**Water Safety NZ**

**Auckland Reference Group**

**Meeting at DPA Boardroom, 28th February 2019**

**Attendees: J Mills, G Troup, D Bray (DPA), M Brown (CBE), C Gillespie (Coastguard Northern),**

**R Pickard (FYFOD), J Johnston (Aktive), A Gibson (SLSNR), L Collins (Waka Ama)**

**Apologies: S Johns (Swimming NZ), M Williams (SLSNR), D Lockwood (YMCA), D Comery (Vector Wero)**

**Introduction**:

GT Welcomed all. Covered meeting process, role in terms of implementation of Auckland Water Safety Plan. Fits with Auckland Council Plan and Auckland Approach (Aktive/Sport NZ). Not at expense of great job each are doing.

JM covered formation of Reference Group, collaboration, wanting action. Emphasis on ‘low hanging fruit’, priority to value of project and it being measurable, funding would be found and not a compromise to any existing for providers. 146 in Auckland region doing a great job, need collaboration.

Reference to Stats that were sent out.

MB asked if they could be, per 10,000 population.

**Proposed Initiatives**:

1. ***Hunua Falls*** – DL had sent info through. GT read out key points, (As per below). RP circulated photo. Worst drowning spot in NZ from a falls perspective. Much work, information gathering, reporting has been done over a long period. Now needs all that brought together and updated, discussion with community, Council, iwi and other groups. Then recommendation for action brought back to Ref Group.

*Background*

* Annual visitor numbers are now 200,000 annually.  Numbers have greatly increased since recording started
* The falls is approx. 30 m high and 25m deep at its deepest point
* High number of Maori, PI and Asian visitors
* Existing life rings are placed some distance back from the rivers edge.  Many have been removed
* Signage has been replaced at least twice over the last decade
* Access to the top of the falls has been removed and discouraged, however some members of the public are still accessing the top.

The following interventions have been recommended at different stages;

* A summer lifeguard patrol service without flags.
* Lifejacket handout scheme
* Removable Flotation barriers around the area where water comes over the falls and cascades into the river.  This area of the falls is highly aerated and less buoyant.
* No swimming Rahui enforced by the local iwi, Ngati Ki Tamaki
* Banning diving/jumping/bombing off the Falls rock face
* Shifting the Life Ring stands closer to the waters edge
* More signage with more international safety symbols and languages

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/76742356/null>

1. **Aspire2** – education module for international students. JM has had call to action as result of drowning of a student. Info from Waikato Uni, 2 hour classroom module. MB referenced ‘Pastoral Care’ programme (see link below). Funding options referenced, ACC, insurance companies. Extend it, as a course, to Immigration NZ, Tourism NZ.

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/assist-migrants-and-students/assist-students/understand-your-obligations/code-of-practice-for-pastoral-care>

1. **Wai-Wise** – DB introduced. Extend current model out to groups, targeting 14-19 age group (but not restricted to that). 1 week (5-day) programme. Could involve ; basic water skills, safer boating, beach education, Wero water safety with options around kai gathering, waka ama, rock fishing, West Coast experience etc. Easy to implement, assess & approach appropriate groups and involve whichever provider groups to deliver. CPR a potential addition to include.
2. **Data driven initiative** – AG introduced. Presented recent historical data around drownings including medical events. Referenced (in no particular order) national information stats, rips, St John, paddleboarders, media, suicides. Also Mulcahy Report. Lead to importance of CPR. Especially by-standers. Courses available and promoted for all groups. JM suggested more analysis required in terms of what needs to be delivered and by whom. In the meantime, relevant data would be forwarded to this group.
3. **Auckland water safety video** – JM ask if there is an appetite for a shared video. Like AirNZ. Lead to suggested discussion with Immigration NZ, Tourism NZ etc. AG referenced Free Wi-Fi on the beaches in NSW might be worth looking at.

***Overall consensus to move on with these initiatives. Reporting back as & when, via email initially.***

**Launch/Comms approach**

Media Release - MB suggested traditional media may not be best option. Suggested similar to Parkland type. Targeted market or local community might be better. Agreed. To be done, as & when.

A targeted comms plan to be developed.

**General Business:**

Mentioned how busy it has been for Coastguard but pleased to see more lifejackets being worn.

RP suggested importance of targeting secondary school sector. Risk awareness. Water Skills for life.

Mentioned FYFOD work with Indian international students with DPA - Water skills for life.

LC updated on Waka Ama. 17 clubs in Auckland region, of 90 nationwide.

Discussion about life jackets.

CG referenced life jacket by-laws.

Next meeting to be determined. Discussion around importance of regular meetings. Decided meeting will be called as and when required.

Thank everyone for their significant work within the sector and positive attitude.

**Additional Actions**

* *Dedicated Auckland water safety page to be set up on WSNZ website – Jonty*
* *Stats to be provided per 10,000 population – Jonty*
* *Data to also show chronological order over 10 years – Jonty*