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5th September 2017

**Development of an Auckland Regional Water Safety Plan**

As an interested party in water safety and drowning prevention within the Auckland Region I want to firstly thank you for engaging with us following my earlier request for information. Additionally I appreciate the information you provided to help us fully understand current drowning prevention activity in the region.

To recap, following in-depth collaboration, the wider water safety sector in New Zealand agreed to a joint NZ Water Safety Sector 2020 Strategy.

WSNZ has a national leadership mandate to deliver drowning prevention education and programmes aligned to the Strategy.

Developing regional water safety strategies is consistent with this mandate.

In that context the WSNZ Board recognised the water safety sector does not currently have a clear and agreed understanding of the nature and drivers of the **Auckland Region’s ‘drowning problem’.**

The size of the Auckland Region, the dynamic character of its population and ethnic communities, and the changing nature of local aquatic participation all present unique problems that have to be factored into coherent drowning prevention solutions.

**There is no collective agreement on the types of water safety interventions** that will have the greatest impact on Auckland’s drowning problem.

This in turn means uncertainty that current expenditure on water safety initiatives, including WSNZ investments is the most effective way to prevent drowning in the Region.

The differing mandates of the water safety organisations in the Auckland Region also makes effective planning, action and use of resources difficult, particularly without a coordinated effort around a collectively agreed strategic direction.

The WSNZ Board committed to addressing these issues, through resolving a comprehensive water safety strategy for the Auckland Region.

***The objective of the strategy is to articulate a coordinated and collaborative work plan for Auckland water safety organisations to reduce drowning fatalities and hospitalisations and build a culture of safe enjoyment around water.***

To analyse the ‘drowning problem’ and achieve the ‘objective’ the project was split into phases to answer the questions:-

1. **What’s being done now, and what do we know?**

In excess of 120 individuals, groups, delivery agencies, funders and influencers were identified and asked for information. That information was then analysed to present a map of the region’s current

water safety activities.

***What did the information tell us?***

* *There is a significant level of activity across a wide range of programmes*

1. **What is the Problem?**

At risk individuals, families and communities are not being reached through the current array of education and teaching of water safety skills programmes. Such individuals, families and communities do not understand water hazards and do not have the competence to survive an incident. ***Most at risk are not being reached by existing programmes.***

**The consequences are:-**

* A significant number of people die or become subject to an ACC claim as a consequence of water related incidents.
* A summary of Auckland drowning fatalities 2012 – 2016 is attached **(91 deaths).**
* A summary of 2016 data leading to ACC claims ***(2016 Auckland data - of the 12,000 active aquatic activity claims totalling $19m, 7,700 of those were Auckland related, totalling $11.7m).***

*\* note this ACC data is not absolutely consistent in tabulation but is strongly indicative of the pattern of incidents 2012-2016 and consequences (it includes both drownings and water related incidents).*

1. **What happens next?**

We are interested in your response to this update and to receiving any questions you may have by **15th September 2017**.

*As indicated in our earlier correspondence, we are also offering the opportunity for a face-to-face forum to provide an update and answer any questions you may have in person. At this point, we’d like to gauge your level of interest in this step. Please click on the link in the body of this communication and simply vote ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to advise your interest in attending a face-to-face forum in Auckland. You can also submit any questions via this link.*

We intend to press ahead with drafting a co-ordinated and collaborative work plan of priority areas for Auckland Water Safety organisations to meet the objectives of the Auckland Project 2017:-

***“To reduce drowning fatalities and hospitalisations and build a culture of safe enjoyment around water”.***

Thanks again for your engagement with us in this critical project.

Regards,

Jonty Mills

Chief Executive

**Water Safety New Zealand**