

Look out you MOB

Unfortunately Indigenous Australians are four times more likely to drown than non-Indigenous Australians. This factsheet aims to help reduce the high rate of drowning incidents while encouraging active participation in aquatic recreation activities through safer behaviour.

5 KEY FACTS ABOUT INDIGENOUS DROWNING DEATHS

1. 26% are children under the age of 10
2. Almost half (47%) occur in rivers
3. 11% of victims were using boats or watercraft
4. 29% of victims recorded a blood alcohol level of 0.05% or higher
5. 12% involved flooding, most commonly driving through floodwaters

5 SAFETY TIPS TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR MOB SAFER AROUND WATER

01. RESPECT THE RIVER

Natural waterways are unpredictable and unpatrolled

FACT: Rivers, lakes, creeks and waterholes are great places to cool off and recreate, but more people drown here than at any other location. Submerged objects, murky water and unknown depths are dangerous hazards and conditions change on a daily basis. Soft and uneven riverbanks can result in unplanned entry and swift currents can quickly drag a person downstream.

- Always enter the water slowly using a gradual feet-first entry so you can check for hazards
- Never dive in or jump from heights into the water.
- Don't have the attitude 'it won't happen to me' – drowning incidents can happen to anyone.

Lifejackets can and do save lives!

02. ALWAYS WEAR A LIFEJACKET

FACT: Not wearing a lifejacket is the most common reason a drowning death occurs while going boating or fishing.

- Everyone, including children must wear a lifejacket (in some States and Territories, this is law).
- Ensure your lifejacket is the correct size and is properly fastened.

03.

AVOID ALCOHOL AROUND WATER

Alcohol and water don't mix

FACT: Too many drowning deaths occur as a result of consuming alcohol when recreating in and around water. Alcohol impairs judgement, coordination and reaction time, causes disorientation and removes inhibitions. This results in distortion of the perception of risk and personal abilities, inability to make quick and safe decisions and greater risk-taking behavior.

- Leave the alcohol at home when going swimming, fishing or boating.
- If you do consume alcohol, avoid recreating in and around the water.

Make safety your priority

04.

PREPARE FOR SAFETY WHEN BOATING AND FISHING

FACT: Over a 10 year period, 473 people drowned in Australia whilst participating in boating or watercraft activity. Of these, 92% were not wearing a lifejacket, 26% had alcohol and 31% had drugs in their system.

- Wear protective clothing and footwear to avoid injuries and sun-related illnesses.
- Regularly check safety gear such as lifejackets to ensure it is in good working condition.
- Check weather and tidal conditions before heading out.
- Always go with a friend so there is someone to help if in trouble.
- Inform someone at home where you are going and your estimated time of return.
- Avoid consuming alcohol or illegal substances before and while boating and fishing.

05.

SWIM BETWEEN THE RED AND YELLOW FLAGS

Always choose patrolled beaches

FACT: Most drowning deaths at beaches occur in unpatrolled locations, outside of the red and yellow flags, and when lifesavers are not on duty.

- Swim between the red and yellow flags - these indicate the safest area on the beach.
- Only swim at patrolled beaches and at times that lifesavers are on duty.
- Listen to the lifesavers and obey safety signage.
- If you get into trouble; stay calm, float on your back, signal and call for help.