



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9TH DECEMBER 2020**

## **Mate! Swim sober and don't be a statistic.**

### **Royal Life Saving urges Australian men to Make the Right Call to prevent drowning this summer**

Royal Life Saving research shows that 2188 males drowned in Australia between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2020, accounting for 79% of total drowning deaths during this period, with men aged 25 to 44 being at greatest risk of drowning.

Royal Life Saving's CEO, Justin Scarr, said "Men taking risks and overestimating their abilities continues to be our greatest challenge. Males are over-represented in drowning statistics, especially men aged 25 to 44 years; in the past year, over 90% of those who drowned in this age group were males. Drowning is preventable, our research shows that too many lives continue to be lost to drowning each year. The tragic and unnecessary loss of life has far reaching impacts on families and loved ones, which is heartbreaking."

Alcohol consumption has been found to be a significant contributor to drowning, with almost one in five (19%) cases of fatal drowning among men aged 25 to 44 involving a blood alcohol content of 0.05% or more. The findings show that most people who had consumed alcohol did not intend to be in the water and drowned following an unintentional fall into water.

In the past 10 years, most drowning deaths in men aged 25 to 44 years occurred at unpatrolled inland waterways such as rivers and creeks, accounting for 31% of deaths, more than any other location. The two most common activities being undertaken immediately prior to drowning were swimming and recreating (26%) and boating (17%). Over 40% of these deaths occurred in the summer months, and alcohol was found to be involved in 36% of deaths.

Mr Scarr says "Alcohol consumption in, on and around waterways increases risk-taking behaviour, reduces coordination, and impairs judgement, and too many Australian men are drowning as a result. Our work at Royal Life Saving is about lives not numbers. And lives matter, especially to the people we love. None of us is invincible. So, as we head into the summer break, our message to men is Make the Right Call and look out for each other while holidaying, camping and boating on our waterways. Have fun but stay safe. Swim sober, wear a lifejacket and don't go alone. Know your limitations and don't take risks. Don't be a statistic."

#### **Notes to the editor**

Royal Life Saving's 'Make the Right Call' campaign highlights a common-sense approach and advocates simple safety tips to prevent drowning:

- **Avoid alcohol around water**
- **Wear a lifejacket when boating, kayaking or canoeing**
- **Avoid swimming or recreating alone**

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia's research, education and advocacy work in drowning prevention and water safety is supported by the Australian Government.

For more information about Royal Life Saving, visit [www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au)

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