

Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan 2024-2028

Final Version 1

Tasmanian Government

ROYAL LIFE SAVING TASMANIA

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 organisation.

Royal Life Saving is a public benevolent institution 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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Authorisation

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Preface

Welcome to the Tasmania Drowning Prevention Plan 2024-2028. This comprehensive document marks a pivotal step forward in our collective efforts to safeguard the lives of Tasmanians and visitors alike. Drowning remains a significant concern, not just in Tasmania but worldwide, claiming precious lives and leaving indelible scars on families and communities.

In this revised version Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan, we have endeavoured to craft a roadmap that not only addresses the immediate challenges posed by water-related incidents but also seeks to instigate a cultural shift towards water safety. Through collaborative efforts and evidence-based strategies, we aim to reduce the incidence of drowning and near-drowning events across Tasmania.

This plan is a testament to the dedication and hard work of numerous stakeholders, including government agencies, community organisations, emergency responders, educators, healthcare professionals, and concerned members of our community. Their invaluable input, expertise, and commitment have shaped the comprehensive approach outlined within these pages.

Recognising the multifaceted nature of drowning prevention, this plan adopts a holistic approach, encompassing education, awareness campaigns, infrastructure improvements, policy advocacy, and emergency response protocols. By addressing risk factors at individual, community, and systemic levels, we strive to create a safer environment where water-related activities can be enjoyed responsibly.

While we acknowledge the progress made in previous initiatives, we are also mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. Changing behaviours, enhancing infrastructure, and overcoming resource constraints require sustained dedication and collaboration. However, with unwavering commitment and a shared vision of a community free from drowning, we are confident that together, we can make significant strides towards a safer Tasmania.

This plan serves as a guiding beacon, directing our collective efforts over the next four years. It is a living document, adaptable to evolving circumstances and informed by ongoing research and feedback from stakeholders and the community. As we embark on this journey, let us remain steadfast in our resolve to protect lives and ensure that every Tasmanian can enjoy the beauty of our waterways safely.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of this plan, and let us move forward with determination, compassion, and unity to achieve our shared goal of preventing drownings in Tasmania.



Michael Ilinsky
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Life Saving Tasmania



Tasmanian Government

ROYAL LIFE SAVING TASMANIA

Introduction

Tasmania is spoiled for choice when it comes to places to swim, recreate or go boating. Its oceans and inland waterways such as rivers, creeks, lakes, and dams are popular amongst locals all year round even though temperatures can be quiet mild at times. Tasmania's average maximum summer temperatures range between 17 and 23°C with winter temperatures of between three and 11° C (37- 51° F). The weather on Tasmania's east coast is often milder than other parts of the island, thanks to the moderating influence of the Tasman Sea.

These environments present a higher risk of drowning due to a variety of factors including changeable conditions, remoteness, lack of supervision and alcohol.

The Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan has been developed with and on behalf of the Tasmanian community. Led by Royal Life Saving, with an extensive range of stakeholders is designed to help our whole community to better manage the risk associated with using the water in our region.

It provides a long-term approach for the community to reducing drowning (fatal and non-fatal) in the area with a focus on 'Building Safer Aquatic Environments', 'Developing Safer Aquatic Users' and 'Designing Safer Aquatic Activity'.

Integrating the Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan

This Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan is designed to work hand in hand with other Tasmanian strategies and plans to support the communities' vision and priorities. These incudes but is not limited to:

- Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan
- Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy
- Active 2030 Strategy (Under Development)
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmanian Strategic Plan



Safe System Approach to Drowning Prevention

The Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan has adopted the Royal Life Saving's Safe System Approach to Drowning Prevention.

This approach is underpinned by these principles:

- Deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable
- People are human and sometimes make mistakes – a simple mistake shouldn't cost anyone their life
- People are vulnerable
- Aquatic environments and activity should be designed to minimise the likelihood or severity of an aquatic incident if an accident happens
- Drowning prevention is a shared responsibility – everyone needs to make safe decisions in, on and around the water to prioritise safety

Initiatives to ensure safer aquatic environments, users and activities need to be implemented together so that the community can enjoy our aquatic environments when recreating or working.





Safe System Outcomes



Safer Aquatic Users

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to change behaviour through a combination of context-appropriate information, education and enforcement activities.



Safer Aquatic Environments

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to improve the physical or natural environments in, on and around waterways which individuals participate in recreational or work-related activity.



Safer Aquatic Activity

This is achieved through drowning prevention strategies that seek to change the methods or process in which an activity is being undertaken or performed through such things as policy, funding, planning or procedures

Our Drowning Prevention Plan

The Tasmania Drowning Prevention Plan has been developed based on the desires and priorities of our community. It demonstrates leadership by valuing and progressing the Safe Systems Approach to Drowning Prevention and it represents a commitment of working together for a future free from drowning.

While Royal Life Saving will play a leading role in facilitating and delivering some of the strategies, it fosters a shared responsibility for its implementation using relevant data to monitor and evaluate drowning prevention strategies.

Using the Safe Systems Approach to Drowning Prevention model the strategy describes four key action areas each with key outcomes that the community seeks to achieve through the development and implementation of a drowning prevention strategy. These include:

- Facilitating Collaboration
- Building Safer Aquatic Environments
- Designing Safer Aquatic Activity
- Developing Safer Aquatic Users



The role of Governments

This is Tasmania's Drowning Prevention Plan for the community and the goals and objectives outlined will help to deliver on the vision of a community free from drowning. It will however require a team effort.

Tasmania has many partners in the community that must work together to make sure this strategy is a success. We thank the Tasmanian Government, Tasmanian Local Governments and their associated departments, emergency services as well as business, health providers, education providers, community organisations, recreational groups, and our residents for the contribution they make now and into the future in reducing drowning.

In the delivery of this Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan, Governments may act as a:

Leader - Responsible for leading a range of activities throughout the region. Ensuring that this legislation and the administration of it is done in a way that is supporting the community vision.

Advocate – Advocating on behalf of the community to other levels of government and various other decision makers to deliver the best possible outcomes for Tasmania.

Provider – Directly providing services and/or infrastructure in ways that achieve the aims of its adopted actions.

Supporter – Partnering across the community to deliver services, infrastructure and events and supports them in doing so.

Facilitator – Bringing groups of people and organisations together to support collaborations and new partnerships to create new opportunities and solve problems for the community.

Our Aquatic Profile

Natural Waterways

Tasmania is an island with an abundance of natural waterways. Surrounded by 2237km of beaches and 48 river catchments spanning more than 5600km. These locations are popular areas for recreation and leisure activities including swimming, boating, and fishing by both locals and Australian and international tourists.





Built Aquatic Environments

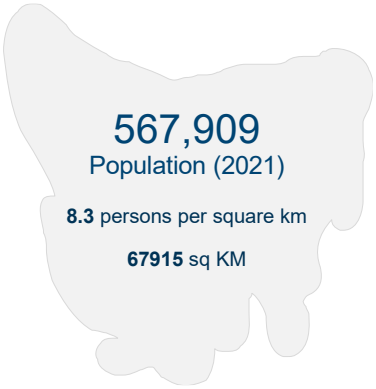
Tasmania has 50 Public Aquatic Facilities with 67% of these within 20km of a place of residence. It is estimated that by 2030 there is $208million required spend on ageing facilities and a further $69million required by 2035 to maintain these facilities. As of 2018 4% of Homes in Tasmania have a swimming pool, being the lowest percentage in Australia.

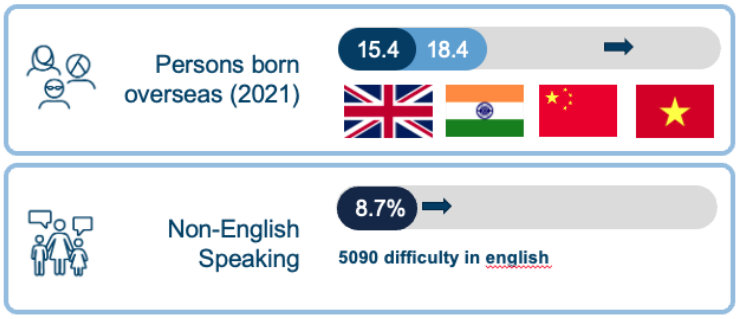


Our Demographic Profile

Australia's island state, Tasmania sits just 240 kilometres south-east of mainland Australia. Tasmania's capital city, Hobart, is not only Australia's southernmost city, but also second oldest city. According to Australia census data, 49 percent of Tasmanians are male and 51 percent are female. The top five ancestries for people in Tasmania are: Australian, English, Irish, Scottish and German.

The top five languages (other than English) spoken in Tasmania are: Mandarin, German, Italian, Greek and Dutch. The top five countries of birth for people in Tasmania are: England, New Zealand, Scotland, Netherlands and Germany.







Tasmania will grow from 568,000 to 647,000 in 2032-33, (79,000 people).

Almost two-thirds of Tasmania's population (309,000) lived outside of the capital city area of Greater Hobart

Tasmanian Drowning Profile

Extracted from a 10-year analysis of Drowning in Tasmania Report – Royal Life Saving

150

DROWNING DEATHS

In Tasmania in last 10 years

1.95

DROWNING DEATHS PER 1000

In Tasmania in last 10 years

Total Estimated Economic Cost of Drowning in Tasmania over past 10 years is $69,915,099.55*

14

DROWNING DEATHS PER YEAR

In Tasmania in last 10 years

473

NON-FATAL DROWNINGS

In Tasmania in last 10 years

Who is drowning?

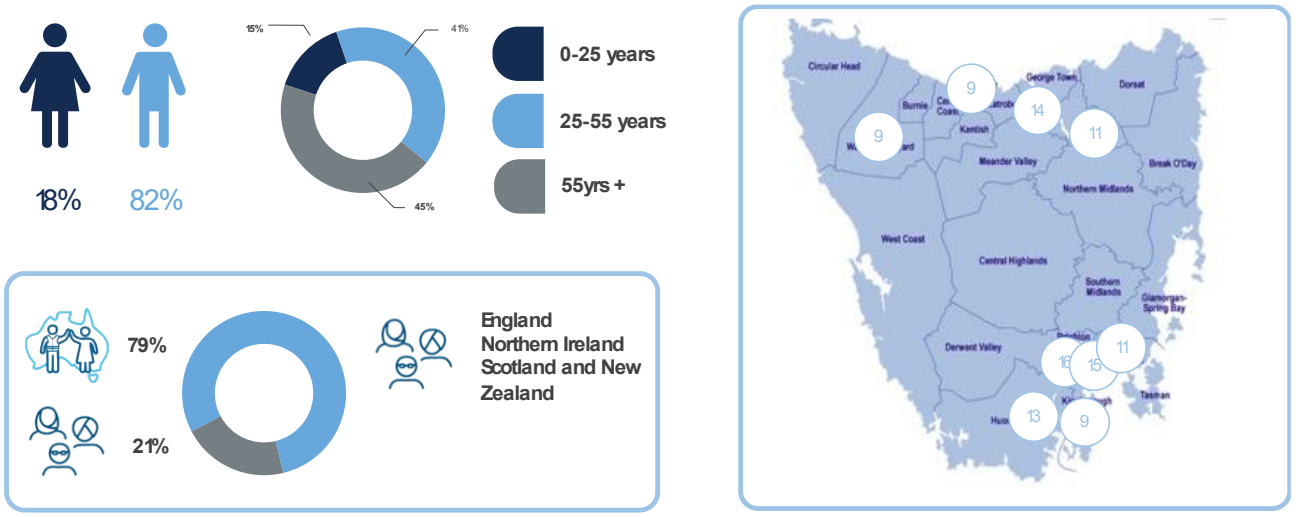


Fig 1. Drowning Demographic Extract from Tasmanian Drowning Report

Where are they drowning?

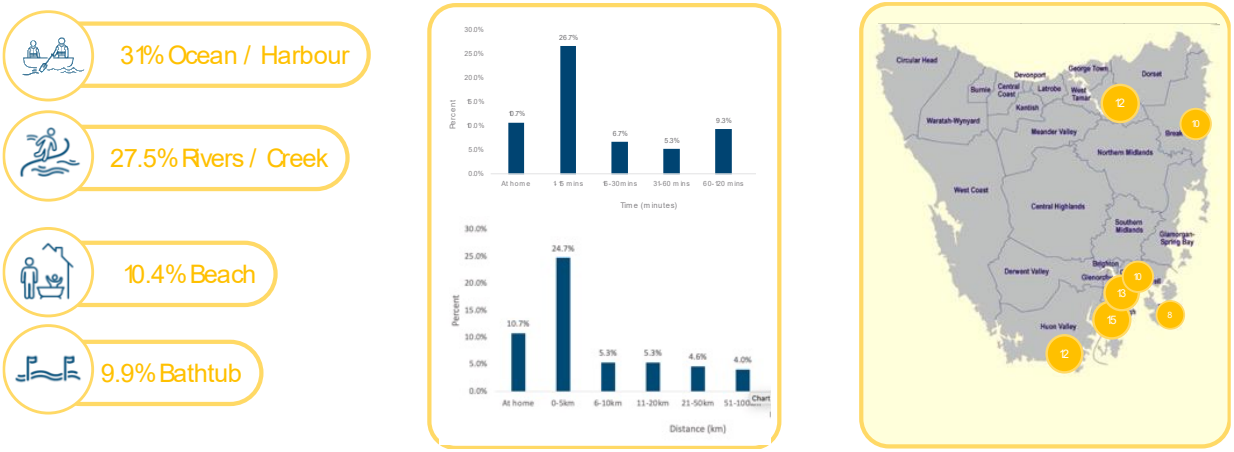


Fig 2. Drowning Location Extract from Tasmanian Drowning Report – Fatal Drownings

What were they doing

27% Boating

25% Unintentional Fall

10% Swimming and Recreating

33% occurred in Summer

33% occurred in WInter

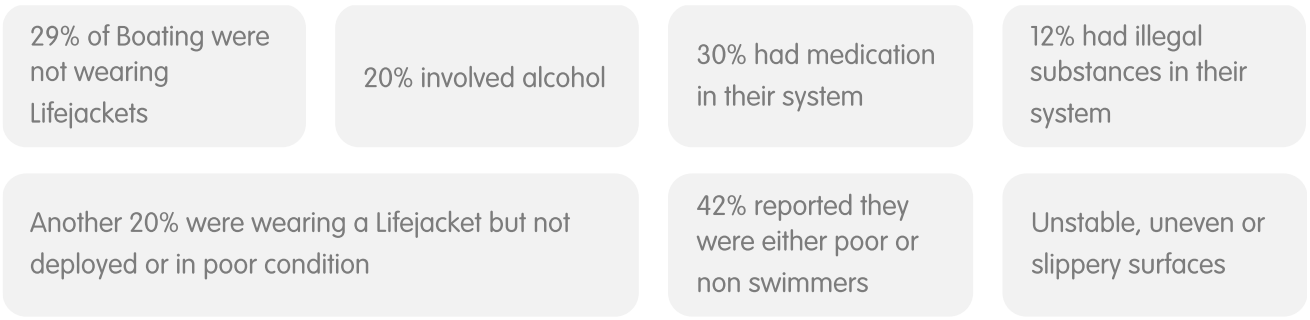
43% on Weekends

56% on Weekdays

45% in the afternoon (midday to 6pm)

25% at Night (6pm to 6am

Fig 3. Drowning Activity Extract from Tasmanian Drowning Report – Fatal Drownings



The information presented in this report is from the Royal Life Saving Fatal Drowning Database, which relies on data collated 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.

Our Engagement Journey

Engagement for the Tasmania Drowning Prevention Plan commenced in April 2022 with an extensive Drowning Research piece undertaken by Royal Life Saving and subsequently a Recreational Boating report undertaken by Marine and Safety Tasmania.

Royal Life Saving Tasmania also facilitated a community drowning prevention workshop in which community leaders, local emergency agencies and key stakeholders explored the issues surrounding drowning in Tasmania.

Stakeholders Involved:

- Oatlands Aquatic Centre
- City of Hobart
- Friends Health & Fitness
- Oceana Aquatic and Fitness
- Hobart Aquatic Centre
- Collegiate Pool
- Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre
- Active Tasmania (Sport and Recreation - Department of State Growth)
- Department for Education, Children and Young People
- Derwent Valley Council
- Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre
- Masters Swimming Tasmania
- Marine & Safety Australia
- Collegiate Pool
- Marine & Safety Australia
- Department for Education, Children and Young People
- Huon Valley Council
- Friends Health & Fitness
- Surf Life Saving Tasmania
- Hydro Tasmania
- Sea Rescue Dodges Ferry
- Kingston Pool & Wellness Centre Pty Ltd
- TasPorts
- Nepalese Tasmania Sports Association
- Masters Swimming Tasmania

This was followed by 1 on 1 draft consultations with key agencies and the production of the consultation draft of this document with over 73 requests for changes.





Top Priority Drowning Areas

Following the analysis into Fatal and Non-Fatal Drownings in Tasmania and the existing programs and the community consultations, the following identifies the Top Priority Drowning Areas which need most attention in Tasmania.

- Males 25-40 and 40-65, Tasmanian Born Residents, who live within 0-20km of their local waterway
- Boating and Fishing from a Boat in Vessels between 5 metres and 9.9 metres
- In Tasmanian Oceans / Harbours in South Eastern Local Government Areas (LGA's) of Tasman, Kingborough, Hobart, Sorell, Clarence and Huon Valley
- From December through to August on Saturday, Sundays and Monday afternoons
- Due to under estimating the risk, over estimating their abilities, wind and poor weather conditions, pre existing medical conditions and a lack of or improper use of PPE (Lifejackets / PFD's) and a lack of or poor public information

- Males 50+, Tasmanian Born Residents,
- Who live in the northern LGAs of Launceston, West Tamar, Devonport or the Southern Suburbs of Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingston
- Unintentional slipping, tripping or falling into Inland Waterways within 50km from their place of residence
- In Summer and Winter in the afternoons and into the evening
- Due to over estimating their abilities, unstable, uneven or slippery surfaces, medical conditions or being intoxicated

- Young Adult Males 20-35, Tasmanian Born Residents,
- Who live in the northern LGA's of Launceston, West Tamar, Central Coast and Waratah or the Greater Hobart LGA's
- Boating, Fishing or Paddling Watercraft in Launceston, Waratah, West Coast, Northern Midlans and Meader Valley Inland Waterways
- In Dec through to July on Fridays through to Mondays
- Due to over estimating their abilities, underestimating the risk, a lack of or improper use of PPE (Lifejackets / PFD's), wind and poor weather conditions with a lcak of swimming and survival skills

- Adult Males and Females, Both Australian and European Born Residents with Underlying Medical Conditions
- Who live throughout Tasmania
- Falling into water while having a Medical episode while at home in their bathroom
- In July through to November throughout the week in the afternoons and evenings
- Due to poor health and medical conditions and a lack of / poor supervision / response capabilities

- Adult Males 25-35 and 45-60 Tasmanian Born Residents,
- Who live in the northern LGAs of Waratah and Midlands or the Southern LGA's of Hobart, Glenorchy and Clarence
- Swimming or Rock fishing
- In Dec through to June on Fridays through to Mondays
- Due to over estimating their abilities, underestimating the risk, a lack of or improper use of PPE (Lifejackets / PFD's), currents and tidal flows, unpredicatbale and dangerous waves, wind and poor weather conditions with a lcak of swimming and survival skills

What can I do

As a community member there is so much you can do to help achieve the vision of a Tasmania Free from Drowning, this may be individually, part of a community group or with friends and family.

Facilitating Collaboration

- Get involved. Take an interest in the drowning prevention and what is planned in your community
- Have your Say – It is important that you give feedback. Your opinion is imporntant to us
- Share the love – make sure you tell others about the strategy and what they should do in, on or around Inland Waterways
- Communicate – don't be afraid to share the Drowning Prevention message and help others in need

Safer Aquatic Environments

- Read the safety signs and know what they mean before entering the water
- Avoid ignoring or disregarding the safety messages. They are there for a reason
- Always check the conditions of the water before you enter
- Make sure you have a safe entry and exit location before you go in the water
- Avoid swimming and recreating in isolated areas

Safer Aquatic Activity

- Ensure you have enough safety equipment on board for you and your passengers
- Wear a Lifejacket when boating or fishing
- Log on/off with Deckee, or tell someone where you're going and when you'll return
- Avoid alcohol and arugs when in on or around the water
- Enrol yourself in a Learn to Swim Program

Safer Aquatic Users

- Educate yourself about the dangers and strategies to stay safe in all waterways
- Avoid swimming or recreating in the water after dark or when alone
- Look after your mates and speak up if they are making poor decisions
- Visit your doctor to get a check up
- Supervise your children at all times when around water
- Enrol yourself or your children in a CPR, First Aid or Lifesaving Course

- Always keep a proper lookout as the skipper of your vessel
- Always drive at a safe speed when the skipper of a vessel

- Know your limits and avoid taking risks. If in doubt, don't go out.
- Keep yourself fit and healthy
- Know what to do in an emergency and who to call



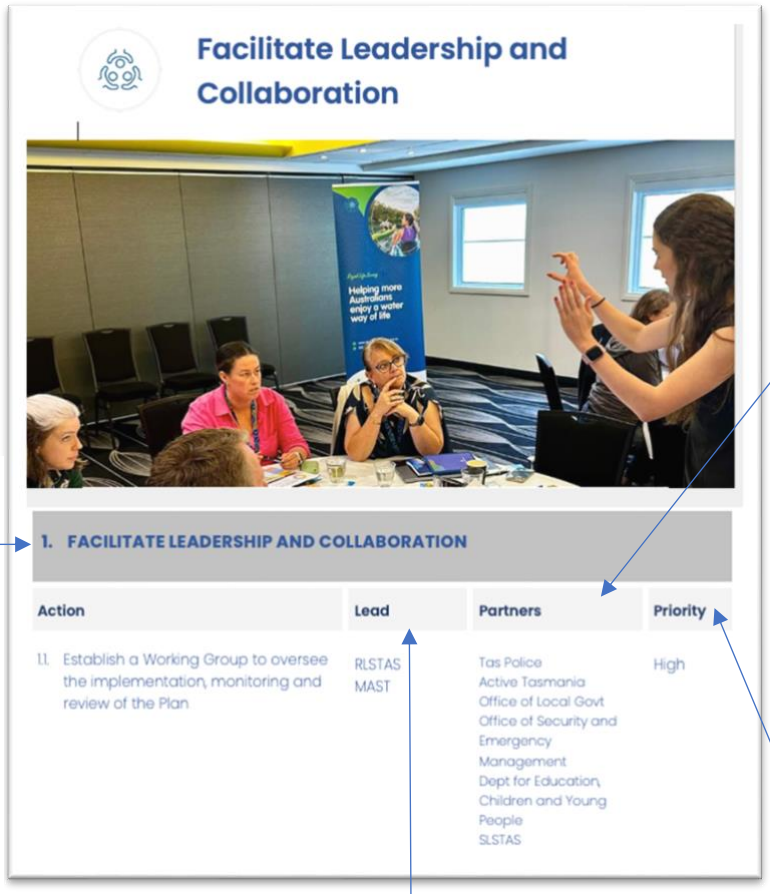
Our Action Plan

Tasmanian Government

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How to read the Strategies

Focus Areas
Our four focus areas are based on addressing the safe systems approach to drowning prevention



Actions
These outline the method or approach to achieve the outcomes of the Strategy.
These strategies cascade down with specific and measurable actions, priorities and responsibilities.

Partners
Collaboration and partnerships are crucial to achieving our long-term goals. This Strategy identifies some of our key partners in delivery, however, the list is not exhaustive and we always welcome new partners.

Priorities
Priorities have been established rather than timelines as many strategies are reliant or coexist with another

Lead
A single organisation must champion this strategy while responsibility rests with everyone including other levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community organisations and individuals.

Facilitate Leadership and Collaboration



Reducing Drowning is a whole of community responsibility. Engaging with the community and involving them in key decision-making promotes collaboration, coordination, and a shared sense of responsibility.

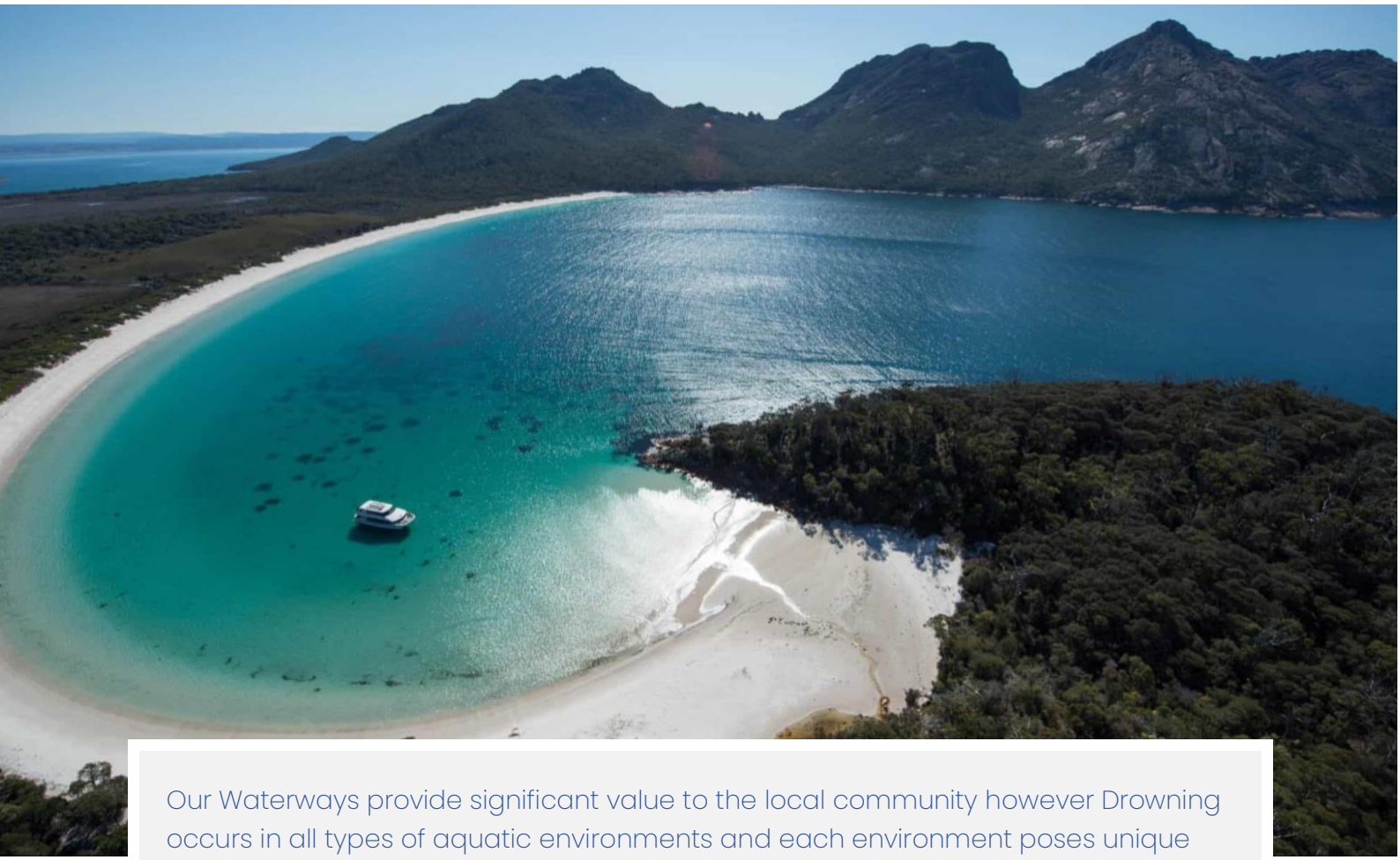
It also ensures that leaders within the community are ethical and transparent and committed to the cause through the provision of adequate resources to implement the strategies.



1. FACILITATE LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Action	Lead	Partners	Priority
1.1. Establish a Working Group to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan	RLSTAS MAST	Tas Police Active Tasmania Office of Local Govt Office of Security and Emergency Management Dept for Education, Children and Young People SLSTAS	High
1.2. Develop a specific budget and resources for the term of the strategy to support the working group and the implementation of strategies and initiatives	TAS Gov.	Working Group Community	High
1.3. Annually review the performance against the Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan and communicate this accordingly with the community	RLSTAS	Working Group Community	High
1.4. Strengthen the reporting and investigation of fatal and non fatal drowning incidents and rescue incidents to better inform causal analysis and future drowning prevention strategies	Tas Police	Tas Coroner's Office Tas Health SLSTAS Sea Rescue Tas MAST Royal Life Saving	Medium
1.5. Establish an incentive and recognition program that motivates governments, industry and communities to strenghten their drowning prevention maturity	Working Group		Low Priority

Build Safer Aquatic Environments



Our Waterways provide significant value to the local community however Drowning occurs in all types of aquatic environments and each environment poses unique risks.

Conditions can change rapidly, particularly in and around natural waterways, and visitors may be unfamiliar with local hazards. Visitors need to be able to identify these hazards and respond appropriately.



2. BUILD SAFER AND INCLUSIVE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

Action	Lead	Partners	Priority
2.1. Governments and Industry work collaboratively to establish a Tasmanian Aquatic Facility Infrastructure Strategy which addresses the significant 'end of life span' needs and future growth areas of Tasmania, to ensure there is adequate 'space' to facilitate long term safe aquatic activities	Active Tasmania	Royal Life Saving Aquatic Facilities Tasmania Gov Local Govs	High
2.2. The Tasmania Government work with the aquatic industry to regulate the implementation and compliance of aquatic facilities with best practice safety, inclusivity and health guidelines for Learn to Swim and Public Swimming Pools	Office of Local Government	Local Governments Royal Life Saving Local Government Insurers TAS Health Aquatic Facilities	Medium
2.3. Incentivise or regulate learn to swim operators to provide greater services for groups at higher risk of drowning and for older children who have not achieved the National Swimming and Water Safety benchmarks	Office of Local Government	Local Governments Royal Life Saving Active Tasmania Aquatic Facilities	Medium
2.4. Implement the Royal Life Saving Best Practice Guidelines for Inclusivity in Aquatic Facilities	Aquatic Facilities	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities	Medium

Action	Lead	Partners	Priority
2.5. Undertake Aquatic Risk Assessments at Key Inland Waterway Drowning Locations	Office of Local Government Royal Life Saving	Hobart, Kingborough, and Huon Valley LGA's Launceston and West Tamar LGAs West Coast LGA	High
2.6. Undertake Signage Assessments at Key Boating, Watercraft and Fishing access points as a key reminder of safety information	Office of Local Government Royal Life Saving MAST	Hobart, Kingborough, and Huon Valley LGA's Launceston and West Tamar LGAs West Coast LGA	High
2.7. Introduce emergency help points, public rescue equipment and emergency communications at High Risk / Frequented Inland Waterway Locations	Local Governments Royal Life Saving	Emergency Services Hobart, Kingborough, and Huon Valley LGA's Launceston and West Tamar LGAs West Coast LGA	Medium
2.8. Explore training and equipping full time Emergency service personnel with inland waterways Basic Water Rescue Training and use of public safety equipment in hig risk locations	Office of Security & Emergency Management	Tasmania Police Tasmanian Fire Service Royal Life Saving	Medium
2.9. Conduct feasibility studies on the creation of designated swimming locations within Key LGA and Inland Waterways	Local Government Royal Life Saving	Launceston and West Tamar LGAs Hobart, Kingborough, and Huon Valley LGA's	Medium

2.10.	Continue to implement an Asset Managment Strategy that seeks to, redesign, repair, remove or reduce the likelihood of incidents from slips, trips and falls around key Inland waterway locations	Land Managers	Tasmania Government Local Government National Parks and Wildlife Service Tas Ports Hydro Tasmania	Medium
2.11.	Increase surviellance of swimmers and rock fisherman, recreating in isolated areas without appropriate PPE or Lifesaving Equipment	Surf Life Saving Local Governments	Tasmania Police Surf Life Saving Sea Rescue MAST	Medium
2.12.	Introduce emergency help points and/or public rescue equipment at high risk / isolated beach and rock fishing locations	Fishing Tasmania Local Governments	Active Tasmania Surf Life Saving Surf Life Saving Clubs Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	Medium

Develop Safer Aquatic Users



Drowning risk changes throughout a person's lifespan. As young children become more mobile, the risk of drowning increases. As teenagers reach adulthood, legal drinking age and gain greater independence, their risk of drowning also increases.

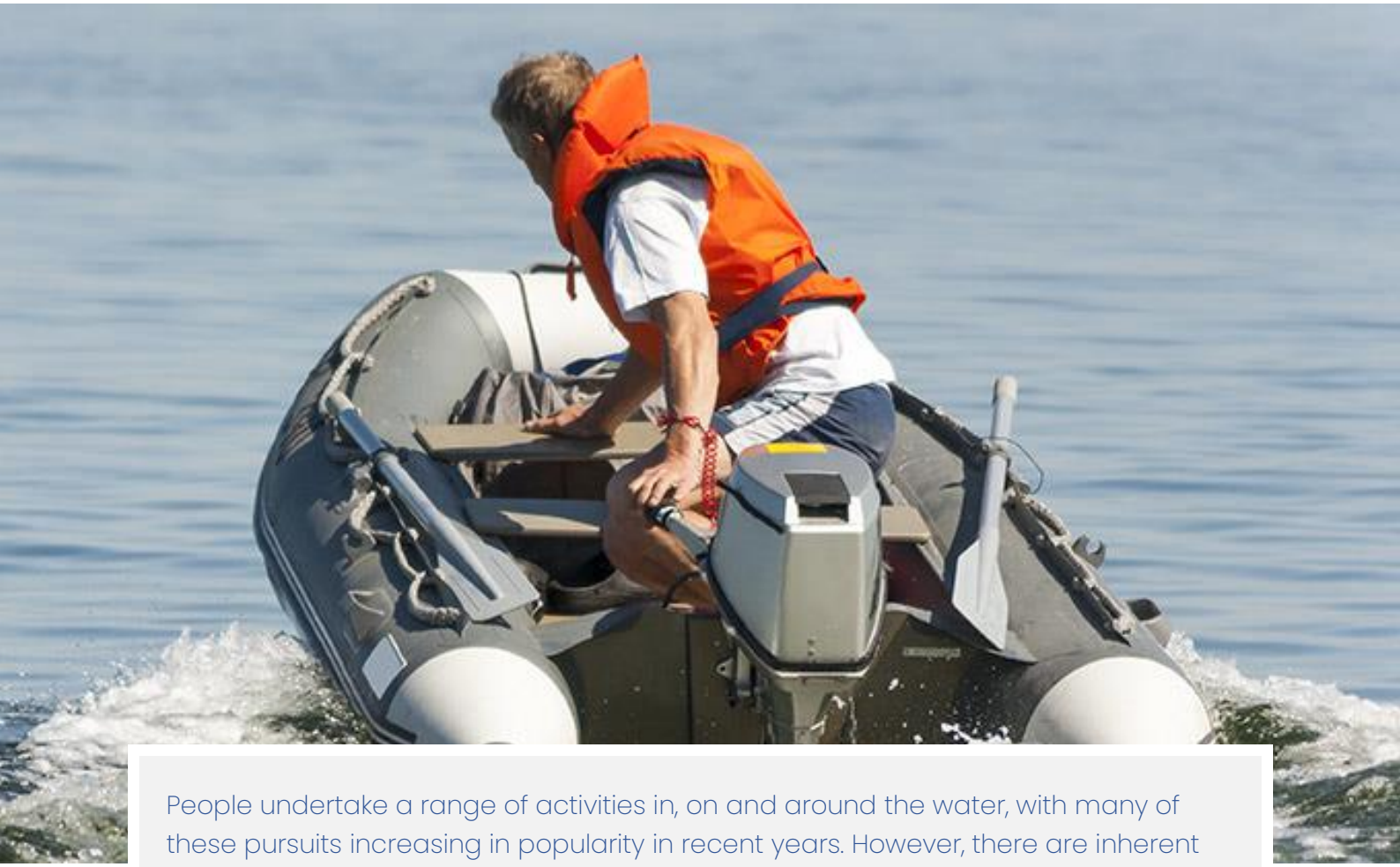
Males are known to be at higher risk of drowning than females, particularly during adolescence and early adulthood as risk-taking behaviour becomes more apparent.



3. DEVELOP SAFER AQUATIC USERS

Action	Lead	Partners	Priority
3.1. Implement a Tasmanian specific Water Safety campaign. The campaign should use local ambassadors and focus on changing behaviour associated with adult males swimming in open waterways, knowing their physical limits, lifejacket use and alcohol consumption in, on and around open waterways	Royal Life Saving Tas	Royal Life Saving Community Leaders Aquatic Facilities Media Agencies Ethnic Media Tas Government MAST	High
3.2. Develop a campaign toolkit that is readily available to community organisations and business who regularly engage with adult males and communities within Tasmania	Royal Life Saving Tas	Community Royal Life Saving Boating and Fishing Industry High School Tertiary Institutes MAST	Medium
3.3. Actively promote falls prevention strategies around water and campaigns with community groups for Adults 55 years and over	TAS DOH	Surf Life Saving Tas Royal Life Saving Tas Boating and Fishing Industry Aged Care Facilities	Medium
3.4. Expand School Lifesaving and Water Safety Education into High Schools focussing on long term generational change to at-risk aquatic activities in Inland Waterways	MAST and Royal Life Saving	Active Tasmania Community Leaders Surf Life Saving Boating and Fishing Industry Department for Education, Children and Young People	High

Design Safer Aquatic Activity



People undertake a range of activities in, on and around the water, with many of these pursuits increasing in popularity in recent years. However, there are inherent risks associated with many of these activities.

Often, the risks are exacerbated by inexperience, poor or inadequate equipment, poor weather conditions and failing to take appropriate safety precautions.



4. DESIGN SAFER AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Action	Councils Role	Partners	Priority
4.1. Continue to support and expand the MAST range of safety information iniatives including the use of Boat Safe Partners, Boatwise Program, Safe Boating Handbook and Safe Boating Resources	MAST	Boating and Fishing Industry	High
4.2. Facilitate a range of community water safety education events with key water safety organsiations, outdoor recreation groups and the community groups at South Eastern LGA's of Tasman, Kingborough, Hobart, Sorell, Clarence and Huon Valley	MAST and Royal Life Saving	Active Tasmania Community Leaders Surf Life Saving Boating and Fishing Industry	High
4.3 Explore the feasibility of conducting additional preventative in-water patrolling activity through December and January to educate and enforce aquatic users about blue water hazards, lifejacket use and alcohol consumption	Tas Police	MAST Surf Life Saving Tas Police Sea Rescue	Medium

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Australian Government – National Health and Medical Research Council

Public Rescue Equipment Guide – Inland Waterways
Royal Life Saving NSW

Thank You

Royal Life Saving Tas prepared this strategy on behalf of the Tasmanian Government and the Tasmanian community and would like to thank:

The Australian Government for funding part of this initiative.

Members of the community who participated in community engagement processes and provided valuable input during the development of this strategy.

Councillors, council employees, and members of the community who participated in the engagement opportunities including forums, meetings and surveys.

Tasmanian Drowning Prevention Plan

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W: www.drowningprevention.org.au

Tasmanian Government

ROYAL LIFE SAVING TASMANIA