



Drowning Prevention and Water Safety National Action Plan

Consultative draft - September 2016

The future we want - A safer Sri Lanka



Disaster Management Center
Ministry of Disaster Management
for Safer Communities & Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka





About Disaster Management in Sri Lanka



In July 2005, the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No.13 of 2005 was enacted which provides the legal basis for instituting a disaster risk management system in the country. The National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM), is a high-level inter-ministerial body. The chairman and vice chairman of the NCDM are H.E. the President and Hon Prime Minister respectively. Other members are Leader of the Opposition, Ministers in charge of 20 selected subject areas, Provincial Council Chief Ministers and five members of the Opposition. The Act also provides for establishing the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) under the Council to be the apex body for the purpose of planning, co-ordinating and implementing of certain natural and other forms of disasters



Our Vision

Safer communities and sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

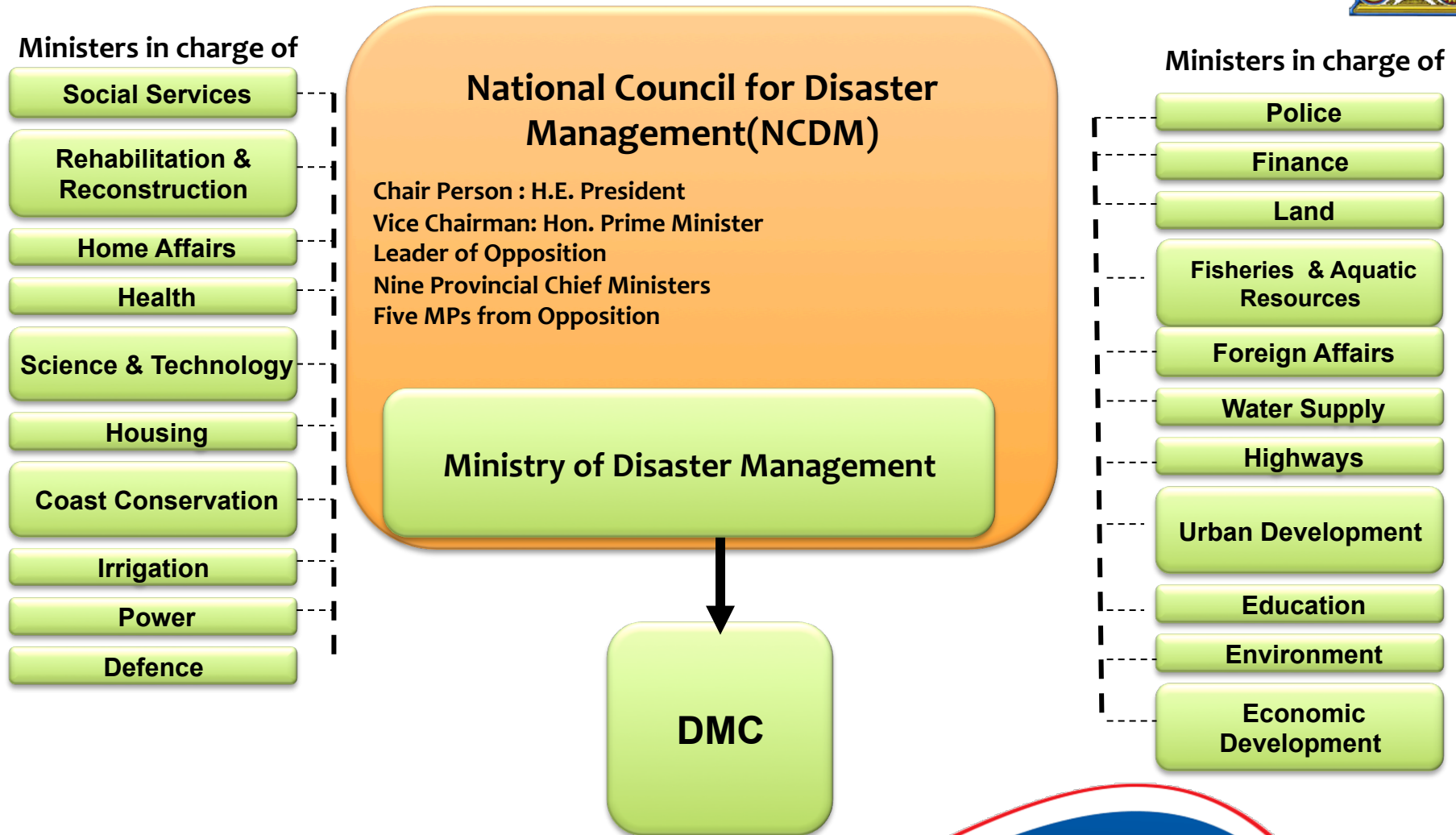
Our Mission

To create a culture of safety among communities and the nation at large through systematic management of natural, technological and man-made disaster risks.





About the National Council for Disaster Management





About the Disaster Management Centre



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Our Mission

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Divisions	About
Mitigation, Research and Development division	Responsible for national level disaster mitigations, risk reduction based on structural non-structural activities. This division is also responsible for all technological aspects of DMC, such as managing national level IT infrastructure, risk analysis and mapping.
Preparedness Planning Division	Coordinating, directing and monitoring of preparation of disaster preparedness and response plans at provincial, district, local authority, divisional and Grama Niladhari levels. Also, Identification of vulnerable communities for different hazards.
Emergency Operations Centre	Operates on 24x7 basis and coordinates all incident information of disasters and resources for management. The centre receives, analyzes, and displays information about incidents to enable decision-making. The centre also finds, prioritizes, deploys, and tracks critical resources.
Training, Education & Public Awareness Division	Provides training and public awareness for relevant government agencies departments and other stakeholders including community groups in Sri Lanka.





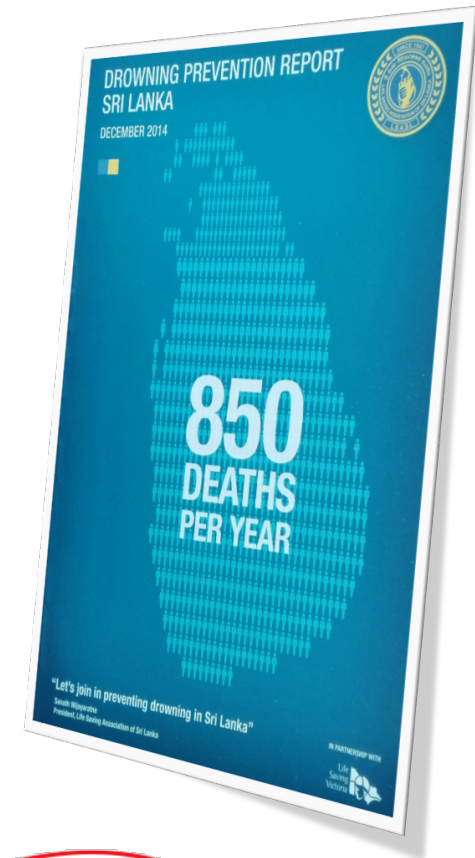
Directive on Drowning Prevention & Water Safety



Under the guidance of National Council for Disaster Management, the Interim Management committee for Disaster Management in Sri Lanka has directed the:

- formation of the National Expertise Committee for Drowning prevention and Water Safety
- formation of Working Committees for Drowning prevention and Water Safety
- preparation of the Drowning Prevention and Water Safety National Action Plan

The Disaster Management Centre will lead the implementation of the directive.





Introduction to Drowning Prevention & Water Safety



Death by drowning (referred to hereafter as drowning) is considered to be the second highest cause of accidental death in Sri Lanka. Research into drowning in Sri Lanka was published in December 2014 through the inaugural Drowning Prevention Report for Sri Lanka.

The recorded data indicated that on average, 855 people drowned each year from 2001-2006 and 2009 in Sri Lanka, translating to a rate of 4.4 deaths per 100,000 people. The actual rate is expected to be higher, in particular resulting from the increases in local travel and recreation since the end of the war in 2009. It is estimated that over 1100 lives are lost due to drowning each year. According to the Global Report on Drowning published by the World Health Organization in 2014, Sri Lanka is ranked 16th place globally in relation to per capita occurrence of drowning. In most cases, drowning is preventable.

This Drowning Prevention and Water Safety plan has been developed to provide a strategic and operational blueprint for government, community and industry actions for preventing drowning and developing water safety in Sri Lanka. The plan is based on experiences in drowning prevention and water safety in Sri Lanka and relevant international best practice, including recommendations from the Global Report on Drowning.

Sri Lanka is a country surrounded by 1,340 kilometers of beach frontage and with an abundance of breathtaking inland waterways, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs and tanks. Addressing drowning prevention and water safety is a priority for gaining social, economic and tourism benefits from beaches and inland waterways.





Key Definitions



The terms defined below are used in this document:

- **Drowning:** Respiratory impairment in which a victim is prevented from breathing air following submersion or immersion in liquid.
- **Drowning Prevention:** Activities, including programs and policies, aimed at stopping people from drowning.
- **Water Safety:** Providing people with lifesaving services, skills in swimming and water safety knowledge to keep people safe in, on and around water.
- **Lifesaving Services:** Trained lifeguards on duty with rescue and first aid equipment.
- **Resuscitation:** To bring someone who is unconscious, or not breathing back to a conscious or active state.
- **Water Rescue Skills:** Skills required for someone to remove another person, or themselves, from dangerous situations in the water.
- **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR):** Breathing for the victim and applying chest compressions to make the heart pump.
- **Water Based Recreation:** Activities or sports based in, on or around water such as swimming, fishing or boating.





Summary of the Drowning Issue



Who is drowning?

Statistical analysis of drowning cases between 2004 and 2009 revealed:

- **Age:** Adults aged 25-44 years had the highest number of drowning deaths.
- **Sex:** Males were four times more likely to drown than females.

Where and how do drowning deaths occur?

Evidence provided from local rescuers and responders revealed key themes:

- **Location:** Lakes were reported as the key location for drowning incidents in six of the nine provinces. This was followed by oceans/beaches in four provinces; unprotected wells/open cisterns also in four provinces; rivers in three provinces; and reservoirs/tanks in three provinces.
- **Activity:** Common aquatic activities in the provinces that may place people at risk included, general recreation or play in, on or near water, fishing for employment or sustenance, other work-related activities such as in rice paddies or construction, activities of daily living such as bathing or doing washing in water, as well as participating in aquatic sports and tourism activities.
- **Contributing Factors:** Key factors reported to be involved in drowning were, alcohol consumption around water, lack of lifejacket wear on boats, lack of supervision, lack of water safety skills and knowledge, flooding from monsoonal rainfall, unprotected wells/open cisterns and reservoirs..
- **Drowning prevention issues:** Key issues in tackling drowning were a lack of learn to swim programs, lack of identified safe swimming zones with lifesaving services, difficulties for many to access safe swimming environments and/or lessons, lack of resources to promote and deliver water safety education and awareness, and a lack of legislation or ability to enforce legislation governing water safety (such as lifejacket wear and alcohol free zones on beaches).





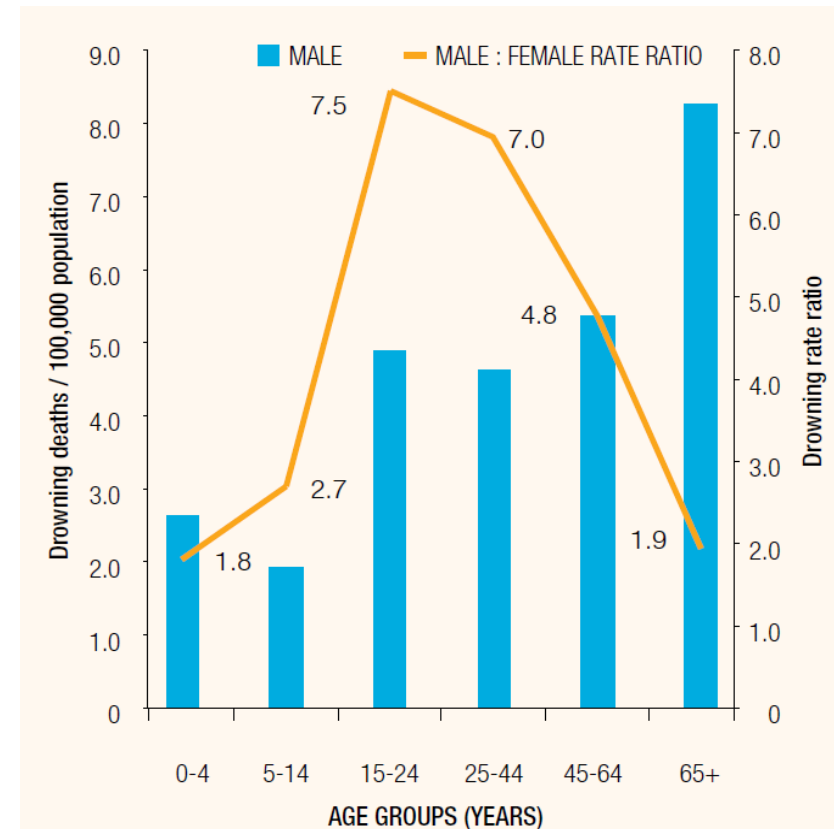
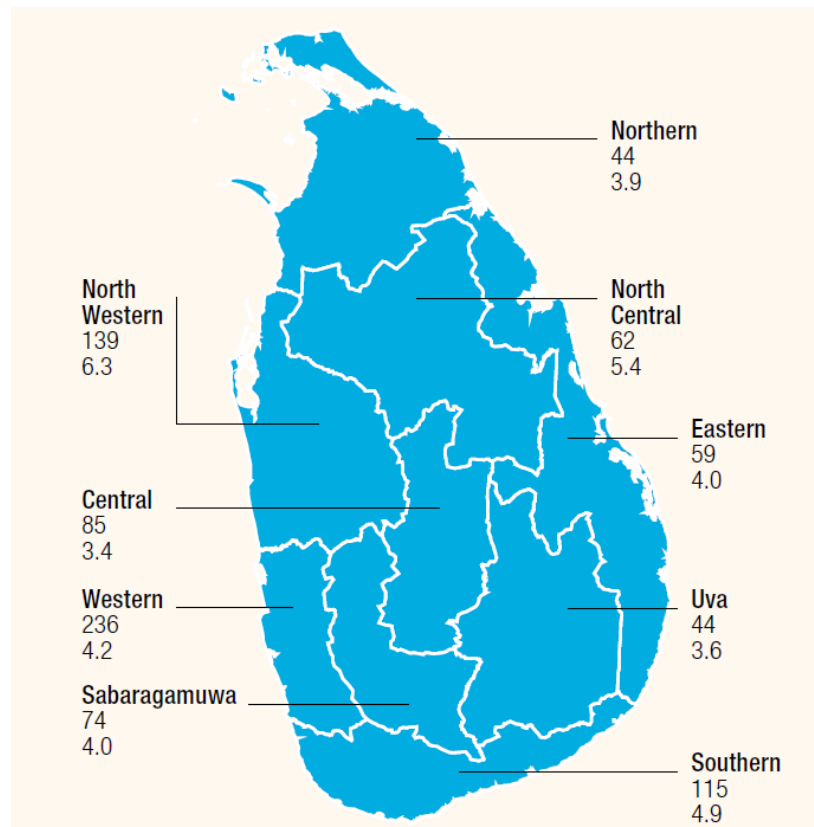
Summary of the Drowning Issue



Extracts from the inaugural Drowning Prevention Report for Sri Lanka published in December 2014:

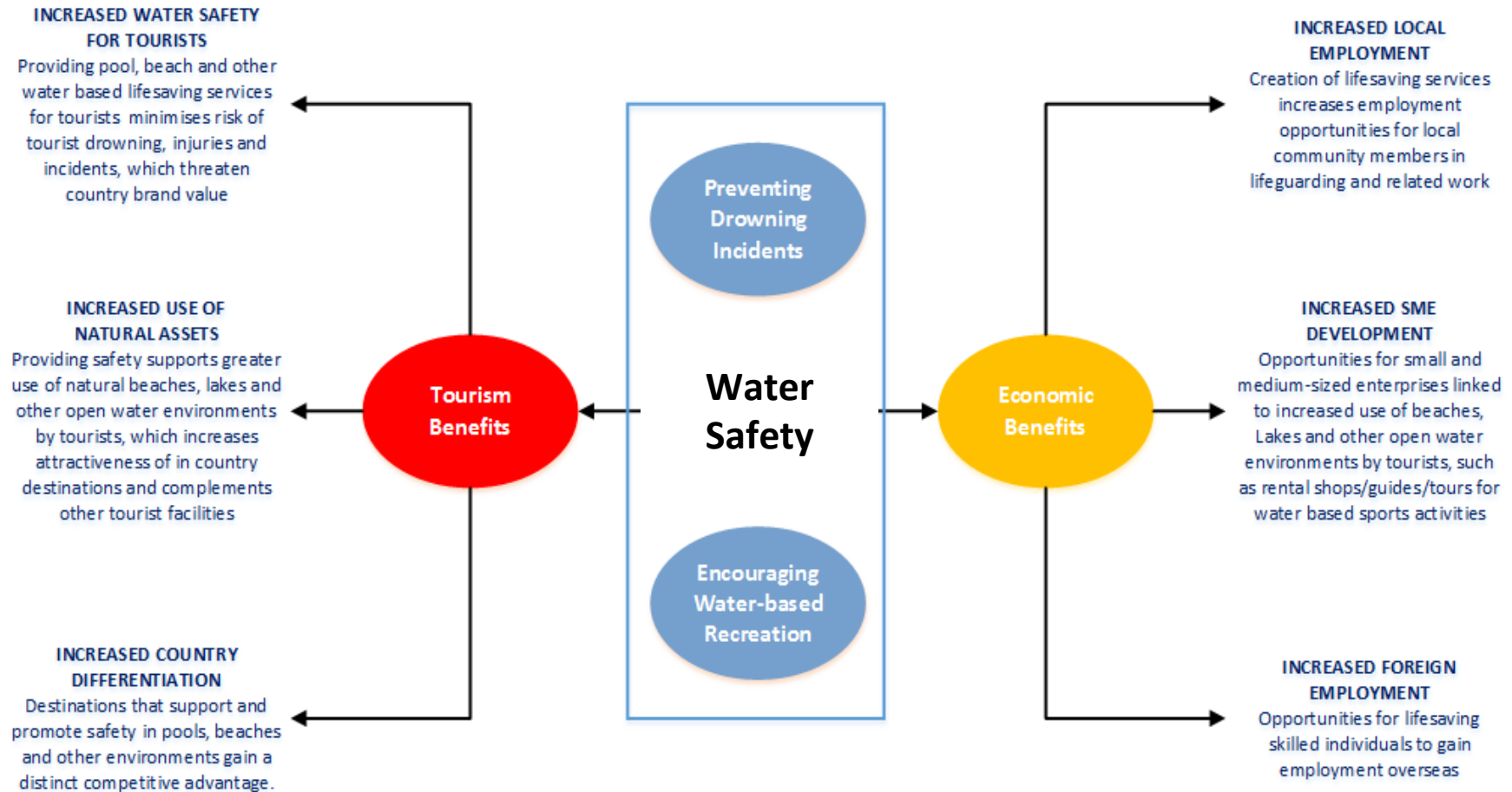
Average drowning rate and male to female rate ratio, by age group, Sri Lanka, 2001-2006 & 2009

Average drowning deaths by frequency and rate (deaths per 100,000 population) by province, Sri Lanka, 2001-2006 & 2009





The Water Safety Opportunity



The primary benefits from developing water safety are preventing drowning deaths and encouraging aquatic recreation. There are economic and tourism benefits that flow from developing water safety as outlined above.

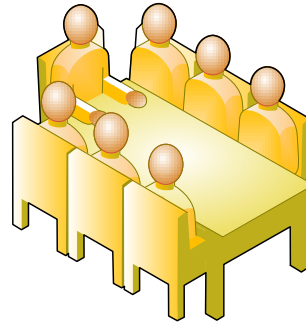




Governance Structure



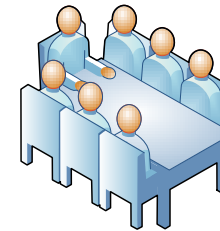
Success in implementation is dependent on multi-stakeholder engagement, action and accountability.



DROWNING PREVENTION & WATER SAFETY EXPERTISE COMMITTEE



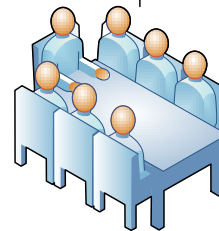
Lifesaving Services Group



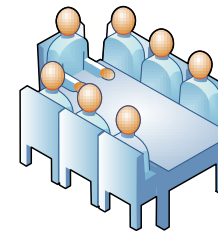
Tourism Services Group



Swim for Safety & Education Group



Public Awareness Group



Research & Evaluation Group





Drowning Prevention & Water Safety Strategies



This Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Plan outlines eight strategies. These strategies have been developed based on analysis of drowning statistics in Sri Lanka and prioritising water safety to deliver social, economic and tourism benefits for Sri Lanka. The strategies draw on international best practice in drowning prevention and water safety and have been refined for relevance and practicality for Sri Lanka.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| STRATEGY 1.0 | Develop a national approach to drowning prevention and water safety |
| STRATEGY 2.0 | Teach swim for safety, resuscitation and water rescue skills to the public |
| STRATEGY 3.0 | Improve public resilience for water related disasters |
| STRATEGY 4.0 | Improve public awareness of dangers and risks related to drowning |
| STRATEGY 5.0 | Develop lifesaving services at beaches, inland waterways and pools |
| STRATEGY 6.0 | Improve drowning evidence base, research, evaluation and reporting |
| STRATEGY 7.0 | Deliver value for tourism from water safety |
| STRATEGY 8.0 | Develop regulations and standards for drowning prevention and water safety |





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Drowning Prevention & Water Safety Actions



STRATEGY 1.0

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3

Develop a national approach to drowning prevention and water safety

- Establish and maintain a national drowning prevention and water safety expertise committee
- Develop and maintain a national drowning prevention and water safety action plan
- Establish & maintain drowning prevention and water safety working groups as required

STRATEGY 2.0

- 2.1
- 2.2
- 2.3

Teach swim for safety, resuscitation and water rescue skills to the public

- Develop nationally endorsed swim for safety training & awareness program
- Teach swim for safety to children through school system
- Teach resuscitation and water safety to children through school system

STRATEGY 3.0

- 3.1
- 3.2

Improve public resilience for water related disasters

- Establishing search & rescue teams for flood and water related response
- Public /private partnership and voluntarism in water related hazards

STRATEGY 4.0

- 4.1
- 4.2
- 4.3

Improve public awareness of dangers and risks related to drowning

- Develop and maintain a national drowning risk profile
- Develop and maintain a national drowning prevention & water safety website
- Disseminate drowning prevention and water safety information through media





Drowning Prevention & Water Safety Actions



STRATEGY 5.0

- 5.1
- 5.2
- 5.3
- 5.4

Develop lifesaving services at beaches, inland waterways and pools

- Identify locations of frequent public access and provide appropriate lifesaving services
- Support volunteers in provision of lifesaving services
- Enable public access to information on lifesaving services location and times
- Develop quality lifesaving services with appropriate equipment and facilities

STRATEGY 6.0

- 6.1
- 6.2
- 6.3

Improve drowning evidence base, research, evaluation and reporting

- Identify and address drowning injury research gaps
- Publish periodic drowning prevention and water safety reports
- Monitor and evaluate drowning prevention and water safety programs

STRATEGY 7.0

- 7.1
- 7.2
- 7.3
- 7.4
- 7.5

Deliver value for tourism from water safety

- Develop tourist beach safety operations to international standards
- Enforce national skills standard for beach and pool lifeguards
- Implement national tourism marketing strategies based on safe beach and water activities
- Establish guidelines for tourism operators on maintaining safe beach and water activities
- Develop a water safety App with information for the public

STRATEGY 8.0

- 8.1
- 8.2
- 8.3
- 8.4

Develop regulations and standards for drowning prevention and water safety

- Develop regulations/guidelines for safe water based recreational activities
- Develop regulations/guidelines for boat operators on maintaining safe water activities
- Develop national standard for water safety signage and implement signage
- Identify innovative means of encouraging use of floatation devices in high risk activities

