

LIFE SAVING VICTORIA
VICTORIAN DROWNING REPORT
2012/13



2012/13 DROWNING REPORT.



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- Ambulance Victoria
- Coroners Prevention Unit, Coroners Court of Victoria
- Emergency Management Programs and Resources, Department of Justice
- National Coroners Information System
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit, Monash University

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COMPILED BY

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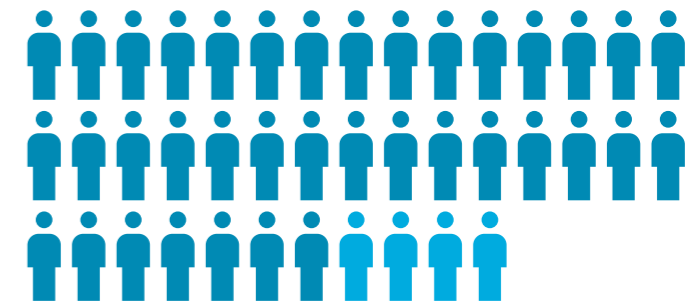
During her time at Life Saving Victoria, Dr Matthews has managed numerous aquatic injury prevention projects, from epidemiology of fatal and non-fatal drowning, aquatic safety signage recognition and recall, injuries in public swimming pools, volunteer member retention, through to evaluation of education programs and major public awareness and multicultural campaigns.

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In his role at Life Saving Victoria, Robert focuses on quantifying drowning risk and assisting land managers in mitigating assessed risks specific to recreational drowning and injury. Robert uses both traditional statistical approaches and spatial statistical analysis approaches in quantifying drowning risks. Robert is a current PhD candidate at RMIT University's School of Mathematics and Geospatial Science.

41

DROWNING DEATHS IN VICTORIA FROM 1 JULY 2012 TO 30 JUNE 2013, AN INCREASE OF 4 DEATHS COMPARED TO 2011/2012.



METHODS

This report includes unintentional fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents reported in Victoria, Australia. An overview of fatal drowning for 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 is provided and compared with non-fatal drowning incidents for the same period. The 5 and 10 year averages were calculated from fatal and non-fatal drowning data in Victoria from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2012.

Fatal incidents

Information on fatal drowning incidents was collected from the Coroners Court of Victoria, and the National Coroners Information System (NCIS). Deaths due to natural causes, suicide, or homicide are excluded from this report.

Coronial information relates to both open and closed cases. While all care is taken to ensure that the results are as accurate as possible, these figures are provisional only, coronial investigations and findings relating to open cases may alter the reported drowning figures. At the time of compilation all suspected unintentional drowning cases in 2012/2013 remained open on the NCIS.

Non-fatal incidents

Information on non-fatal drowning in 2012/2013 was provided by Ambulance Victoria (AV). Cases of non-fatal and immersion related injuries attended by AV paramedics were extracted from the VACIS® clinical information system. Potential drowning data for this report was identified via a database search for all drowning related dispatch codes identified at the emergency call-taker level, as well as cases in which paramedics reported a final assessment of 'post immersion'.

Only patients reported as suffering respiratory compromise or vomiting as a result of immersion were included in analyses. Hospital discharge data from the Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR), a registry capturing all out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) cases attended by ambulance paramedics in Victoria, was also used to ensure complete identification of non-fatal drowning.

Information on non-fatal drowning from 2002 to 2012 was provided by the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU) at Monash University. Data included non-fatal and immersion-related injuries, extracted from the Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset (VEMD) and Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset (VAED) for the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2012. The VEMD is a dataset containing records of emergency department presentations in 398 Victorian hospitals with 24-hour emergency services.

Data was selected if the cause of injury was 'submersion drown pool' or 'submersion drown other'. Due to inconsistencies in the coding, these cases were then manually screened to ensure that they were submersion or non-fatal drowning cases. The VAED is a record of all hospital admissions in the state of Victoria. Data was extracted if the cause of injury was a non-fatal drowning (including water transport), or if the cause of injury was a water vehicle accident and the diagnosis code included drowning.

Drowning deaths identified in either AV or VISU data were excluded to avoid an overlap with Life Saving Victoria (LSV) fatal drowning data.

Excess risk maps

Excess risk maps were created to illustrate the degree to which drowning rates are greater than or less than the average observed risk at differing locations (this is also called standard mortality rates). The maps were based on frequency counts of drowning incident postcode and drowning victim residence postcode, grouped by Victorian Local Government Areas (LGAs). These maps do not provide information about whether excess rates are statistically significant, rather they are based on ratios of actual to expected counts of events by the population at risk.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Every day, visitors to Victoria's 811 kilometres of ocean beaches, 259 kilometres of bay beaches, 85,000 kilometres of rivers, 13,000 natural wetlands and 450 public and commercial swimming pools, engage in a wide variety of recreational aquatic activities (Short, 1996; DSE, 2011; VAIC, 2001). Our prevention efforts span this setting.



REDUCE DROWNING

Reduce Victorian drowning rate

41

Drowning deaths in Victoria in 2012/2013, an increase of 4 deaths compared to 2011/2012.

89

Non-fatal drowning incidents in Victoria in 2012/2013.

0.72

Crude drowning death rate per 100,000 persons in Victoria in 2012/2013.

1.56

Crude hospitalisation rate of non-fatal drowning victims per 100,000 persons in Victoria in 2012/2013.

48%

Decrease in the drowning rate in Victoria since the start of the Play it Safe by the Water (PISBTW) campaign in 1998.

SERVICES

Expand to meet public need/ sustainability/ membership development, growth and support

809

Rescues by lifesavers and lifeguards on patrolled beaches on average per year from 2002-2012.

1,872

First aid assistance by lifesavers and lifeguards on patrolled beaches on average per year from 2002-2012.

28,463

Volunteer members in 2012/2013, patrolling our beaches and providing education and training in lifesaving activities, to ensure the safety of the Victoria's waterway users.

5,590

Training courses completed by lifesavers in order to update or advance their qualifications in 2012/2013.

\$235M

Estimated total value of lifesaving services in Victoria per year (PWC, 2011).

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Continue development to ensure efficiency and expansion of delivery

189,807

Participants took part in LSV water safety education programs state wide in 2012/2013; a 10% increase compared to 5 year average (2007-2012).

10,360

Culturally and linguistically diverse participants took part in LSV programs in 2012/2013; a 71% increase compared to the 5 year average (2007-2012).

29,614

People trained in CPR or participated in Child and Infant CPR or other First Aid related courses run by LSV in 2012/2013; a 29% increase compared to the 5 year average (2007-2012).

4,040

Pool Lifeguard participants in LSV courses in 2012/2013; an increase of 14% compared to the 5 year average (2007-2012).

124

Aquatic facilities are registered Watch Around Water facilities in 2012/2013.

AQUATIC RISK & RESEARCH

Striving for excellence through evidence based practice

24,000

Children estimated to be leaving primary school each year unable to swim 50 metres or more of a standard swimming pool, based on parent estimates (Birch et al, 2013).

68%

Teachers surveyed believed that the swimming ability of the Year 6 students in their class who were born outside Australia was below that of an 'average swimmer' (Birch et al, 2013).

45%

Beachgoers surveyed reported observing any signage at selected Victorian beaches (Matthews et al, 2014).

80

Aquatic facility safety assessments conducted in 2012/2013 to audit aquatic locations against the best practice standards.

44%

Aquatic facilities have not completed an aquatic facility safety assessment in the past five years.

PROGRESS

Progress against drowning prevention priority areas in the Victorian Water Safety Master Plan and Australian Water Safety Strategy, 2012-2015.

KEY LIFE STAGES	BASELINE 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2004-2007)	FOLLOW-UP 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2010-2013)	PROGRESS
Children 0-4 years	3	2	Work needed
Children 5-14 years	4	2	On track
Young people 15-24 years	5	5	Work needed
People aged over 55 years	13	10	Work needed

HIGH RISK LOCATIONS

HIGH RISK LOCATIONS	BASELINE 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2004-2007)	FOLLOW-UP 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2010-2013)	PROGRESS
Rural and remote	23	18	Work needed
Inland waterways	15	14	Work needed
Coastal waterways	14	15	Urgent work needed

HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES/ COMMUNITIES

HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES/ COMMUNITIES	BASELINE 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2004-2007)	FOLLOW-UP 3 YEAR AVERAGE (2010-2013)	PROGRESS
Alcohol related	9*	9	Urgent work needed
CALD Communities	6	6	Work needed

* Average from 2000-2008

130

FATAL AND NON-FATAL DROWNING INCIDENTS IN 2012/2013.

CEO'S REPORT

Forty-one people drowned in Victoria this year, which represents our highest drowning toll since 2004/2005. The increase in drowning deaths again this year is a tragic warning to all to remain vigilant when it comes to water safety.

A key feature of this year's report is the inclusion of non-fatal drowning statistics from Ambulance Victoria (AV) for 2012/2013 which, along with statistics from the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU) over the previous 10 years, provides a more detailed picture of drowning trends.

This data, combined with fatal drowning data, reveals that there were 130 fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents in 2012/2013 and almost 1,500 fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents in Victoria from 2002-2012. Therefore on average, there are 150 drowning deaths or hospitalisations each year in Victoria, or, for every drowning death there are another three people hospitalised due to drowning.

Key issues highlighted by this year's report include:

- A 65% increase in the drowning rate of those aged over 60 years, compared to the average over the previous 10 years (2002-2012). This represents the highest age-specific drowning death rate by population in Victoria.
- An increase in the number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities who drowned in 2012/2013, representing 22% of the total drowning deaths.
- Despite our prevention efforts, which have seen a decrease in drowning along Victoria's coast over recent years, this year saw a converse trend with a 52% increase in coastal drowning deaths, compared with the average over the past decade. All coastal drowning deaths occurred at beaches that were not patrolled by lifesavers.
- Alcohol continues to be an issue, with nine drowning deaths this year whereby alcohol was reportedly consumed by the individual prior to drowning. Alcohol-related deaths represent one in four drowning deaths in Victoria over the past decade.
- Unintentional water entries (slips/trips/falls) over the past decade accounted for 40% of fatal drowning incidents.

The good news this year was that there were zero drowning deaths in the 5-14 year age group. This is a positive result and alongside the 38% decrease in drowning in inland waterways this year, compared with the average over the past decade, may reflect the effectiveness of our current programs targeting school children in regional Victoria.

This year's report also includes map representations of the Victorian fatal drowning trend from 2002-2012, highlighting key areas of risk.

38%

DECREASE IN DROWNING IN INLAND WATERWAYS THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THE AVERAGE OVER THE PAST DECADE

I present Life Saving Victoria's Drowning Report for 2012/ 2013 with the reminder that every drowning death is one too many. It is our mission to prevent aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities by ongoing engagement with industry, Government and the community to develop innovative solutions.

I remind all Victorians to take ownership of their own personal safety as well as those in their care; be aware of the potential dangers in the water and prepare by putting safety first when in, on or around water.



Nigel Taylor
Chief Executive Officer,
Life Saving Victoria



65%

INCREASE IN THE FATAL DROWNING RATE OF OLDER ADULTS AGED OVER 60 YEARS FROM THE 10 YEAR AVERAGE.

WHO IS DROWNING?

There were 130 drowning incidents in Victoria in 2012/2013, including 41 fatal and 89 non-fatal drowning incidents. From 2002-2012 there were 1,497 drowning incidents, with an average of 150 each year. For every drowning death there are another three non-fatal drowning incidents. This year, the crude fatal drowning rate was 0.74 per 100,000 persons with the crude hospitalisation rate of 2.12 per 100,000 persons.

GENDER

Males are consistently overrepresented in drowning statistics. Of the 41 drowning deaths in Victoria in 2012/13, 32 (78%) were male. While males were still overrepresented, the gender difference was slightly less with respect to non-fatal drowning with 60 (67%) males hospitalised in 2012/2013 and on average 76 (69%) hospitalised from 2002-2012.

AGE

Adults aged over 60 years had the highest age-specific fatal drowning rate in 2012/2013 (15 or 1.35 per 100,000 persons), followed by children aged 0-4 years (3 or 0.84 per 100,000 persons). This has been consistent over the past decade, in which these two age groups have maintained the highest fatal drowning rates.

There was a decrease in the fatal drowning rate per 100,000 persons across all age groups in 2012/2013 compared with the 10 year average (2002-2012), except those aged over 60 years, which increased by 65% (1.35 in 2012/2013 compared with 0.82 from 2002-2012). The inverse was found in non-fatal drowning rates with the highest rate in children 0-4 years (12.24, 2012/2013) and decreasing with age.

The high non-fatal drowning rate in 0-4 year olds in 2012/2013 was mirrored by the prevalence of drowning incidents in swimming pools and bathtubs in this age group.

Swimming pools were the most common location of non-fatal drowning for children aged 0-4 years (62%; comprising 17, 39% in private pools and 10, 23% in public pools), followed by bathtubs/spa baths (9, 20%). This trend was also reflected in the past decade of hospitalisations with 42% in swimming pools and 23% in bathtubs/spa baths.

Children aged 0-4 years remain at greatest overall risk of drowning with the highest age-specific rate of fatal and non-fatal drowning, 11.85 per 100,000 (2002-2012) followed by 2.93 for 15-24 year olds and 2.90 for 5-14 year olds.

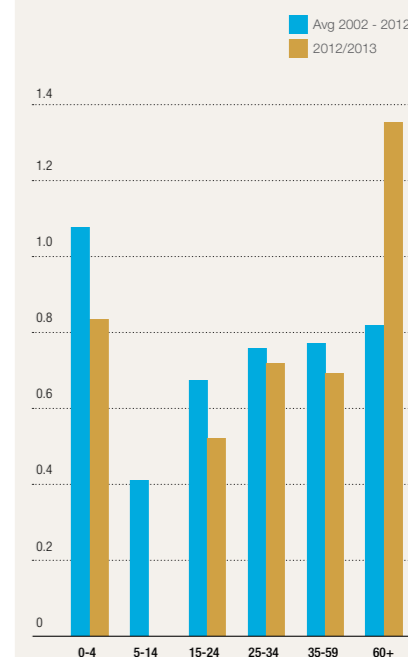
CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

This year 9 (22%) people who drowned were reported as being from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, almost double the average of 5 (14%) from the previous decade (2002-2012). These figures are likely to be higher as from 2002-2012 country of birth or ethnicity were unknown in 3 out of 4 drowning deaths (country of birth was unable to be determined for non-fatal drowning incidents).

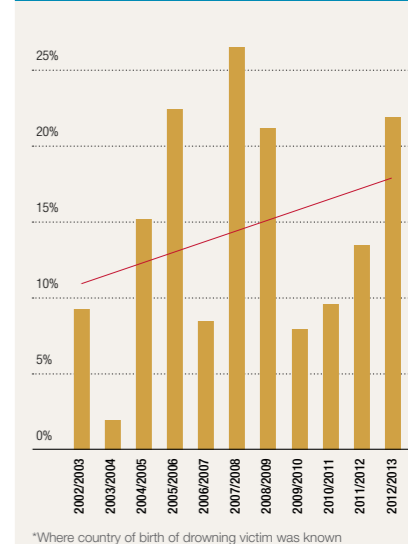
Individuals from a CALD background are recognised as those who identify as 'having a specific cultural or linguistic affiliation by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, preferred language, language(s) spoken at home, or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.' (DHSMU, 2002)

A review of cases from 2002-2012 involving individuals from CALD communities revealed that the majority were male (82%); aged 15-24 years (25%) or 35-59 years (32%). Incidents typically occurred in open waterways; with almost two thirds in coastal waterways (64%) and almost one third in inland waterways (29%). Common activities the victims were undertaking prior to the drowning incident included swimming (29%), rock fishing/rock walking (21%), walking or recreating near water (16%), or attempting a rescue (13%). In over a third of incidents (37%) the victim did not intend to enter the water, they slipped or fell in.

FATAL DROWNING RATE (PER 100,000 PERSONS) IN VICTORIA BY AGE 2002-2013



PERCENTAGE OF DROWNING DEATHS IN VICTORIA BY OVERSEAS COUNTRY OF BIRTH* 2002-2013

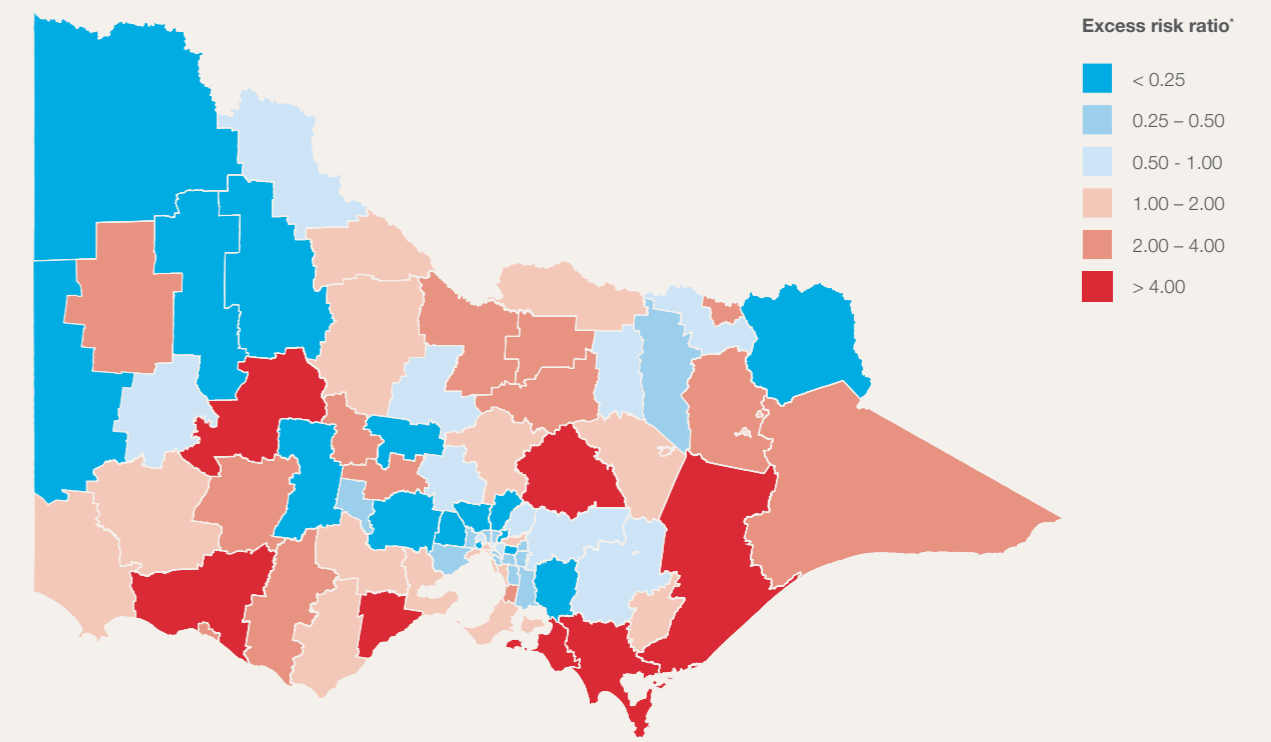


*Where country of birth of drowning victim was known

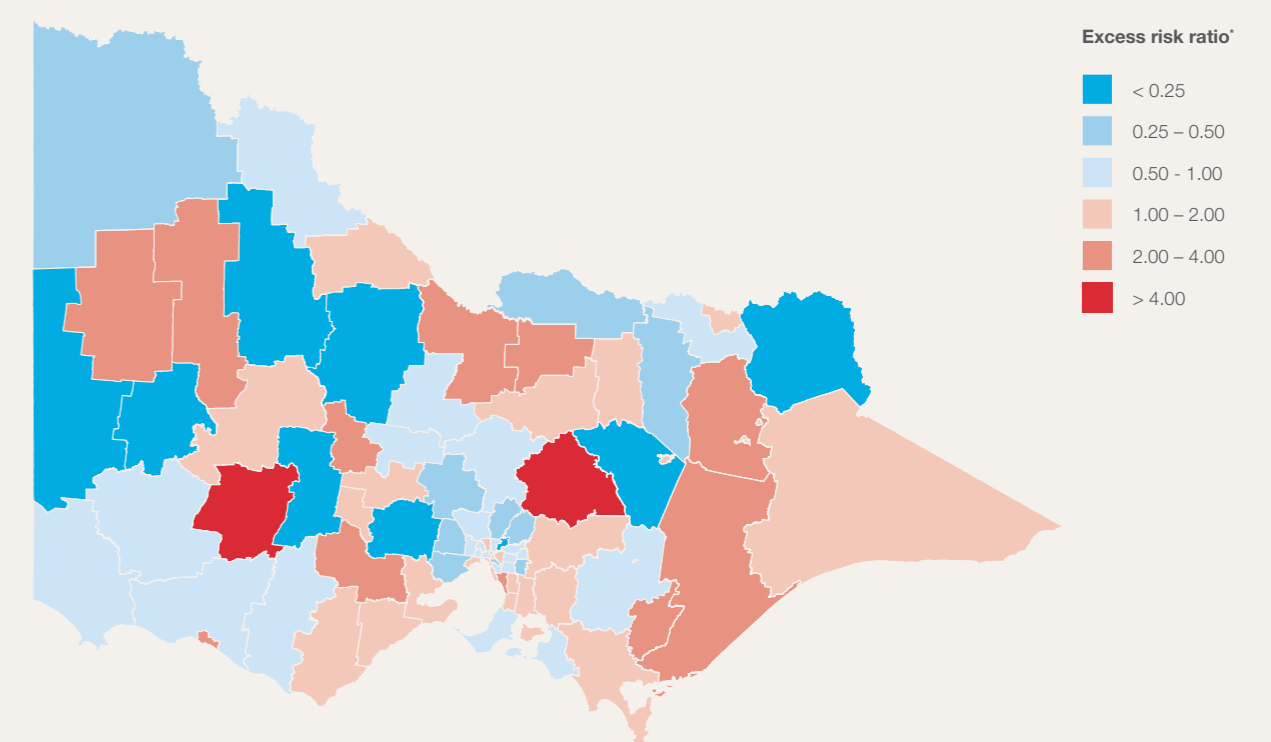


**PEOPLE
IN REGIONAL
AREAS REMAIN
1.5
TIMES MORE
LIKELY TO DROWN
THAN THOSE
IN MAJOR CITIES.**

**RISK OF DROWNING BY LOCATION OF INCIDENT
IN VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS FROM 2002-2012**



**RISK OF DROWNING BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE
IN VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS FROM 2002-2012**



*Excess risk is defined as a ratio of the observed number over the expected number of cases. LGAs in blue indicate a lower level of risk expected as indicated by risk values less than one. In contrast, LGAs coloured as red indicate higher risk rates than expected (indicated with values greater than one).

52%

INCREASE IN DROWNING DEATHS IN COASTAL WATERWAYS THIS YEAR.

WHEN, WHERE, WHAT

WHEN DID THEY DROWN?

Month

The highest number of drowning deaths occurred in February and March 2012/2013, with seven and eight drowning deaths respectively. This is the highest number of drowning deaths recorded in these months in over a decade.

On Saturday 9 March, the Labour Day long weekend took a tragic turn, with three separate drowning deaths in one day. This was amidst a record breaking heatwave, which affected southeast Australia and in particular Melbourne, with a record nine consecutive days above 30°C (Bureau of Meteorology, 2013).

Season

Drowning incidents occur all year round. Over the past decade (2002-2012) the majority of drowning incidents occurred in summer (37%), followed by spring (24%), autumn (21%) and winter (18%). Summer was also the peak season for non-fatal drowning incidents in 2012/2013 (52, 58%), however the majority of fatal drowning incidents in 2012/2013 occurred in autumn (16, 39%).

WHERE DID THEY DROWN?

Region - Place of occurrence

Just over half of drowning fatalities in 2012/2013 occurred in metropolitan regions (22, 54%). This is in line with the more recent trend for drowning incidents occurring in metropolitan regions (52% from 2007-2012) and differs from the previous five year period where the majority of incidents occurred in regional Victoria (61%, 2002-2007).

Region - Place of residence

Similar to the region of incident, just over half of those who drowned in Victoria in 2012/2013 resided in major cities in Victoria (21, 51%). However, when accounting for the differences in the distribution of the population, the drowning rate per 100,000 persons was greater for those residing in regional Victoria. While the drowning rate in regional Victoria has decreased over the years (average 0.85 from 2002-2007 to average 0.63 from 2007-2012), those in regional and remote areas remain 1.5 times more likely to drown than those in major cities in Victoria.

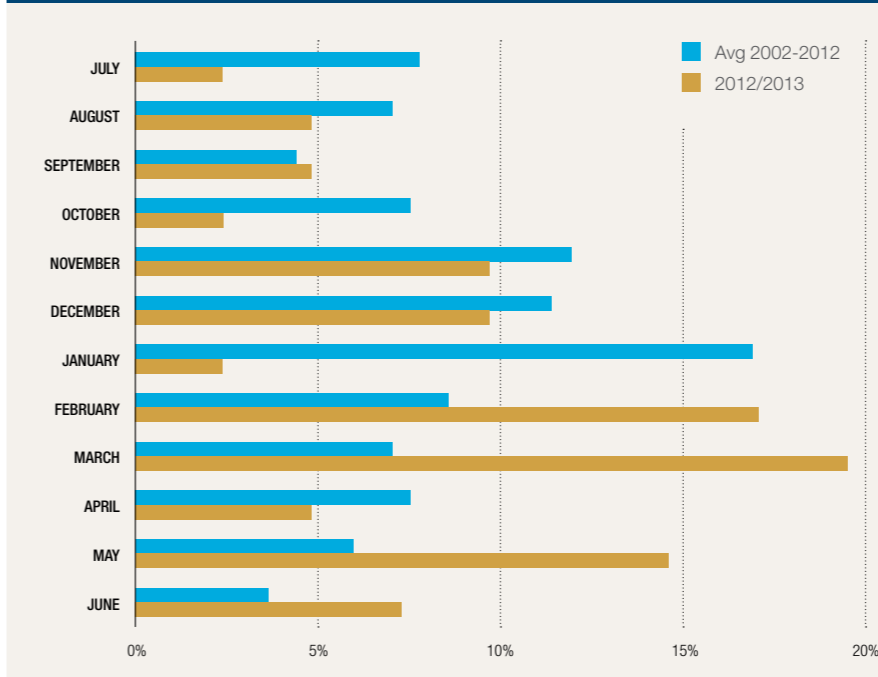
Waterways

The majority of drowning deaths occurred in coastal waterways in 2012/2013 (23, 56%). This represents a 52% increase in coastal drowning deaths compared with the average over the past decade 2002-2012.

On a positive note, there was a decrease in the number of drowning deaths in inland waterways in 2012/2013 with 9 (22%) compared to an average of 15 per year from 2002-2012 (38%).

Non-fatal incidents in open waterways in 2012/2013 were also more likely to occur in coastal environments (23, 26%) compared to inland waterways (9, 10%). However, the most common locations for non-fatal drowning in 2012/2013 were in swimming pools (51%), including both private pools (23, 26%) and public pools (22, 25%).

PERCENTAGE OF DROWNING DEATHS BY MONTH 2002-2013



THE MAJORITY OF DROWNING DEATHS OCCURRED IN COASTAL WATERWAYS IN 2012/2013

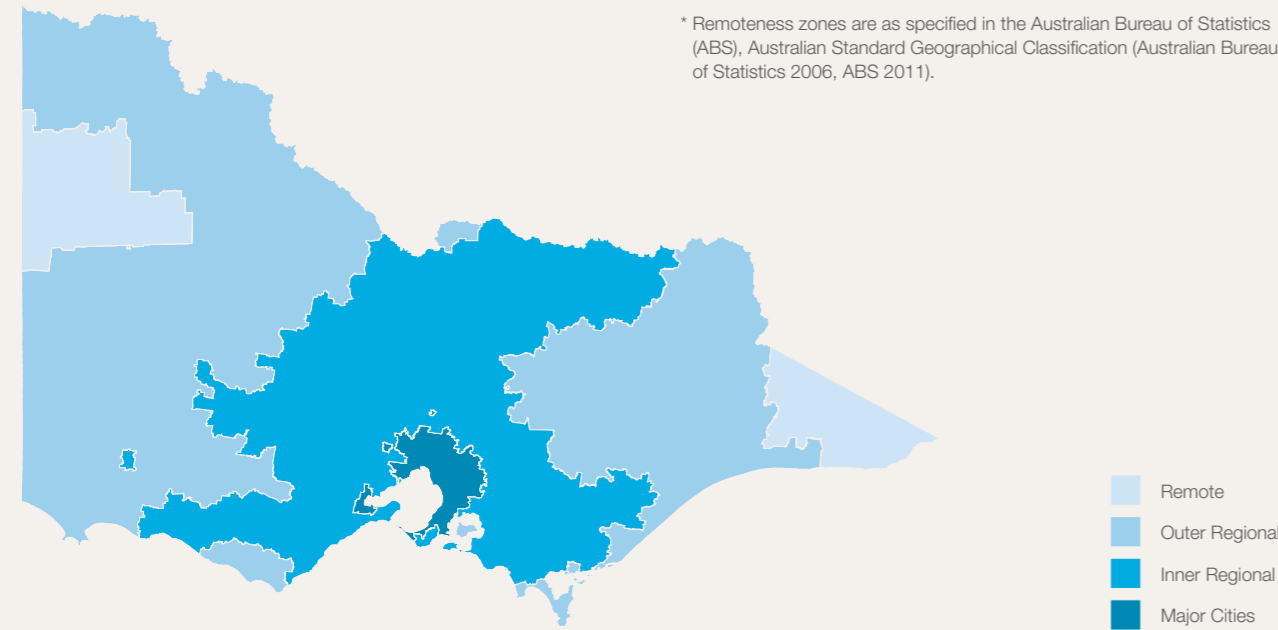
23

WHEN, WHERE, WHAT CONT.

DROWNING BY REMOTENESS AREA*: 2002-2013

INCIDENT	RESIDENCE				TOTAL
	MAJOR CITIES	INNER REGIONAL	OUTER REGIONAL	REMOTE	
Avg 2002-2007	39%	45%	15%	1%	100%
Avg 2007-2012	52%	40%	8%	1%	100%
2012/2013	54%	30%	13%	2%	100%

* Remoteness zones are as specified in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australian Standard Geographical Classification (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, ABS 2011).



WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

Activity

Various recreational activities were being undertaken immediately prior to fatal drowning incidents in 2012/2013. These included swimming, paddling or wading (7, 17%), followed by walking or playing near water (5, 12%), boating (5, 12%), diving/skin diving (includes snorkelling and SCUBA diving; 4, 10%) and other activities including fishing, attempting a rescue and bathing.

In a large proportion of cases the activity prior to drowning was unknown (11, 24%). This is due to the person being on their own at the time of the incident and reinforces the need to look out for yourself and others around water.

Activities with an increased number of drowning deaths compared to the previous 10 year average (2002-2012) included fishing (up by 3), diving/skin diving (up by 2), attempting a rescue (up by 2).

Fatal boating incidents were again higher this year, with five fatalities compared to the average of three deaths per year from 2006-2012, since the introduction of mandatory wearing of lifejackets (personal flotation devices, PFDs) for recreational boaters in December 2005.

The average prior to this safety initiative (from 2000-2006) was nine drowning deaths.

There were no rock fishing drowning deaths this year, which is a positive sign and hopefully reflects LSV's ongoing Rock Fishing Safety campaign, promoting rock fishing safety particularly throughout CALD communities.

A review of fatal drowning deaths over the past decade (2002-2012) also revealed that in many cases (40%) the person was not intending to enter the water, they slipped or fell in.

Over half of non-fatal drowning incidents in 2012/2013 occurred when the individual was swimming, (52, 55%). This reflects the high proportion of non-fatal drowning incidents occurring in swimming pools.

Over the past 10 years, from 2002-2012, the specific activity prior to the incident occurring was only known in just over half of the hospital admissions (522, 53%). Of these 522 incidents, a similar pattern to fatal drowning was found. Swimming was again the most common activity, accounting for 24% of hospital admissions. Other common activities included general leisure activities (18%), boating (11%) and individual water sports/craft riding (12%).

SWIMMING, PADDLING OR WADING

17%

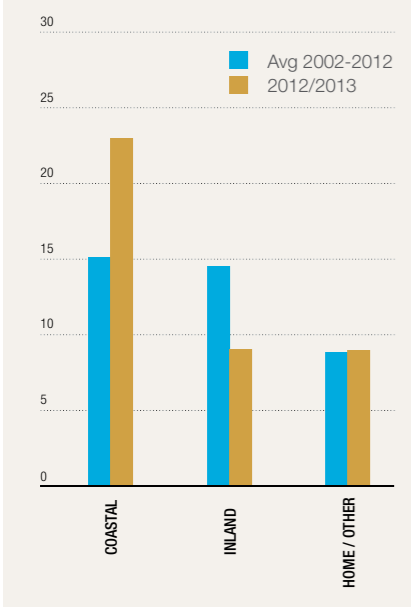
WALKING OR PLAYING NEAR WATER

12%

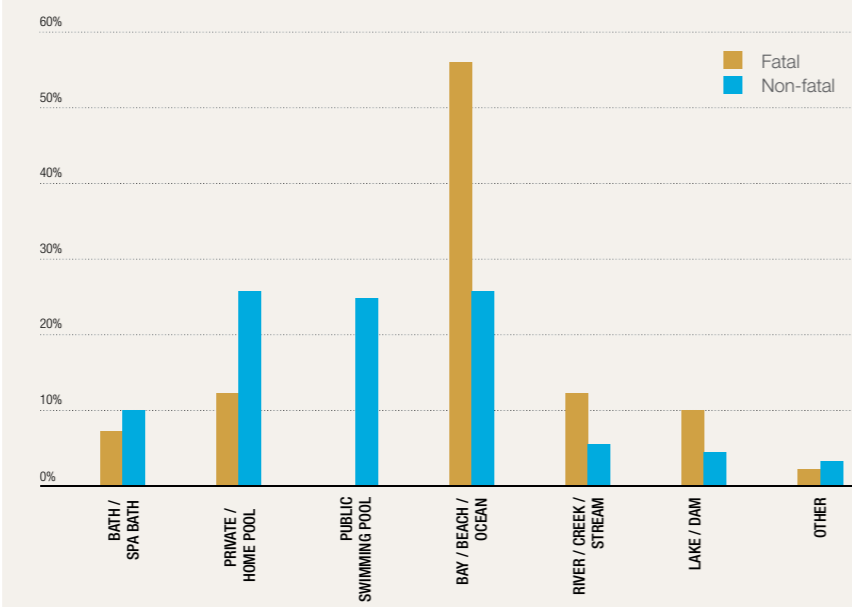
BOATING

12%

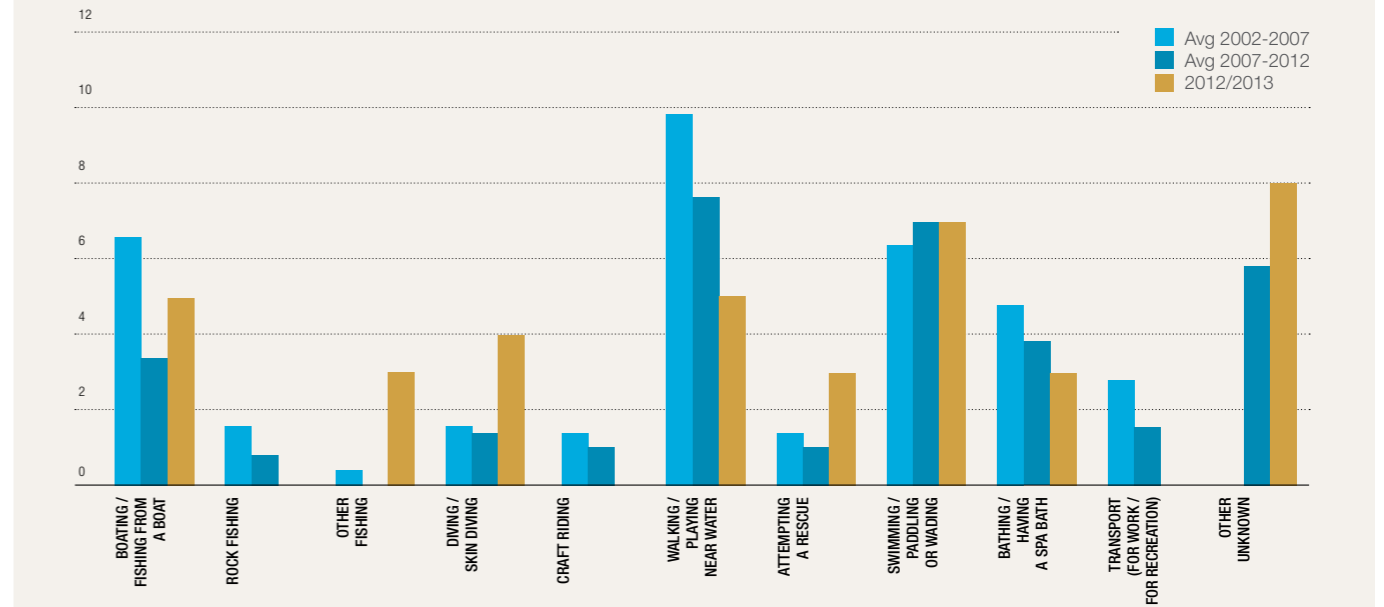
DROWNING DEATHS PER YEAR BY LOCATION 2002-2013



PERCENTAGE OF FATAL AND NON-FATAL DROWNING BY BODY OF WATER 2012-2013



DROWNING DEATHS PER YEAR BY ACTIVITY IN VICTORIA 2002-2013



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

ALCOHOL-RELATED DROWNING DEATHS

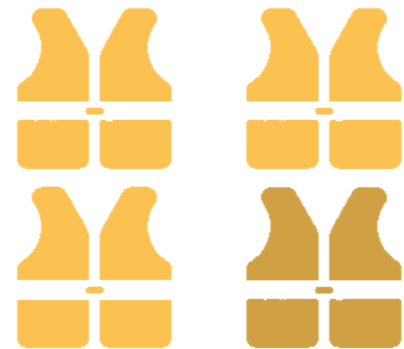
Tragically, another nine lives were lost in 2012/2013 when an individual reportedly consumed alcohol prior to drowning, representing 22% of the total drowning toll. This is consistent with the past decade with nine deaths each year related to alcohol consumption (2002-2012), representing on average one in four drowning deaths.

The characteristics of drowning incidents where alcohol was reportedly involved were similar to previously reported trends in that the majority involved males (8, 89%); and involved similar age groups, with those aged 25-59 highest represented (Matthews et al 2011).

The place of occurrence of alcohol-related drowning incidents in 2012/2013 was evenly divided, with a third each in inland waterways, coastal waterways and the home environment.

3-IN-4

PEOPLE THAT DROWNED IN BOATING INCIDENTS NOT WEARING A LIFEJACKET AT THE TIME THE INCIDENT OCCURRED



22%

OF LIVES LOST WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL REPORTEDLY CONSUMED ALCOHOL PRIOR TO DROWNING



PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDS)

Lifejackets or personal flotation devices (PFDS) have saved numerous lives over the years. An international study provided evidence to suggest wearing a lifejacket may potentially prevent one in two drowning deaths among recreational boaters (Cummings et al, 2011).

Unfortunately, not wearing a lifejacket has potentially claimed many lives in Victoria, with three out of four people who drowned in boating incidents not wearing a lifejacket at the time the incident occurred. In addition, the simple act of putting on a lifejacket when rock fishing could also have saved another 12 lives over the past decade, with all individuals who drowned while rock fishing not wearing a lifejacket.

Of all drowning deaths involving recreational boating or other activities where a lifejacket is required or recommended to be worn, such as rock fishing, 78% (50) of victims from 2002-2012 were reportedly not wearing one.



Many incidents involve unexpected large waves, leaving insufficient time to put on a lifejacket. This emphasises the importance of always wearing a lifejacket when boating or rock fishing.

A number of LSV's life saving clubs have been leading by example over the years, wearing lifejackets while operating inflatable rescue boats (IRBs). This will be formalised in 2014, with LSV introducing new safety measures in line with Surf Life Saving Australia safety initiatives, including mandatory lifejacket use on all IRBs by 1 October 2014.

CORONIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of the coroner in Victoria is to investigate certain deaths such as drowning, in order to determine the identity of the person who died, the cause of the death and, in some situations, the circumstances surrounding the death. As part of this process, the coroner may recommend ways to help prevent similar deaths in the future.

There were three drowning deaths where coronial recommendations were made in 2012/2013. The recommendations relate to home pool and spa safety as well as coastal aquatic safety signage. The following is a summary of each incident and the recommendations made by the coroner as contained in the coronial findings. Note, these are not exact replications from the findings; full details can be accessed from the Coroners Court of Victoria website:

<http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/home/case+findings/>

2010

In January 2010, a toddler drowned in an in-ground swimming pool in the backyard of a rental property. Just prior to the drowning, the child was playing in the backyard of the home with three other siblings. The pool barrier was largely compliant with the requirements at the time, despite offering direct access to the pool to those in the backyard.

Recommendations

1. That Consumer Affairs Victoria seeks to amend its tenancy forms and publications available to tenants and landlords to include information about pool barrier fencing. Furthermore, landlords and their agents should be encouraged when making available properties to rent to families with young children, to strongly consider complying with the latest Australian Standard relating to pool fencing.
2. That the Building Commissioner and the Minister for Planning consider the contributing circumstances of this death, and determine whether amendments should be made to the existing swimming pool barrier requirements to reduce the risk of previously acceptable barrier configurations, particularly those which utilise self-closing doors, when properties are sold, or offered to lease.

2010

In April 2010, a toddler drowned in an outdoor spa in the backyard of a rental property. Just prior to the drowning, the child was playing around the home with her older sibling. A family friend arrived at the home and the child's mother answered the door, a few minutes later she realised her daughter was missing and found her in the outdoor spa floating face down. There was no barrier fencing around the spa and no automatic locks on the access doors from the house.

Recommendations

1. Life Saving Victoria has made the following submission for other reports provided to the Coroners Court of Victoria and is reproduced here. Their submission includes four recommendations:
 - i. Continued programs for toddler water safety education;
 - ii. Placing into legislation a requirement to display at the poolside a sign displaying current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedures;
 - iii. A register of pools and spas; and
 - iv. Mandatory inspection of all pool and spa safety barriers every four years by licensed pool safety inspectors.

I support the recommendations of Life Saving Victoria.
2. I also recommend pursuant to section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008*, that Consumer Affairs Victoria amend its tenancy forms and publications created for tenants and landlords to include regulatory information about pool barrier fencing.
3. I further recommend that the Real Estate Institute of Victoria communicate to their members the importance of property inspections, which are not simply for the management of their client's asset, but also from a duty of care to ensure the health and wellbeing of tenants.



CORONIAL RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

2012

In January 2012, a 36-year-old mother drowned when visiting Urquarts Bluff beach with her child, another adult and four other children. Urquarts Bluff is approximately 10km west of Anglesea and adjacent to the Great Ocean Road; the beach has no surf lifesaving club, and is not a patrolled beach. On this day there was a southwesterly wind which created difficult swimming conditions. The children were carried by a rip out of their depth, and both mothers then pursued them to assist. All were quickly swept away from the shore. Neither of the adults was a strong or experienced swimmer. The rescue response by Fairhaven and Anglesea surf life saving clubs, surfers, police, and ambulance, helped save the lives of the four children and one adult. Tragically despite these efforts the 36-year-old mother was unable to be saved.

Recommendations

1. The signs within the Great Ocean National Park have been the subject of internal review since approximately 2009/2010, which review is not yet completed. No recommendations are made other than the review and consultation process be complete as early as possible, and that any improvements that are agreed be effected promptly.
2. That relevant bodies, including but not confined to Life Saving Victoria, Parks Victoria, Surf Lifesaving Clubs, Surf Life Saving Australia and agencies associated with tourism and education, give consideration to introducing or expanding community education in respect of beach safety signage and information systems. Education, to create a habit that upon arrival at such a destination, especially for the first time, groups and individuals will consider relevant information and consider whether their intended activities for the day are appropriate at that location or not.

“EVERY DROWNING DEATH IS ONE TOO MANY. IT IS OUR MISSION TO PREVENT AQUATIC RELATED DEATH AND INJURY IN ALL VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES BY ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS.”

Nigel Taylor
*Chief Executive Officer,
Life Saving Victoria*

KEY WATER SAFETY AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

VICTORIAN WATER SAFETY COUNCIL

- Life Saving Victoria
- Aquatics & Recreation Victoria
- Australian Volunteer Coast Guard – Victoria
- Boating Industry Association of Victoria
- Canoeing Victoria
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Justice – Emergency Management Programs & Resources
- Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority
- Kidsafe Victoria Inc
- Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board
- Parks Victoria
- Surfing Victoria
- Swimming Victoria Inc
- Transport Safety Victoria
- Victoria Water Police/Search & Rescue Squads
- Victorian Recreational Fishers
- Yachting Victoria
- YMCA

OTHER WATER SAFETY AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

- Central Coastal Board
- Civic Mutual Plus
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure
- Department of Environment and Primary Industries
- Life Saving Clubs
- Local Government Authorities
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre
- Swimming Pool and Spa Association
- Victorian Coastal Council
- Victorian Managed Insurance Authority
- Victorian Multicultural Commission

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