

WATER SAFETY NEW ZEALAND
DROWNING REPORT
2014





Drowning is the respiratory impairment of lungs due to submersion / immersion in liquid. It can be fatal (mortality), or non-fatal (morbidity) resulting in a stay in hospital of 24 hours or longer.

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Acknowledgements

With special thanks to our government partners.



Introduction

Another year – another raft of lives lost. 90 to be exact.

And while this represents the second lowest toll since records began in 1980, 2014 also saw the highest number of hospitalisations (180) since 2003. There's certainly no room for celebration.

Of the 90 drownings reported in this document, 71 are considered as having been "preventable". The remaining 19 deaths – arising as a result of road or air accidents, homicide or suicide – are classified as non-preventable (meaning drowning prevention initiatives would not have an impact on the end outcome).

For the purposes of this report, we have focused on the 71 "preventable" deaths occurring as a result of both recreational activity and non-recreational activity, where the victims had no intention of being in the water. These are the deaths that intervention by the water safety sector is most likely to prevent.

But this problem cannot be solved by those at the frontline of water safety alone. All New Zealanders have a part to play in preventing drowning and hospitalisation.

This year saw the completion of the New Zealand Water Safety Sector Strategy 2020 – No One Drowns – the first truly collaborative approach to addressing water safety in New Zealand. The goals are ambitious – seeking to halve the male drowning toll, and bring pre-school drowning down to zero – by 2020.

To do this the sector will work together to deliver new and innovative programmes and interventions, and drive attitudinal and behavioural change through communication and other campaigns. Research – including in depth analysis of drowning tolls and trends – will underpin these new developments, helping set the policy agenda and ensuring that initiatives that are proven to have the greatest impact are properly resourced and supported.

The sector will stand accountable for its results, and these will be reported against in the 2015 version of this document.

We invite all New Zealanders to play their part in reducing the drowning toll as we work towards our 2020 goals.

Matt Claridge
CEO
Water Safety New Zealand



National Overview

2014

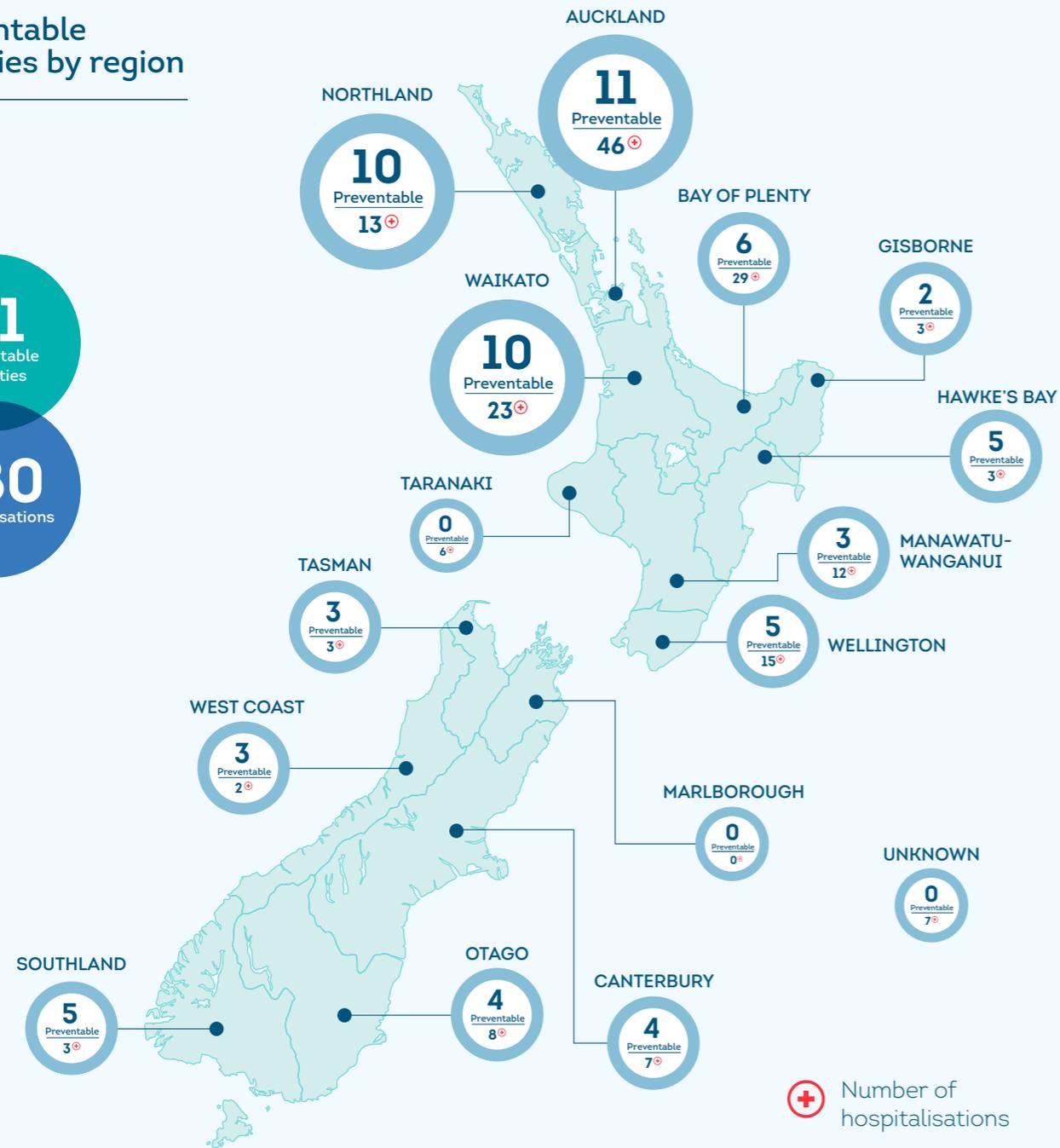
In 2014 there were 71 recreational (intending to be in the water) and non-recreational (no intention of being in the water) drowning fatalities. The following analysis of fatalities is based on these 71 incidents (and is compared to previous years' recreational and non-recreational deaths).

The remaining 19 fatalities are classified as 'other' (arising as a result of road or air vehicle accidents, homicide, suicide or of unknown origin) and are not considered applicable to the prevention and rescue efforts of the water safety sector.

Preventable fatalities by region

71
Preventable fatalities

180
Hospitalisations



Males



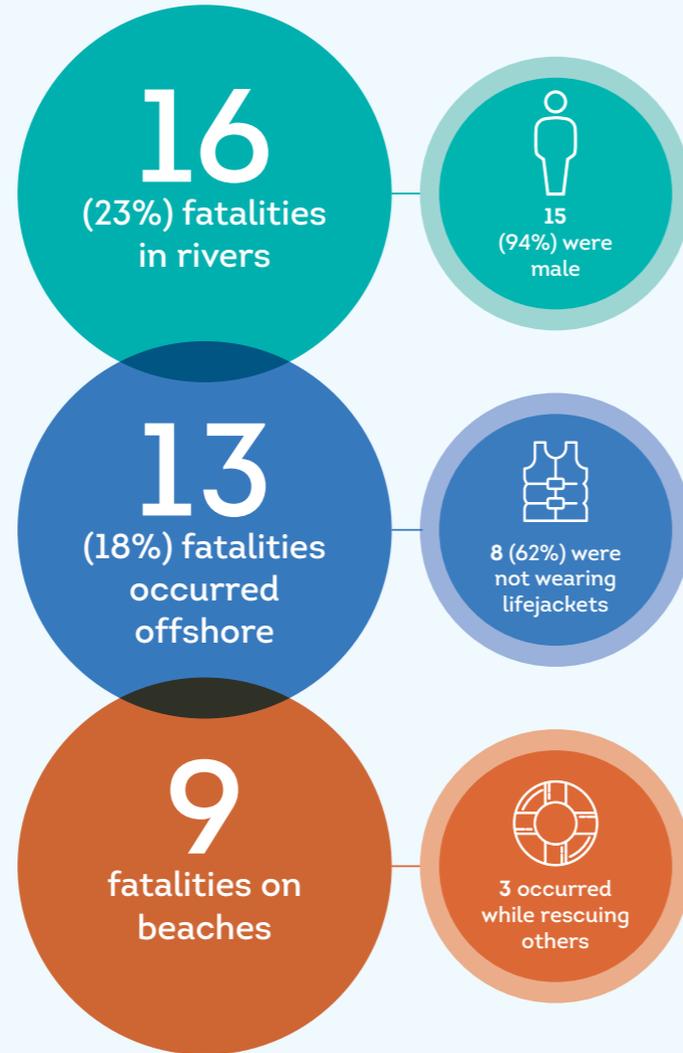
This is the **lowest** male total since 2010

Alcohol or drugs were present in **12** (17%) of fatal incidents

133 (74%) hospitalisations compared to 116 (67%) in 2013

Environment

The majority of fatalities (60 or 85%) occurred in the natural environment (as opposed to home or pool).



Under fives

6 (8%) fatalities in 2014

5 (7%) fatalities in 2013

None were directly supervised at the time of drowning

In the majority of these cases, the child had been able to wander away from the home.

35 (19%) hospitalisations in 2014, compared to 29 (18%) in 2013.

Children (5-13 years)

3 (4%) fatalities in 2014

6 (8%) fatalities in 2013

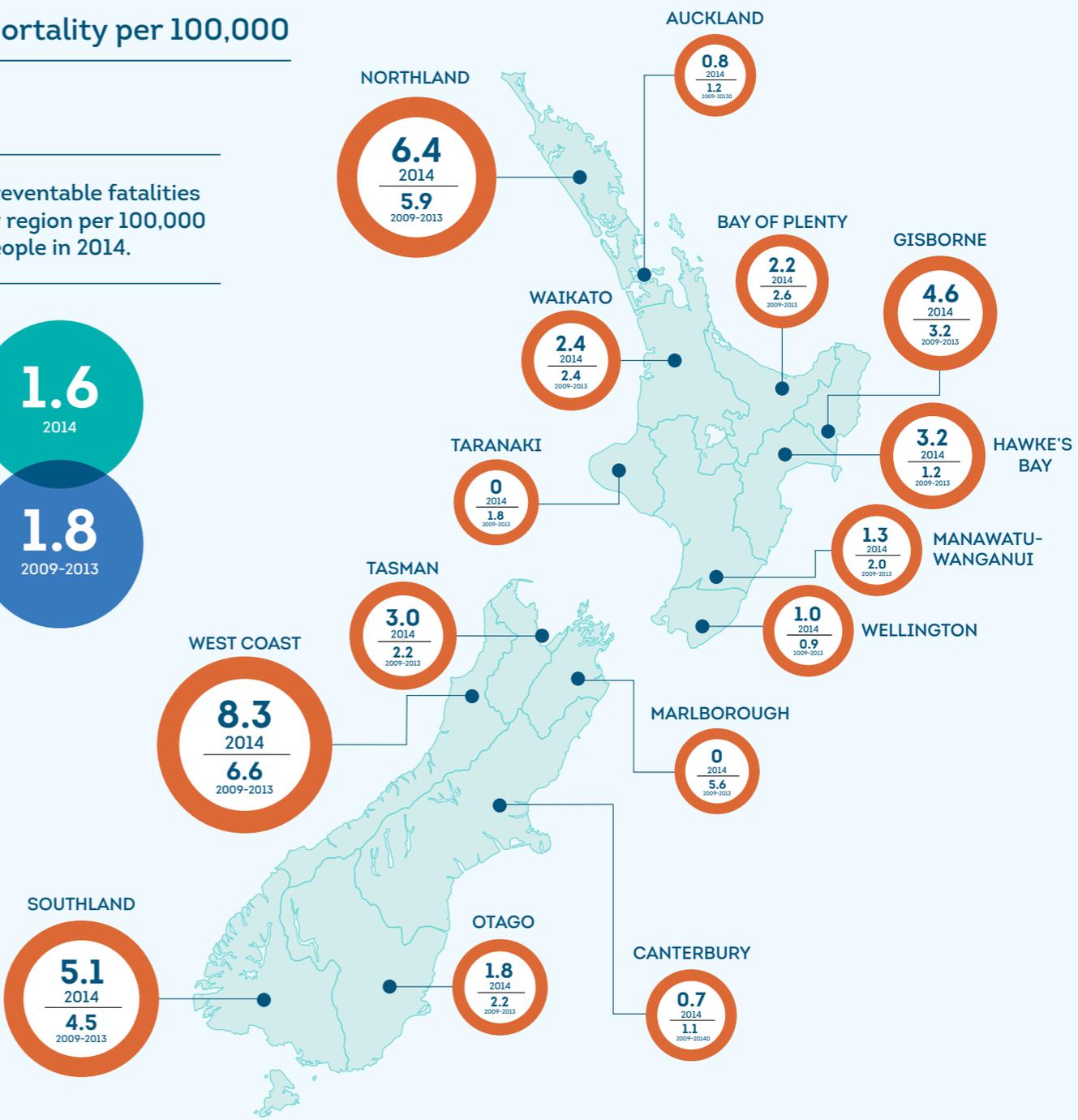
2/3 of cases were non-recreational immersion incidents (not intending to recreate in the water).

14 (8%) hospitalisations in 2014, compared to 18 (10%) in 2013.



Mortality per 100,000

Preventable fatalities by region per 100,000 people in 2014.

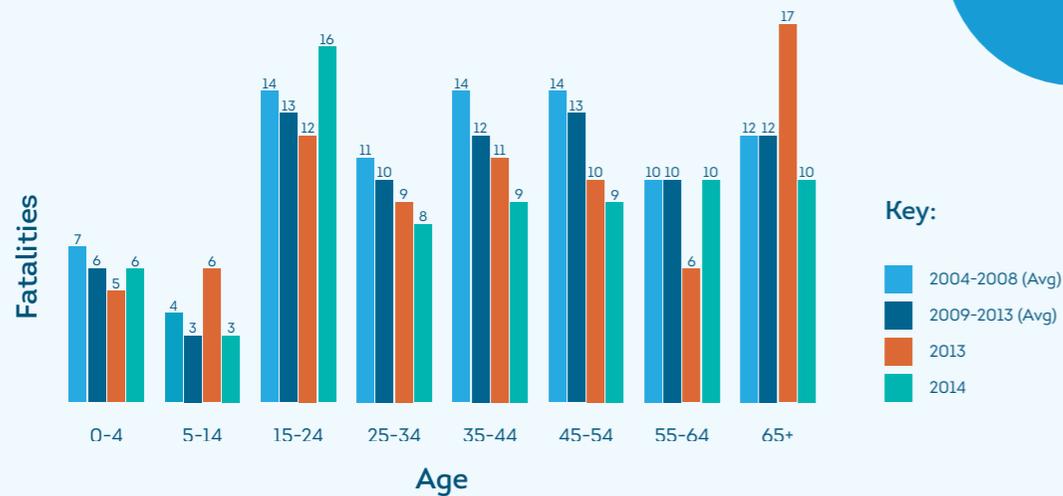


Mortality by age group

3 (21%) increase in fatalities in the 15-24 age group compared to the 10 year average (2004-13).



All five who died while rescuing others were aged between 34 and 54.

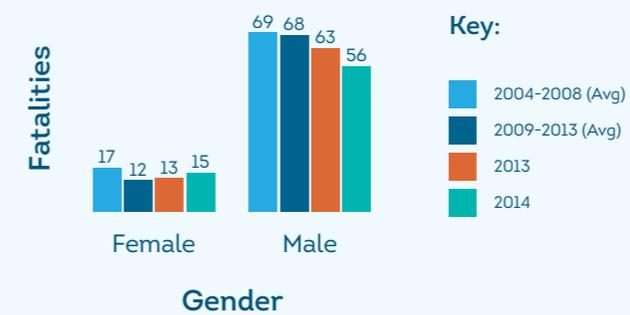


Mortality by gender

32 male fatalities resulted from participation in 13 types of recreational activities - this is 57% of male deaths.

5 female fatalities resulted from participation in four types of recreational activity - 33% of female deaths.

24 males and **10** females died in a non-recreational drowning incident such as a fall into water or attempting to rescue another.

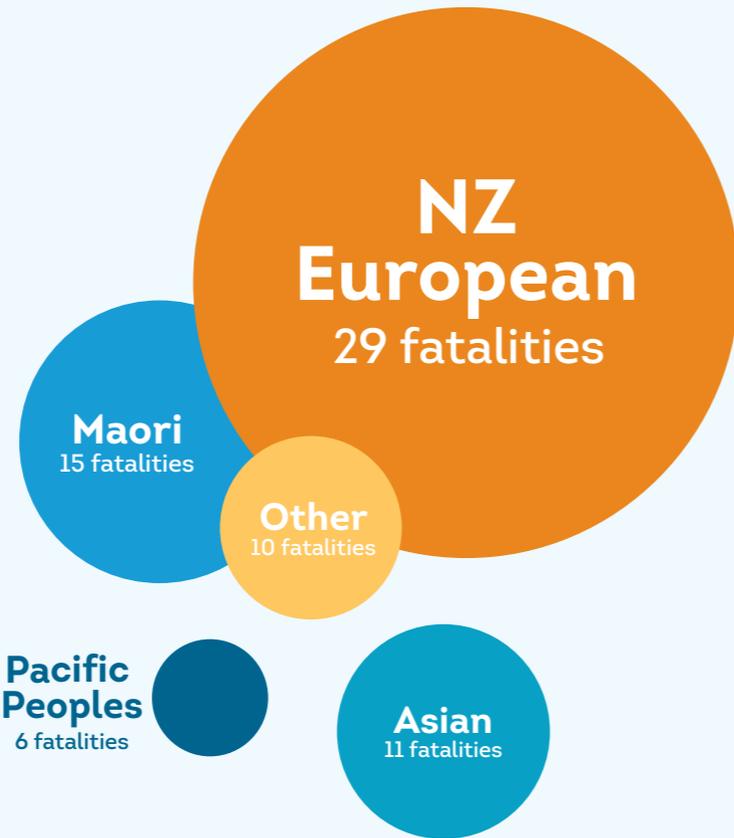
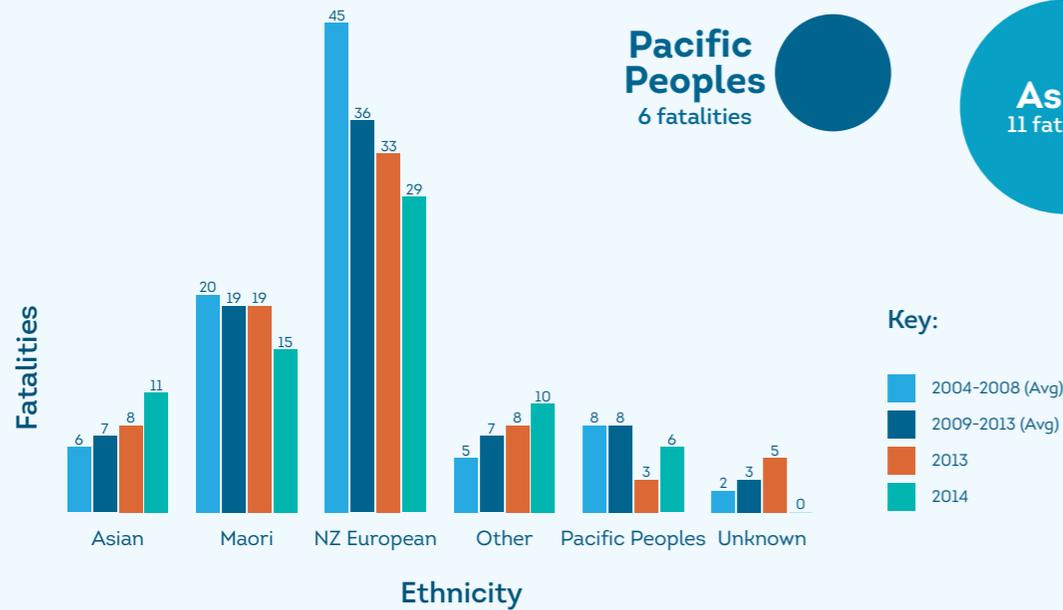


Mortality by ethnicity

NZ European fatalities decreased by 12 (29%) on the 10 year average (2004-2013).

It was the lowest Maori toll (15) since 2010; however Maori are still over represented in drowning fatalities at 14% of the population but 21% of the toll.

11 was the highest toll for Asian fatalities since 2011.

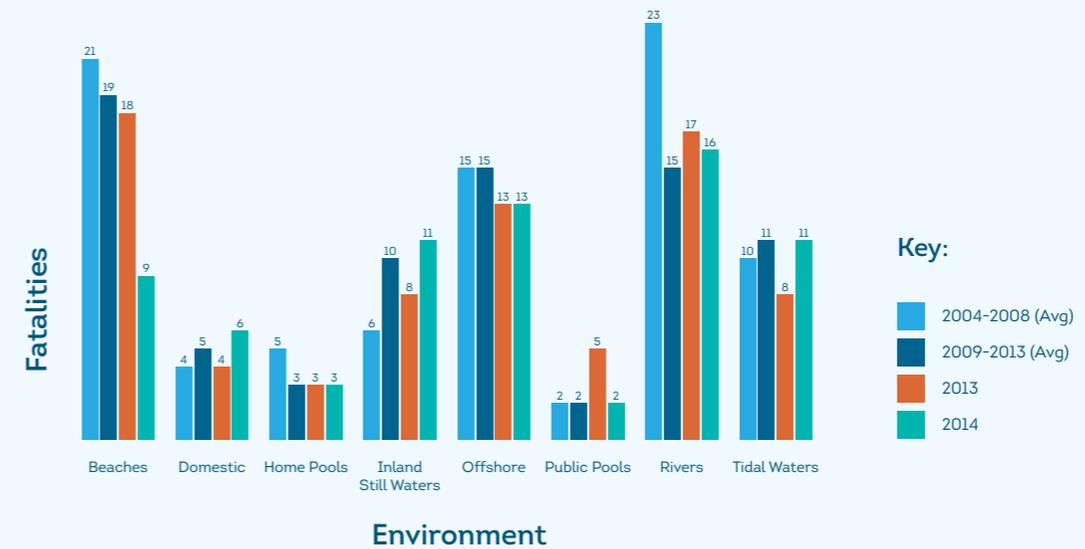


Mortality by environment

Beach drowning fatalities (9) were half the 2013 and 10 year average (2004-2013) tolls. This is the lowest equal beach toll since records began in 1980.

4 (38%) offshore drowning deaths were aged 55-64.

The majority of immersion incidents (not intending to recreate in the water) occurred in rivers (30%) and inland still waters (21%).

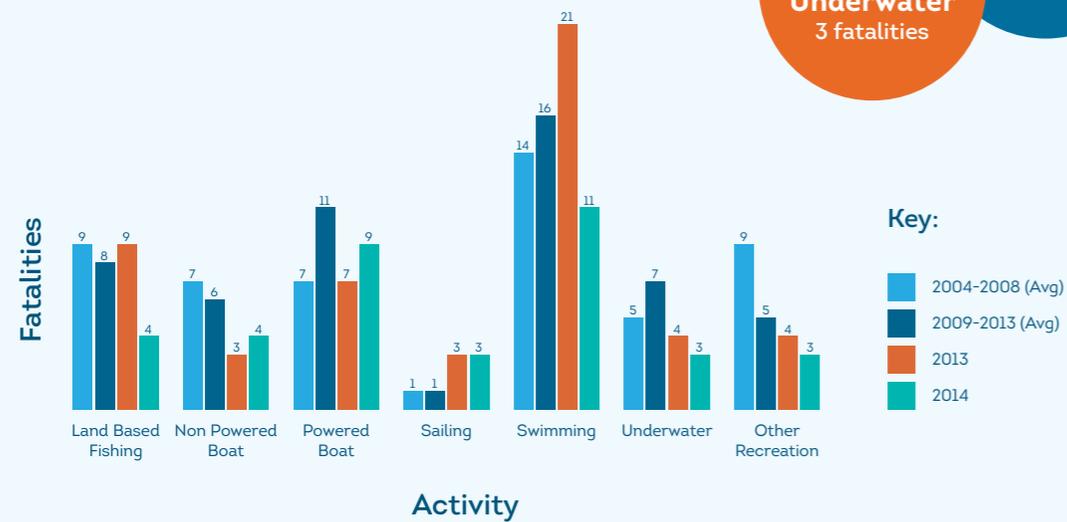


Mortality by activity

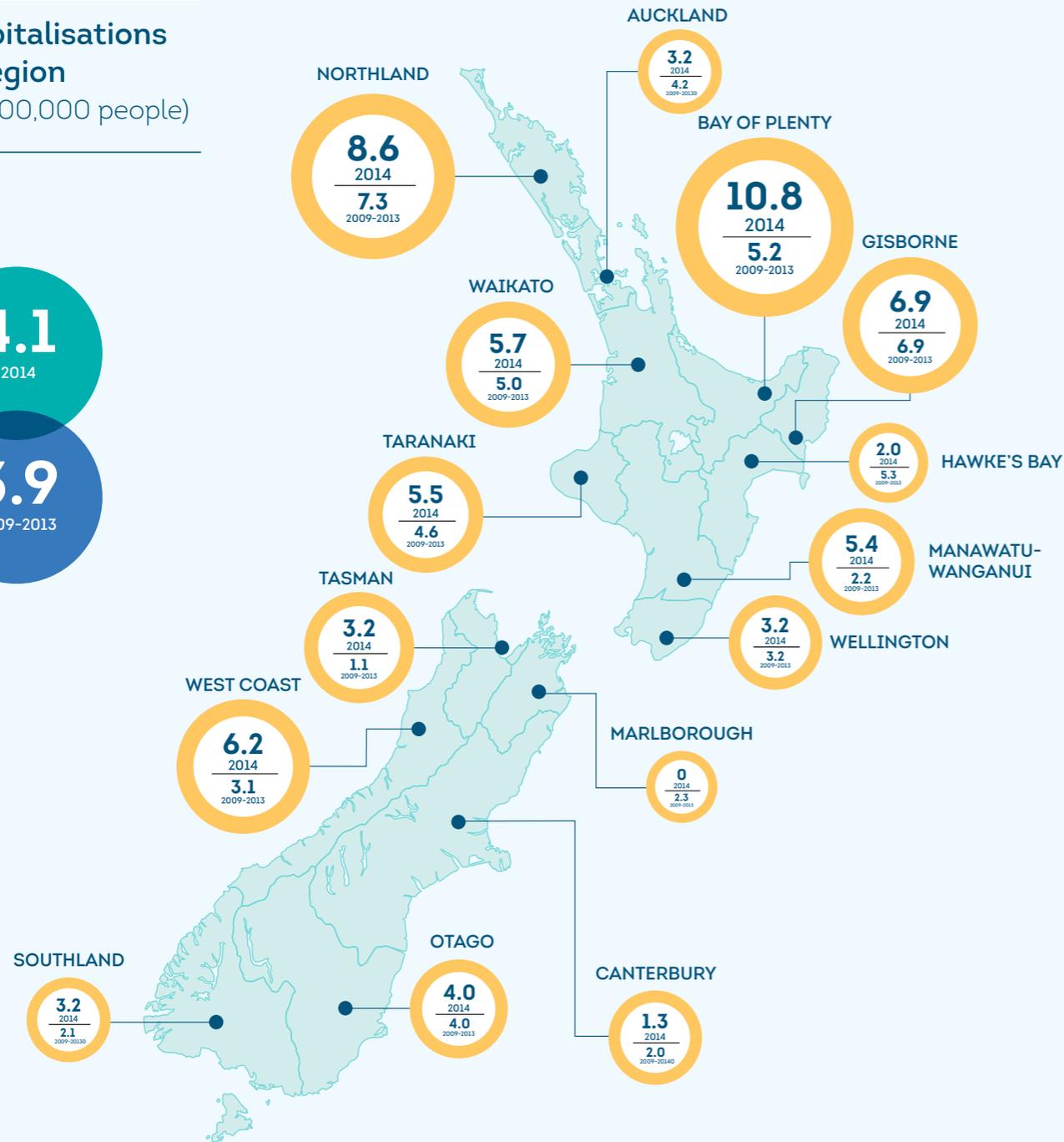
Drowning fatalities resulting from swimming (11) were almost half the 2013 toll and 27% less than the 10 year average (2004-2013).

6 (55%) drowning deaths that occurred while swimming were aged 15-24.

Males constituted 13 (81%) of those fatalities due to boating. Of these, 9 (69%) were not wearing a lifejacket.



Hospitalisations by region (per 100,000 people)

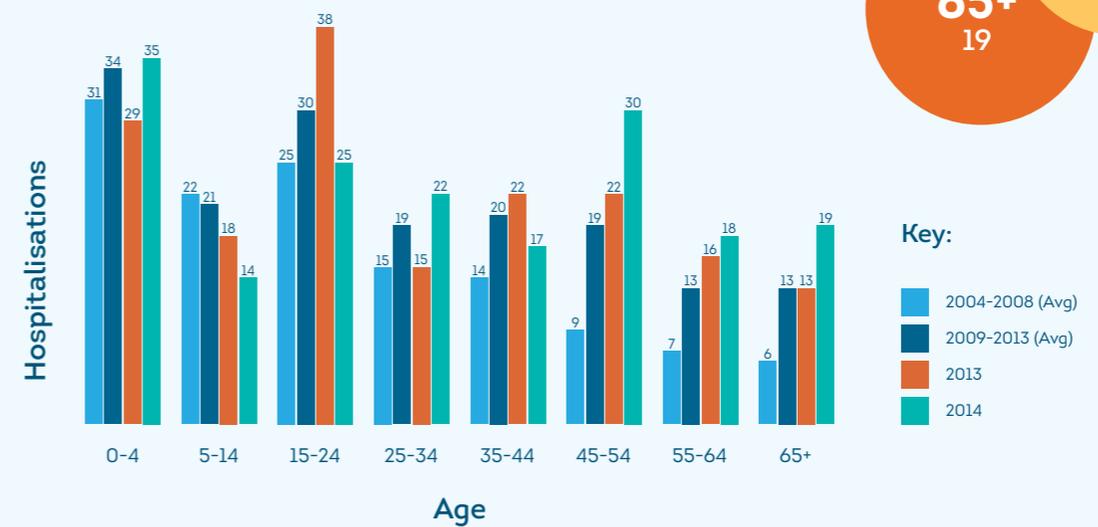
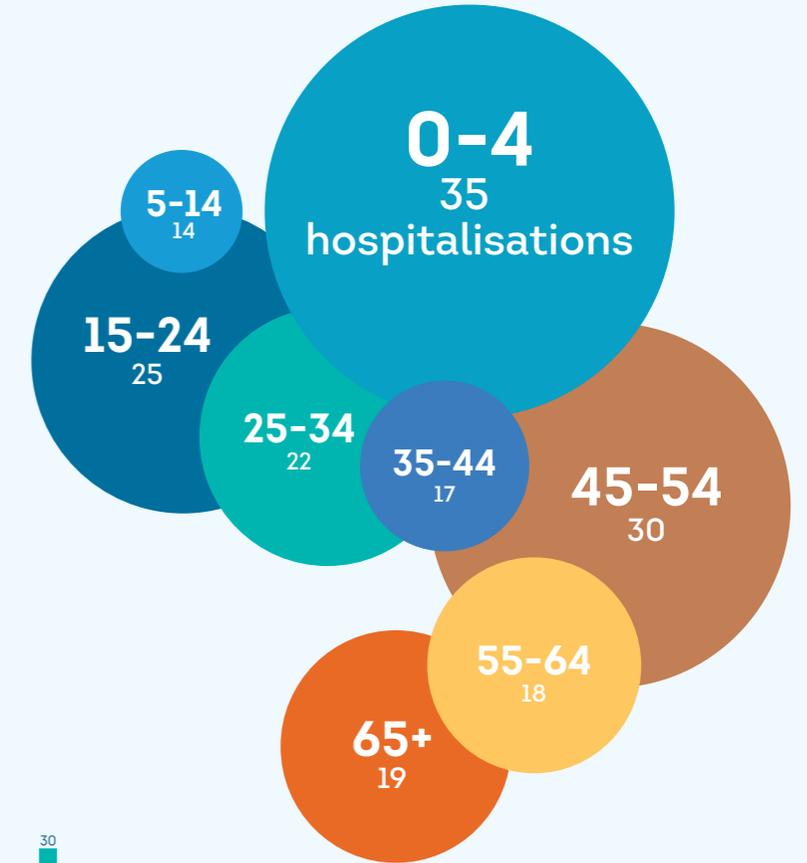


Hospitalisations by age group

35 Under 5's were hospitalised - the highest number per age group. It has been the top group every year except 2013.

Almost 2/3 of those aged under five (23) were hospitalised after a drowning incident in a domestic location.

There was an increase on the 10 year average in the 0-4 (by 3), 25-34 (by 5), 45-54 (by 16), 55-64 (by 8) and 65+ (by 10) age groups.

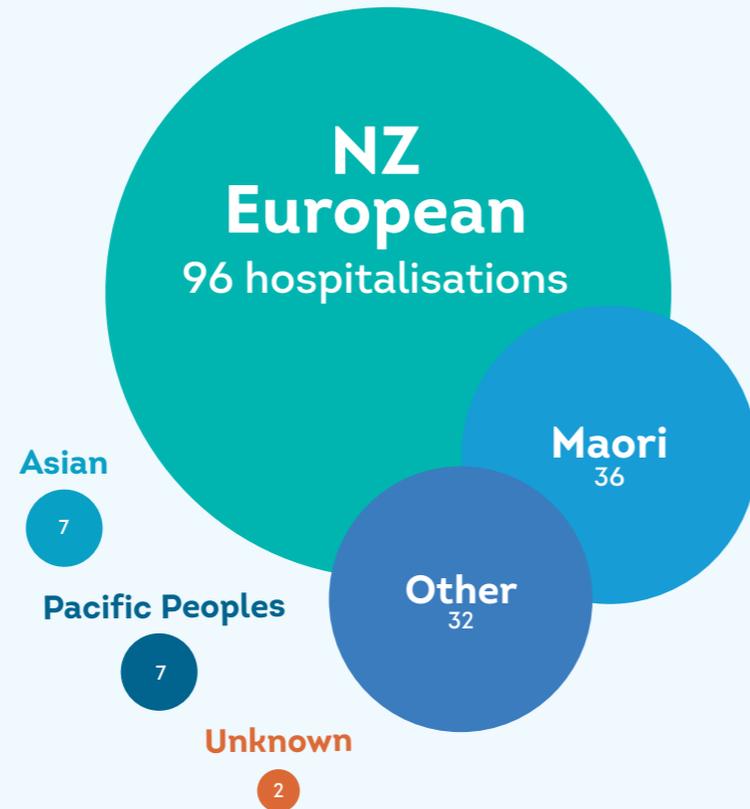
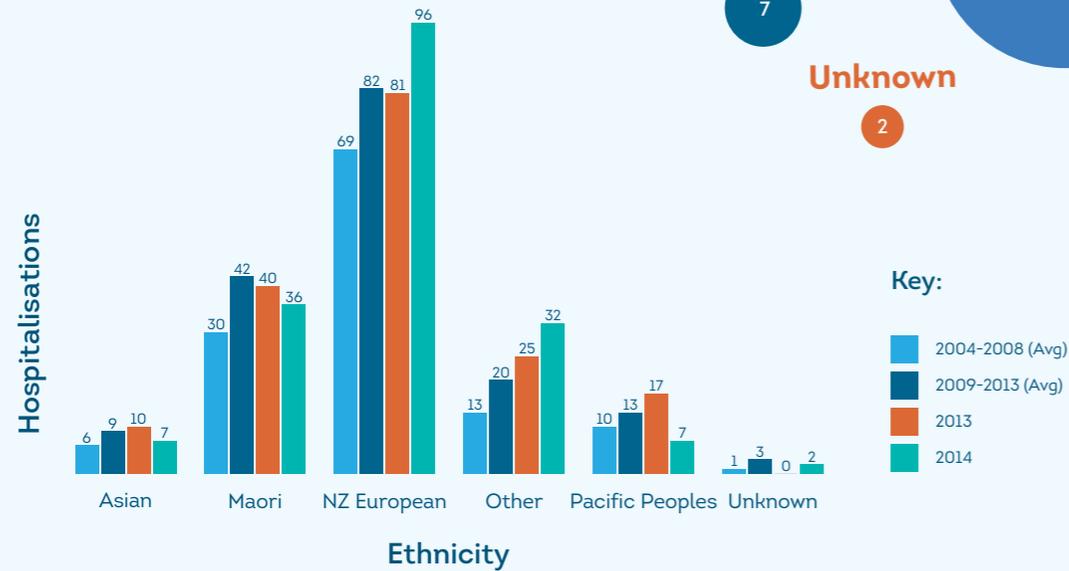


Hospitalisations by ethnicity

NZ European hospitalisation incidents increased by 21 (27%) on the 10 year average. It is the highest NZ European hospitalisation toll since 2003.

Swimming was the top activity resulting in hospitalisation for Maori, Pacific Peoples and Asian ethnicities. Boating was the top activity for NZ European and other ethnicities.

10 (28%) Maori hospitalisations occurred in the Bay of Plenty, more than double any other region.



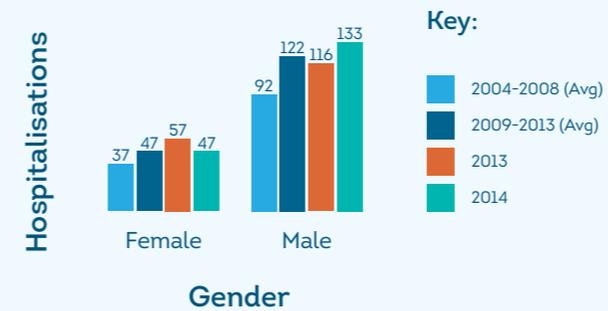
Hospitalisations by gender

3 males were hospitalised for every female.

All hospitalisations aged 65+ were male.

Male hospitalisations increased by almost 25% (26) on the 10 year average.

Swimming accounted for the highest recreational hospitalisation toll for females (12 or 26%); boating was the highest recreational activity for males (39 or 29%).



Hospitalisations by activity

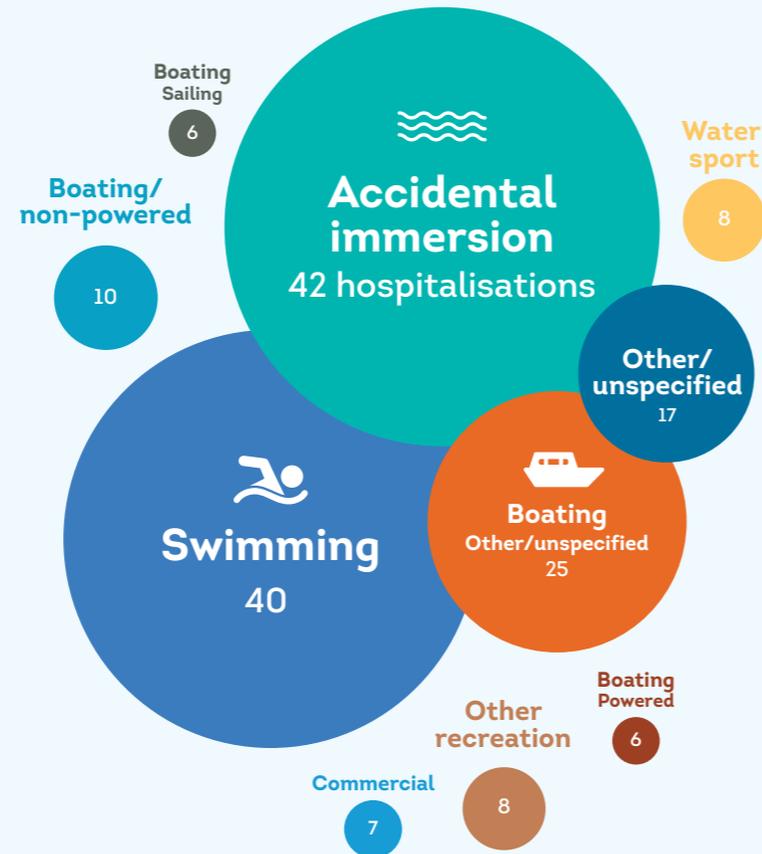
Swimming hospitalisations decreased by 15 (27%) on the 2013 toll and are slightly down (by 3) on the 10 year average (2004-2013).

19 (48%) swimming hospitalisations were aged under 25.

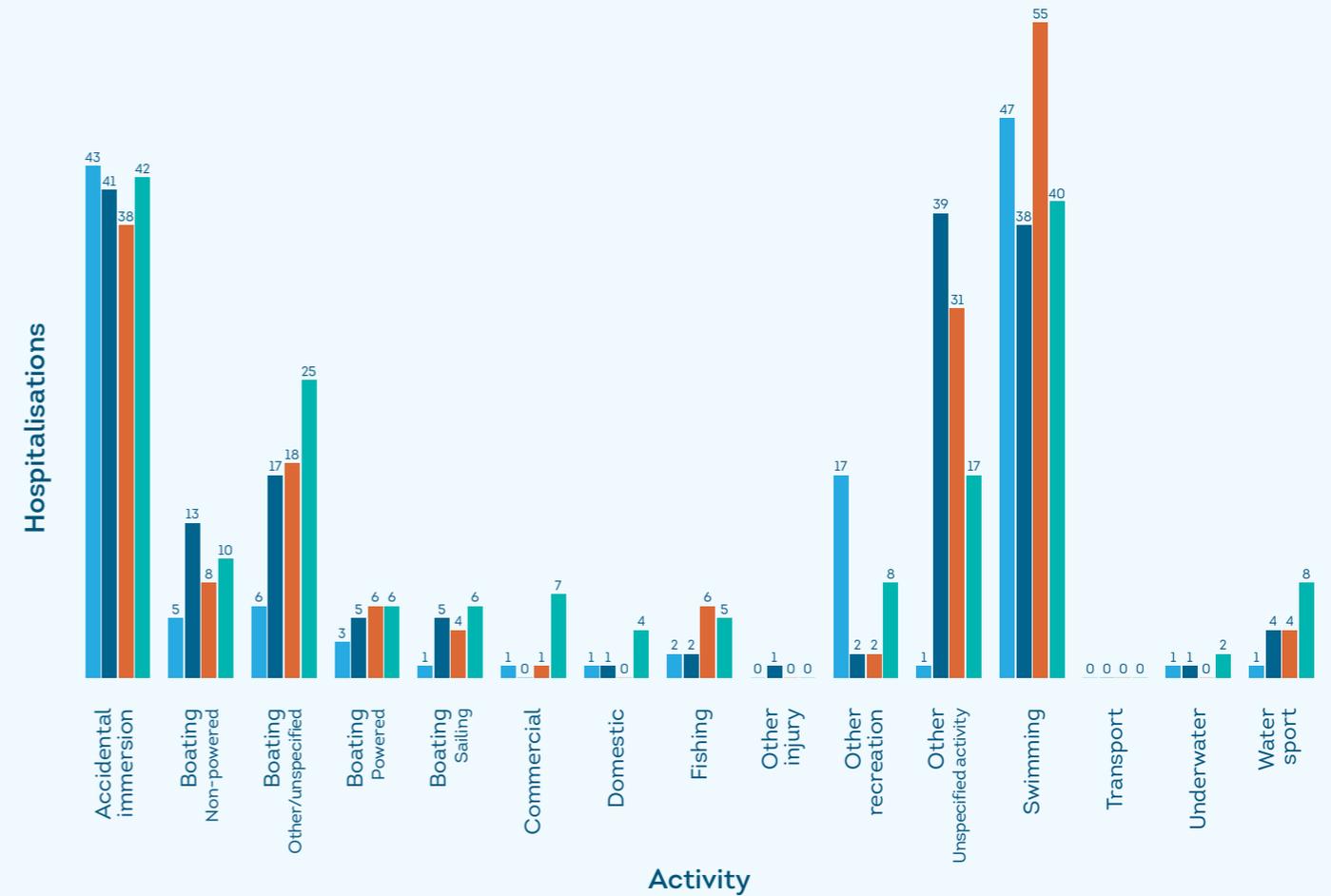
Hospitalisations due to boating have increased by 20 (71%) on the 10 year average. In 2014, 83% of boating hospitalisations were male.

21 of the 42 hospitalisations resulting from accidental immersion were aged 0-5.

Water sport hospitalisations (8) **doubled** on both the 2013 total and the 5 year average (2009-2013).



Hospitalisations by activity



Key:

- 2004-2008 (Avg)
- 2009-2013 (Avg)
- 2013
- 2014

Hospitalisations by environment

Hospitalisations occurring from a drowning incident at a beach decreased by 8 (31%) on the 2013 total and slightly decreased from the 10 year average by 2 (10%).

Other domestic hospitalisations increased by 5 (23%) on the 10 year average.

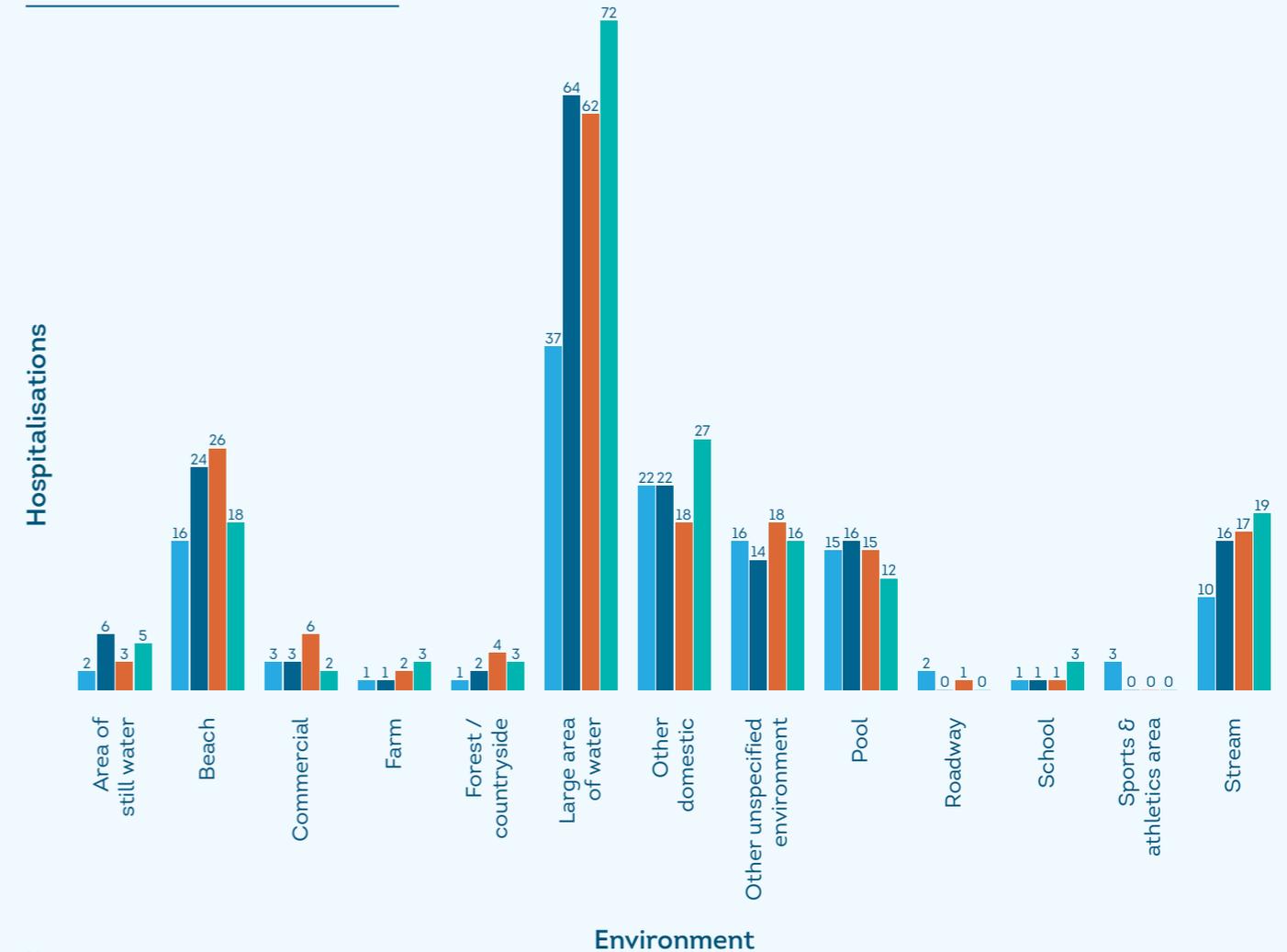
23 (85%) hospitalisations occurring in an other domestic location in 2014 were aged under 5.

Pool hospitalisations decreased by 3 (20%) on the 2013 total. 7 of the pool hospitalisations (58%) were aged under 5.

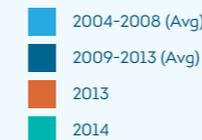
Large area of water increased by 21 (43%) on the 10 year average.



Hospitalisations by environment



Key:



Note: Hospitalisation data is sorted using the ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS international coding system. A large amount of environmental coding is set to large body of water which does not allow for a more specific data breakdown. The system is based on internationally established codes.

Drowning fatalities and hospitalisation incidents 1980 - 2014

Hospitalisation incidents related to drowning have increased 62% between 2003 (111) and 2014 (180)



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Quick Facts (fatalities)

	2014		2009-2013 average	
	Numbers	%rounded	Numbers	%rounded
Recreational activity				
Land based fishing	4	4	8	7
Non-powered boat	4	4	6	6
Powered boat	9	10	11	10
Sailing	3	3	1	1
Swimming	11	12	16	15
Underwater	3	3	7	6
Other recreation	3	3	5	4
Non-recreational activity				
Immersion incidents	33	37	25	24
Occupational	1	1	1	1
Other	19	21	28	26
Total	90	100	108	100
Environment				
Beaches	11	12	23	21
Domestic	6	7	8	7
Home pools	3	3	4	4
Inland still waters	19	21	13	12
Offshore	15	17	17	16
Public pools	2	2	2	2
Rivers	21	23	26	24
Tidal waters	13	14	15	14
Total	90	100	108	100

	2014		2009-2013 average	
	Numbers	%rounded	Numbers	%rounded
Ethnicity				
Asian	11	12	9	8
Maori	18	20	22	21
NZ European	42	47	55	51
Other	13	14	8	7
Pacific Peoples	6	7	9	8
Unknown	0	0	4	4
Total	90	100	108	100
Gender				
Female	20	22	22	21
Male	70	78	86	79
Total	90	100	108	100
Age group				
00 - 04	7	8	7	7
05 - 14	4	4	4	3
15 - 24	19	21	18	17
25 - 34	10	11	13	12
35 - 44	11	12	16	15
45 - 54	9	10	19	17
55 - 64	15	17	14	13
65+	15	17	17	16
Total	90	100	108	100