

# WA DROWNING REPORT 2019

A water loving nation  
free from drowning



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Partner:



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**



# A WATER LOVING NATION FREE FROM DROWNING

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Royal Life Saving WA acknowledges and pays respect to the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation: who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are located. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations who have contributed and continue to contribute to our national identity.

**We pay respect to elders; past, present and future.**

## Drowning incidents recorded in WA in 2018/19



Drowning Incidents  
(9.0 per 100,000)



Fatal  
Drownings



Hospital  
Admissions



Emergency  
Department  
Presentations



Overall drowning rates **decreased**  
from 2017/18 by 13.0%



Drowning trends show an average  
**increase** of 3.3% over past decade

Males were twice as likely to drown than females

69% of those who drowned in Western Australia were male



Drowning risk **decreased** with  
age with toddlers and young  
children at the highest risk

**Rate per 100,000:**

62.7 Toddlers (0-4 years)

8.3 Children (5-14 years)

7.8 Young People (15-24 years)

4.1 Adults (25-64 years)

4.0 Older Adults (65+ years)



People in **regional WA** were almost  
twice as likely to drown than those in the  
Perth metropolitan area.

**Top 3 regions** (rate per 100,000)



Midwest

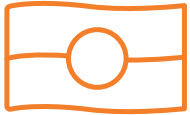


Kimberley



South West

Culturally diverse communities were over-represented in drowning data



6% of drowning involved **Aboriginal Australians**

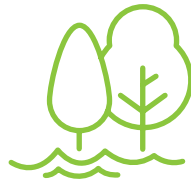


17.1% of drowning involved **a person born overseas**

Drowning incidents were most likely to occur in open water and home swimming pools, while swimming, boating or recreating around water.



**31.0%**  
Ocean/Harbour



**20.7%**  
River/Creek/Stream



**13.8%**  
Home Pool



**27.6%**  
Boating



**27.6%**  
Swimming



**10.3%**  
Recreating

Key risk factors for drowning:



Presence of a **pre-existing medical condition**



**Environmental factors** such as poor weather/ water conditions



**Poor swimming ability**



**Not wearing a lifejacket** or using appropriate safety equipment



**Inexperience** in the activity being undertaken



Consumption of **alcohol (BAC >0.05)**

## DROWNING AT A GLANCE

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Drowning has a significant impact on the Western Australian community. In particular, the life-long consequences of non-fatal drowning have a great impact on the individual, their families and local communities.

This report highlights key drowning trends in Western Australia from July 2018 to June 2019 and identifies those at most risk. Translating this into policy and practice assists Royal Life Saving WA's efforts to better understand drowning and its impacts, build evidence-informed, innovative solutions to prevent drowning and empower the community to adopt safer aquatic behaviours.

**LEAD**



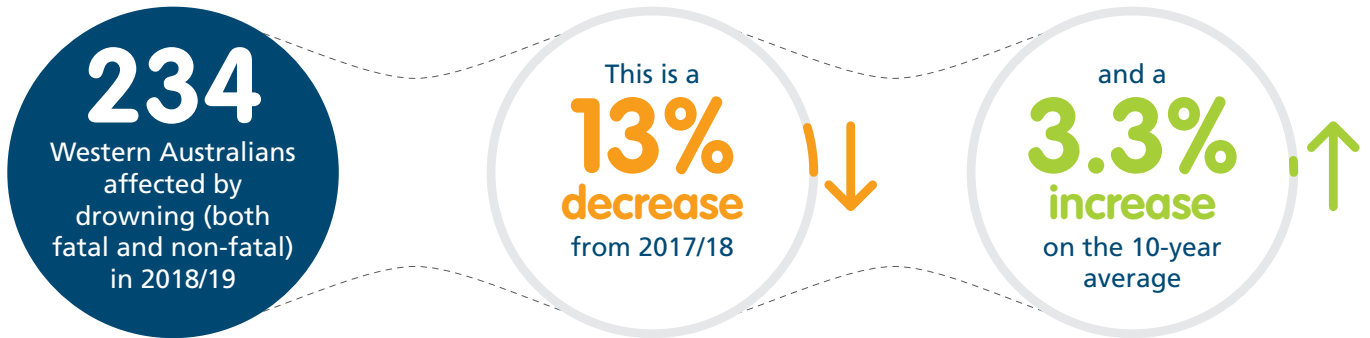
**BUILD**



**EMPOWER**



# FATAL AND NON-FATAL DROWNING



## Fatal Drowning

There were 29 fatal drowning incidents recorded in WA waterways between July 2018 and June 2019, at a rate of 1.1 per 100,000 population, the same as in 2017/18. Fatal drowning trends have shown a 9.7% decrease in the rate of drowning over the past decade

Nationally, WA accounted for 11.6% of all fatal drowning incidents in 2018/19 and recorded the fourth highest rate of drowning behind the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales.

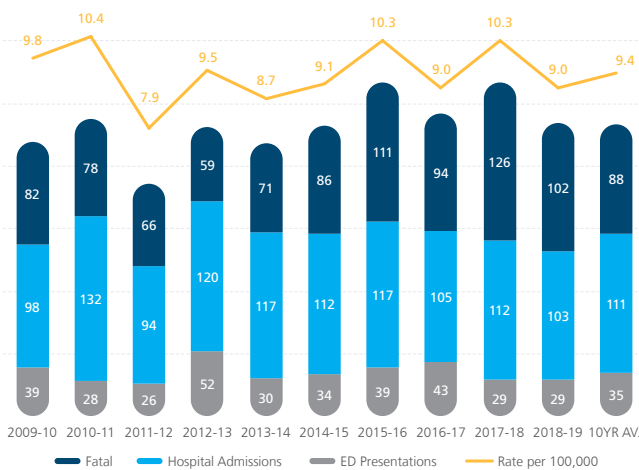
## Non-Fatal Drowning

For every fatal drowning death recorded in 2018/19, there were seven non-fatal drowning incidents. Overall, 205 non-fatal drowning incidents were recorded in WA during 2018/19, a 13.9% decrease from 2017/18.

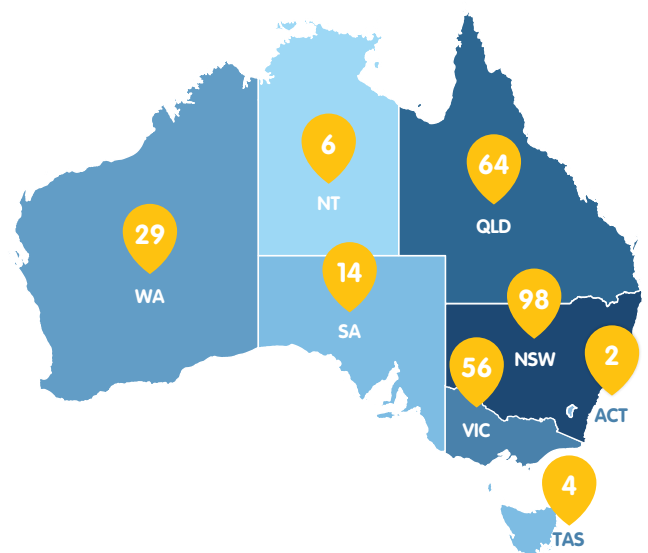
Of these, 103 people were admitted to hospital at a rate of 4.0 per 100,000 population. This reversed the trend reported in 2017/18, with the rate decreasing by 8.7%. While the average number of hospital admissions has remained similar over the past decade, rates have decreased by 11%.

In addition, 102 people presented at a hospital emergency department in the Perth metropolitan area at a rate of 4.9 per 100,000 population. This reversed the trend reported in 2017/18, with the rate decreasing by 19.9%. In addition, the average number of presentations has almost halved over the past decade (45.8%) and rate of presentation has decreased by 31.2%.

Overall drowning in WA, 2009/10 to 2018/19




State and Territory breakdown



# WHO

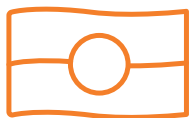
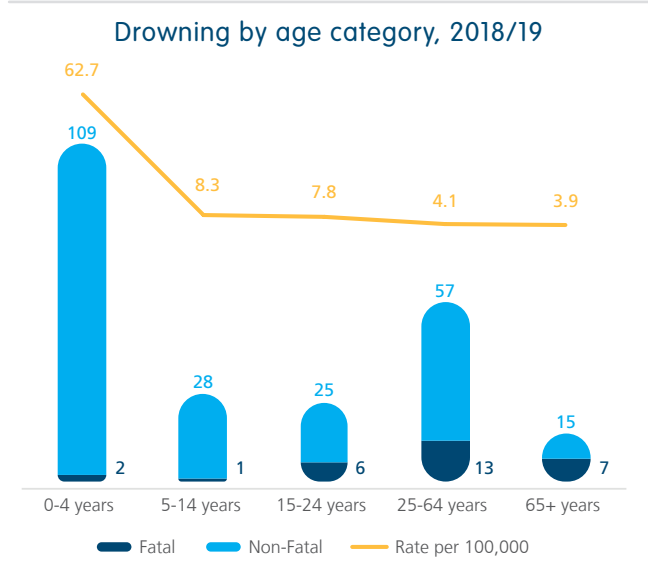
Males were 2.2 times more likely to be involved in a drowning incident (12.4/100,000) compared to females (5.6/100,000) with 68.8% of incidents involving men.

**69%** of those who drowned in Western Australia were male 

While drowning risk decreased with age, drowning severity increased, with a greater proportion of drowning incidents being fatal amongst older age groups. Young adults aged 15-24 years recorded the highest fatal drowning rate (1.9/100,000) of any age group, while toddlers recorded the highest rate of non-fatal drowning (61.6/100,000).

Compared to 2017/18, all age groups recorded decreased drowning rates, with the exception of adults aged 25-64 years which increased by 3.3%. The greatest reduction was observed in older adults aged 65 years and over where the drowning rate almost halved (44.3% reduction).

In addition, over the past decade, rates of fatal drowning have almost halved amongst toddlers aged 0-4 years, children aged 5-14 years and young people aged 15-24 years (46.1%, 49.0% and 43.9% decrease respectively).



**Aboriginal Australians** continue to be over-represented in drowning data with 6% of incidents involving Aboriginal Australians, despite making up only 4.0% of the WA population. Overall, Aboriginal Australians were 1.5 times more likely to be involved in a drowning incident (13.4/100,000) than non-Aboriginal Australians (8.8/100,000).

Overall, 17.1% of drowning incidents (fatal and non-fatal) involved a person **born overseas**, an 8.0% decrease from 2017/18. This was higher for fatal drowning where 41.4% of incidents involved a person who was born overseas. Of these, 75% were from a non-English speaking background and two thirds had been living in Australia for 10 years or more (average - 26 years).

Almost half (48.3%) of fatal drowning incidents **involved tourists**, with the majority being intrastate visitors travelling within WA (85.7%).



The majority of fatal drowning victims were from **high socio-economic areas**, with 27.6% in the highest quintile for economic advantage. There was an 8.7% decrease in the proportion of drowning deaths involving people from low socio-economic areas, with 10.3% residing in areas within the lowest two quintiles for economic advantage compared to 19.0% in 2017/18.





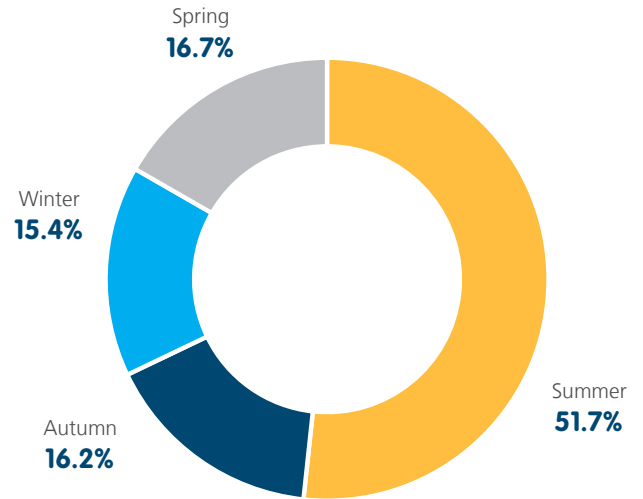
## WHEN AND WHERE

More than half of drowning incidents (fatal and non-fatal) occurred during the summer months (51.7%), likely contributed to by warmer weather, higher exposure through increased participation in aquatic activities and school holidays being during this time of year. Drowning during winter increased in 2018/19, with 14.7% occurring during this season.

Almost two thirds of drowning deaths occurred during the week (65.5%) and the most common days were Saturday (20.7%), Monday and Thursday (17.2%). In addition, 10.3% of drowning deaths occurred over a public holiday/long weekend.

Similar to previous years, the majority of drowning deaths occurred during the afternoon (65.5%) with 2.30pm – 5.30pm the highest risk time for drowning (41.4%).

Drowning by season, 2018/19



### High-risk times for drowning



Summer months



Saturday, Monday, Thursday and key holiday periods



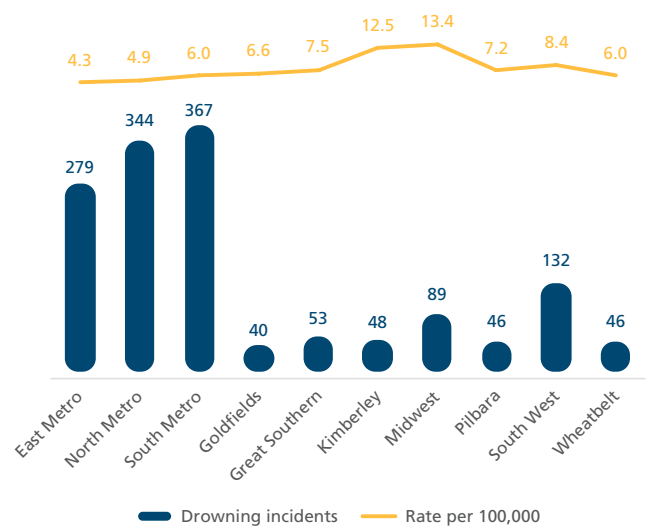
Afternoon between 2.30 and 5.30PM

### > Metro vs. regional aquatic location

While a higher proportion of drowning occurred in the Perth metropolitan area (68.9%), rates of drowning were higher in regional WA with people almost twice as likely to drown in regional WA (7.7/100,000) than the Perth metropolitan area (4.4/100,000). The rate of drowning in regional WA increased by 12.2% from 2017/18, while the rate decreased by 4.3% in the Perth metropolitan area.

Over the past decade, the Midwest, Kimberley and South West regions recorded the highest drowning rates. The East Metropolitan, North Metropolitan and Wheatbelt regions recorded the lowest rates.

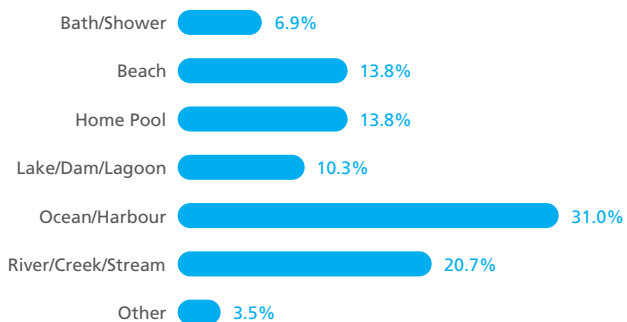
Drowning by health region, 2009/10 to 2018/19



While the majority of drowning deaths occurred in major cities (41.8%), one in five (20.7%) occurred at remote or very remote locations with limited access and mobile phone reception, affecting response times and rescue efforts. Aquatic locations where the drowning occurred varied by age and geographic location.

Overall, drowning (fatal and non-fatal) was most likely to occur in open water locations (27.3%), followed by home swimming pools (22.0%) and beaches (12.9%) in 2018/19.

Fatal drowning by aquatic location, 2018/19



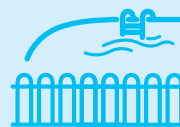
Top 3 Aquatic Locations



**31.0%**  
Ocean/Harbour

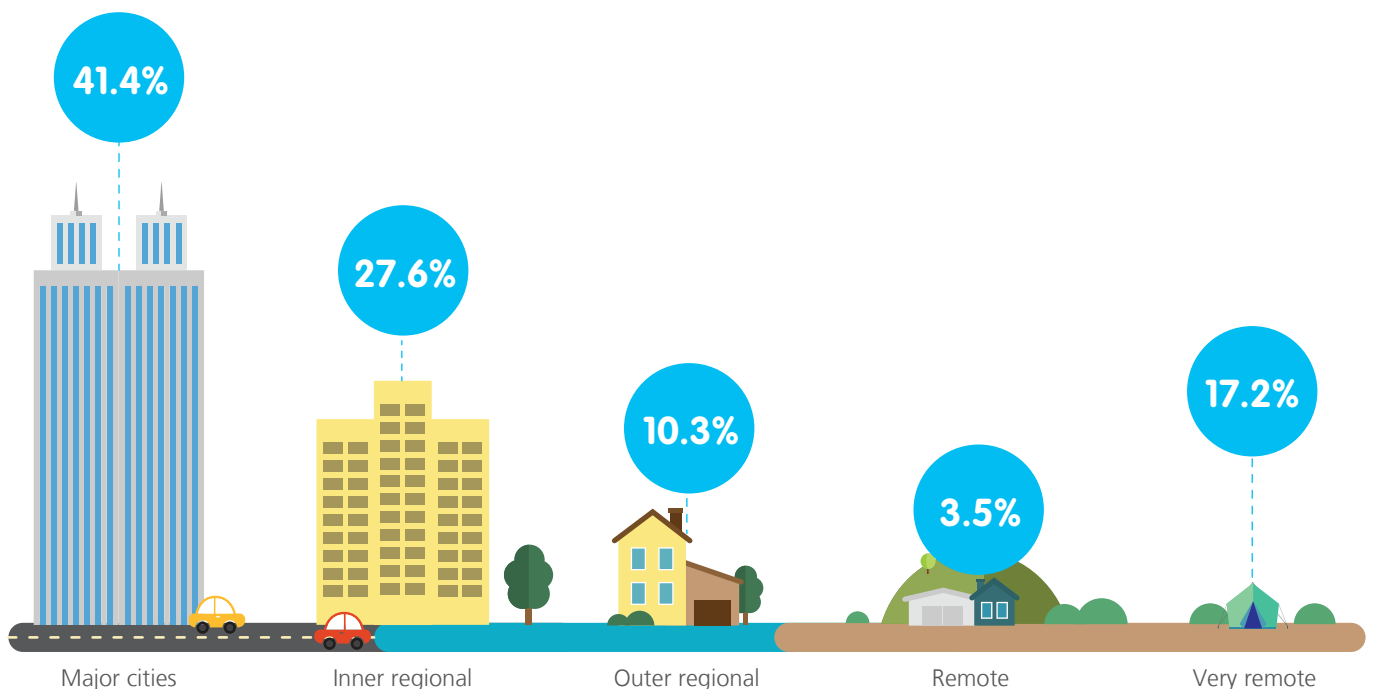


**20.7%**  
River/Creek/  
Stream



**13.8%**  
Home Pool

Proportion of drowning deaths by remoteness

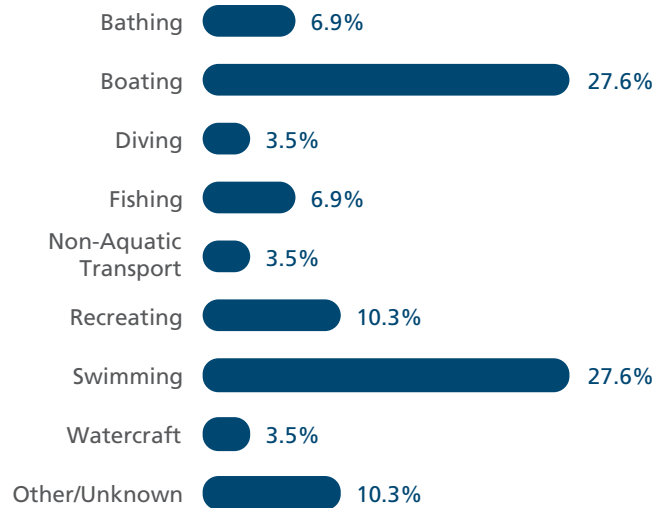


## ACTIVITY

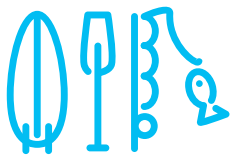
Activities being undertaken at the time of the fatal drowning incidents varied, with boating and swimming the most common activities, followed by recreating around a waterway, fishing and bathing.

Overall, 51.7% of people involved in a fatal drowning incident entered the water intentionally while participating in an aquatic activity or jumped into the water prior to the drowning event. Of those that weren't prepared to enter the water, 20.7% slipped or fell and 17.2% were swept in by a wave. Method of water entry was unknown in 10.3% of incidents.

Fatal Drowning by activity, 2018/19



Entry to Water – Fatal Drowning, 2018/19



**48.3%**

Aquatic activity participation



**20.7%**

Slipped/fell



**20.7%**

Swept in



**3.5%**

Jumped in



**6.9%**

Other/ Unknown



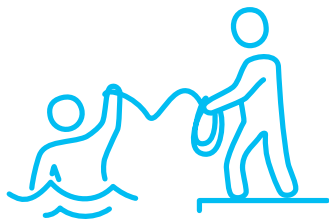
Over half were participating **with others at the time** of the incident (55.2%), while 41.4% were alone impacting on rescue and response.

## RESCUE AND RESPONSE

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A rescue was attempted in 82.8% of fatal drowning incidents recorded in 2018/2019. Over half of the rescues were performed by people unknown to the victim including general members of the public and professional staff such as lifeguards and water police.

The remaining 45.8% were performed by a family member and/or friend who was known to the victim. Common reasons for a rescue not being performed were that they were participating alone or that other persons weren't able to perform a rescue due to unsuitable weather conditions, lack of swimming skills or lack of safety equipment.



A rescue was attempted in **82.8%** of fatal drowning incidents

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Of those incidents where an aquatic rescue was undertaken, **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was performed** in 41.7% of incidents.

In instances where CPR wasn't performed, most common reasons included that the rescuer was unable to locate the victim or that the person was clearly deceased when retrieved from the water.

### Fatal Drowning Risk Factors

- > Pre-existing medical conditions contributed to 37.9% fatal drowning incidents, a 14.8% increase from 2017/2018. Most common medical conditions were cardiac and respiratory-related
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather conditions, strong currents/ flowing water, deep water, sudden changes in water depth and flooding were a factor in 37.9% fatal drowning incidents
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly the use of lifejackets was a factor in 24.1% of fatal drowning incidents
- > Almost one quarter of fatal drowning incidents (24.1%) were contributed to by poor swimming ability, a 14.4% decrease from 2017/2018
- > There was a 15.3% decrease from 2017/2018 in the number of fatal drowning incidents where alcohol consumption was a factor, with 6.9% recording a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 or greater
- > Inexperience in the activity being undertaken contributed to 13.8% of fatal drowning incidents

**INLAND WATERWAYS**  
July 2009 to June 2019

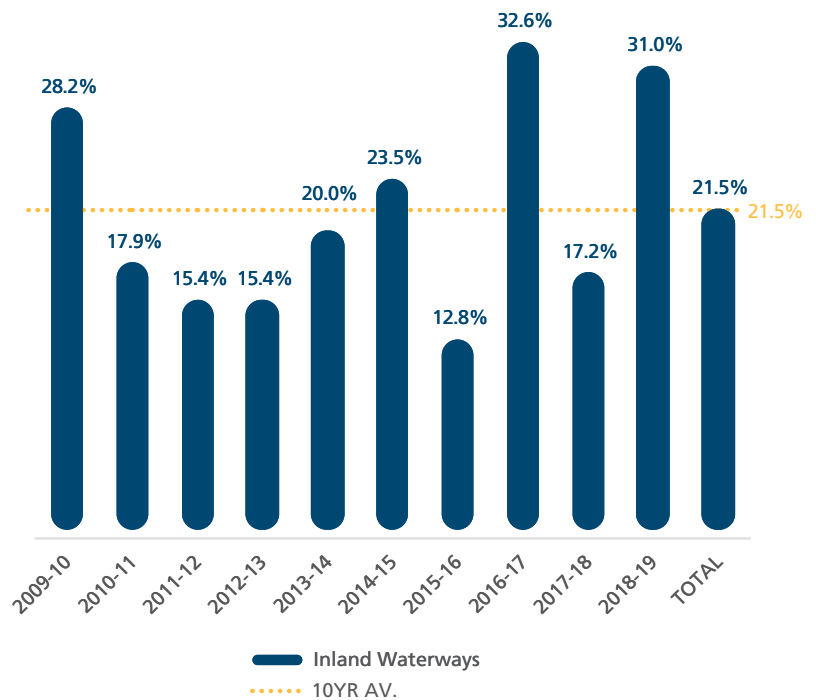


**75**  
people drowned  
at inland  
waterways

Representing  
**21.4%**  
of total drowning  
deaths

and a  
**21% increase**  
over the past  
decade ↑

Proportion of inland waterway drowning deaths by year, 2009-2019



An **inland waterway** refers to a system of natural or artificial bodies of water including rivers, creeks, lakes, dams, gorges and channels

## Inland waterways in WA



Total number of major rivers in WA



Total number of lakes in WA



Total length of major rivers in WA

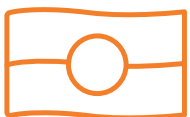
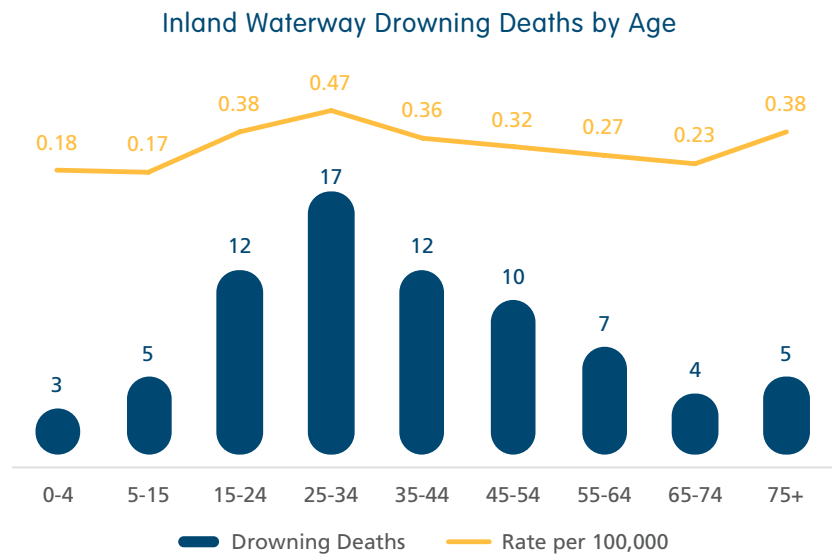
Males were 6.4 times more likely to drown than females (0.51/100,000 vs. 0.08/100,000)

94% of those who drowned were male



Drowning risk was **greatest** amongst adults 25-34 years, followed by young adults 15-24 years and older adults 75 years and over.

Drowning risk was **lowest** amongst young children aged 5-14 years, followed by toddlers 0-4 years.



18.7% of fatal drowning deaths involved **Aboriginal Australians** who were 5.8 times more likely to drown at inland waterways than non-Aboriginal Australians. This is significantly higher than general drowning trends in WA

Culturally diverse communities were over-represented in drowning data with **38.7% born overseas**



62.1% were from a non-English speaking background



Majority had lived in Australia for 10+ years (48.3%)

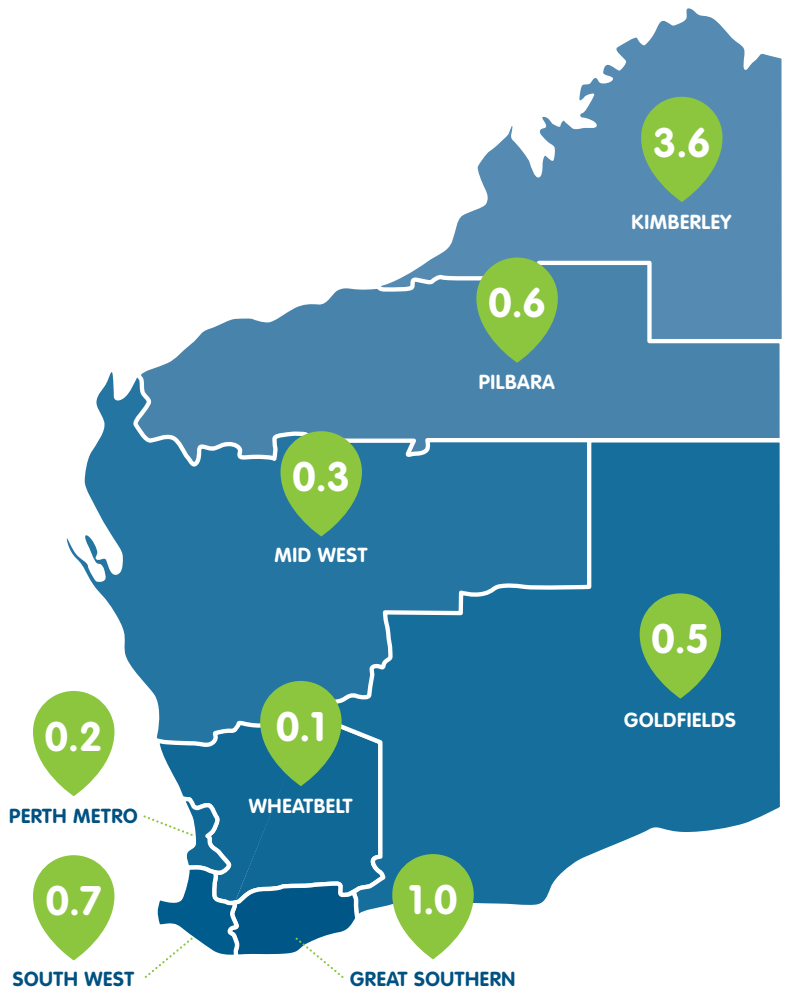


12.5% were overseas tourists



The majority of drowning deaths at inland waterways occurred at **river locations (41.3%)**, followed by lakes (21.3%) and dams (12.0%).

Drowning was 2.2 times more likely to occur in regional WA (56%; 11.2/100,000) than the Perth metropolitan area (44%; 5.3/100,000)  
 Drowning rate per 100,000 population

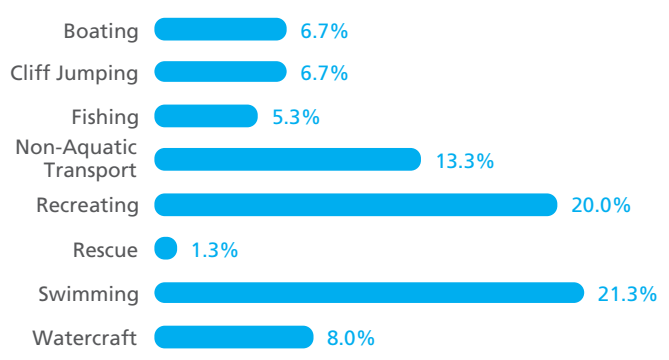


### Top 5 waterways

- 01 Swan River
- 02 Ord River
- 03 Fitzroy River
- 04 Blackwood River
- 05 Karijini National Park

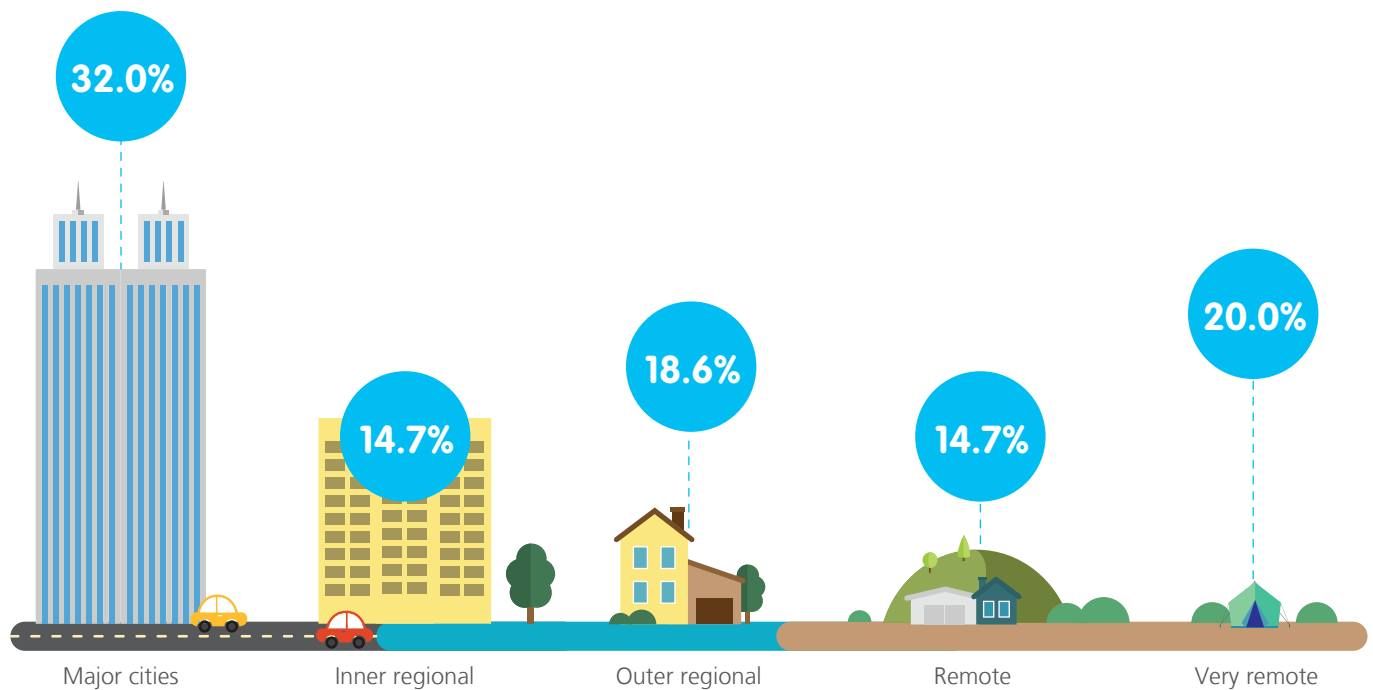
Activities being undertaken at the time varied, with recreating around water, swimming and non-aquatic transport (e.g. driving, flying) the most common activities. A large proportion of activity was unknown due to the person being alone at the time of the incident.

### Inland Waterway Drowning by Activity





One third of drowning deaths at inland waterways occurred in remote or very remote locations



### Key sources of risk - **Environmental**

- > Presence of deep water and sudden changes in water depth (36.0%)
- > Pathways/platforms/bridges/jetties in close proximity and providing direct access to water (26.7%)
- > Strong currents and fast flowing water (14.7%)
- > Activity areas such as playgrounds and camping grounds in close proximity to water locations increasing access (17.3%)
- > Flooding and seasonal variations causing changes to water depth and water flow (10.7%)
- > Poor lighting due to participation in activities at night (10.7%)

### Key sources of risk – **Personal**

- > Inability of bystanders to be able to respond due to lack of rescue skills, limited access to water and/or safety equipment (70.0%)
- > Lack of awareness of dangers that exist at inland waterway locations (40.0%)
- > Presence of pre-existing medical condition, particularly cardiac conditions and physical disabilities (29.3%)
- > Lack of swimming and water safety skills (26.7%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (25.3%) with an average BAC almost five times the legal limit for driving (0.183%) and highest recording of 0.306%.
- > Unauthorised use of a waterway or undertaking a prohibited activity at the location (16.0%)

# BOATING-RELATED DROWNING

July 2009 to June 2019

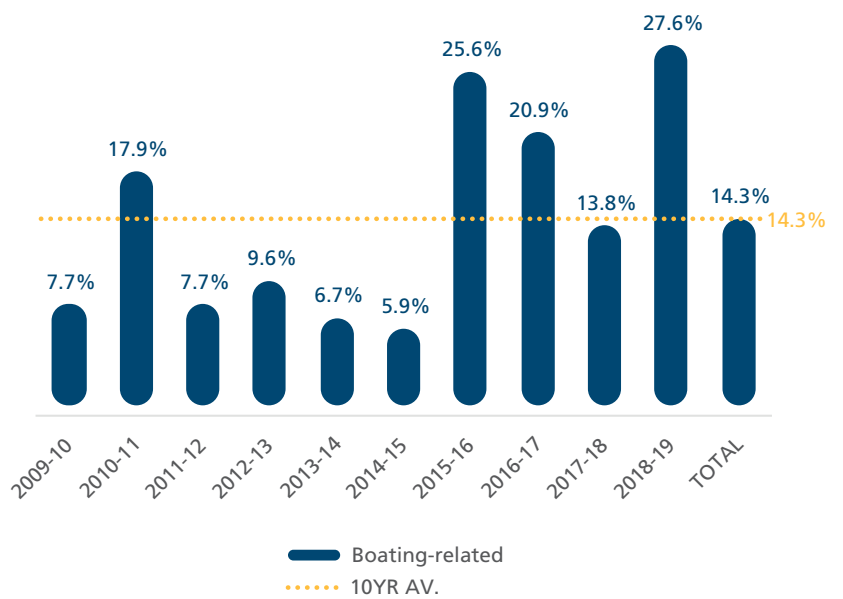


**50**  
boating-related  
drownings  
between 2009  
and 2019

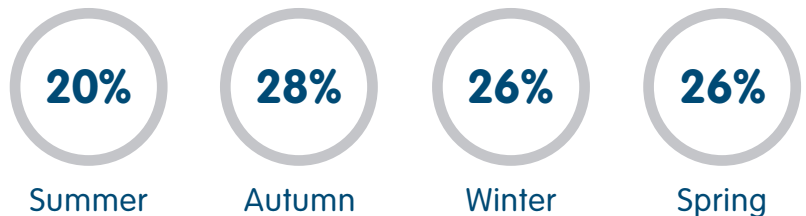
Representing  
**27.6%**  
of total drowning  
deaths

and a  
**89%**  
increase  
on the 10-year  
average

Proportion of boating-related deaths by year, 2009-2019



**Boating incidents occurred all year round.**  
More than half (56.0%) occurred in early morning/morning  
and 18.0% occurred on a public holiday:



## Boating-related drowning deaths



Incidents



Multiple Fatality Incidents



Went To Inquest



Were Work-Related

Males were more likely to drown than females

94% of those who drowned in boating-related deaths were male



98,456

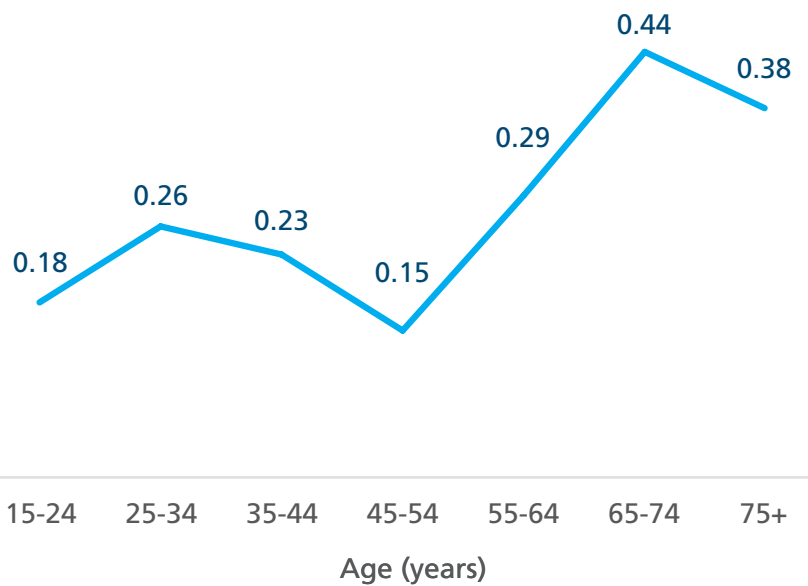
Total number of registered boats in WA



261,706

Total number of recreational skipper's ticket licences in WA

## Boating-related Drowning Deaths by Age, 2009/10 to 2018/19



Culturally diverse communities were over-represented in drowning data with **32.0% born overseas**



52.5% were from a non-English speaking background



Majority had lived in Australia for 10+ years (68.8%)

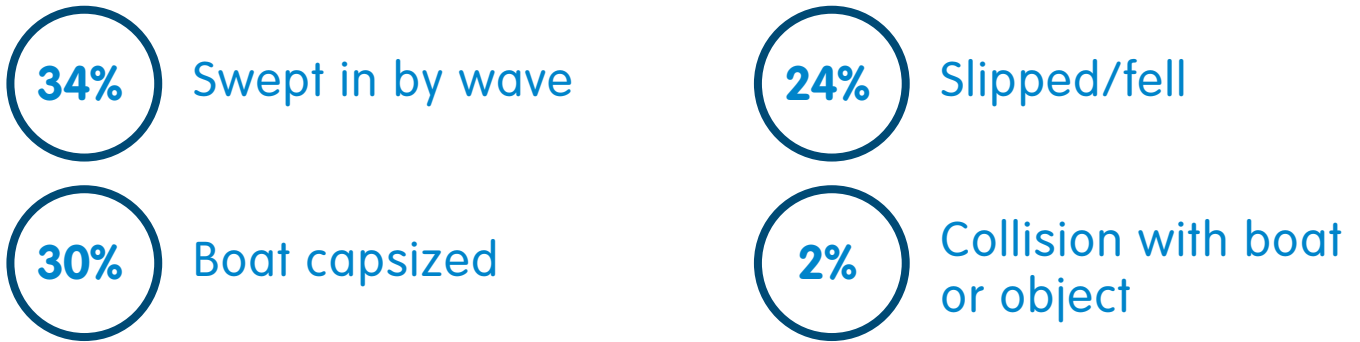


12.5% were overseas tourists

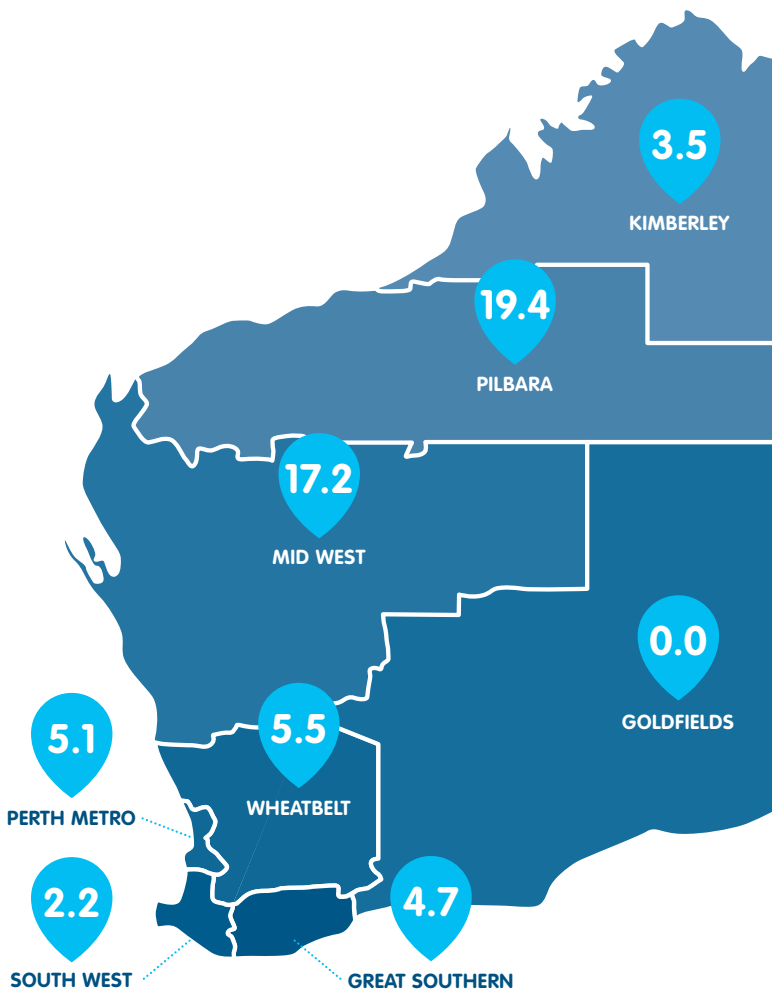


The majority of boating-related drowning occurred at **coastal locations** (90%), with a small proportion occurring at inland waterways such as rivers (10%).

Entry into water was unintentional in majority of the boating-related incidents, meaning people were not prepared to enter the water:



Boating-related drowning was almost twice as likely to occur in regional WA (52%; 7.25/10,000 registered vessels) than the Perth metropolitan area (48%; 3.84/10,000 registered vessels)



#### Key risk factors for drowning

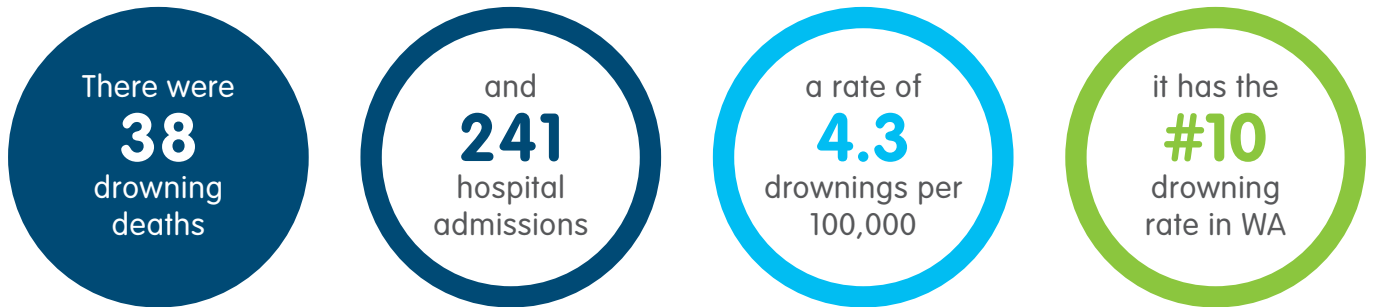
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (30.0%)
- > Boating alone (26.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (68.0%)
- > Poor swimming ability (64.0%)
- > Not wearing a lifejacket and/or using inappropriate safety equipment (70.0%)
- > Inexperienced in boating-related activities (20.0%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (18.0%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.138%)



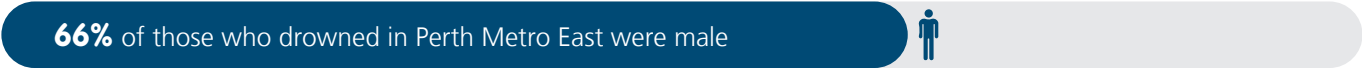


Photo: Serpentine Falls

There were **279 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - East region



Males (5.6/100,000) were **almost twice as likely to drown** than females (3.2/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>2.2</b> City of Perth	<b>34.2</b> Home Pool	<b>34.2</b> Recreating
<b>1.1</b> City of Belmont	<b>31.6</b> River/Creek/Stream	<b>23.7</b> Swimming
<b>0.8</b> City of Bayswater	<b>15.8</b> Bath/Shower	<b>18.4</b> Bathing



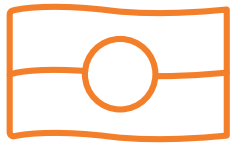
**71.3%** were born in Australia



**28.7%** were born overseas



Of these, **70.6%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **3.9%** of people who drowned were **Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (8.1/100,000) almost twice as likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (4.2/100,000).



10.5% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and children 5-14 years.**

(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**48.4%** Summer months



**68.4%** Weekdays



**52.6%** Afternoons

### Key risk factors for drowning

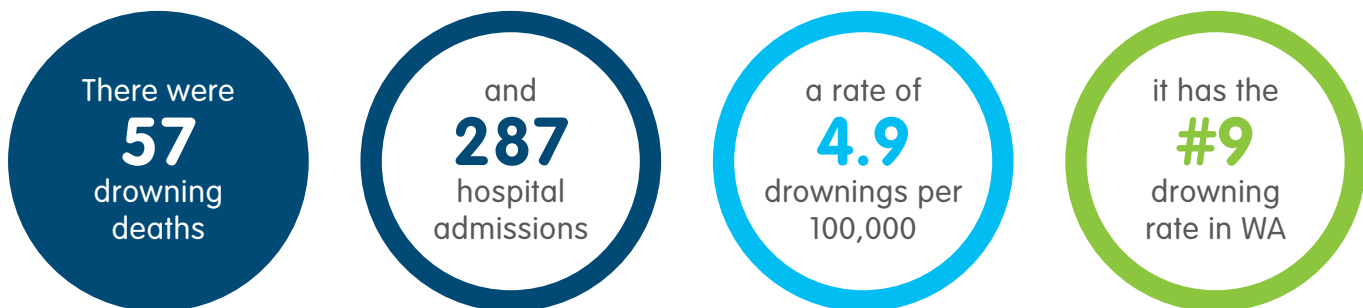
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (55.3%)
- > Participating alone (50.0%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (23.7%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (7.9%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (10.5%)
- > Poor swimming ability (26.3%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (2.6%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (13.2%) with an average BAC more than four times the legal limit for driving (0.223%)
- > Injury including head injury (5.3%)

**PERTH METRO - NORTH**  
July 2009 to June 2019

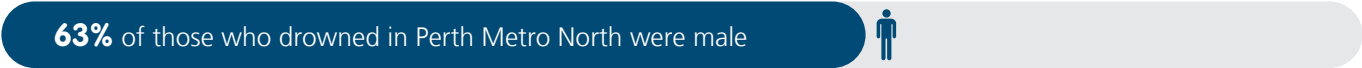


Photo: Hillarys Marina

There were **344 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - North region



Males (6.0/100,000) were **1.6 times more likely to drown** than females (3.2/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>1.1</b> Town of Subiaco	<b>31.6</b> Home Pool	<b>38.6</b> Recreating
<b>1.0</b> City of Wanneroo	<b>31.6</b> Beach	<b>28.1</b> Swimming
<b>1.0</b> Town of Claremont	<b>7.0</b> Bath/Shower	<b>7.0</b> Bathing





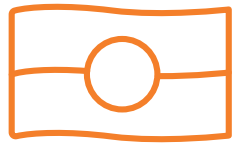
**69.8%** were born in Australia



**30.2%** were born overseas



Of these, **90.9%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **2.3% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (10.4/100,000) twice as likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (4.8/100,000).



14.0% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and older adults over 65 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**45.4%**  
Summer months



**56.1%**  
Weekdays



**42.1%**  
Mornings

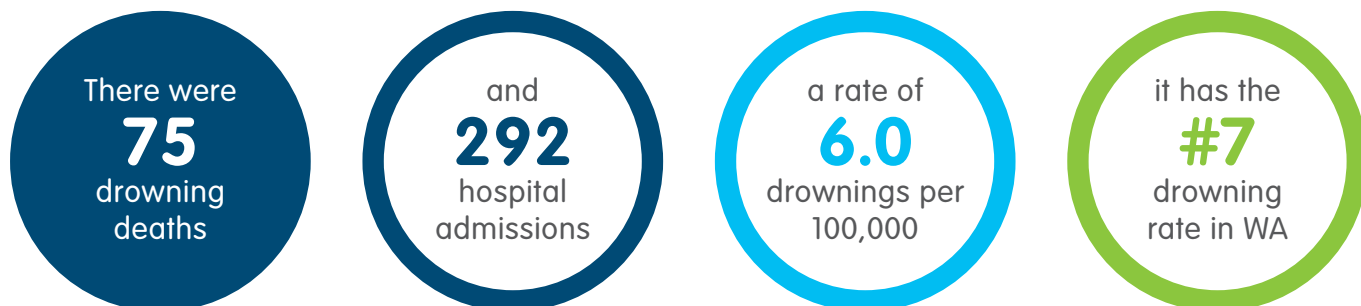
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (42.1%)
- > Poor swimming ability (40.4%)
- > Participating alone (38.6%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (26.3%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (24.6%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (21.1%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (21.1%)
- > 8.8% resided in a low socio-economic area
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (3.5%) with an average BAC more than four times the legal limit for driving (0.226%)
- > Injury including head injury (3.5%)

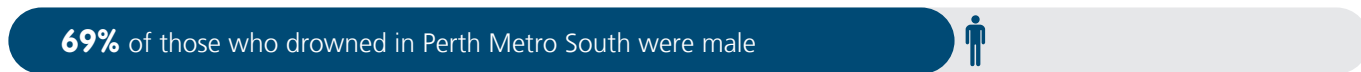


Photo: Blackwall Reach

There were **367 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - South region



Males (7.6/100,000) were **2.1 times more likely to drown** than females (3.6/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>4.6</b> Shire of Waroona	<b>38.7</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>28.0</b> Boating
<b>2.4</b> Town of Fremantle	<b>21.3</b> Beach	<b>16.0</b> Recreating
<b>2.3</b> City of Mandurah	<b>13.3</b> Home Pool	<b>12.0</b> Swimming



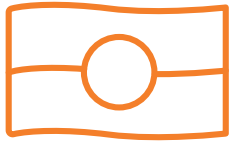
**74.4%** were born in Australia



**25.6%** were born overseas



Of these, **65.5%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **3.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (12.0/100,000) twice as likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (5.9/100,000).



25.3% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and older adults over 65 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)

**28.1**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**4.0**

Children (5-14 years)

**3.8**

Young People (15-24 years)

**3.6**

Adults (25-64 years)

**5.2**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**43.9%**  
Summer months



**62.7%**  
Weekdays



**46.7%**  
Afternoons

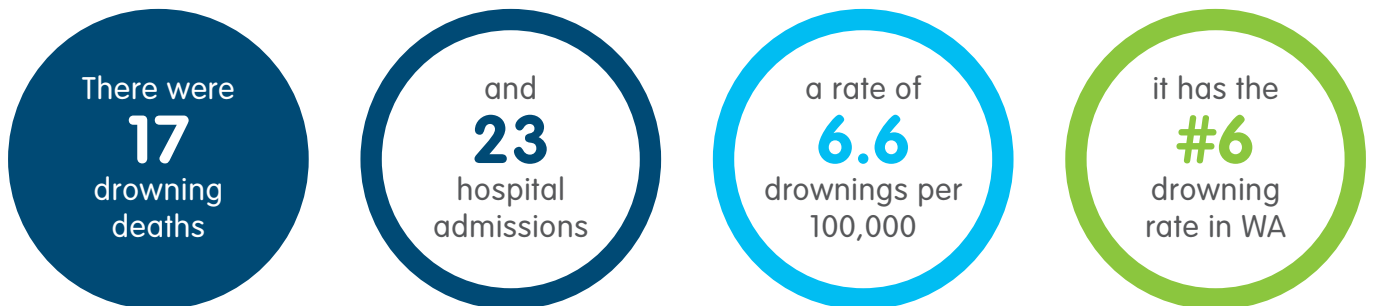
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (42.7%)
- > Participating alone (34.7%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (29.3%)
- > Poor swimming ability (25.3%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (17.3%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (13.3%) with an average BAC three times the legal limit for driving (0.160%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (12.0%)
- > Injury including head injury (10.7%)
- > 9.3% resided in a low socio-economic area
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (5.3%)



Photo: Hillier Lake

There were **40 drowning incidents** recorded in the Goldfields region



Males (10.2/100,000) were **2.5 times more likely to drown** than females (4.1/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>7.7</b> Shire of Esperance	<b>35.3</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>35.3</b> Swimming
<b>1.5</b> Shire of Leonora	<b>29.4</b> Beach	<b>23.5</b> Fishing
<b>0.9</b> City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder	<b>11.8</b> Home Pool	<b>11.8</b> Recreating



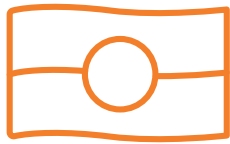
**80.0%** were born in Australia



**20.0%** were born overseas



Of these, **33.3%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **10.0% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates similar for Aboriginal (6.9/100,000) and non-Aboriginal Australians (6.6/100,000).



52.9% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and older adults over 65 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**42.5%**  
Summer months



**52.9%**  
Weekends



**58.8%**  
Afternoons

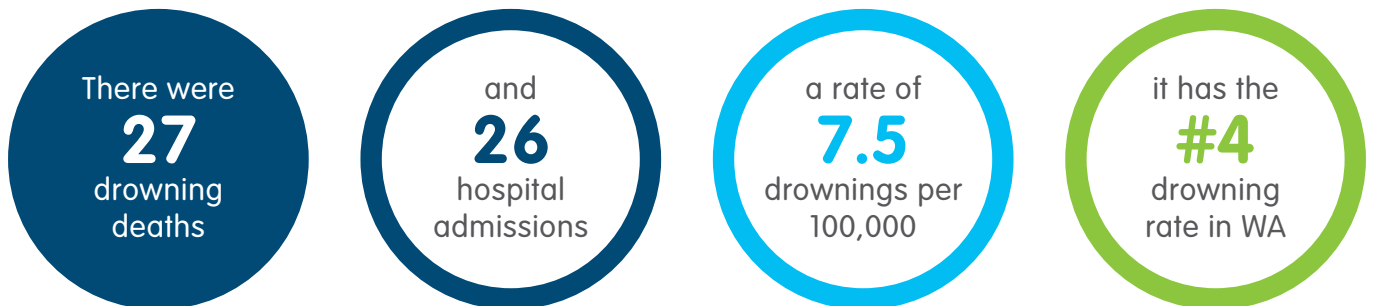
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > 82.3% at remote or very remote locations
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (58.8%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (47.1%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (41.2%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.155%)
- > Participating alone (23.5%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (35.3%)
- > Poor swimming ability (17.7%)
- > Injury including head injury (11.8%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (5.9%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (5.9%)
- > 5.9% resided in a low socio-economic area



Photo: The Gap

There were **53 drowning incidents** recorded in the Great Southern region



Males (13.0/100,000) were almost **three times more likely to drown** than females (4.1/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>17.9</b> Shire of Jerramungup	<b>51.9</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>40.7</b> Fishing
<b>14.1</b> Shire of Ravensthorpe	<b>18.5</b> Beach	<b>11.1</b> Watercraft
<b>5.5</b> City of Albany	<b>14.8</b> River/Creek/Stream	<b>11.1</b> Recreating



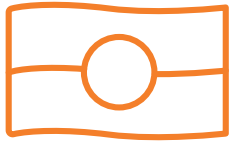
**62.3%** were born in Australia



**37.7%** were born overseas



Of these, **75.0%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **1.9% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (4.0/100,000) half that of non-Aboriginal Australians (7.6/100,000).



48.2% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 25-34 years and young people 15-24 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**35.9%**  
Autumn months



**55.6%**  
Weekdays



**44.4%**  
Afternoons

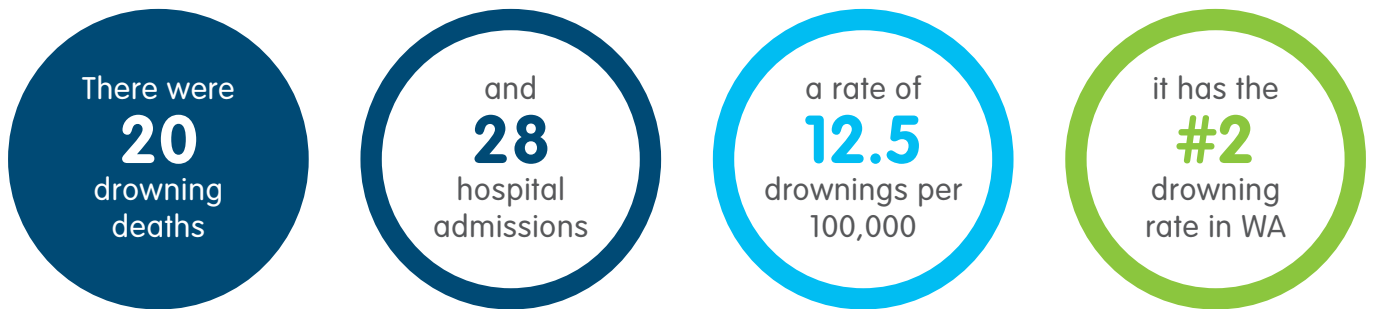
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (63.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (55.6%)
- > Participating alone (29.6%)
- > Poor swimming ability (29.6%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (22.2%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (3.7%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (18.5%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.167%)
- > Injury including head injury (14.8%)
- > 14.8% resided in a low socio-economic area
- > 8.8% at remote or very remote locations
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (7.4%)



Photo: Ivanhoe Crossing

There were **48 drowning incidents** recorded in the Kimberley region



Males (17.8/100,000) were almost **three times more likely to drown** than females (6.6/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>11.4</b> Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley	<b>55.0</b> River/Creek/Stream	<b>40.0</b> Recreating
<b>5.3</b> Shire of Broome	<b>15.0</b> Lake/Dam/Lagoon	<b>20.0</b> Swimming
<b>2.7</b> Shire of Halls Creek	<b>11.8</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>10.0</b> Diving





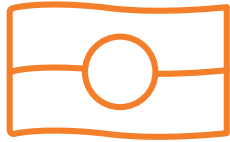
**77.1%** were born in Australia



**22.9%** were born overseas



Of these, **60.0%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **35.4% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, the largest proportion of any other region. However, drowning rates for Aboriginal Australians (11.0/100,000) were slightly lower than that of non-Aboriginal Australians (13.5/100,000).



15.0% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and young people 15-24 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**33.3%**  
Spring months



**55.0%**  
Weekdays



**30.0%**  
Afternoons

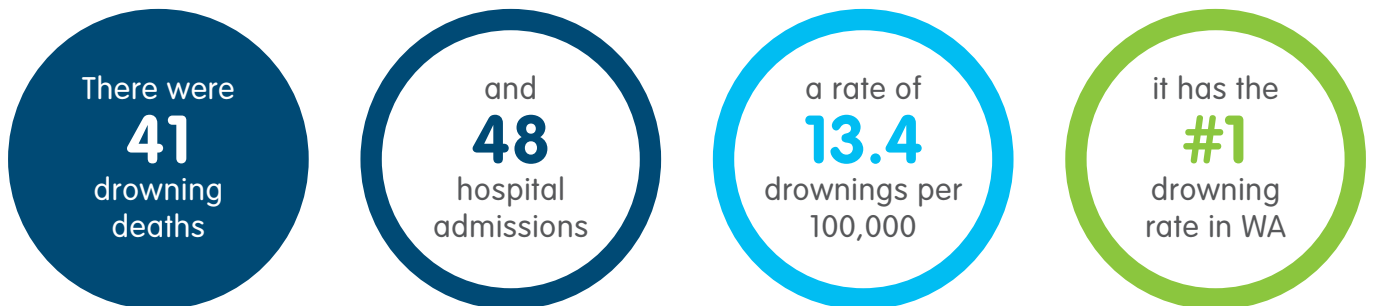
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (20.0%)
- > Participating alone (40.0%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (15.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (40.0%)
- > Poor swimming ability (15.0%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (10.0%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (40.0%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.168%)
- > Injury including head injury (5.0%)
- > 100.0% occurred at remote or very remote locations
- > 80.0% resided in a low socio-economic area



Photo: Turquoise Bay

There were **89 drowning incidents** recorded in the Midwest region



Males (19.1/100,000) were **2.3 times more likely to drown** than females (8.5/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>38.0</b> Shire of Exmouth	<b>48.8</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>34.2</b> Diving
<b>29.3</b> Shire of Carnarvon	<b>41.5</b> Beach	<b>24.4</b> Boating
<b>27.5</b> Shire of Shark Bay	<b>4.9</b> River/Creek/Stream	<b>17.1</b> Watercraft



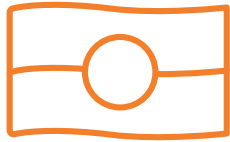
**76.4%** were born in Australia



**23.6%** were born overseas



Of these, **64.3%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **12.4% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (13.4/100,000) the same as non-Aboriginal Australians (13.4/100,000).



70.7% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 55 years and over**

(Rate per 100,000)

**33.2**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**4.4**

Children (5-14 years)

**9.1**

Young People (15-24 years)

**14.2**

Adults (25-64 years)

**14.2**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**33.7%**

Summer months



**55.6%**

Weekdays



**43.9%**

Afternoons

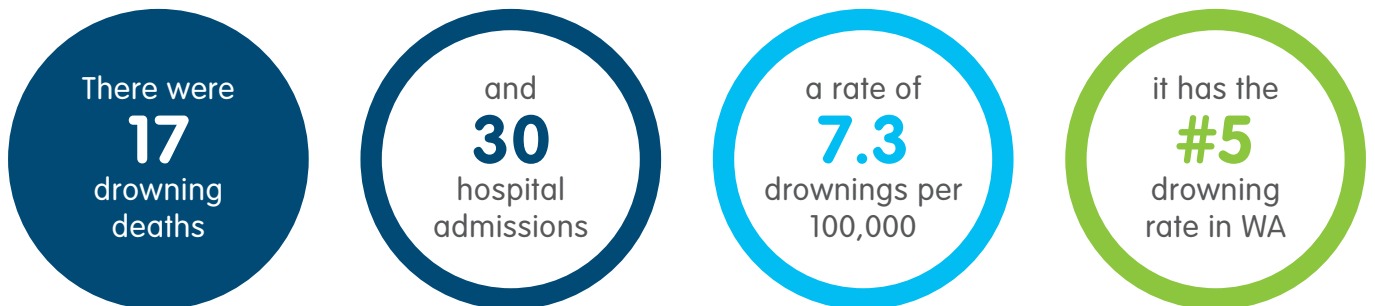
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (36.6%)
- > Participating alone (24.4%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (2.4%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (2.4%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (43.9%)
- > Poor swimming ability (17.1%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (51.2%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (9.8%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.172%)
- > Injury including head injury (7.3%)
- > 82.9% at remote or very remote locations
- > 22.0% resided in a low socio-economic area



Photo: Hammersley Gorge

There were **47 drowning incidents** recorded in the Pilbara region



Males (8.9/100,000) were **1.6 times more likely to drown** than females (5.6/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>5.2</b> Shire of Karratha	<b>58.8</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>47.1</b> Boating
<b>1.8</b> Shire of Port Hedland	<b>11.8</b> River/Creek/Stream	<b>11.8</b> Non-aquatic transport
<b>1.8</b> Shire of Ashburton	<b>5.9</b> Lake/Dam/Lagoon	<b>11.8</b> Swimming



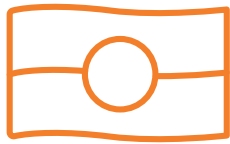
**80.9%** were born in Australia



**19.2%** were born overseas



Of these, **57.1%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **25.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (14.4/100,000) 2.3 times greater than non-Aboriginal Australians (6.3/100,000).



35.3% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and young people 15-24 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**38.3%**  
Summer months



**52.9%**  
Weekdays



**35.3%**  
Early mornings

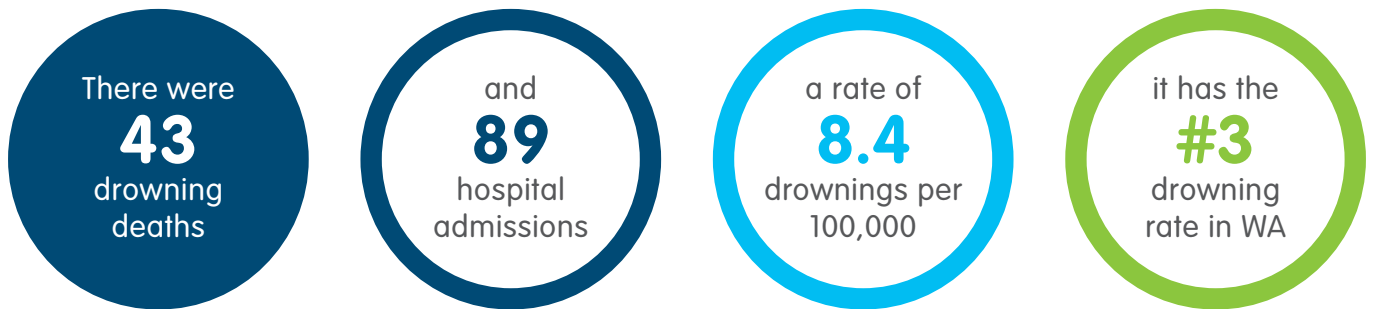
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (23.5%)
- > Participating alone (23.5%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (5.9%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (58.8%)
- > Poor swimming ability (5.9%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (29.4%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (11.7%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.167%)
- > Injury including head injury (29.4%)
- > 100.0% occurred at remote or very remote locations
- > 23.5% resided in a low socio-economic area



Photo: Blackwood River

There were **132 drowning incidents** recorded in the South West region



Males (12.5/100,000) were **3.5 times more likely to drown** than females (3.6/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>9.6</b> Shire of Augusta-Margaret River	<b>32.6</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>23.3</b> Recreating
<b>6.4</b> Shire of Manjimup	<b>32.6</b> Beach	<b>18.6</b> Watercraft
<b>4.8</b> Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes	<b>16.3</b> Lake/Dam/Lagoon	<b>16.3</b> Swimming



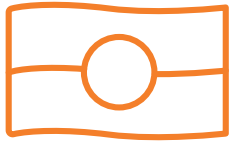
**78.0%** were born in Australia



**22.0%** were born overseas



Of these, **62.5%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **1.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (5.7/100,000) slightly lower than non-Aboriginal Australians (8.5/100,000).



69.8% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 25-34 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**48.4%**  
Summer months



**51.2%**  
Weekdays



**55.8%**  
Afternoons

### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (27.9%)
- > Participating alone (37.2%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (9.3%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (7.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (41.9%)
- > Poor swimming ability (20.9%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (39.5%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (18.6%) with an average BAC more than three times the legal limit for driving (0.157%)
- > Injury including head injury (23.3%)
- > 67.5% at remote or very remote locations
- > 18.6% resided in a low socio-economic area

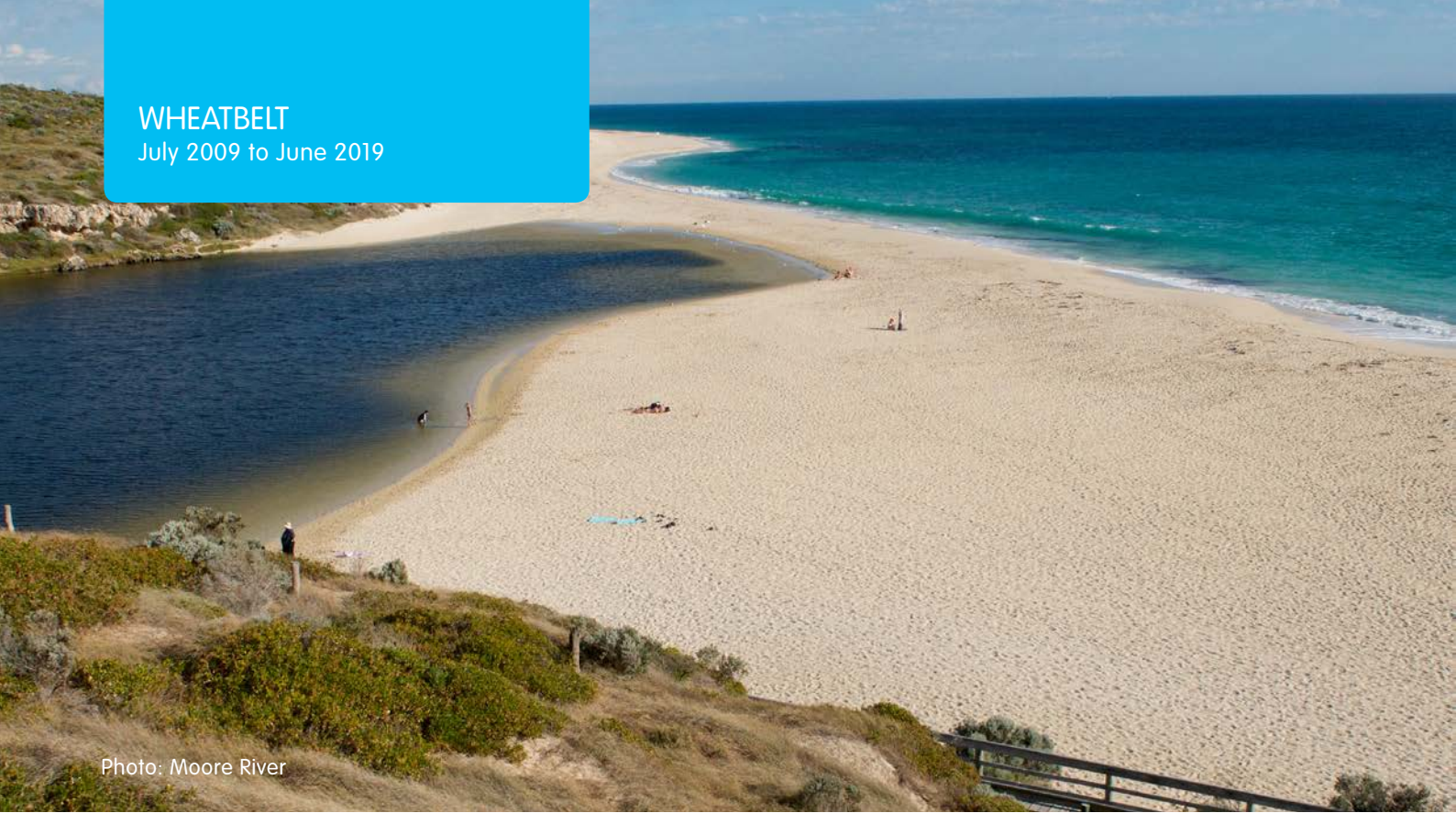
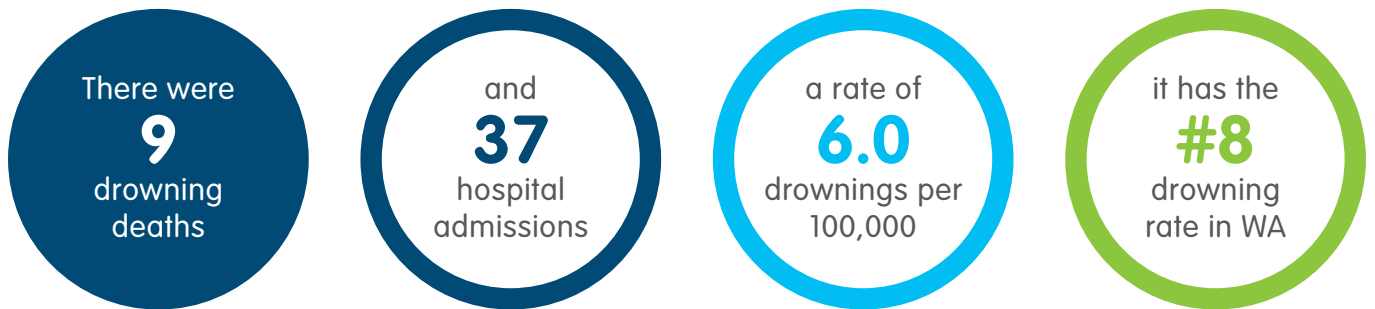


Photo: Moore River

There were **46 drowning incidents** recorded in the Wheatbelt region



Males (8.0/100,000) were **2.2 times more likely to drown** than females (3.6/100,000)



Top 3 local areas (/100,000)	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>9.7</b> Shire of Goomalling	<b>33.3</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>33.3</b> Diving
<b>9.1</b> Shire of Dandaragan	<b>22.2</b> Beach	<b>22.2</b> Boating
<b>5.8</b> Shire of Gingin	<b>22.2</b> Home Pool	<b>11.1</b> Swimming





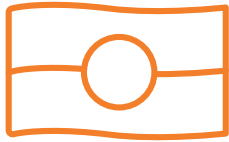
**84.8%** were born in Australia



**15.2%** were born overseas



Of these, **75.0%** were from a non-English speaking country



Overall, **6.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (8.9/100,000) 1.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal Australians (5.6/100,000).



55.6% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and young people 15-24 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)



Toddlers (0-4 years)



Children (5-14 years)



Young People (15-24 years)



Adults (25-64 years)



Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**37.8%**  
Summer months



**66.7%**  
Weekdays



**41.5%**  
Mornings

### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (44.4%)
- > Participating alone (22.2%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (22.2%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (11.1%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (22.2%)
- > Poor swimming ability (44.4%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (11.1%)
- > 11.1% occurred at remote or very remote locations
- > 22.2% resided in a low socio-economic area



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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PO Box 28, Floreat Forum WA 6014

Call **08 9383 8200**  
Email **info@royallifesavingwa.com.au**  
Visit **royallifesavingwa.com.au**

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