



# WA DROWNING REPORT 2020

Partner:



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA





## A WATER LOVING NATION FREE FROM DROWNING

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Royal Life Saving acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands in which we live and work. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and recognise their continuing association with the land, waters and sky of this country.

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

## Drowning incidents recorded in WA in 2019/20



Drowning Incidents  
(9.8 per 100,000)



Fatal  
Drownings



Hospital  
Admissions



Emergency  
Department  
Presentations



Overall drowning rates  
**increased** from 2018/19 by 9.5%.



Drowning trends show an average  
**increase** of 6.5% over past decade

Males were almost twice as likely to drown than females

**64%** of those who drowned in Western Australia were male



Drowning risk was highest  
amongst toddlers, young  
children and older adults.

**Rate per 100,000:**

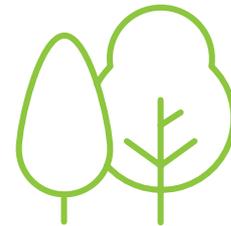
**64.1** Toddlers (0-4 years)

**8.2** Children (5-14 years)

**5.7** Young People (15-24 years)

**5.3** Adults (25-64 years)

**6.6** Older Adults (65+ years)



People in **regional WA** were 2.3 times more  
likely to be involved in a drowning incident  
than those in the Perth metropolitan area.

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



Midwest

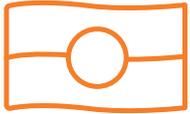


Kimberley



South West

Multicultural communities were over-represented in drowning data



7.4% of drowning involved **Aboriginal Australians**

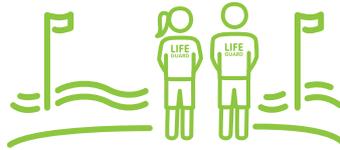


19.9% of drowning involved **a person born overseas**

Drowning incidents were most likely to occur at coastal and inland waterways while swimming, fishing or recreating around water.



**38.9%**  
Ocean/Harbour



**16.7%**  
Beach



**13.9%**  
Lake/Dam



**21.6%**  
Swimming



**16.2%**  
Fishing



**16.2%**  
Recreating

Key risk factors for drowning:



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



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



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



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



Poor **swimming ability**



**Inexperience** in the activity being undertaken

## DROWNING AT A GLANCE

**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 2019 to June 2020 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 36 fatal drowning incidents recorded in WA waterways between July 2019 and June 2020, at a rate of 1.4 per 100,000 population, a 23.3% increase from 2018/19. Fatal drowning trends have shown a 3.8% decrease in the rate of drowning over the past decade

Nationally, WA accounted for 13.3% of all fatal drowning incidents in 2019/20 and recorded the second highest rate of drowning behind the Northern Territory.

## Non-Fatal Drowning

For every fatal drowning death recorded in 2019/20, there were six non-fatal drowning incidents. Overall, 222 non-fatal drowning incidents were recorded in WA during 2019/20, a 7.7% increase from 2018/19.

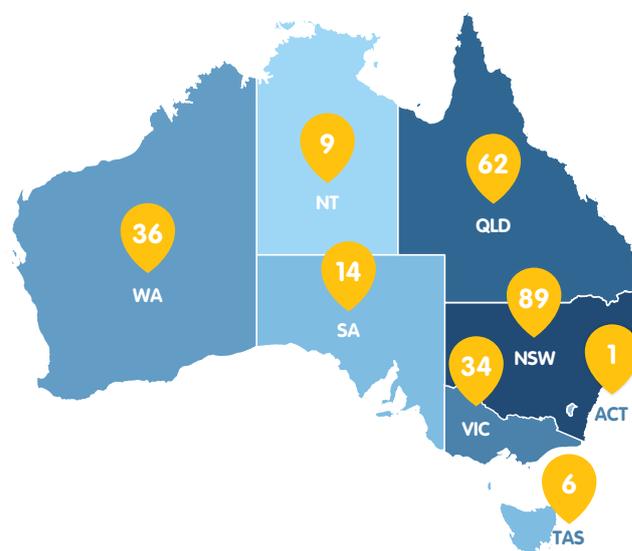
Of these, 102 people were admitted to hospital at a rate of 3.9 per 100,000 population, a slight decrease from 2018/19 (0.9%). While the average number of hospital admissions has remained similar over the past decade, rates have decreased by 13.1%.

In addition, 120 people presented at an emergency department in the Perth metropolitan area at a rate of 5.7 per 100,000 population. This reversed trends reported in 2018/19, with the rate increasing by 16.4%. Despite this increase, there has been an overall downward trend, with the average number of presentations has more than halved over the past decade (53.6% decrease) and rate of presentations has decreased by 40.9%.

Overall drowning in WA, 2010/11 to 2019/20



State and Territory breakdown, Fatal Drowning



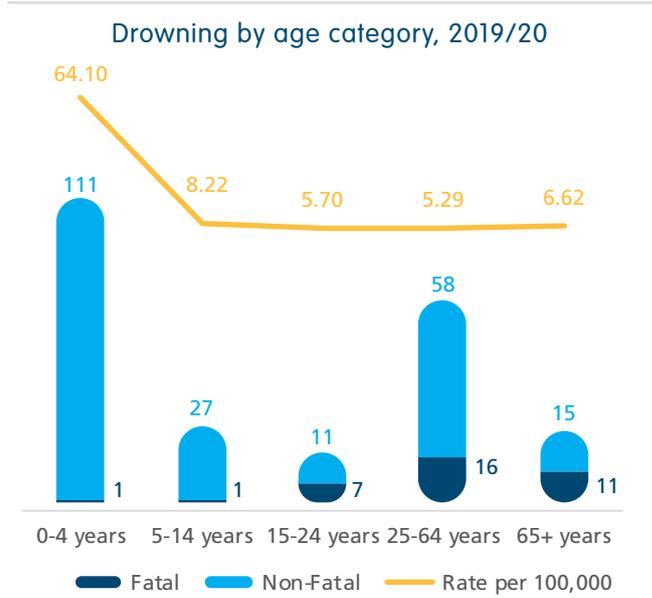
Males were 1.7 times more likely to be involved in a drowning incident (12.5/100,000) compared to females (7.2/100,000) with 63.6% of incidents involving men. While the drowning rates amongst males was similar to 2018/19, the rate amongst females increased by 22.2%.

**64%** of those who drowned in Western Australia were male 

Drowning risk varied with age. In a continuing trend, toddlers (64.1/100,000) and young children (8.2/100,000) were at the greatest risk of drowning and drowning severity increased with age.

Compared to 2018/19, young people aged 15-24 years recorded the greatest decrease in drowning rate (26.9%), while rates increased for older adults (69.2%), adults 25-64 years (29.3%) and toddlers (2.2%). Rates for children aged 5-14 years remained similar to 2018/19 (1.2% decrease).

In addition, over the past decade, rates of fatal drowning have reduced significantly amongst toddlers aged 0-4 years (44.4%) and children 5-14 years (40.3%), while rates have almost doubled for young people aged 15-24 years.



**Aboriginal Australians** continue to be over-represented in drowning data with 7.4% of incidents involving Aboriginal Australians, despite making up only 4.0% of the WA population. Overall, Aboriginal Australians were 1.9 times more likely to be involved in a drowning incident (18.0/100,000) than non-Aboriginal Australians (9.5/100,000).

Overall, 19.9% of drowning incidents (fatal and non-fatal) involved a person **born overseas**, an 14.1% increase from 2018/19. This was higher for fatal drowning where 37.9% of incidents involved a person who was born overseas. Of these, 54.6% were from a non-English speaking background and one third had been living in Australia for 10 years or more (average - 26 years).

22.2% of fatal drowning incidents **involved tourists**, all of whom were intrastate tourists travelling within WA



The majority of fatal drowning victims were from **high socio-economic areas**, with 30.6% in the highest quintile for economic advantage. The proportion of drowning deaths involving people from low socio-economic areas doubled in 2019/20, with 25.0% residing in areas within the lowest two quintiles for economic advantage compared to 10.3% in 2018/19.



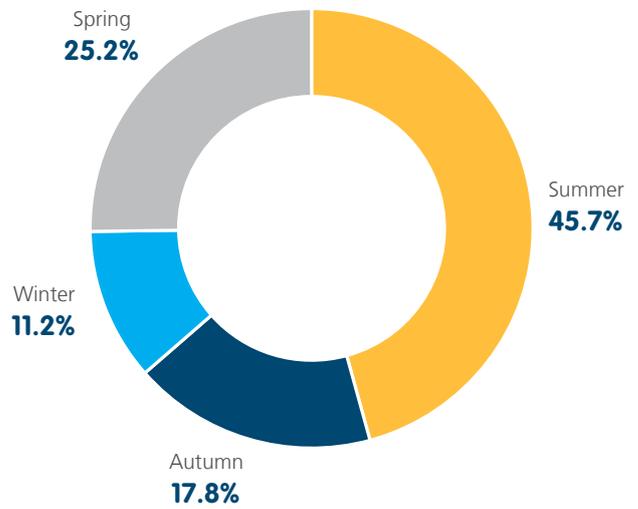
## WHEN AND WHERE

Almost half of drowning incidents (fatal and non-fatal) occurred during the summer months (45.7%), likely contributed to by warmer weather, higher exposure through increased participation in aquatic activities and school holidays being during this time of year.

Over half of drowning deaths occurred during the week (58.3%), however, Sunday (22.2%) and Saturday (19.4%) were the most common days for fatal drowning to occur. In addition, 11.1% of drowning deaths occurred over a public holiday/long weekend, a slight increase from 2018/19.

Similar to previous years, the majority of drowning deaths occurred during the afternoon (47.2%) with 2.00pm - 4.00pm the highest risk time for drowning.

Drowning by season, 2019/20



### High-risk times for drowning



Summer months



Saturday, Sunday and key holiday periods



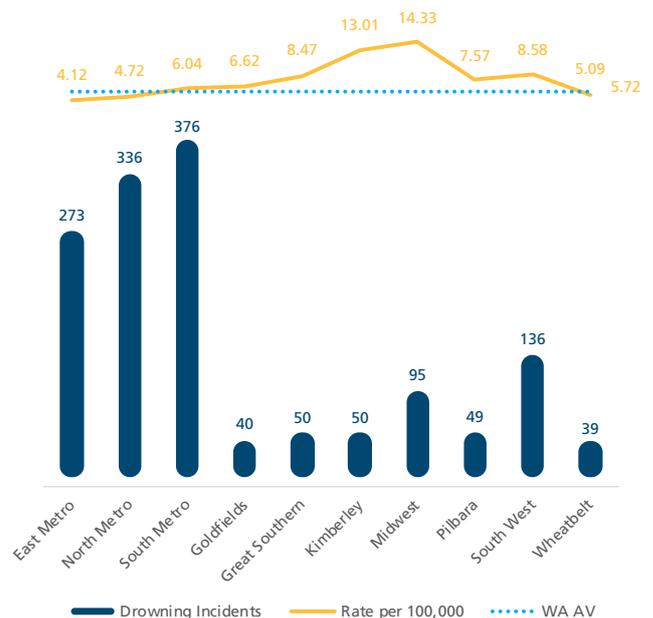
Afternoon between 2.00 and 4.00PM

### > Metro vs. regional aquatic location

While a higher proportion of drowning occurred in the Perth metropolitan area (63.8%), rates of drowning were higher in regional WA with people 2.3 times more likely to drown in regional WA (9.5/100,000) than the Perth metropolitan area (4.2/100,000). The rate of drowning in regional WA continued to increase in 2019/20 (23.4% increase), while the rate decreased by 4.5% 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.

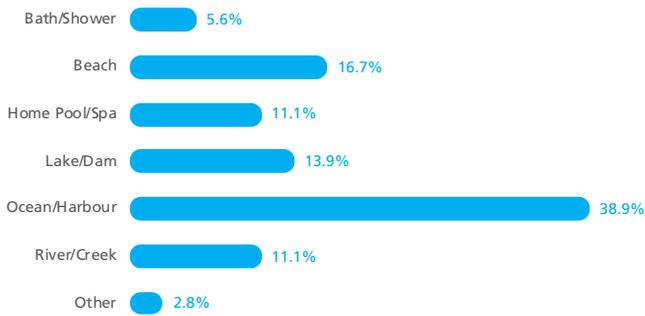
Drowning by health region, 2010/11 to 2019/20



Aquatic locations where the drowning occurred varied by age and geographic location. While the majority of drowning deaths occurred in major cities (44.4%), almost one quarter (22.2%) occurred at remote or very remote locations with limited access and mobile phone reception, affecting response times and rescue efforts.

Aquatic locations where drowning occurred varied by age and demographic. Fatal drowning incidents were most likely to occur at ocean/harbours, beaches or lake/dams. While overall drowning (fatal and non-fatal) was most likely to occur in open water locations (33.3%), followed by home swimming pools (16.7%) and beaches (11.6%) in 2019/20.

Fatal drowning by aquatic location, 2019/20



Top 3 Aquatic Locations



**38.9%**  
Ocean/Harbour

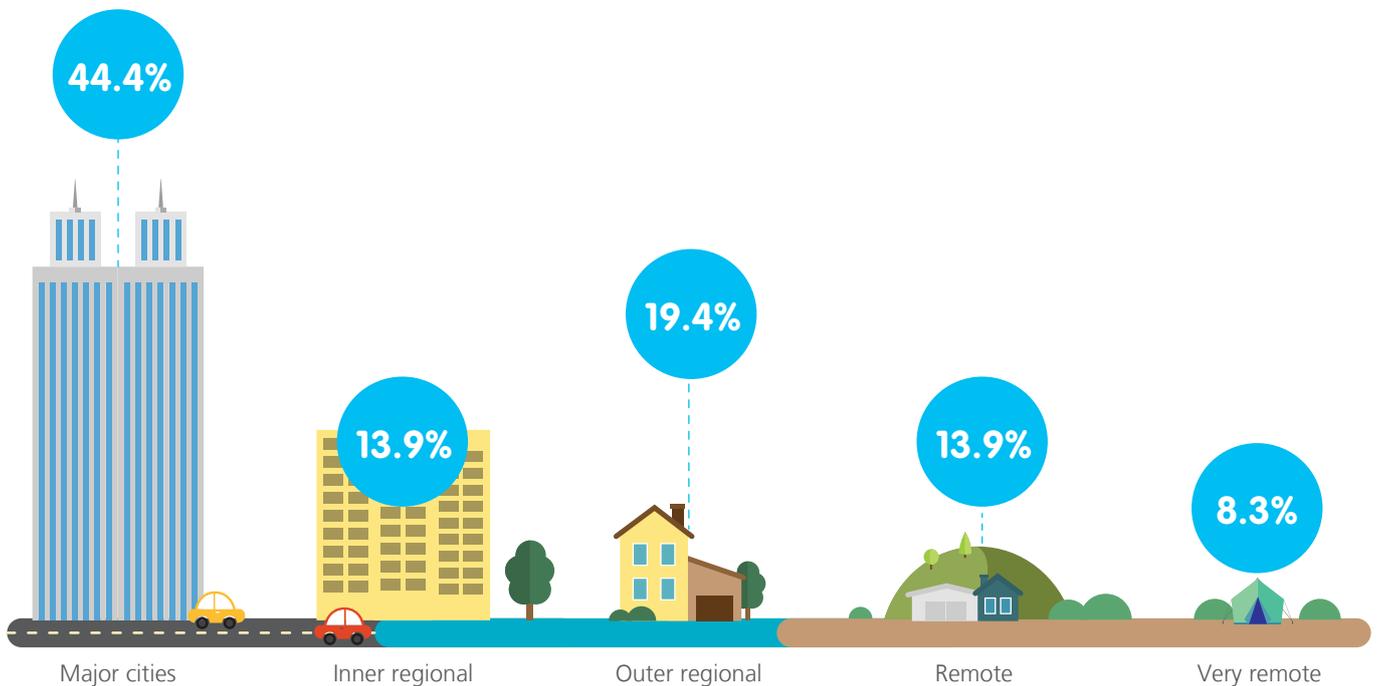


**16.7%**  
Beach



**13.9%**  
Lake/Dam

Proportion of drowning deaths by remoteness



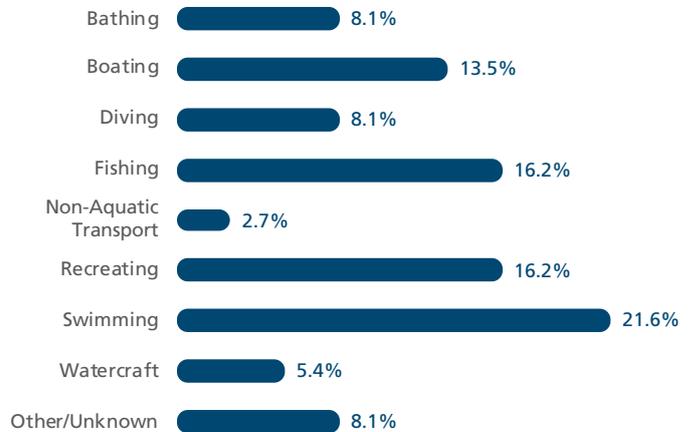
## ACTIVITY

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

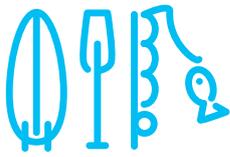
For non-fatal drowning incidents, one quarter (25.7%) of people were participating in a water sport and a further 14.9% were participating in a leisure activity at the time of the incident.

Overall, 42.7% of people involved in a fatal drowning incident entered the water intentionally while participating in an aquatic activity prior to the drowning event. Of those that weren't prepared to enter the water, 16.7% slipped or fell and 8.3% were swept in by a wave. Method of water entry was unknown in 11.1% of incidents.

Fatal Drowning by activity, 2019/20



Entry to Water – Fatal Drowning, 2019/20



**47.2%**

Aquatic activity participation



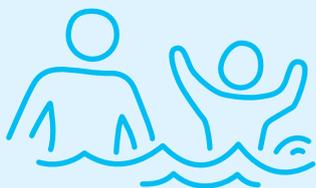
**16.7%**

Slipped/fell



**8.3%**

Swept in



The majority of people (61.1%) were participating **with others at the time of the drowning incident**. Over one quarter (27.8%) were participating alone, impacting on rescue and response efforts. This was a 13.6% decrease from 2018/19.

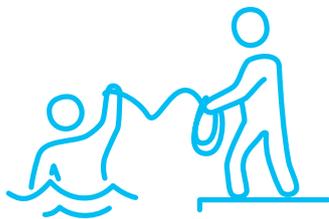
## RESCUE AND RESPONSE

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A rescue was attempted in 38.9% of fatal drowning incidents recorded in 2019/20. Over half (57.1%) 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 57.1% 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 **38.9%** of fatal drowning incidents

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Of those incidents where an aquatic rescue was undertaken, **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was performed** in 78.6% 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 33.3% of fatal drowning incidents, a 4.6% decrease from 2018/19. 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 30.6% of fatal drowning incidents
- Lack of safety equipment, particularly the use of lifejackets was a factor in 22.2% of fatal drowning incidents
- Poor swimming ability contributed to 13.4% of fatal drowning incidents, a 10.2% decrease from 2018/19
- One in six people involved in a fatal drowning incident (16.7%) had alcohol in their system, a 7.4% decrease from 2018/19. Of these, two thirds recorded a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.05 or greater. BAC ranged from 0.030 to 0.376% with an average of 0.142%
- Inexperience in the activity being undertaken contributed to 8.3% of fatal drowning incidents

# ALCOHOL-RELATED DROWNING

JULY 2010 TO JUNE 2020



**74**  
alcohol-related  
drowning  
deaths

Representing  
**21.4%**  
of total drowning  
deaths

and a  
**8% increase**  
over the past  
decade



Alcohol-related drowning deaths by year (2010/11 to 2019/20)



Overall, 59.5% of people involved in an **alcohol-related drowning death** had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.05 or greater.

### 0.142 - average BAC recorded.

There has been a 26% decrease in average BAC recorded over the past ten years.

54.2% also had drugs in their system at the time of drowning.

### High-risk times for drowning



37.8%  
Summer months



58.1%  
Weekends  
12.2% Public Holiday



35.2%  
Evening  
6PM - 12AM

Males were 3.2 times more likely to drown than females (0.61/100,000 vs. 0.19/100,000) and were four times more likely to have a BAC 0.05 or greater.

79% of all drowning deaths were males

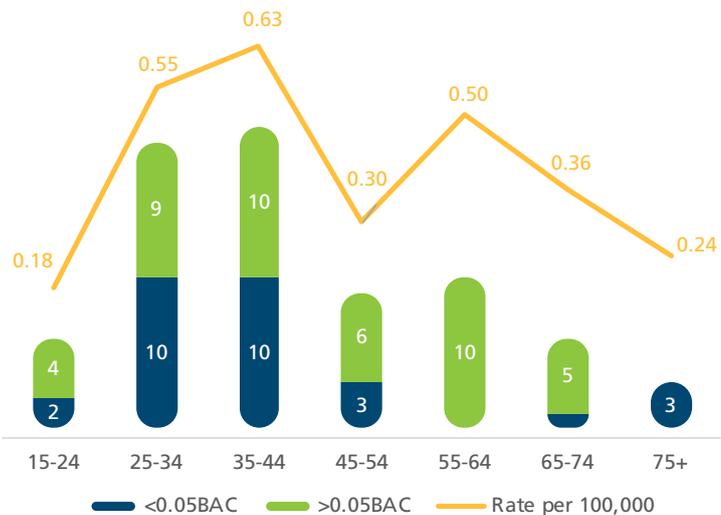


Drowning was greatest amongst adults 25-44 years, with adults aged 35-44 and 55-64 years recording the highest proportion of deaths with a BAC of 0.05 or greater.

Drowning risk was lowest amongst young people 15-24 years and older adults 75 years and over recorded the lowest proportion of deaths with a BAC of 0.05 or greater.

24.3% were visitors to the area, with the majority (77.8%) travellers from within WA.

Alcohol-Related Drowning Deaths by Age 2010/11 to 2019/20



10.8% of fatal drowning deaths involved **Aboriginal Australians** who were 3.8 times more likely to be involved in an alcohol-related drowning (1.26/100,000) than non-Aboriginal Australians (0.33/100,000)

Multicultural communities were over-represented in alcohol-related drowning data with **29.7% born overseas**



50.0% were from a non-English speaking background



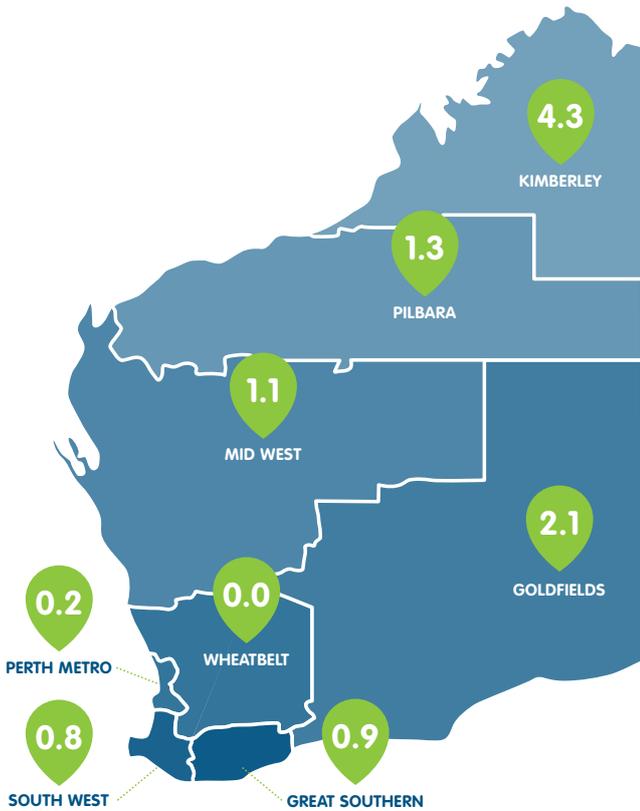
Majority had lived in Australia for 10+ years (59.1%)



9.1% were overseas tourists

Drowning was 5.7 times more likely to occur in regional WA (59%; 1.2/100,000) than the Perth metropolitan area (41%; 0.2/100,000).

Drowning rate per 100,000 population



### Top 3 Aquatic Locations, Alcohol-related drowning



**28.4%** Ocean/Harbour



**25.9%** River/Creek



**17.6%** Beach



**9.5%** Bath/Shower



**6.8%** Lake/Dam



**6.8%** Home Pool/Spa



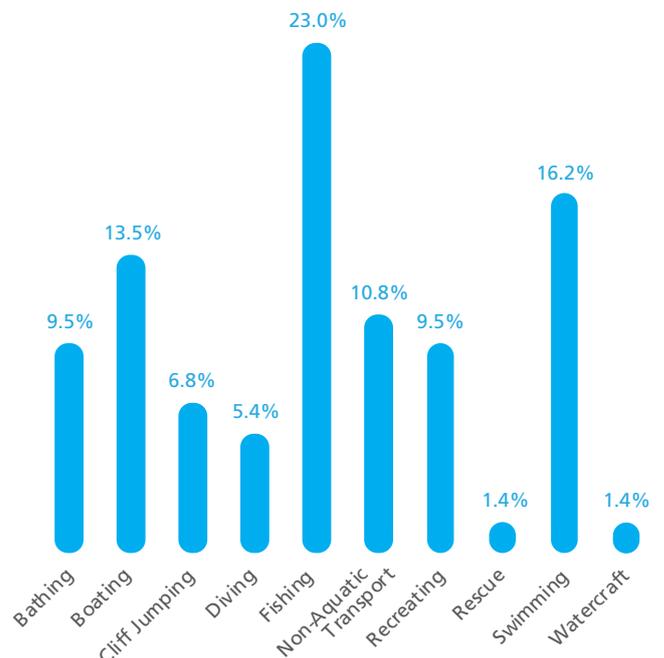
**50% of people entered the water unintentionally** (48% swept in / 19% submerged vehicle)



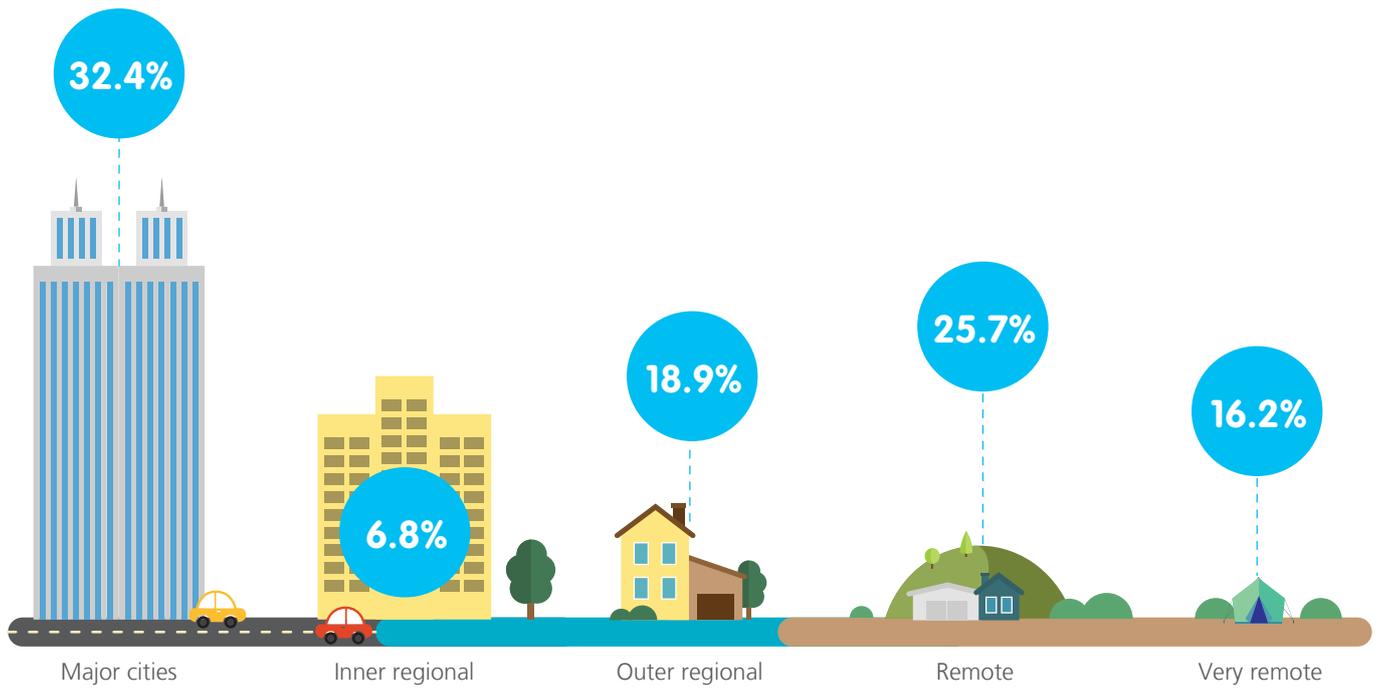
**50% aquatic rescue performed**  
24% CPR performed

### Alcohol-Related Drowning Deaths by Activity, 2010/11 to 2019/20

Most common activities being undertaken at the time of the drowning incident were fishing, swimming and boating.



Almost half of alcohol-related drowning deaths occurred in remote or very remote locations, and two-thirds occurred within 50km of home.



# FISHING-RELATED DROWNING

July 2010 to June 2020



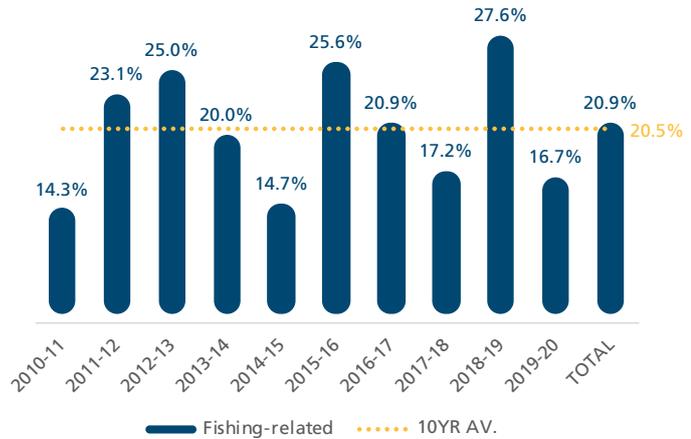
**72**  
fishing-related  
drowning  
deaths

Representing  
**20.9%**  
of total drowning  
deaths

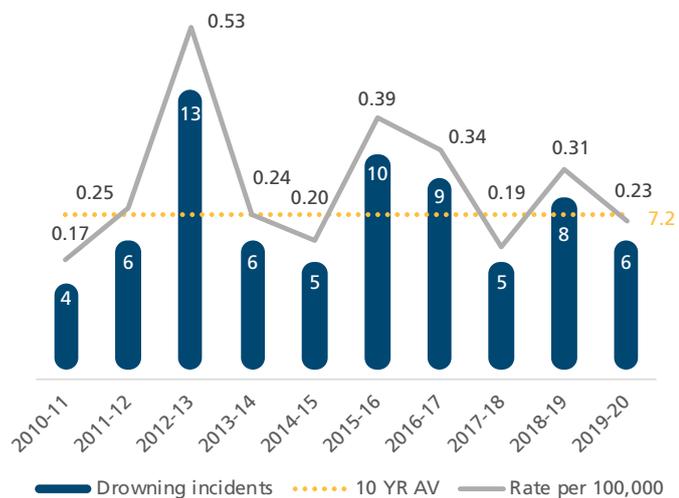
and a  
**22%**  
increase  
over the past  
ten years



Proportion of fishing-related drowning deaths by year, 2010/11 to 2019/20



Number of fishing related drowning deaths, 2010/11 to 2019/20



## Fishing-related drowning deaths



### High-risk times for drowning



32.0%  
Autumn months



50.0%  
Weekends



38.0%  
Mornings  
7-8AM / 10-11AM

Males were 8.4 times more likely to drown than females

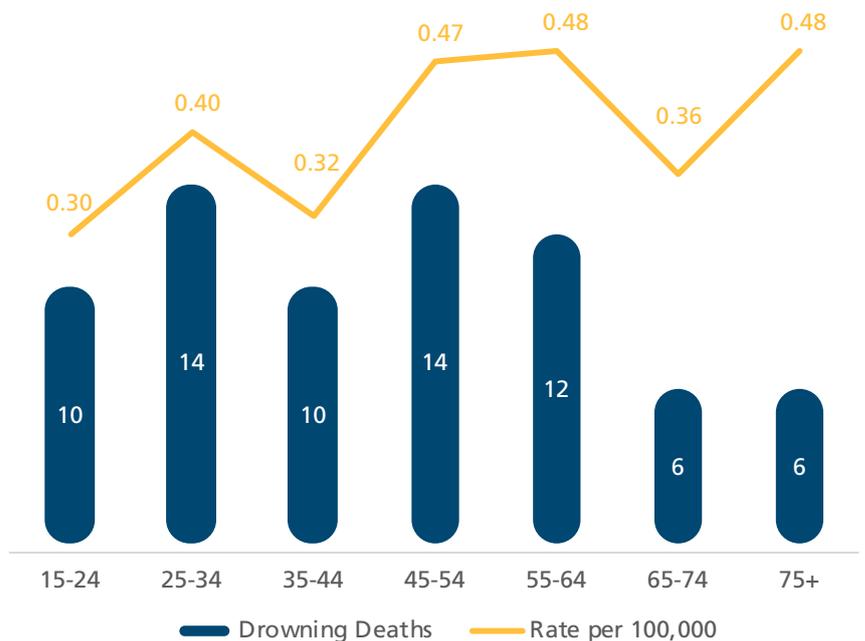
90% of those who drowned in fishing-related deaths were male



### Type of fishing



### Fishing-related drowning deaths by Age, 2010/11 to 2019/20



Multicultural communities were over-represented in fishing-related drowning data with **44.4% born overseas**.



84.4% were from a non-English speaking background



Majority had lived in Australia for 6-10 years (43.8%)



28.1% were new arrivals who had lived in Australia for five years or less.



The majority of fishing-related drowning occurred at **coastal locations** (93%), with a small proportion occurring at inland waterways such as rivers (7%).

### Fishing Black Spots

Albany / Carnarvon / Karratha  
Esperance / Rottnest Island



**53% aquatic rescue performed**  
34% CPR performed

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

**39%**

Swept in by wave

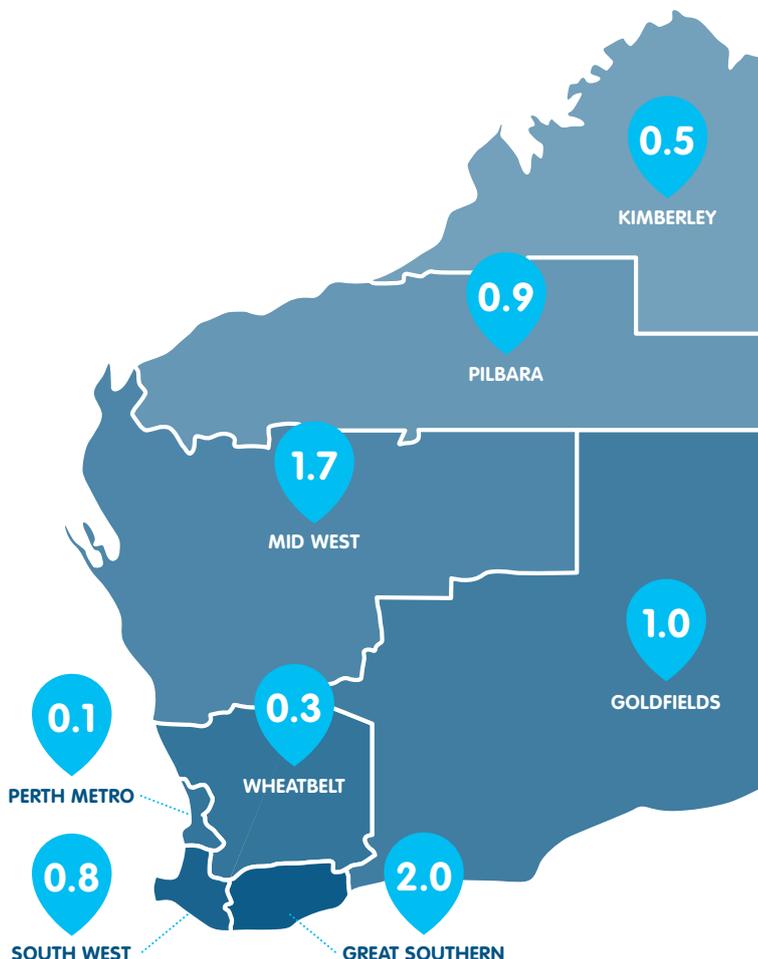
**36%**

Slipped/fell

**18%**

Boat capsized

Fishing-related drowning was 10.4 times more likely to occur in regional WA (73.6%; 0.99/100,000) than the Perth metropolitan area (26.4%; 0.10/100,000)



### Key risk factors for drowning

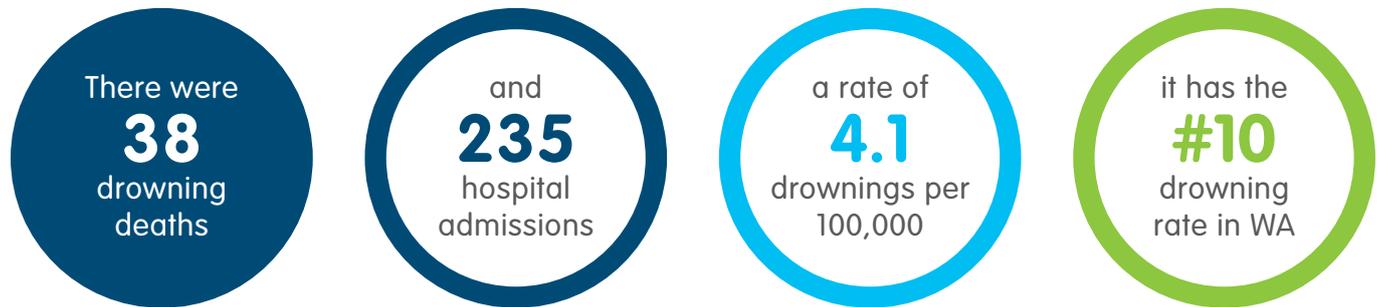
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (79.2%)
- > Not wearing a lifejacket and/or not using appropriate safety equipment (70.8%)
- > Remoteness of location (43.1%)
- > Poor swimming ability (35.1%)
- > Presence of pre-existing medical condition (25.0%)
- > Fishing alone (23.6%)
- > Inexperience in fishing-related activities (22.2%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (>0.05BAC) (15.3%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.136%)





Photo: Bells Rapid, Avon River

There were **273 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - East region



Males (5.0/100,000) were **1.6 times more likely to drown** than females (3.0/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> City of Bayswater	<b>31.6</b> Home Pool	<b>34.2</b> Recreating
<b>#2</b> City of Gosnells	<b>29.0</b> River/Creek	<b>23.7</b> Swimming
<b>#3</b> City of Swan	<b>15.8</b> Lake/Dam	<b>18.4</b> Bathing



**71.8%** were born in Australia



**28.2%** were born overseas



Of these, **64.7%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **4.8% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (9.3/100,000) 2.3 times more likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (4.0/100,000).

2.6% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is significantly lower than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (71.1%)  
CPR performed (70.4%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**3.0 days**



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years followed by children 5-14 years and older adults 65+ years.**  
(Rate per 100,000)

**22.5**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**3.0**

Children (5-14 years)

**2.6**

Young People (15-24 years)

**2.8**

Adults (25-64 years)

**3.0**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**49.8%**  
Summer months



**65.8%**  
Weekdays  
13.2% Public Holiday



**55.3%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

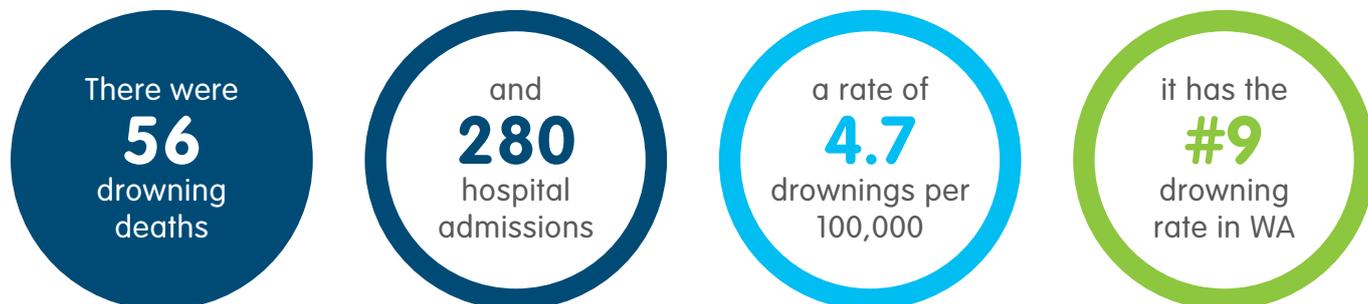
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Participating alone (60.5%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (52.6%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (23.7%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.123%)
- > Poor swimming ability (21.1%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (18.4%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (7.9%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (5.3%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (5.3%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (2.6%)



Photo: Scarborough Beach Pool

There were **336 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - North region



Males (5.9/100,000) were **1.7 times more likely to drown** than females (3.5/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> City of Joondalup	<b>33.3</b> Beach	<b>36.1</b> Recreating
<b>#2</b> City of Wanneroo	<b>31.5</b> Home Pool/Spa	<b>26.2</b> Swimming
<b>#3</b> City of Stirling	<b>9.3</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>8.2</b> Fishing



**72.0%** were born in Australia



**28.0%** were born overseas



Of these, **81.1%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **2.1% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (8.9/100,000) almost twice as likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (4.7/100,000).

7.1% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is significantly lower than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (78.6%)  
CPR performed 90.9%

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**3.3 days**



**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



**42.3%**  
Summer months



**58.9%**  
Weekdays



**42.9%**  
Mornings  
6AM - 12PM

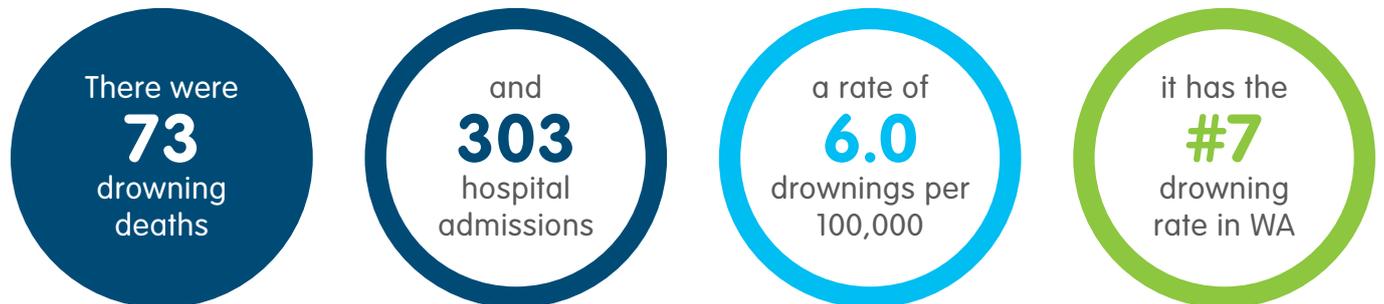
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (42.9%)
- > Poor swimming ability (37.5%)
- > Participating alone (32.1%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (26.8%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (21.4%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (21.4%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (19.6%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (7.1%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (8.9%) with an average BAC twice the legal limit for driving (0.103%)



Photo: Rottnest Island

There were **376 drowning incidents** recorded in the Perth Metropolitan - South region



Males (8.1/100,000) were **2.1 times more likely to drown** than females (3.9/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> City of Mandurah	<b>40.3</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>26.4</b> Boating
<b>#2</b> City of Rockingham	<b>18.1</b> Beach	<b>17.2</b> Fishing
<b>#3</b> Rottnest Island	<b>15.3</b> Home Pool/Spa	<b>13.8</b> Recreating



**75.5%** were born in Australia



**24.5%** were born overseas



Of these, **81.1%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **4.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with Aboriginal Australians (15.4/100,000) 2.6 times more likely to drown than non-Aboriginal Australians (5.9/100,000).

23.3% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (71.2%)  
CPR performed (78.9%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**2.7 days**



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

**30.3**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**4.9**

Children (5-14 years)

**4.0**

Young People (15-24 years)

**4.0**

Adults (25-64 years)

**5.7**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**49.8%**  
Summer months



**61.6%**  
Weekdays



**49.3%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

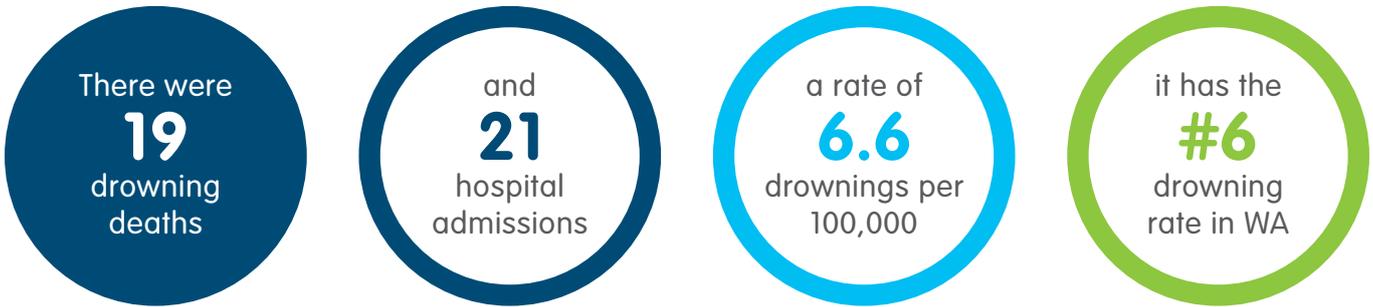
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (41.1%)
- > Participating alone (41.1%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (30.1%)
- > Poor swimming ability (24.7%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (20.6%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (21.9%) with an average BAC twice the legal limit for driving (0.098%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (12.3%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (9.6%)
- > Injury including head injury (6.6%)
- > Absent or faulty pool barrier (5.5%)



Photo: Twilight Beach, Esperance

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



Males (9.3/100,000) were **2.8 times more likely to drown** than females (3.3/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Esperance	<b>29.4</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>31.6</b> Swimming
<b>#2</b> City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder	<b>29.4</b> Beach	<b>31.6</b> Fishing
<b>#3</b> Shire of Jerramungup	<b>11.8</b> River/Creek	<b>10.5</b> Recreating



**72.5%** were born in Australia



**27.5%** 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 Australians (6.9/100,000) and non-Aboriginal Australians (6.6/100,000).

47.4% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (84.2%)  
CPR performed (50.0%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**4.5 days**



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

**25.0**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**3.5**

Children (5-14 years)

**6.2**

Young People (15-24 years)

**4.8**

Adults (25-64 years)

**7.7**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**45.0%**  
Summer months



**52.6%**  
Weekends



**57.9%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

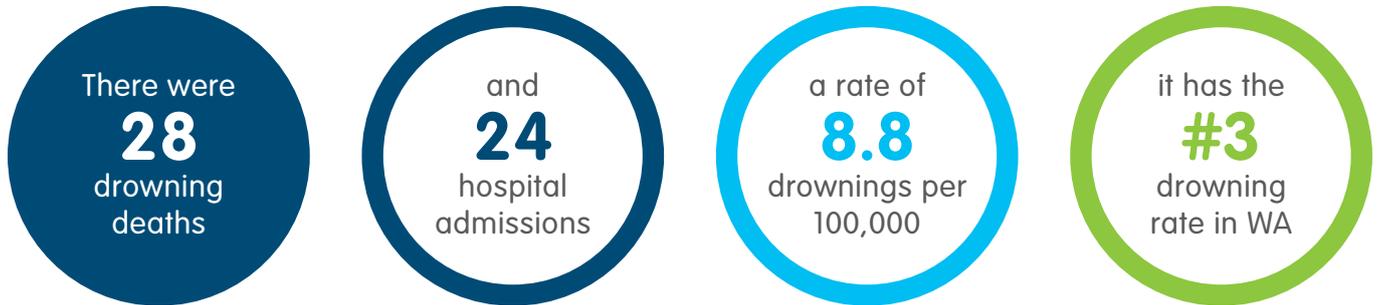
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Remote or very remote locations (84.3%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (57.9%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (47.4%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (42.1%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.137%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (31.6%)
- > Poor swimming ability (21.1%)
- > Participating alone (10.5%)
- > Injury including head injury (10.5%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (10.0%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (5.3%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (5.3%)



Photo: Salmon Holes, Torndirrup National Park, Albany

There were **52 drowning incidents** recorded in the Great Southern region



Males (11.7/100,000) were **2.4 times more likely to drown** than females (5.0/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> City of Albany	<b>57.7</b> Ocean/harbour	<b>44.4</b> Fishing
<b>#2</b> Shire of Denmark	<b>19.3</b> Beach	<b>11.1</b> Watercraft
<b>#3</b> Shire of Ravensthorpe	<b>11.5</b> Lake/Dam	<b>11.1</b> Recreating



**64.0%** were born in Australia



**36.0%** were born overseas



Of these, **66.7%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **2.0% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates less common for Aboriginal Australians (6.9/100,000) and non-Aboriginal Australians (8.6/100,000).

50.0% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (73.1%)  
CPR performed (31.6%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**5.5 days**



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 25-64 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



**38.0%**  
Autumn months



**57.7%**  
Weekdays



**46.2%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

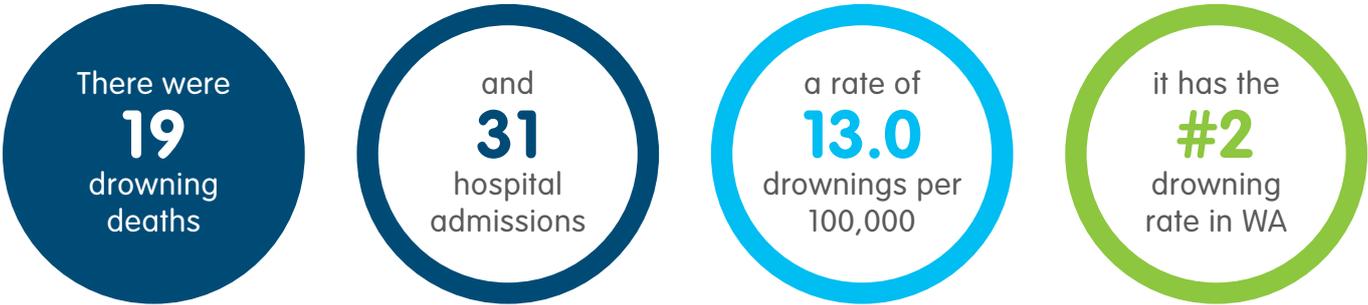
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (69.2%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (57.7%)
- > Participating alone (34.6%)
- > Poor swimming ability (30.8%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (24.0%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (23.0%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (19.2%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (15.4%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.138%)
- > Injury including head injury (11.5%)
- > Remote or very remote locations (7.7%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (7.7%)



Photo: Lake Argyle, Kununurra

There were **50 drowning incidents** recorded in the Kimberley region



Males (17.3/100,000) were **2.1 times more likely to drown** than females (8.2/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Broome	<b>57.9</b> River/Creek	<b>30.4</b> Recreating
<b>#2</b> Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley	<b>15.8</b> Beach	<b>18.2</b> Swimming
<b>#3</b> Shire of Derby-West Kimberley	<b>10.5</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>9.1</b> Diving



**82.0%** were born in Australia



**18.0%** were born overseas



Of these, **40.0%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **36.0% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, the largest proportion of any region. However, drowning rates for Aboriginal Australians (11.6/100,000) were slightly lower than that of non-Aboriginal Australians (14.5/100,000).

31.6% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is lower than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (57.9%)  
CPR performed (63.6%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**1.2 days**



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults 25-64 years**

(Rate per 100,000)

**35.2**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**9.8**

Children (5-14 years)

**7.7**

Young People (15-24 years)

**12.5**

Adults (25-64 years)

**4.7**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**34.0%**  
Summer months



**52.6%**  
Weekdays



**31.6%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

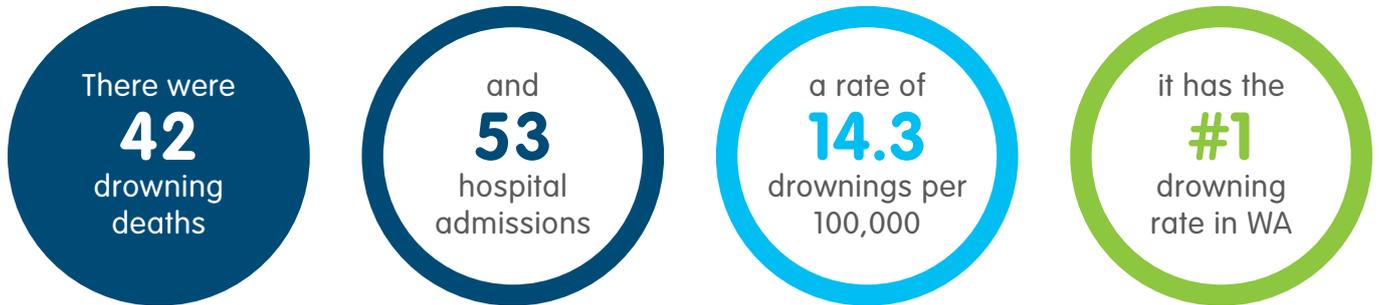
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Remote or very remote locations (100.0%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (73.9%)
- > Participating alone (47.4%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (42.1%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (26.3%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (57.9%) with an average BAC almost three times the legal limit for driving (0.143%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (10.5%)
- > Poor swimming ability (10.5%)
- > Injury including head injury (5.0%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (2.0%)



Photo: Gnarloo Station

There were **95 drowning incidents** recorded in the Midwest region



Males (19.6/100,000) were **2.3 times more likely to drown** than females (8.4/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Carnarvon	<b>50.0</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>30.0</b> Diving
<b>#2</b> Shire fo Exmouth	<b>40.5</b> Beach	<b>24.0</b> Fishing
<b>#3</b> City of Greater Geraldton	<b>4.8</b> River/Creek	<b>22.0</b> Boating



**73.7%** were born in Australia



**26.3%** were born overseas



Of these, **71.4%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **11.6% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (13.4/100,000) the slightly lower than non-Aboriginal Australians (14.5/100,000).

59.5% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is higher than overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (61.9%)  
CPR performed (69.2%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**2.1 days**



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 65 years and over**

(Rate per 100,000)

**33.0**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**4.3**

Children (5-14 years)

**11.6**

Young People (15-24 years)

**14.6**

Adults (25-64 years)

**16.3**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**31.6%**  
Summer months



**66.7%**  
Weekdays



**47.6%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

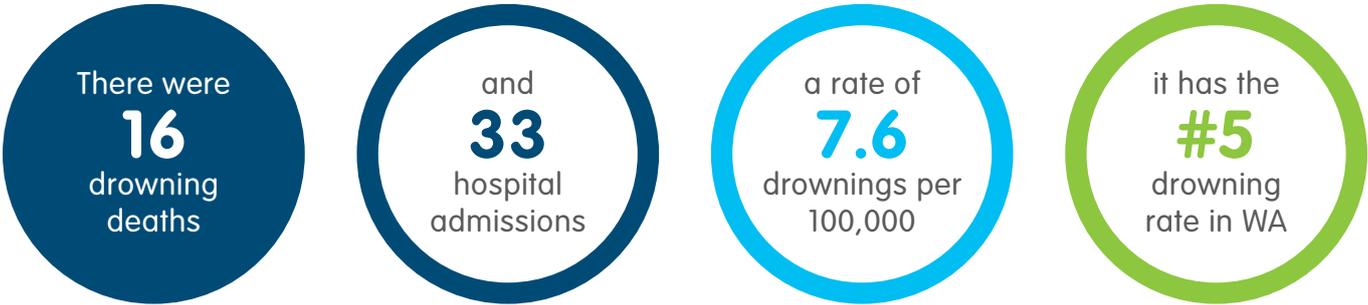
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Remote or very remote locations (85.8%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (51.2%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (47.2%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (38.1%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (26.2%)
- > Participating alone (23.8%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (17.9%)
- > Poor swimming ability (16.7%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (11.9%) with an average BAC twice the legal limit for driving (0.116%)
- > Injury including head injury (11.9%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (2.4%)



Photo: Fern Pool, Karijini National Park

There were **49 drowning incidents** recorded in the Pilbara region



Males (8.5/100,000) were **1.4 times more likely to drown** than females (6.1/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Karratha	<b>68.8</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>34.8</b> Boating
<b>#2</b> Shire of Port Headland	<b>6.3</b> River/Creek	<b>26.1</b> Fishing
<b>#3</b> Shire of Ashburton	<b>6.3</b> Lake/Dam	<b>8.7</b> Non-aquatic transport



**85.7%** were born in Australia



**14.3%** were born overseas



Of these, **42.9%** were from a non-English speaking country

Overall, **24.5% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal (14.3/100,000) 2.2 times greater than non-Aboriginal Australians (6.6/100,000).

75.0% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is double the overall state average (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (31.3%)  
CPR performed (80.0%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**1.2 days**



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

**45.0**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**2.5**

Children (5-14 years)

**10.9**

Young People (15-24 years)

**3.8**

Adults (25-64 years)

**0.0**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**38.8%**  
Summer months



**50.0%**  
Weekends



**37.5%**  
Early Morning  
12AM - 6AM

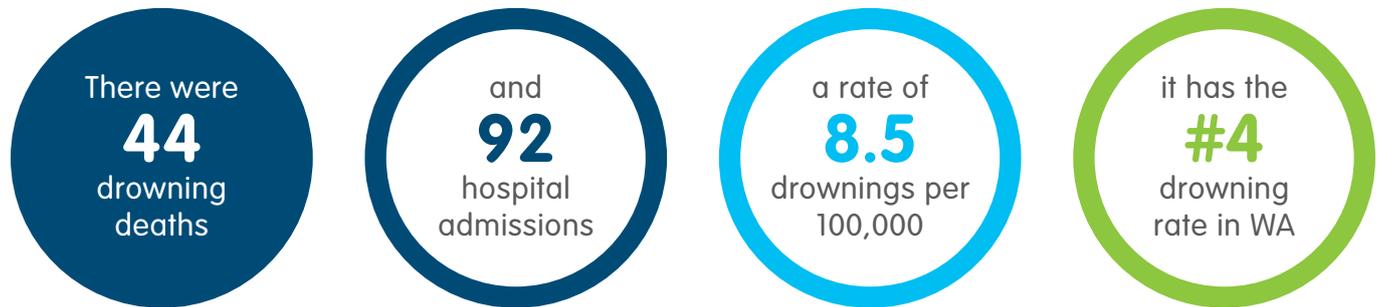
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Remote or very remote locations (100.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (62.5%)
- > Participating alone (37.5%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (37.5%) with an average BAC almost twice the legal limit for driving (0.083%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (29.6%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (25.0%)
- > Injury including head injury (25.0%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (25.0%)
- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (18.8%)
- > Poor swimming ability (6.3%)



Photo: Black Diamond Lake, Collie

There were **136 drowning incidents** recorded in the South West region



Males (12.8/100,000) were **3.2 times more likely to drown** than females (4.0/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Busselton	<b>34.1</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>26.9</b> Fishing
<b>#2</b> Shire of Augusta-Margaret River	<b>31.8</b> Beach	<b>19.2</b> Recreating
<b>#3</b> Shire of Manjimup	<b>13.6</b> Lake/Dam	<b>15.4</b> Watercraft



**78.7%** were born in Australia



**21.3%** were born overseas



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

Overall, **2.2% of people who drowned were Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal Australians (5.4/100,000) slightly lower than non-Aboriginal Australians (8.6/100,000).

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

Rescue attempted (68.2%)  
CPR performed (73.3%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**3.8 days**



**Drowning risk was greatest amongst toddlers 0-4 years and adults aged 25-64 years**  
(Rate per 100,000)

**27.3**

Toddlers (0-4 years)

**4.5**

Children (5-14 years)

**6.6**

Young People (15-24 years)

**8.6**

Adults (25-64 years)

**5.4**

Older Adults (65+ years)

### High-risk times for drowning



**46.3%**  
Summer months



**52.3%**  
Weekdays



**47.7%**  
Afternoons  
12PM - 6PM

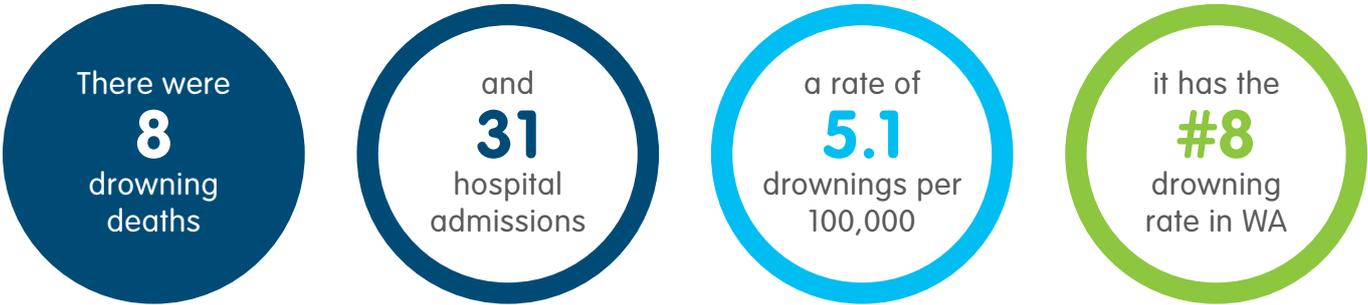
### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Inexperience/unfamiliar with location (50.0%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (47.7%)
- > Participating alone (40.9%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (27.3%)
- > Consumption of alcohol (BAC >0.05) (22.7%) with an average BAC more than twice the legal limit for driving (0.121%)
- > Injury including head injury (22.7%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (18.2%)
- > Poor swimming ability (18.2%)
- > Remote or very remote locations (6.8%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (6.8%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (6.6%)



Photo: Jurien Bay Beach

There were **39 drowning incidents** recorded in the Wheatbelt region



Males (6.6/100,000) were **twice as likely to drown** than females (3.4/100,000)



Top 3 local areas	Top 3 locations (%)	Top 3 activities (%)
<b>#1</b> Shire of Gingin	<b>25.0</b> Ocean/Harbour	<b>20.0</b> Diving
<b>#2</b> Shire of Dandaragan	<b>25.0</b> Beach	<b>20.0</b> Boating
<b>#3</b> Shire of Chittering	<b>25.0</b> River/Creek	<b>20.0</b> Fishing



**79.5%** were born in Australia



**20.5%** were born overseas



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

Overall, **2.6%** of people who drowned were **Aboriginal**, with drowning rates for Aboriginal Australians (3.0/100,000) half that of non-Aboriginal Australians (5.2/100,000).

62.5% of fatal drowning involved a **tourist and/or visitor** to the area, which is almost double overall state trends (36.6%).

Rescue attempted (62.5%)  
CPR performed (80.0%)

Av. length of hospital stay (non-fatal)  
**4.6 days**



**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%**  
Autumn months



**50.0%**  
Weekends



**50.0%**  
Mornings  
12AM - 6AM

### Key risk factors for drowning

- > Poor swimming ability (50.0%)
- > Presence of a pre-existing medical condition (37.5%)
- > Environmental factors such as poor weather/water conditions (37.5%)
- > Participating alone (25.0%)
- > Lack of supervision by a responsible adult (25.0%)
- > Inexperience or unfamiliarity with location (12.5%)
- > Remote or very remote locations (12.5%)
- > Resided in a low socio-economic area (12.5%)
- > Lack of safety equipment, particularly use of lifejackets (7.7%)



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Email **info@royallifesavingwa.com.au**  
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