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Media Release

For immediate release



Water Safety New Zealand Issues Warning!

Whilst the weather through October thus far has not been conducive to aquatic based activities, Labour Weekend traditionally sees New Zealanders head to the water intent on enjoying themselves after a long winter in hibernation.

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ), General Manager, Matt Claridge states: "The arrival of Labour Weekend triggers for many people a desire to get back into their favourite aquatic based activities. Whether it's a day at the beach or river, dusting off the fishing gear and hitching up the boat, or simply cooling down with a refreshing swim now is the time when we start to see participation rates in all forms of aquatics soar."

"Inevitably this coincides with an increase in drowning and injury incidents. History tells us we can expect upwards of 30 people to drown in the three months from October until the end of the year."

One group of particular concern to WSNZ is young children. To date this year seven preschool children (0-4 years of age) have drowned and whilst all drownings are tragic, those involving under fives are particularly traumatic to all involved as they could invariably have been avoided if appropriate supervision measures were in place.

"Active supervision in and around water means a responsible adult keeping young children in their care both within sight and within reach at all times, no lapses, no excuses. Parents also need to be teaching their children water safe behaviour and providing opportunities for them to learn to swim" says Claridge

Statistics from WSNZ's Drownbase™ point to the next most at risk group being fisherman, both those in boats and land based.

Claridge continues, "As a nation we love to go fishing and after a long layoff for many the temptation is to throw caution to the wind and grab any chance to get back out there. For those with boats we implore them to perform a thorough maintenance and safety check of the vessel and ensure life jackets and communication (minimum of 2 means of communication) equipment are available and working. Spring weather is notorious for the swift changes that can occur with the conditions, therefore it is imperative that anyone planning to go fishing gets a marine weather forecast, listen for



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regular updates and leaves detailed information with someone responsible about where they are going, who they are with and when they plan to return.”

To the end of September this year (71) drownings have occurred, (32) of those in recreation activities and (23) non-recreation related and (16) occurred in other activities.

...Ends...

For more information or interview contact

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