



Multiple Fatality Drowning Deaths

A 10-YEAR ANALYSIS
2015/16 TO 2024/25



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

ABOUT ROYAL LIFE SAVING

Royal Life Saving is focused on reducing drowning and promoting healthy, active and skilled communities through innovative, reliable, evidence based advocacy; strong and effective partnerships; quality programs, products and services; underpinned by a cohesive and sustainable national organisation.

Royal Life Saving is a public benevolent institution (PBI) dedicated to reducing drowning and turning everyday people into everyday community lifesavers. We achieve this through: advocacy, education, training, health promotion, aquatic risk management, community development, research, sport, leadership and participation and international networks.

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Miller L. 2026 Multiple Fatality Drowning Deaths.
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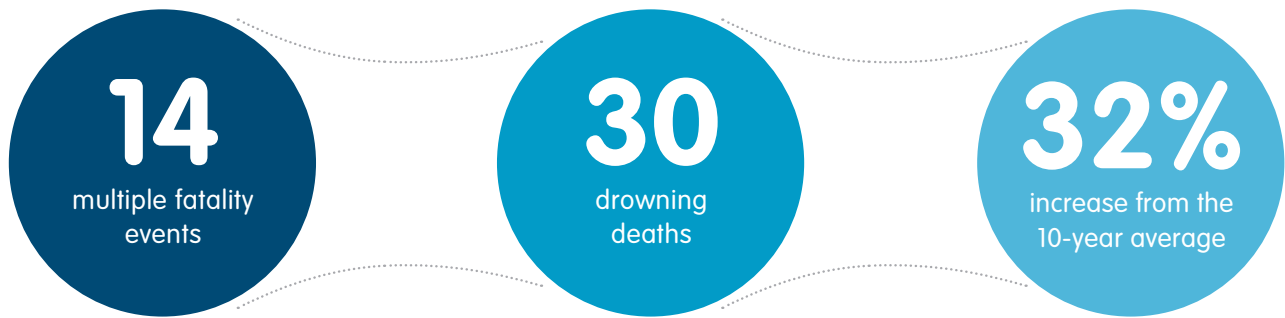
> OUR VISION

**A water-loving nation
free from drowning.**



RoyalLifeSaving.com.au

> MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS SNAPSHOT:
Financial year 2025/26



83% of multiple fatality drowning events were males



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



27%
were aged between
65-74-years



30%
occurred while boating



47%
occurred in a River/Creek



20%
non-aquatic transport

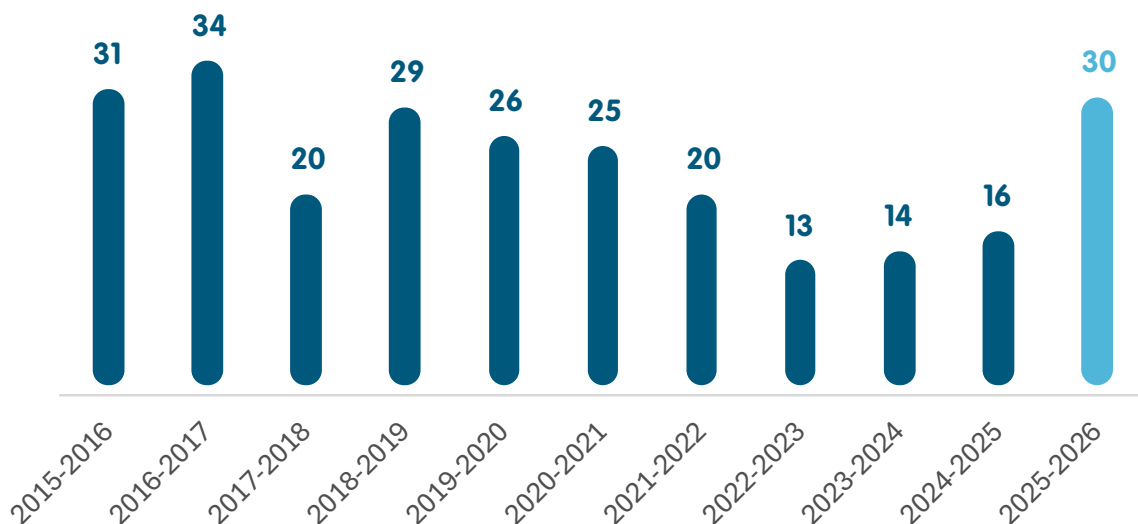


37%
were born overseas
27% were born in China &
27% in United Kingdom

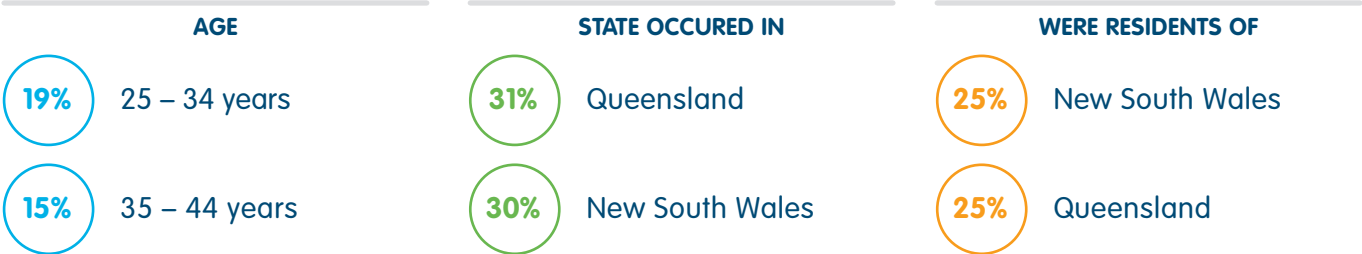
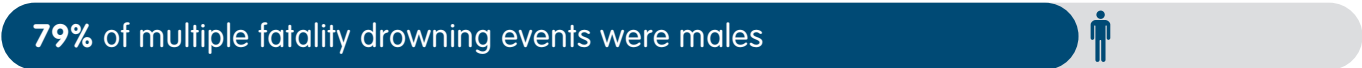


20%
occurred while swimming

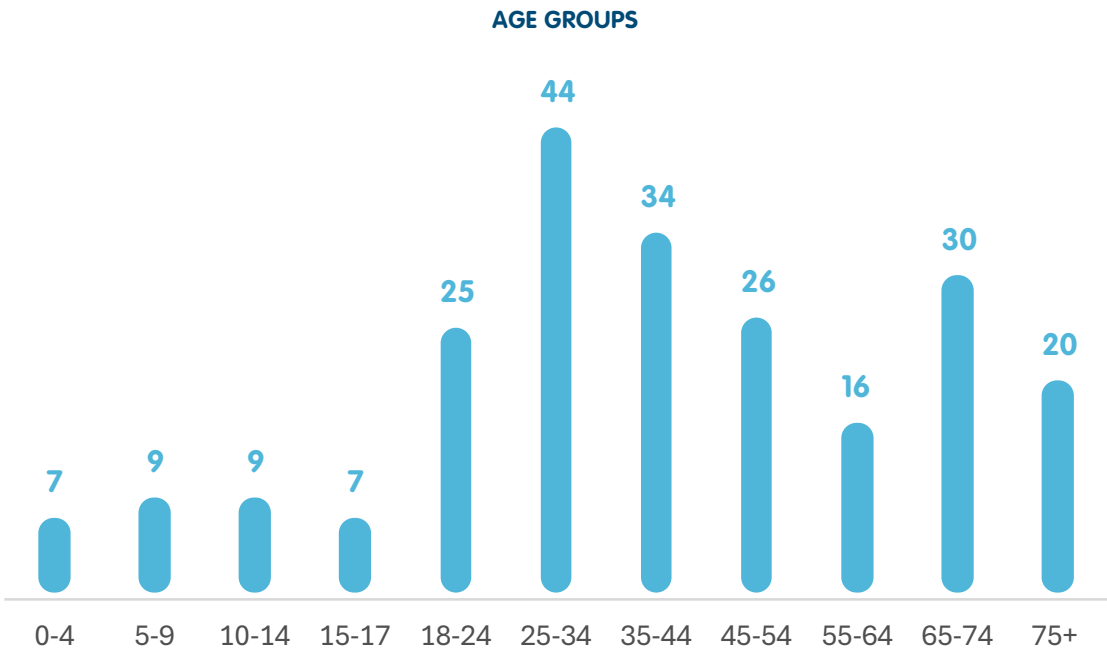
COMPARISON OVER THE PAST 10-YEARS (2015/16-2024/25) TO THIS FINANCIAL YEAR (2025/26)



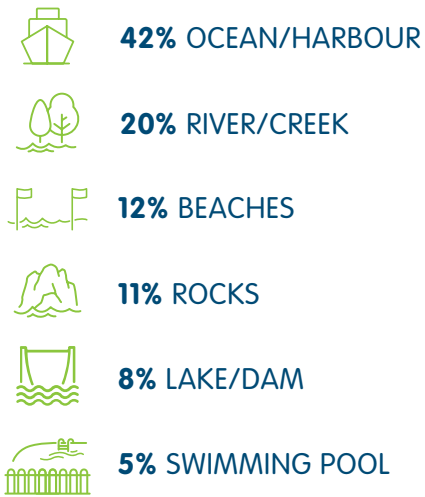
> MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS 10-YEAR SNAPSHOT
Analysis from 2015/16 to 2024/25



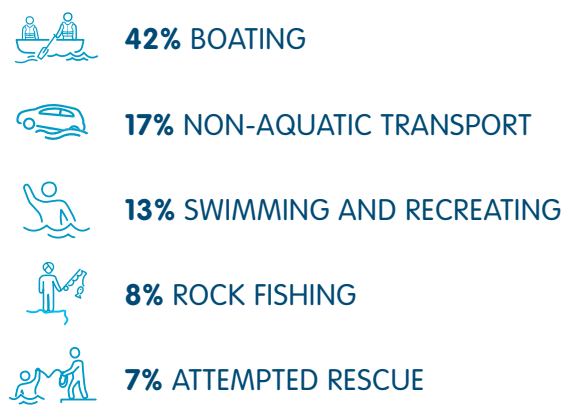
42% were among people born overseas
The top three countries being United Kingdom, China, and India.
Of those born overseas 18% were overseas visitors and 3% were international students.



TOP LOCATIONS



TOP ACTIVITIES



38% of drowning deaths that occurred in a River/Creek were during a flooding event.

Of the Non-aquatic Transport fatalities, **38%** occurred during a flooding event.

RISK FACTORS



19%

of people who drowned while boating was found to be wearing a life jacket



6%

of drowning deaths occurred during a flood



21%

of cases had drugs recorded



16%

had a pre-existing medical condition



13%

of cases had recorded alcohol present

> MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS SNAPSHOT: Overseas Born

Of the 229 drowning deaths that occurred as a result of a multiple fatality event, **97 (42%)** of people were reported as born overseas, **81%** were Males.

Over half were residents to Australia, **18%** were overseas visitors, followed by **3%** being recorded as an international student.

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN INCLUDED

12%

United Kingdom

11%

China

11%

India

5%

Philippines

TOP LOCATIONS



33% OCEAN/HARBOUR



22% BEACH



18% RIVER/CREEK



18% ROCKS



6% SWIMMING POOL

TOP ACTIVITIES



27% BOATING



21% SWIMMING AND RECREATING



18% NON-AQUATIC TRANSPORT



12% ROCK FISHING



8% ATTEMPTED RESCUE

LOCATION OF INCIDENT



42% of overseas born drowning deaths occurred in New South Wales followed by Queensland (28%) and Western Australia (14%).

RESIDENTIAL LOCATION



34% lived in New South Wales, **18%** lived in Queensland, and **14%** lived in Western Australia at the time of death.

RISK FACTORS

7% were found to have pre-existing medical condition.

11% of cases reported alcohol present at the time of death, **however none were found to contribute to the drowning death.**

12% of drowning deaths reported drugs.
83% of which were legal prescription medications.

MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS WHO WERE BORN OVERSEAS BY AGE GROUP

23%

25-34 years

18%

35-44 years

15%

55-64 years

12%

65-74 years

> MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS SNAPSHOT: Ocean/Harbour

There were **40** multiple fatality drowning events that took place in an Ocean/Harbour, resulting in a total of **102** (45%) drowning deaths over the past 10 years.

These events occurred mainly while boating (**85%**) followed by Non-aquatic Transport (**9%**) (Airplane or helicopter crash into the ocean).



Almost a third (**31%**) of these deaths were among people born overseas; **59%** were residents, followed by **19%** being overseas visitors.

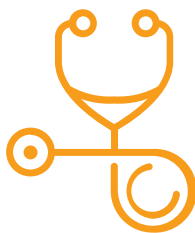


33% of deaths occurred in Queensland, **21%** occurred in Western Australia

RISK FACTORS



26%
of cases had drugs
recorded



18%
had a pre-existing
medical condition



14%
of cases had recorded
alcohol present

MULTIPLE FATALITY DROWNING DEATHS THAT OCCURRED IN AN OCEAN/HARBOUR BY AGE GROUP



➤ RECOMMENDATIONS / PREVENTION

- Collaborating with drowning prevention organisations and injury prevention agencies to promote safety messages around flood safety/ flood warning, boating safety messages, and road safety.
- Improve boating safety education by encouraging trip planning, weather checks, communication devices, and emergency preparedness before entering waterways.
- Continue to promote life jacket wear through messaging that focuses on normalizing life jacket use for all boating and watercraft activities.
- Increase awareness on the importance of carrying and maintaining compliant life jackets, including regular checks on fit, condition, and accessibility before every trip out on the water.
- Continue to promote active child supervision

➤ METHODS

Data from this analysis was collated from the Royal Life Saving National Fatal Drowning Database for the 10-year period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2025 (2015/16 to 2024/25) which is sourced from the National Coronial Information System (NCIS), State and Territory Coronial offices and year-round media monitoring. Information contained within the NCIS is made available by the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Drowning deaths as a result of suicide or homicide, deaths from natural causes, sharks and crocodile attacks, or hypothermia have been excluded from this report. While this report reports solely on those who died due to drowning (as the contributory cause of death), we acknowledge that additional people may have died in these incidents from other causes e.g., injuries etc.



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