



The top 10 river drowning black spots. What challenges do they pose for prevention?

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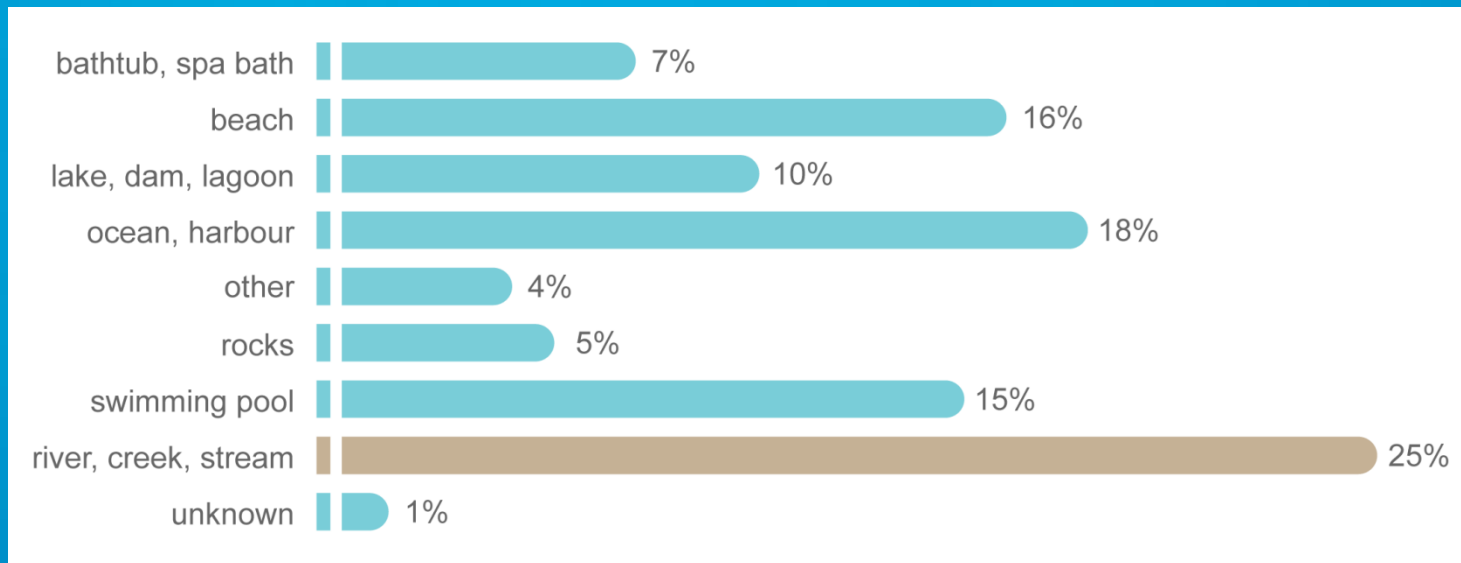
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Key findings from 10 year review (2002-2012)

- 735 drowning deaths in Australian rivers
creeks and streams

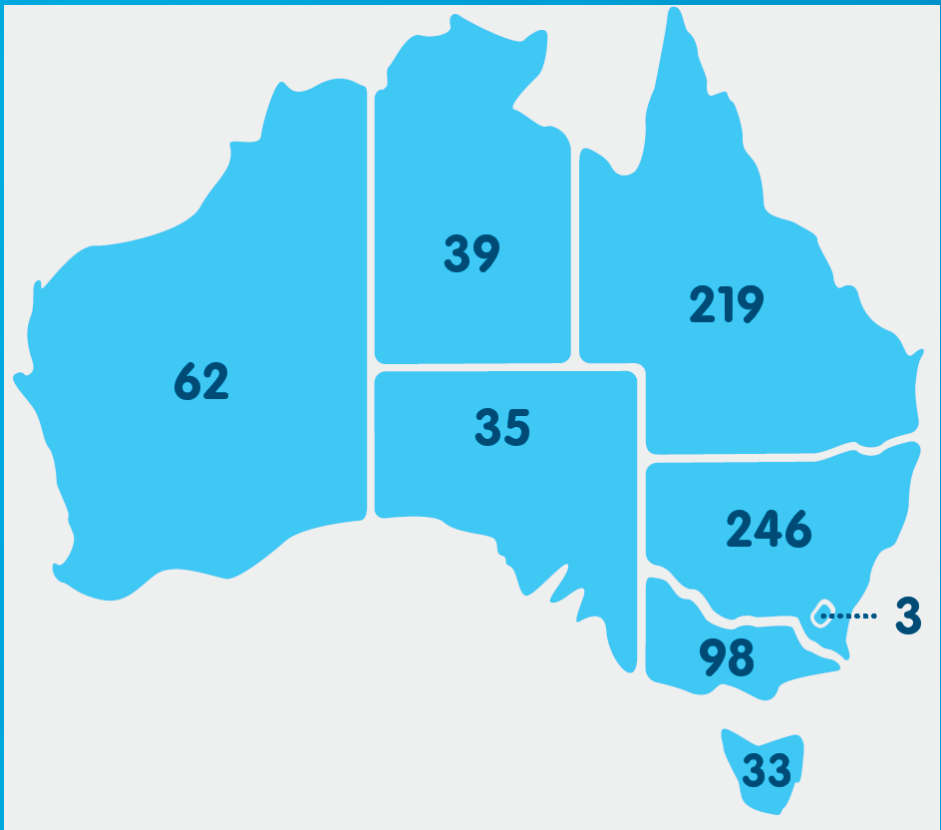
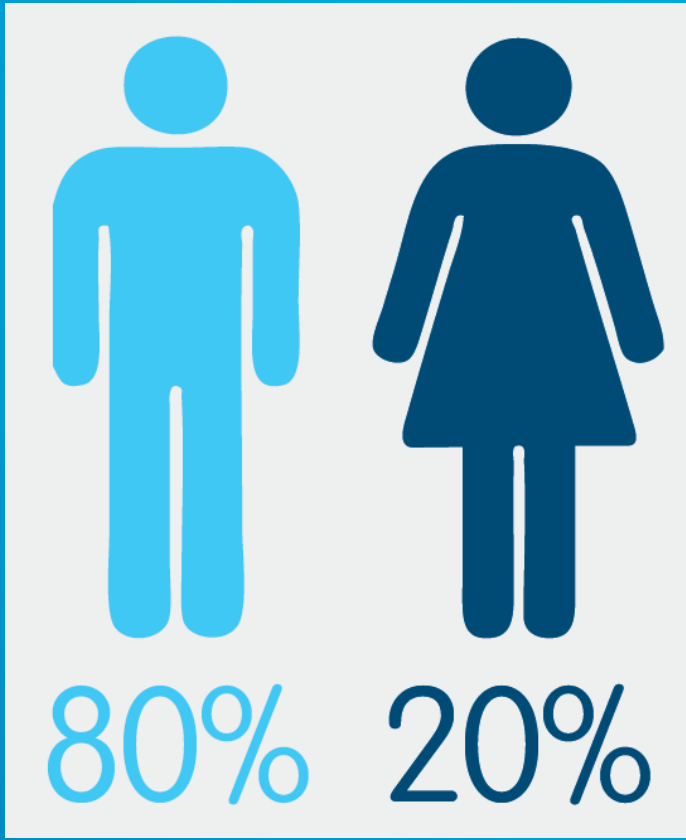


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NATIONAL DROWNING PREVENTION SUMMIT 2014



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- 74% of people drowned within 100kms of their home postcode

TOP 3 ACTIVITIES



20% FALLS INTO WATER



18% NON-AQUATIC TRANSPORT



15% SWIMMING & RECREATING



Major Cities 28.7%



Inner Regional 29.7%



Outer Regional 24.6%



Remote 6.7%



Very Remote 10.3%

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Top 10 river drowning black spots

1. Murray River
2. Brisbane River (QLD)
3. Yarra River (VIC)
4. Swan River (WA)
5. Hawkesbury River (NSW)
6. Murrumbidgee River (NSW)
7. Sandy Creek (QLD)
8. Derwent River (TAS)
9. Katherine River (NT)
10. Macquarie River (NSW)

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37% OF CASES KNOWN TO INVOLVE ALCOHOL

- 82% male where alcohol known to be involved
- 1 in 4 victims had a BAC $\geq 0.05\text{mg/L}$ & deemed contributory to drowning
- More than 1 in 8 victims had a BAC $\geq 0.2\text{mg/L}$
- 10% of river drownings known to involve illegal drugs

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Drowning Data – Challenges for Prevention

- Size of the problem – almost every State / Territory has a black spot in the Top 10
- Urban vs. Rural river environments
- Remoteness of location of incident
- Fatal drowning not the whole story
- Diverse range of activities prior to drowning being undertaken
- Men and Alcohol (a lot of it)



Risk Assessments – Key Findings

- Review of 100 inland water safety risk assessment conducted around NSW identified:
 - Many commonly occurring hazards rated as high risk, often with no risk treatments in place
 - Stakeholder identification and ongoing engagement
 - Difficult to ensure implementation of recommended risk treatments
 - Visitation and injury data difficult / impossible to obtain?
 - Risk assessment useful as one part of a broader drowning prevention strategy for inland waterways



Risk Assessments - Implications for drowning prevention

- Hundreds / thousands kms of river frontage
- Identifying the multiple stakeholders & who have responsibility to implement drowning prevention strategies
- Regular engagement to ensure recommendations are acted upon

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Call to action / Implications

- Men and alcohol drowning prevention strategies for rivers desperately needed
- River drowning a local issue
 - Targeted drowning prevention initiatives developed for and in consultation with local communities likely to be successful
- Not all rivers are the same
 - Urban, Suburban, Rural