in New Zealand leaves plenty to improve on. The single most common denominator involved with these drownings, be it in the bath or the home pool is supervision and responsible care. Children should absolutely be encouraged to play with water, but this time needs to be dedicated and committed to by parents and caregivers as sole priority. For every preschooler that died as a result of drowning in 2006, a further six were hospitalised. Supervision and compliant pool fencing are the primary interventions for positively impacting on this area.”

“Water Safety New Zealand and Plunket will continue to deliver these fundamental messages to ensure that all are made aware of their responsibility towards protecting this vulnerable sector of society” concludes 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 August 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	Aug-07
<b>Recreational</b>																					
Land Based Fishing																					
Angling	3	5	3	7	4	2	7	4		6	2	2	5	3	7	1	3	4	1	2	
Net Fishing						6				1					2	3		1	2	2	
Shellfishing			1	1	1			2		4			1	4	1	3	1	1			
Non Powered Boat																					
Canoeing				1	1	3		2		1	1				2						
Kayaking						1	1				1		4		1	2	3	1		2	1
Rafting	3	2	3		3		1	1						2		1					
Rowing Craft / Dinghy	1	2	5		3	1		3	3	6		1	1	4	3	3	3	2	1	3	1
Powered Boat																					
Jet Boat	1	2	3	1					1							1					
Jet Skis						1					1										1
Over 4m	2	8	3	3	3	2	1	3	5	3	1	3	4	1	5	6	4	4	6	2	
Under 4m	4	2	6	3	3	13	4		3	2	6	3	5	5	6	2		2			
Sailing																					
Fixed Keel Boat		2	1	1	1		1	1	2	2		2	2			1					
Offshore Sailing		1			3												1	2			
Sailing Dinghy																					
Trailer Sailer	2																				
Underwater																					
Free Diving							1								2	1		1		1	
Scuba Diving	4	3	5	4	2	4	4	3	1	3	2	3	6	1	3	5		2	2	2	
Snorkelling	1	1	2		3		3	4		2	2	1	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	
Water Sport / Recreation																					
Board Riding		1					1				1	1	1			2	3			1	
Boogie Boarding				1				1				1	1	1	1		3				
Diving / Jumping	1	1	1				3	1	1	1	2	2	1	1		1	1	3		4	
Swimming	8	9	21	12	5	11	12	12	13	13	22	15	9	4	10	16	11	8	6	6	1
Tubing	1		1	1			1										1				
Water Skiing														1	1						
Windsurfing													2								
<b>Total Recreational</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Non-Recreational</b>																					
Immersion Incident																					
Accidental Immersion	28	27	34	15	21	16	22	13	20	19	24	19	23	21	27	19	14	21	18	21	4
Flood/Civil Emergenc	4														1		1				
Homicide				1	1					3	1		2	1					1	1	
Non-Water Related R	4	5	4		2	3	3	2	4	1		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	9	9	9	16	14	13	7	15	8	16	10	11	12	9	6	6	8	9	7	9	1
Occupational Related																					
Commercial Fishing	12	2	4	2	7	7	1	4	9		6	4	3	3		1	4				
Other Commercial						1		5	1	2	2		1					2	2		
Transportation																					
Aircraft		3		1		1					4										
Passenger Ship	1																				
Road Vehicle	15	17	4	16	7	12	11	16	10	7	5	5	7	13	9	9	12	12	3	5	
<b>Total Non-Recreational</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Drownings</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>8</b>

