

Oral & Poster Abstract

Total Life Saving Service Plan

A NATIONAL LIFESAVING PLAN TO PREVENT DROWNING AND INJURY IN NEW ZEALAND, 2005-2010

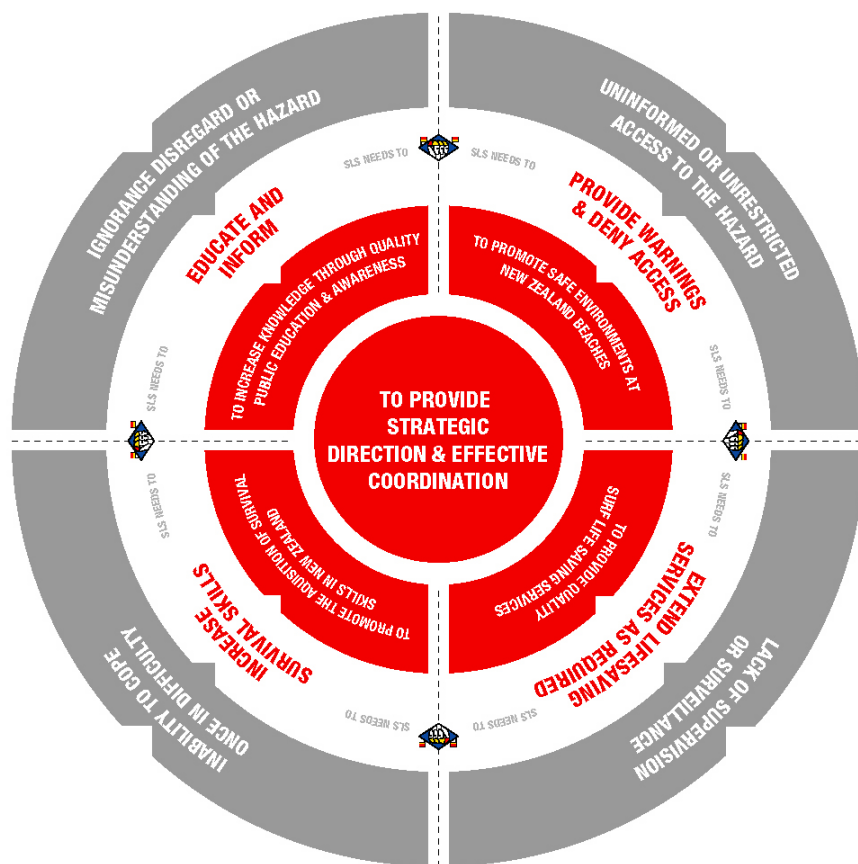
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People are drowning at beaches throughout New Zealand. Unfortunately the vast majority occur when the Surf Lifeguards are not patrolling OR at locations where there are no patrols. The National Lifesaving Plan provides a framework to do something about this. It intends to best meet the provision of all surf lifesaving activity in New Zealand through to 2010.

It is imperative that any plan has clear and obvious connections to the Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) mission 'preventing drowning and injury in New Zealand'. Upstream it is the means for the organisation to substantially contribute to the central governments strategy of 'a watersafe New Zealand, free from drowning'.

Surf Life Saving has identified the four (4) causal factors associated with drowning and set realistic and achievable goals to counteract each of these factors. Five (5) interrelated objectives support these goals and together will provide the framework for coordinating work under the strategy.

1. People drown because of ignorance, disregard or misunderstanding of the hazard
Surf Life Saving must aim to educate and inform by increasing knowledge through quality public education and awareness. This increase in knowledge will lead to positive beach behaviour and in turn ensure the beach going public of New Zealand participate wisely and safely in our environment. A centralised and national led public education strategy is critical to the success of the plan.
2. People drown because they are uninformed or have unrestricted access to the hazard
By taking the high ground and providing warnings and denying access, Surf Life Saving will create safer environments at New Zealand beaches. As Surf Lifeguards we can't be everywhere all of the time, it is important we understand where the hazards are in our turf and be innovative in managing these hazards. Central to the objective of safer environments is the concept of personal responsibility.
3. People drown because of a lack of supervision or surveillance
'Lifesaving Services' covers the preventative and rescue aspects of our organisation. Services are often the last chance for people in trouble in the ocean. To truly say we are experts we will need to build on our firm foundations and fill gaps innovatively ie extend as required. Surf Life Saving must 'think outside the square' in order to remain relevant when deciding future service provision.
4. People drown because of their inability to cope once in difficulty
A determined effort to increase survival skills will contribute to a population of New Zealanders who can use the countries many aquatic environments safely and skilfully. The fact that hazards exist at beaches means we must look for ways to increase the ability of people to survive in an environment they are unfamiliar with.



At the core of the plan is strategic direction and effective coordination. This means policy development, resourcing, reviews along with essential research and development that will infiltrate all parts of the Surf Life Saving and ultimately contribute to work under each of the goals. In short this ensures an evidence based and measurable approach to prevent drowning in New Zealand.

The Surf Life Saving New Zealand Lifesaving Plan and its operational rollout into programmes and initiatives is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis including:-

- NZ Drowning Data
- SLSNZ Incident Data (rescue, first aid and search)
- Demographic Data
- Risk and Hazard Analysis
- Coastal Mapping and Analysis
- Stakeholder knowledge and expertise

Learning Outcomes:

1. Leadership: Understand the need for a strategic and evidence based approach to drowning prevention
2. Alignment: Realise the importance of buy-in from all stakeholders, both upstairs and downstairs
3. Capability: Understand how prioritisation is the key to any operationalisation of a total service plan

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