

Pacific Water Safety Strategy Launched

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has today officially launched the Pacific Peoples Water Safety Strategy. The Launch was held at the Otara Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church and attended by over 100 people including Members of Parliament, community leaders, church ministers and water safety experts.

An average of 114 New Zealanders drown every year (2003 – 2007). Pacific people account for 9% of all drowning deaths in New Zealand.

The predominant issue with Pacific drownings are the high number of recreational based incidents. That is, typically Pacific people drown whilst fishing or swimming and generally it is at the beach, the river or just offshore.

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge remarks: “history tells us that Pacific people have a strong connection with the water. Often though, New Zealand’s waterways are very different to those in the Pacific Islands and considerably more dangerous. A lack of familiarity is often a causal factor in drownings. Now we have an initiative that will educate Pacific people on the very important things like wearing lifejackets and checking the marine and weather conditions.”

The Pacific Peoples Water Safety Strategy is supported by ACC. The strategy focuses on community engagement and has been developed over the last two years. The ongoing task of building awareness amongst Pacific communities has already commenced. This will be complimented by two road shows that will travel New Zealand, linking with Church and community groups.

Claridge concludes; “education is the critical component in building a water safety culture within Pacific communities. Ensuring that Pacific communities understand the issues and can respond accordingly is critical, allowing future generations of Pacific people to enjoy New Zealand’s waterways safely”.

For more information or interview contact:

Matt Claridge

General Manager

Phone: (04) 801 9600

Mobile: (027) 478 1836

Email: matt@watersafety.org.nz

Ben Taufua

Pacific Project Manager

Mobile: (027) 472 0037

Email: ben@watersafety.org.nz

Drowning Fact Sheet

Pacific Peoples



The following facts represent fatal drownings of Pacific people in New Zealand from 2003-2007.

All data is sourced from Water Safety New Zealand's DrownBase™.

Drownings by Ethnicity – Pacific Peoples (2003-2007)

Activity	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Recreational	7	6	3	-	9	25
Non-Recreational	4	4	2	2	2	14
Total	11	10	5	2	11	39

- 9% of drowning victims are Pacific Peoples.
- 87% of Pacific Peoples drowning victims are Male.
- 18% of Pacific Peoples drownings involved Alcohol.
- 49% of Pacific Peoples drownings occurred when the deceased was with bystanders.
- 64% of Pacific Peoples drowning deaths occurred while participating in a recreational activity.
- Activity Breakdown
 - 36% Immersion Incident
 - 26% Water Sport Recreation
 - 20% Land Based Fishing
 - 18% Boating
- Environment Breakdown
 - 31% Rivers
 - 20% Beaches
 - 18% Tidal Waters
 - 13% Offshore
 - 10% Inland Still Waters
 - 5% Domestic
 - 3% Public Pools
- Demographics - Age Group Breakdown
 - 10% 00-04 years of age
 - 10% 05-14
 - 18% 15-24
 - 20% 25-34
 - 26% 35-44
 - 10% 45-54
 - 3% 55-64
 - 3% 65+

