NON-FATAL DROWNINGS

Non-fatal drowning is a drowning incident where **a person survives** after experiencing respiratory impairment from being submerged or immersed in liquid.

For every fatal drowning, there are approximately 3 non-fatal incidents,

Children (0-4 years)

Have the highest **fatal** to **non-fatal** ratio, with **8 non-fatal** incidents for every **1 fatal drowning.**

They are at the **highest risk** of non-fatal drowning in **swimming pools.**

Teenagers and Adults

Are more likely to experience **non-fatal drowning** in natural water bodies.

They are at the **highest risk** of non-fatal drowning in **rivers, lakes, and beaches**

Long-Term Impacts:

Non-fatal drownings can lead to significant long-term health issues, including:
hypoxic brain injury impacting an individual's quality of life.

Australia's Drowning Deaths 2025/26

Statistics from 2025/26 report published by

ROYAL LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA

For more information visit

339
Drowning deaths in 2021/22

281
Drowning deaths in 2022/23

323
Drowning deaths in 2023/24

357
Drowning deaths in 2024/25

313

Drowning deaths in 2025/26

10%
Increase

284

10 year average

82%
Were Male

30%
Were aged 65 years or older

39%
Were born overseas

TOP 3 LOCATIONS

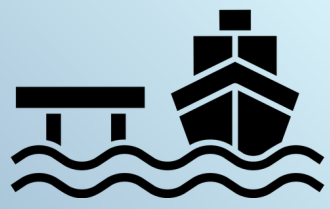
22%
River / Creek



21%
Beach

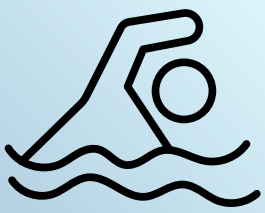


20%
Ocean / Harbour



TOP 3 ACTIVITIES

24%
Swimming / Recreational



13%
Unintentional fall into water



10%
Boating



Who Drowns?

Age group

Infants
0-4 years

38%

Decrease compared to the 10 year average.

Children
5-14 years

14%

Increase compared to the 10 year average.

Teenage / Young Adult
15-24 years

5%

Decrease compared to the 10 year average.

Adult
25-34 years

16%

Decrease compared to the 10 year average.

Adult
65 years and over

11%

Increase compared to the 10 year average.

Who Drowns?
Country of Birth

62%

of people who drown,
country of birth was known

Of those
(76 people)

39%

were born overseas

The highest number of people who drowned in 2025/26 were born in China followed by people from United Kingdom, India, United States, New Zealand and Japan



China



UK



India



USA



New Zealand



Japan

Who Drowns? Where?

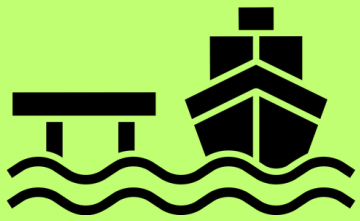
TOP 3 LOCATIONS



River / Creek

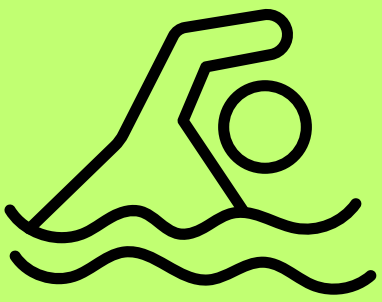


Beach



Ocean / Harbour

TOP 3 ACTIVITIES



Swimming and Recreational

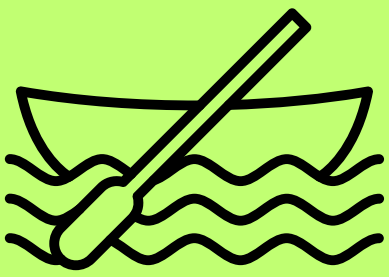


Unintentional fall into water



Boating

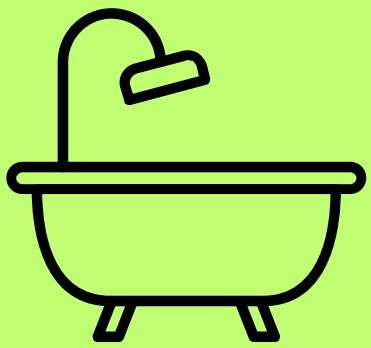
OTHER ACTIVITIES



Watercraft



Non- Aquatic transport



Bathing



Jumped in



Fishing



Diving and Snorkling



Attempt rescue



Rock Fishing



Unknown

Who Drowns? Where?

0-4 years

73%
Unintentional fall into water

18%
Swimming and Recreational

9%
Bathing

5-14 years

54%
Swimming and Recreating

23%
Unintentional fall into water

15%
Non Aquatic Transport

8%
Watercraft

15-24 years

38%
Swimming and Recreational

12%
Non-Aquatic transport

12%
Boating

9%
Jumped in

6%
Unintentional fall into water

Who Drowns? Where?

Adult
50- 64 years

18% Swimming and Recreational

11% Boating

11% Diving and Snorkeling

9% Bathing

8% Recreational Fishing

8% Unintentional fall into water

5% Non Aquatic transport

Adult
65 + years

31% Swimming and Recreational

15% Unintentional fall into water

14% Boating

8% Diving and Snorkeling

7% Non Aquatic transport