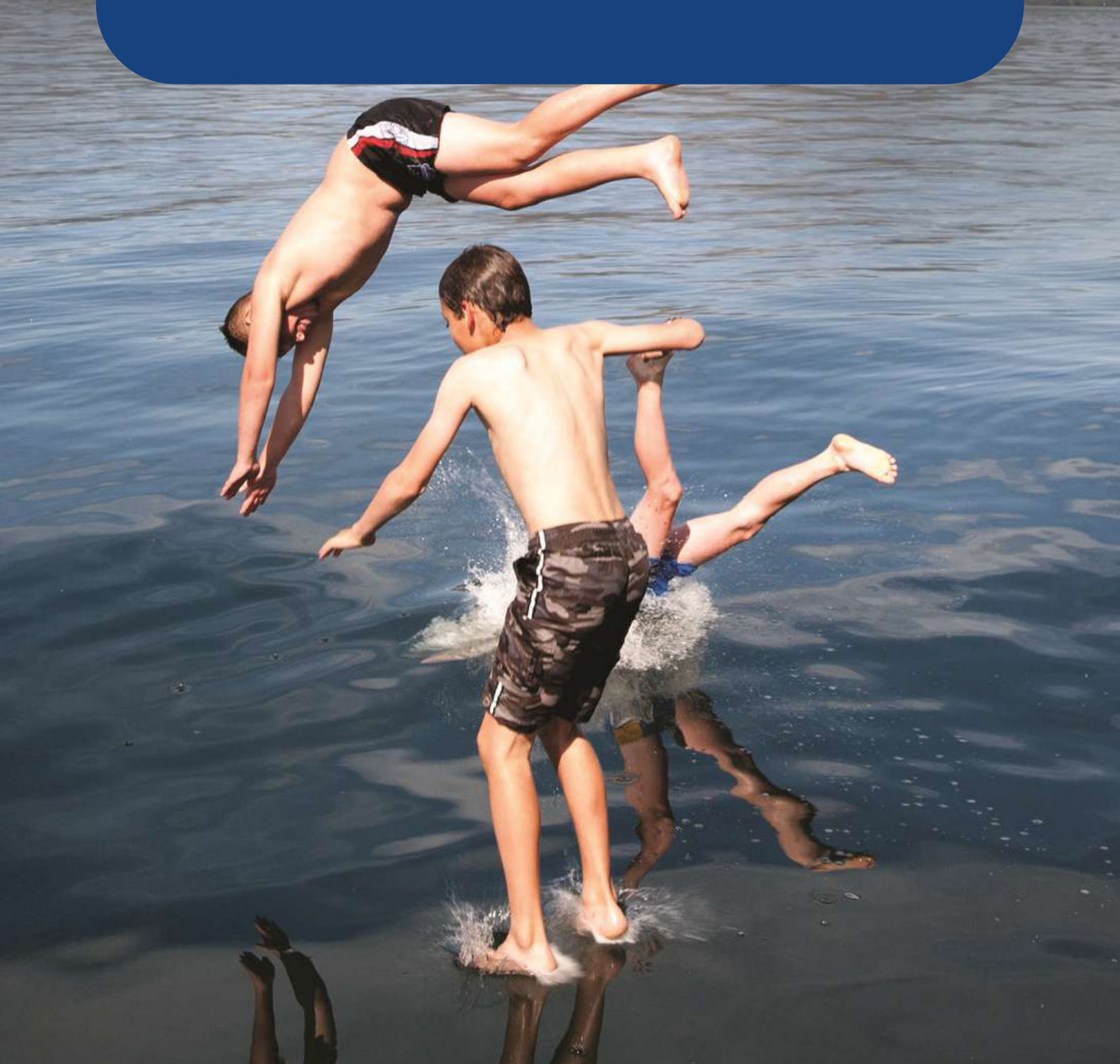




Drowning Prevention Report 2018



Summary

Tēnā Koutou,

Recreation in, on and around the water is a cultural and popular pastime for millions of people in New Zealand. As an island nation, our beaches, rivers and lakes are some of the most magnificent in the world. A moderate climate, accessible waterways, including public and residential pools provide ample opportunities for Kiwis, immigrants and tourists alike to recreate and participate in water sports and activities year round. This is part of the New Zealand lifestyle.

With any water comes risk and sadly every year far too many people lose their lives or are injured in, on or around the water. The real tragedy is that most drownings and injuries are preventable.

There were 66 preventable drowning fatalities in 2018 down from 91 in 2017. While every preventable drowning fatality is a tragedy for a family and a community, the water safety sector can take some pride in this being the second lowest drowning toll on record after 2010. It's a reflection of the fantastic collaborative work undertaken day in and day out by the thousands of passionate volunteers who make up the vast majority of the sectors' workforce.

However it must be acknowledged that front line services are stretched and the toll could easily have been much higher if it wasn't for their efforts. My sincere thanks must go to all those working tirelessly in the sector, and to all the volunteers who give up their time to keep our communities safe.

While male drownings continue to dominate the numbers, the male drowning toll for 2018 is the lowest on record while the female toll is up 20% on the five year average. 2018 was an improvement on the previous year for toddlers and babies with three under - fives fatally drowning compared to seven in 2017. One is one too many. The total number of preventable fatalities for 15 to 24 year olds is the lowest since records began in 1980. It is half of the 2017 toll and the five year average. The toll for over 65's is the highest since 1990. 65% were accidental immersions and 29% involved swimming.

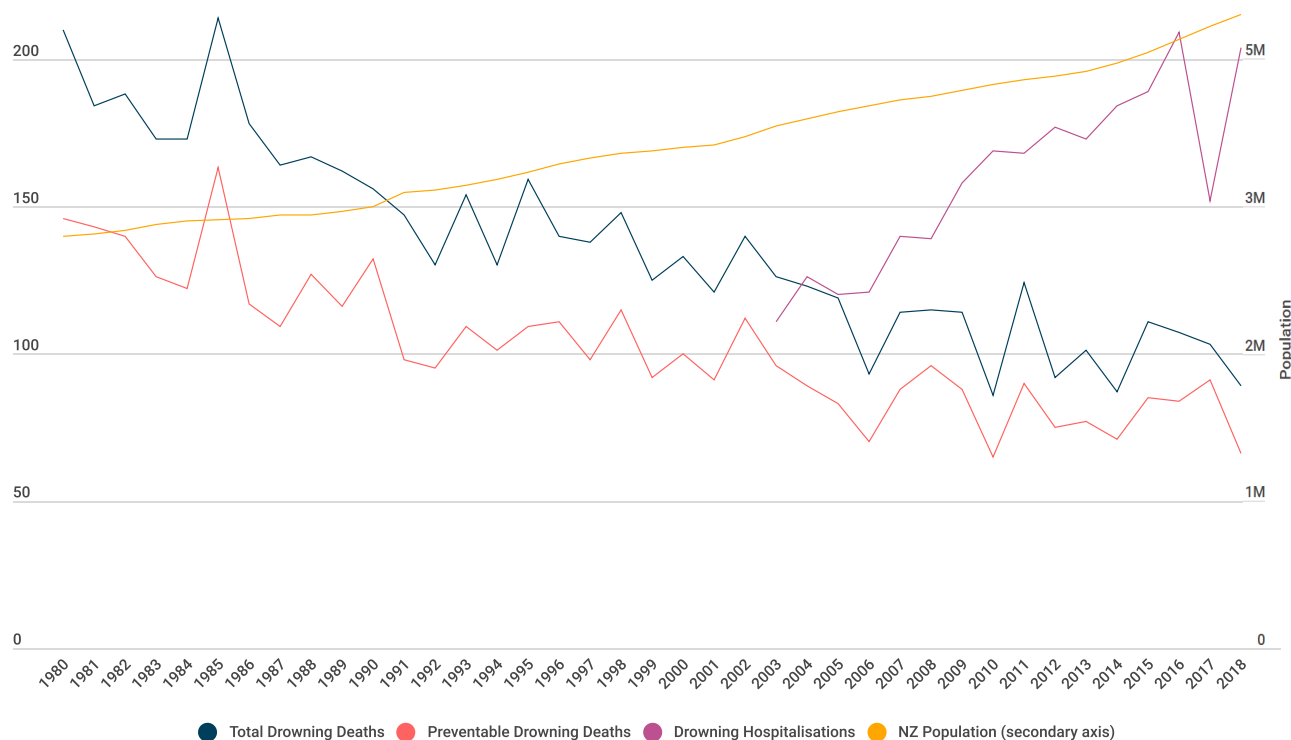
Immersion incidents, where the victims had no intention of being in the water, continues to be the largest cause of preventable drowning fatalities (46%), followed by those who simply went for a swim which ended in tragedy (26%). Research* shows that while drowning is recognised as a problem by 84 percent of New Zealanders, (fifth behind child abuse, domestic violence, road safety and bullying) the reality is drowning is the leading cause of recreational death, and the third highest cause of accidental death in New Zealand.

The water safety sector is united in its commitment to the drowning prevention targets as detailed in the 2020 Water Safety Sector Strategy. While the toll for 2018 is encouraging, complacency can never be a factor and the hard work is still ahead of us. Every New Zealander must play a part in bringing about the necessary culture change and make water safety a priority in their lives.

Jonty Mills

* WSNZ Attitudes and Behaviour survey 2018

1980 - 2018 Overview



Key Findings



There were 66 preventable drowning fatalities in 2018, down from 91 in 2017.



46% (31) of fatalities were Accidental Immersions and 21% of hospitalisations



The largest number of fatalities came from the 65+ age group (17)



There were 20% more female fatalities in 2018 than the 2013 - 2017 average



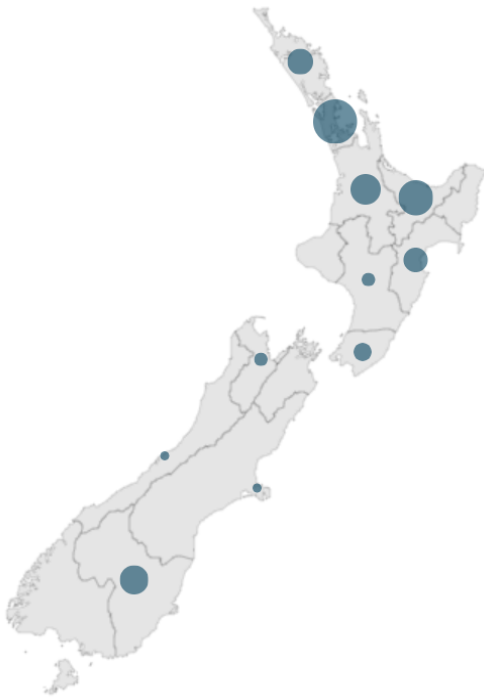
Swimming was the deadliest recreational activity in 2018 with 17 recorded fatalities.



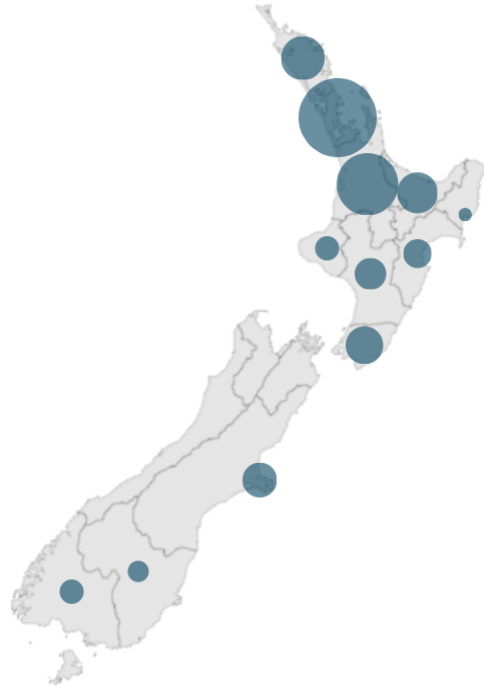
Powered Boating fatalities were 83% down on 2017 and the 2013 - 2017 average.

Regions

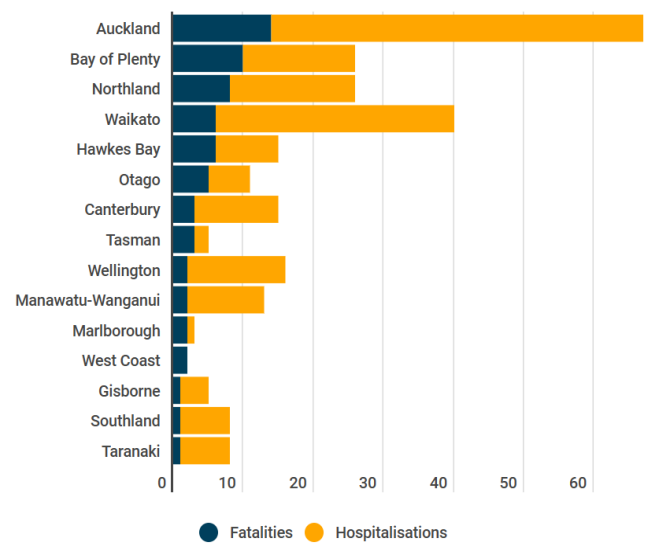
Fatalities



Hospitalisations



| | Fatalities | Hospitalisations |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Auckland | 14 | 53 |
| Bay of Plenty | 10 | 16 |
| Canterbury | 3 | 12 |
| Gisborne | 1 | 4 |
| Hawkes Bay | 6 | 9 |
| Manawatu-Wanganui | 2 | 11 |
| Marlborough | 2 | 1 |
| Northland | 8 | 18 |
| Otago | 5 | 6 |
| Southland | 1 | 7 |
| Taranaki | 1 | 7 |
| Tasman | 3 | 2 |
| Waikato | 6 | 34 |
| Wellington | 2 | 14 |
| West Coast | 2 | 0 |



Findings

Fatalities

Overall, 2018 had the second lowest drowning toll since 2010 (65).

Auckland's 2018 fatality rate is down 42% compared to 2017.

Wellington, Canterbury, Southland and the West Coast all recorded fatality drops of over 50% in 2018.

The biggest increase was in Hawkes Bay which went from zero preventable fatalities in 2017 to 6 in 2018.

2018 Regions Per Capita

| | Deaths Per 100k Population | Population |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Auckland | 0.8 | 1,695,900 |
| Bay of Plenty | 3.3 | 305,700 |
| Canterbury | 0.5 | 624,200 |
| Gisborne | 2.0 | 49,100 |
| Hawkes Bay | 1.3 | 465,900 |
| Manawatu-Wanganui | 0.8 | 243,700 |
| Marlborough | 4.3 | 46,600 |
| Northland | 4.5 | 179,100 |
| Otago | 2.2 | 229,200 |
| Southland | 1.0 | 99,100 |
| Taranaki | 0.8 | 119,600 |
| Tasman | 2.9 | 104,000 |
| Waikato | 1.3 | 468,800 |
| Wellington | 0.4 | 521,500 |
| West Coast | 6.1 | 32,600 |

Fatalities

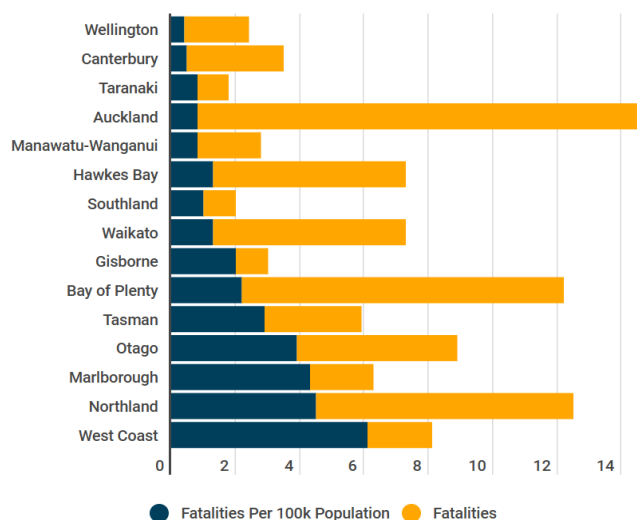
West Coast had the highest drowning rate in the country in 2018, with 6.1 drowning fatalities per 100,000 of population, although this is down from 16.5 in 2017. Northland is second (4.5) followed by Marlborough (4.3) while both are down on 2017.

Hospitalisations

Hospitalisations in 2018 are up 34% on 2017 and 13% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

Northland is up 1700% on 2017 and 125% on the five year average for hospitalisations.

Waikato is up 127% on 2017 and 62% on the five year average for hospitalisations.



Hospitalisations

In 2018, Northland had the highest (10.1) drowning related hospitalisation rate in the country per 100,000 of population, followed by Gisborne (8.1) and Waikato (7.3).

Age

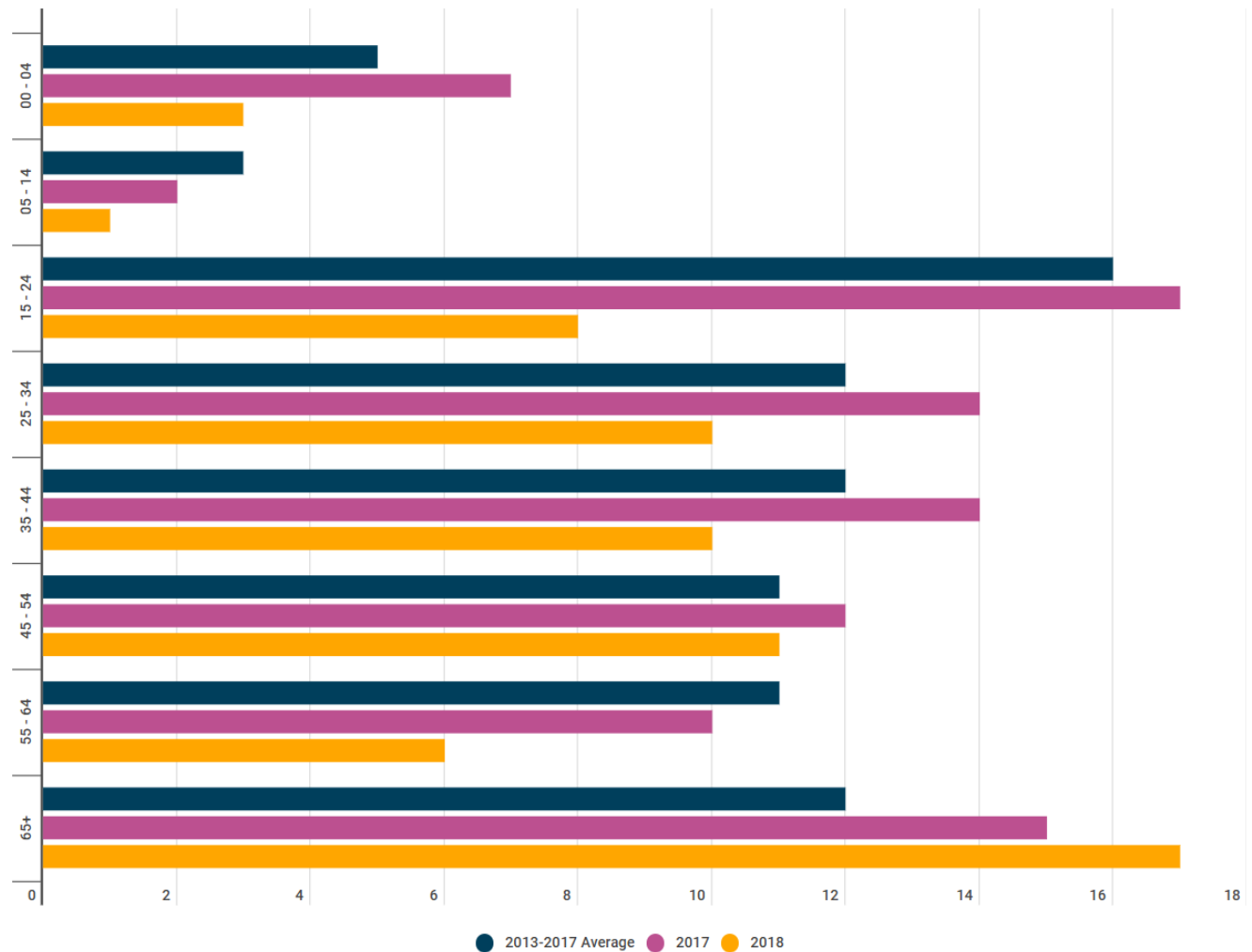
Fatalities

The 15 - 24 age group had the lowest total fatalities in 2018 since records began in 1980.

In 2018, 95% of fatalities for ages 15 - 34 were male.

67% of all preventable drowning deaths were aged over 35 in 2018.

The 0 - 4 age group saw less fatalities in 2018 than the previous year and the 2013 - 2017 five year average.



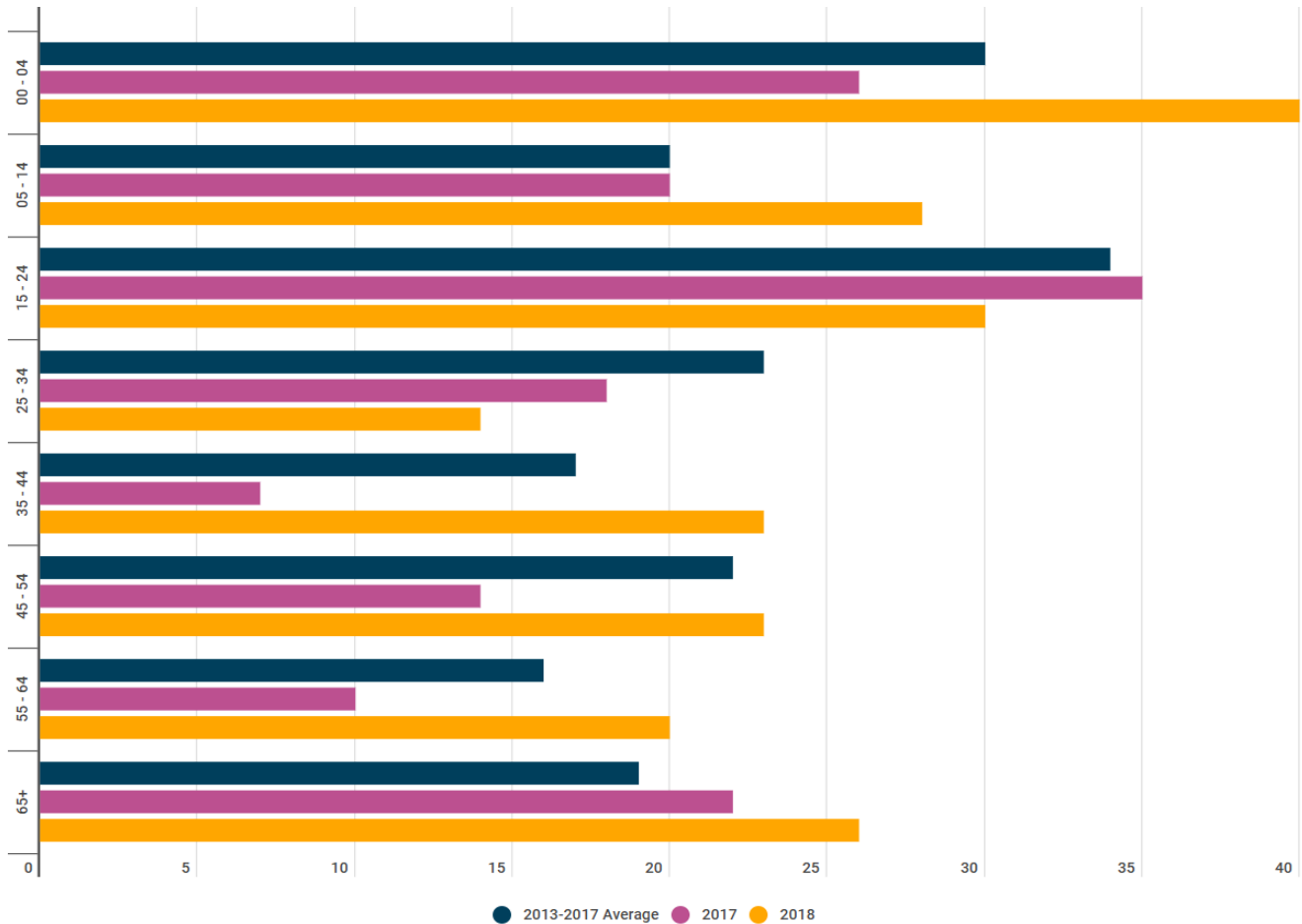
Hospitalisations

The highest age group for hospitalisations was 0 - 4 in 2018, with a 53% increase on 2017.

The 65+ age group saw the highest amount of hospitalisations on record in 2018. An increase of 18% on 2017 and 37% on the 2013 - 2017 average.

In 2018 Female hospitalisations were the same as male hospitalisations in the 15 - 24 age group, this is the first time they have made up more than 20% on the gender ratio of hospitalisations.

25 - 34 age group is has decreased hospitalisations by 22% in 2018 compared to 2017. And a further 35% reduction on the 2013 - 2017 average.



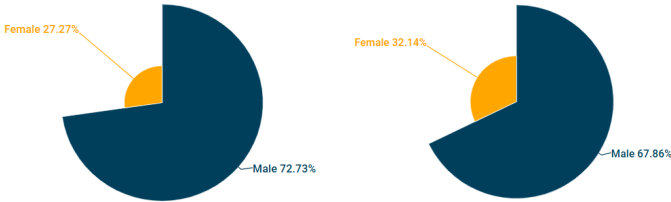
Gender

Fatalities

In 2018, female fatalities were up 20% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

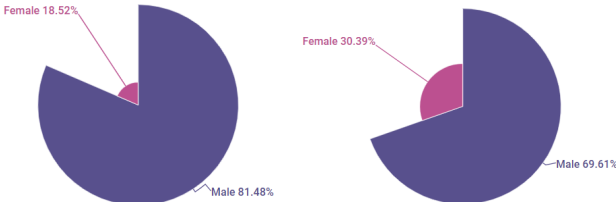
50% of female drownings in 2018 occurred in Auckland and Northland.

2018



61% of female drownings in 2018 were Accidental Immersions while 35% of male fatalities were.

2013 - 2017 Five Year Average



Hospitalisations

The 2018 hospitalisation gender ratio is 1.8 males to every one female, compared to 2.9 males to every one female in 2017.

Female hospitalisations in 2018 are up 90% on 2017 and up 31% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

Swimming was the highest activity for hospitalisations in 2018 (29%) followed by accidental Immersion (24%).

The highest male activity for hospitalisations in 2018 was swimming (27%) followed by boating (26%)

Ethnicity

Fatalities

New Zealand Europeans made up 44% of the drowning toll in 2018, compared to 60% in 2017.

40% of Asian drownings were aged 25-34 with 80% of those at Beaches (half were Fishing).

43% of Pacific Peoples drownings were aged 15-24. 86% were male. Over half (58%) were Swimming deaths.

58% of Maori drownings were aged 35-54. 33% occurred Offshore and half were Accidental Immersions.



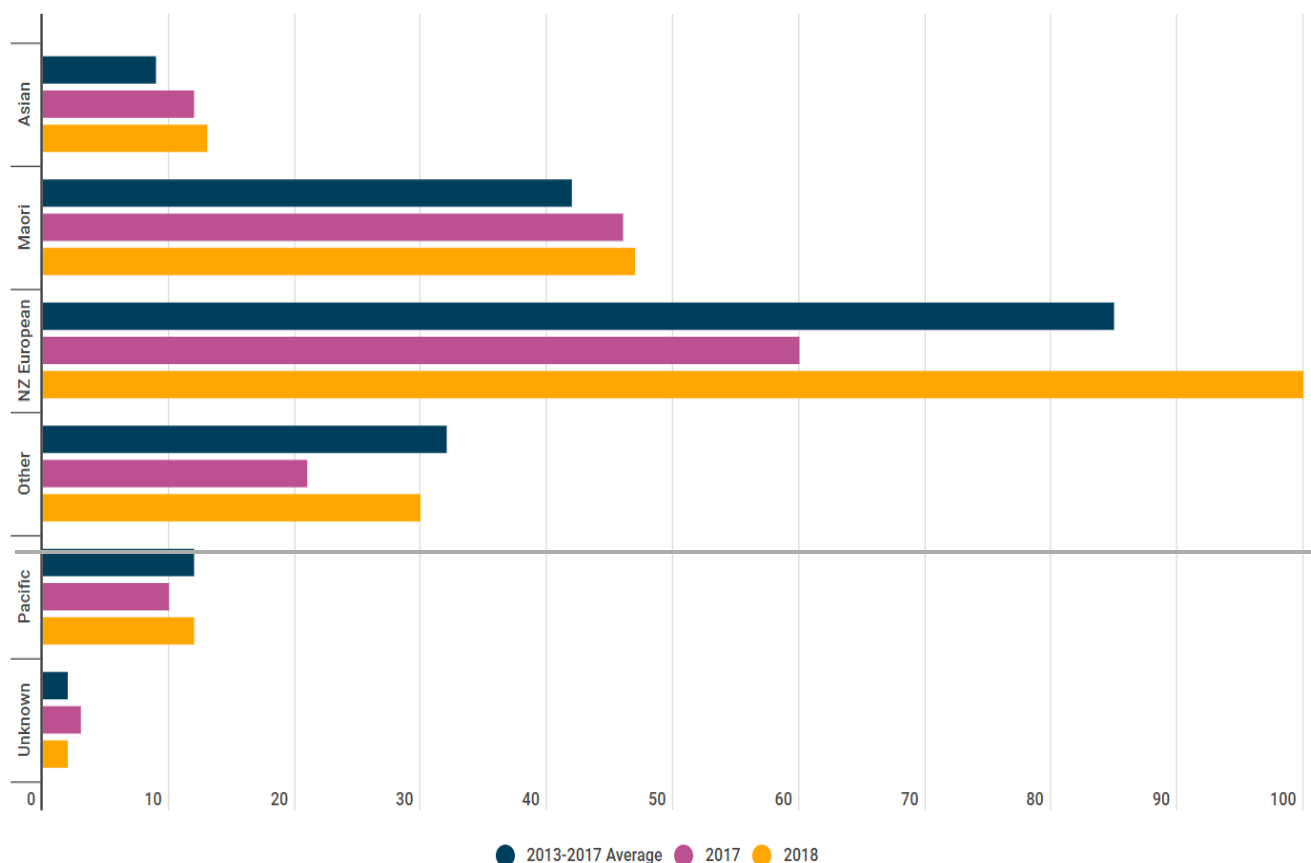
Hospitalisations

49% of 2018 hospitalisations were New Zealand European, 23% Maori, 15% Other, 6% Asian and 6% Pacific Peoples.

The number of New Zealand European hospitalisations in 2018 were the highest on record. An increase of 67% on 2017 and 18% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

The Asian hospitalisation rate in 2018 was the highest on record. This was an increase of 44% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

In 2018, the Maori hospitalisation rate was the highest on record since 2010. The highest regions for Maori hospitalisations were Waikato (21%) and Bay of Plenty (17%).



Environment

Fatalities

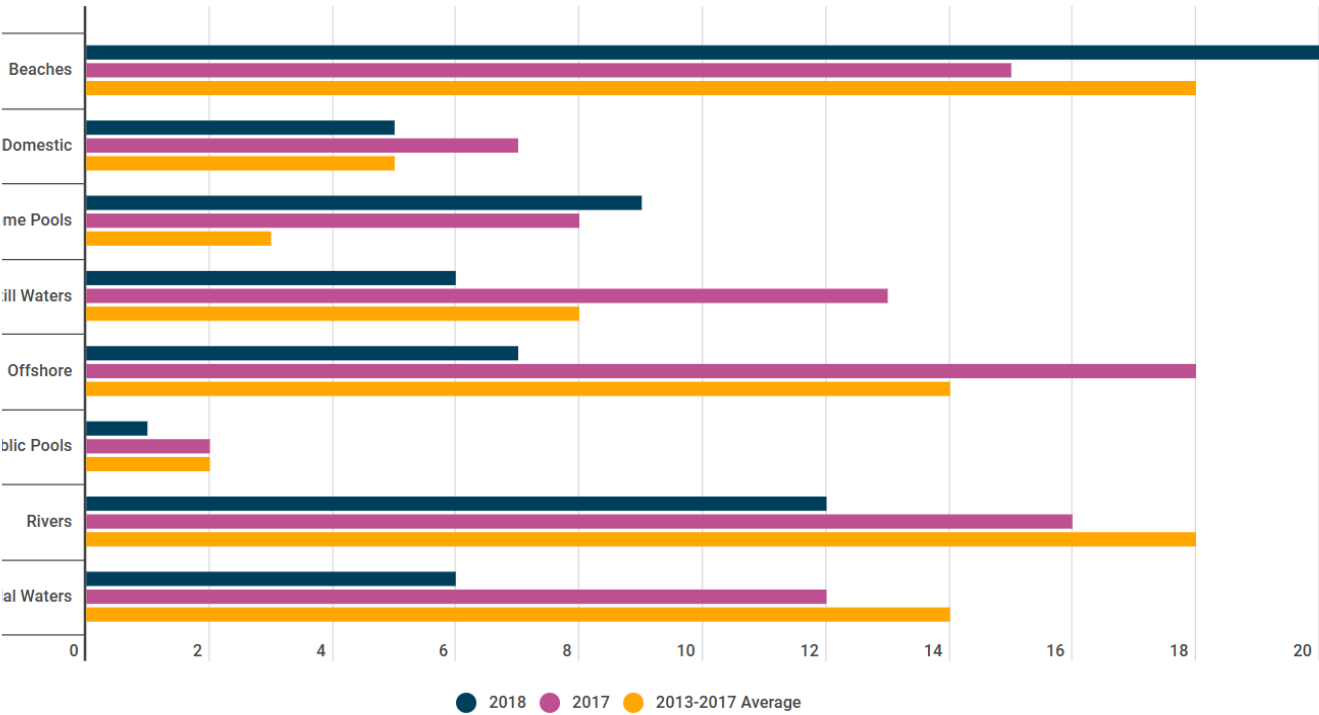
In 2018, 30% of preventable drowning fatalities occurred at Beaches. This is a 33% increase on 2017. 40% were Swimming and 30% were Fishing.

The number of fatalities in Pools in 2018 was up 200% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average. The highest toll since 2007.

The number of River fatalities in 2018 was the lowest ever. Swimming and Accidental Immersions combined

to make up 84% of fatalities in Rivers, at 42% each. Tidal Waters had the lowest ever fatalities in 2018. 67% of these fatalities were New Zealand European and 50% involved alcohol.

Offshore fatalities in 2018 were the lowest since 2010. 86% of Offshore fatalities in 2018 were males.

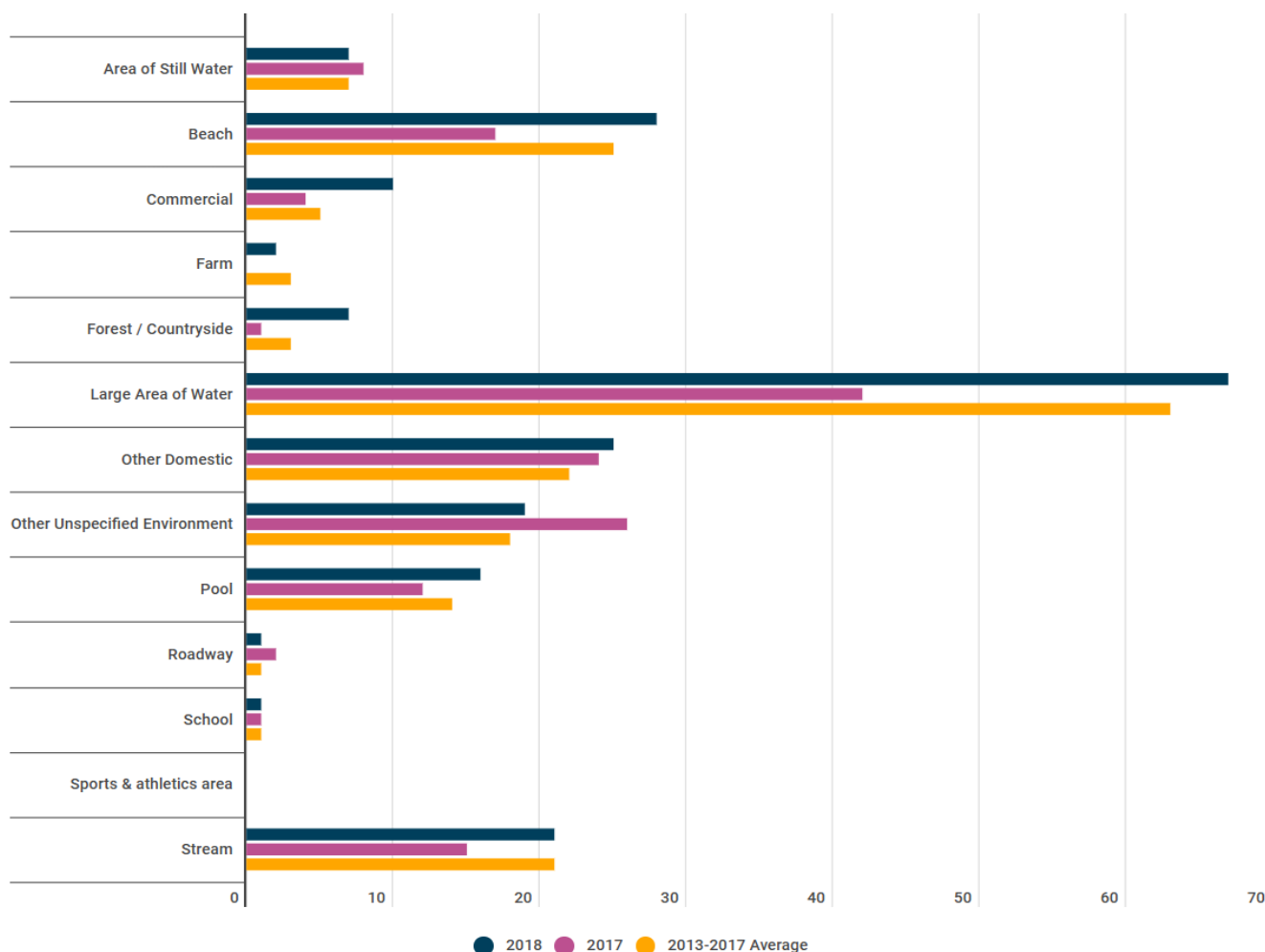


Hospitalisations

65% of hospitalisations in 2018 occurred at Beaches and 32% of these occurred in Auckland. 46% were Swimming and 21% Boating.

In 2018, hospitalisations in Home Pools were up 14 % on the 2013 - 2017 five year average and 33% on 2017. 63% were aged under 15.

Domestic hospitalisations in 2018 were up slightly on 2017 and on the 2013 - 2017 five year average. 80% were aged under 15. Almost half were Maori.

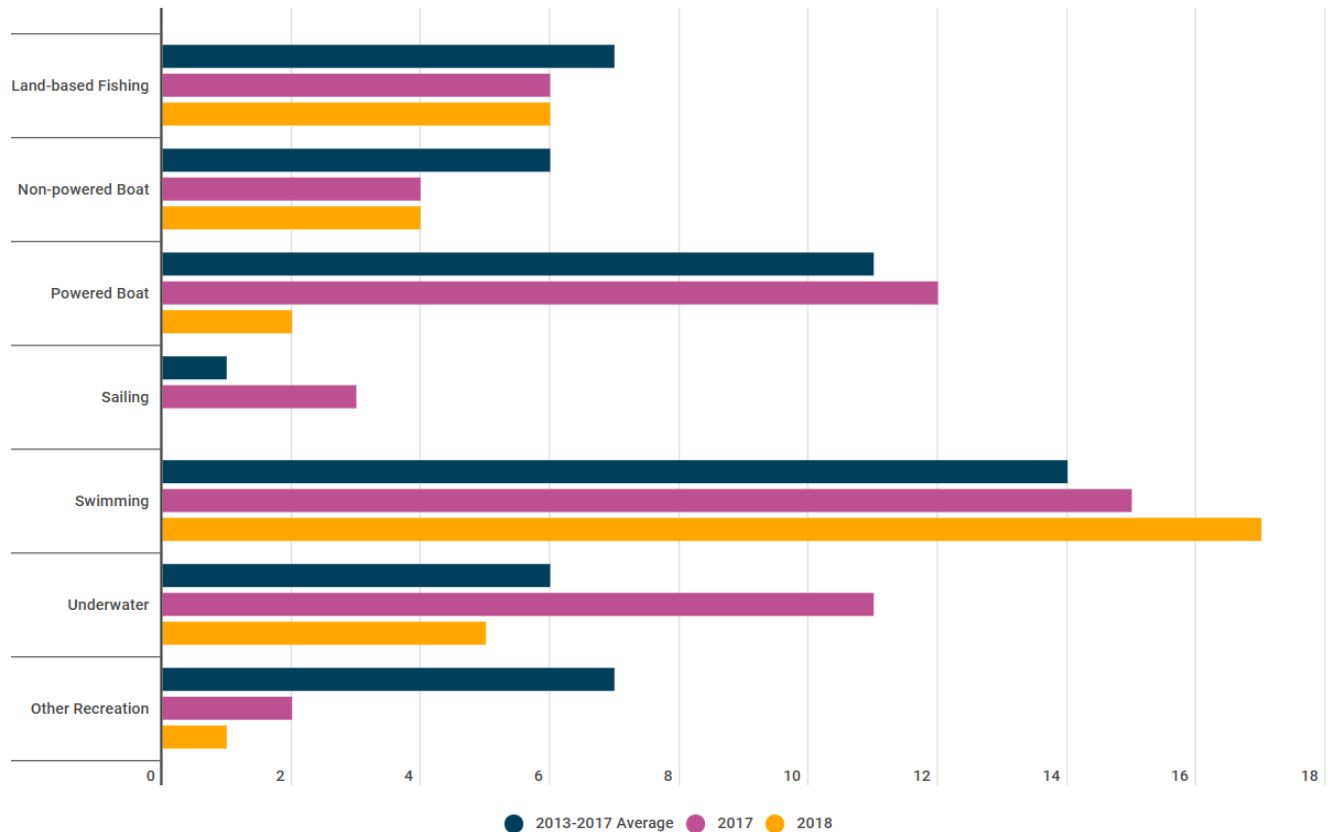


Activity

Fatalities

Underwater incidents in 2018 were down 55% on 2017 and close to the 2013 - 2017 five year average. 80% were aged 25-54. All were male.

Swimming incidents in 2018 were up on 2017 and the 2013 - 2017 five year average. People aged 65+ made up 28% of Swimming fatalities.



Hospitalisations

Accidental Immersions made up 21% of hospitalisations in 2018. This is down 10% on 2017 but up 10% on the 2013 - 2017 five year average.

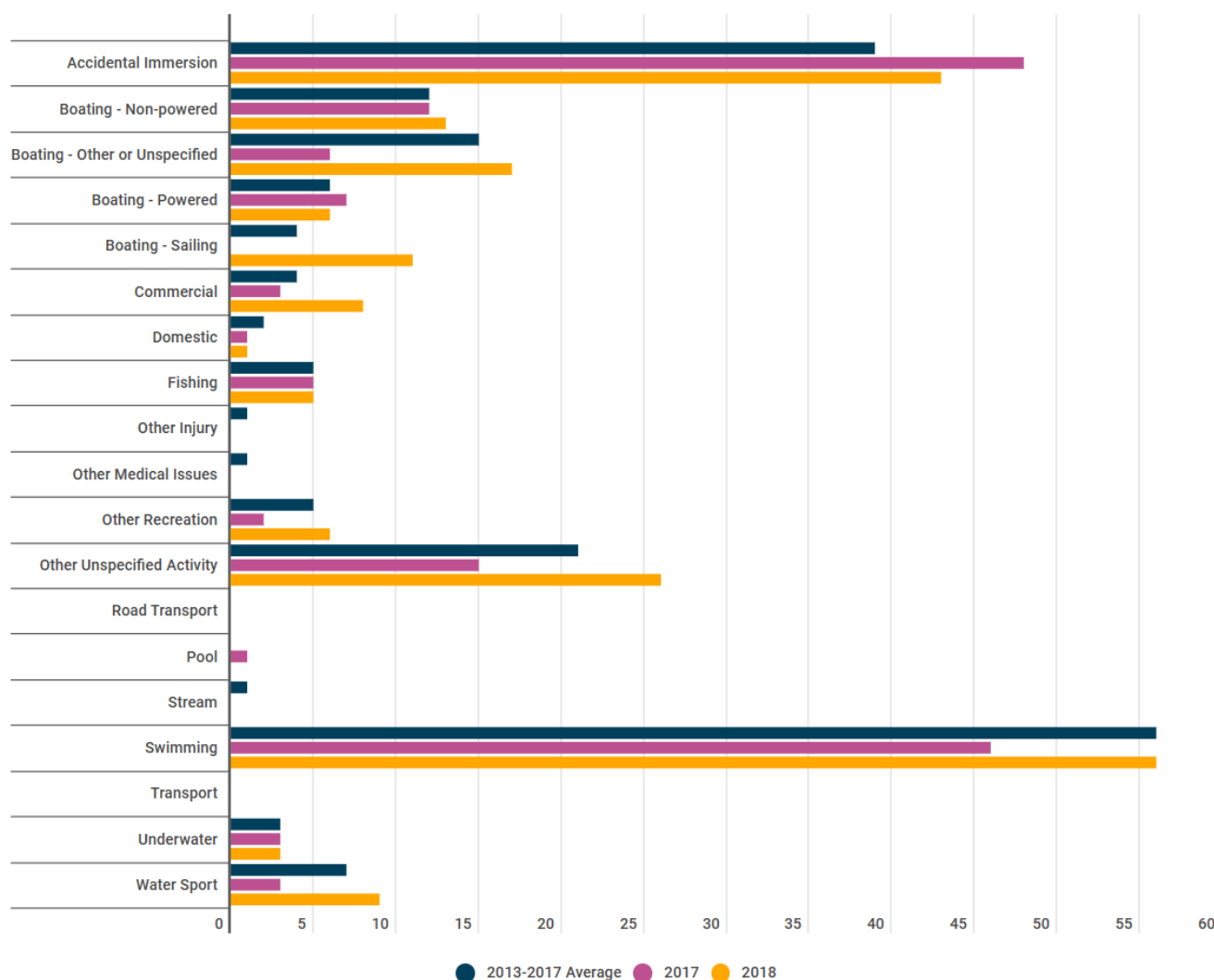
49% New Zealand European, 23% Maori, 15% Other, 6% Asian, 6% Pacific People.

A quarter of these occurred in domestic locations. 35% were aged under five.

Boating was involved in 23% of hospitalisations in 2018. This is up 88% on 2017 and up 10% on the

2013 - 2017 five year average. Of note was the high number involving Sailing.

Swimming made up 28% of hospitalisations in 2018. This was the same as the 2013 - 2017 five year average, but up 22% on 2017. 27% in Large Area of Water, 23% at Beaches, 23% in Pools. 27% in Auckland and 18% in Bay of Plenty. 55% of hospitalisations in 2018 were from people under the age of 15. 71% were aged under 25.



Disclaimer

In this report non-fatal drownings that result in a stay in hospital of 24 hours or longer are classified as 'hospitalisations'.

In 2018 there were 66 recreational (intending to be in the water) and non-recreational (no intention of being in the water) preventable drowning fatalities.

The following analysis of these fatalities is based on the 66 incidents in 2018, which is a decrease of 25, or 27 percent, compared to the 91 preventable drowning fatalities in 2017.

23 additional fatalities have been classified as 'other or nonpreventable drownings' (arising as a result of road or air accidents, homicide, suicide or of unknown origin).

Details about these fatalities are not included other than in the table at the end of this report.

There were 204 drowning related hospitalisations in 2018.

This is a 25 percent increase on 2017 and an 11 percent increase on the five year average of 181 (2013 – 2017).

*International Life Saving Federation, 2016

More detailed information is available on request or at www.watersafety.org.nz.

Data sourced from Water Safety New Zealand's DrownBase™ and the figures provided are provisional.

Gender

There were 76 male drowning deaths in 2021. This is the highest male total since 2003 (80).

There was no significant change in female drowning death numbers in 2021 (14) from the 2020 total (13) and the five year average (15).

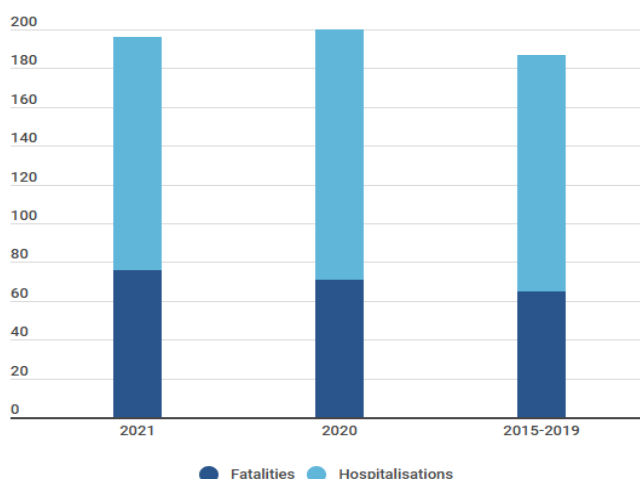
The most male drowning fatalities occurred in the 65+ age group (18). The largest age group for female drowning deaths in 2021 was the Under fives with three fatalities.

In 2021, Females died by drowning in just 3 types of recreational activities. Males drowned taking part in 16 different recreational activities*.

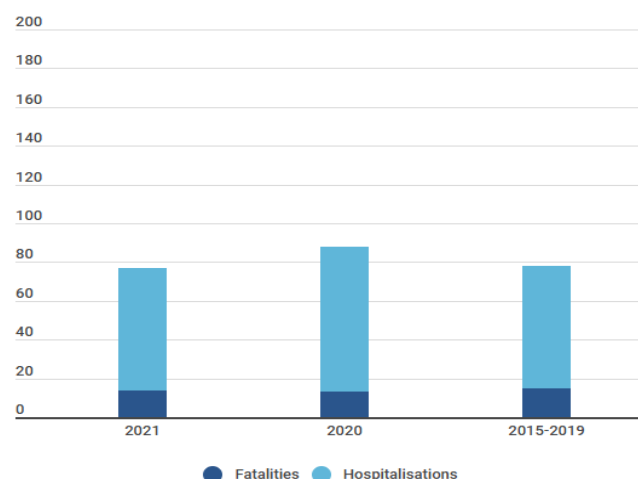
In 2021, female hospitalisations were close to 50:50 with male hospitalisations in non-recreational activities, but were less than half (39) the male total (92) in recreational activities.

* Female recreational activities resulting in drowning fatality: free diving, swimming, powered boat under 4m Male recreational activities resulting in drowning fatality: angling, board riding (surfing), boogie boarding, canoeing, jumping, free diving, jet skis, kayaking, net fishing, powered boat over 4m, powered boat under 4m, rafting, rowing craft/dinghy, scuba diving, snorkelling, swimming.

Male



Female



Disclaimer

Drowning is defined as “the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid; outcomes are classified as death (fatal) or morbidity (non-fatal)”*.

The Drowning Prevention Report uses statistics on preventable drowning deaths only. Preventable drowning deaths are classified as “Fatalities”, and are all drowning deaths other than those that result from suicides, homicides and vehicle accidents.

Non fatal drownings are classified as “Hospitalisations”, which are drowning related hospitalisations that required hospital care.

Reported drowning related statistics often change due to updated information on cause of death or injury. This information is compiled from a range of sources. Thanks to our partners for making their information available.

*International Life Saving Federation, 2016

More detailed information is available on request or at www.watersafety.org.nz.

Data sourced from Water Safety New Zealand’s DrownBase™ and the figures provided are provisional.



watersafetynz.org