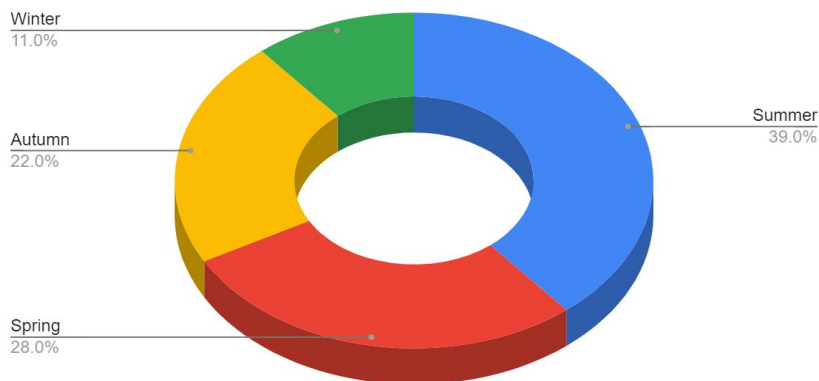


# **Dangers In The Water And On The Road**

**'The average driver takes their eyes off the road for 5 seconds per text message, covering an entire football field's worth of road.'** Imagine the effects this short moment of weakness could result in. Housework, socialising and miscommunication have resulted in more than 4 out of 10 drownings. Was it worth it? Dangers in the water and on the road can change your life or someone else's life forever and at times devastatingly end someone's life.

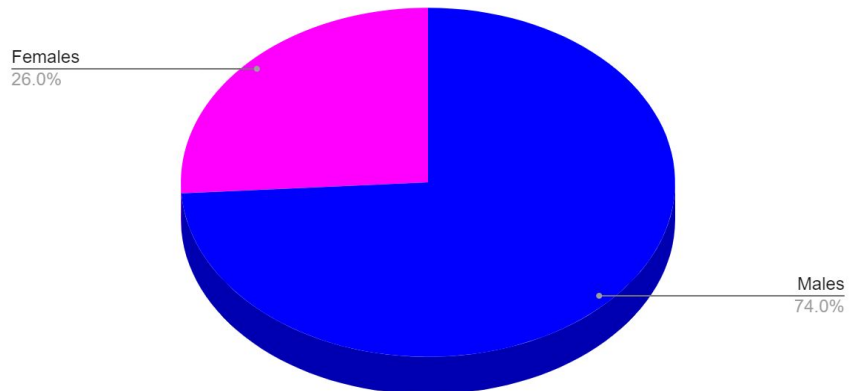
**Waterways in Australia take the lives of many daily, 276 lives were lost in 2019, but this number could have been reduced. Over one-third of these lives are lost in summer when our beaches are packed. Smarter decisions could have given the victims a better chance at surviving. For example, swimming between the red and yellow flags on the beach is the best way to start. Research shows that many people cannot identify a rip current, therefore they do not know they are being swept out to the ocean. Beaches aren't the only place where people drown, research shows that more people drowned in rivers, streams, and creeks, but why is that? Rivers, streams and creeks can have a**



**high-speed flow which when entering the water can be difficult to escape, this can then result in being swept away and drowning. Another factor of deaths in rivers, creeks and streams is the consumption of alcohol, which accounts for 10-30% of all drowning deaths.**



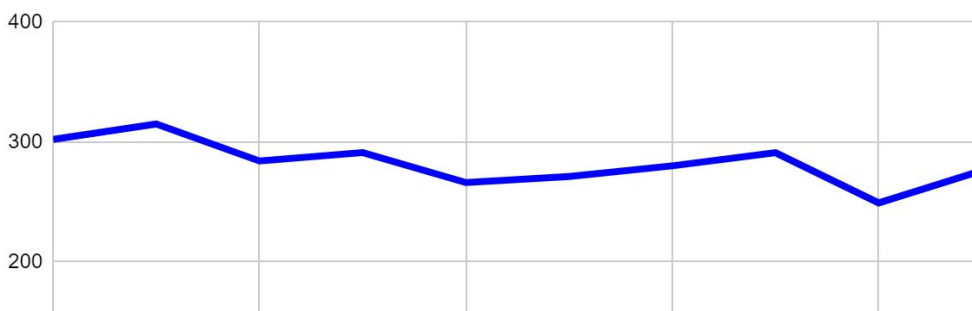
Males account for 74% of all drowning in Australia, but why is this? Research shows that males are more likely to participate in swimming and water sports, that's not all though, a lot of the time they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol, plus a lot of the time they forgo wearing a life jacket which can be the difference between life and death. If there were tougher restrictions when competing in water sports the 214 male lives lost could have been heavily reduced.



Tasmania has the highest drowning rate of 1.91 per 100,000 people. NSW had the most deaths last year recording 98 lives lost to drowning in our waterways. Over the last 10 years, NSW has recorded 1000 deaths alone. From July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, there were 584 non-fatal drownings which resulted in hospitalization. The most common age group for these deaths are 45 to 54-year-olds.

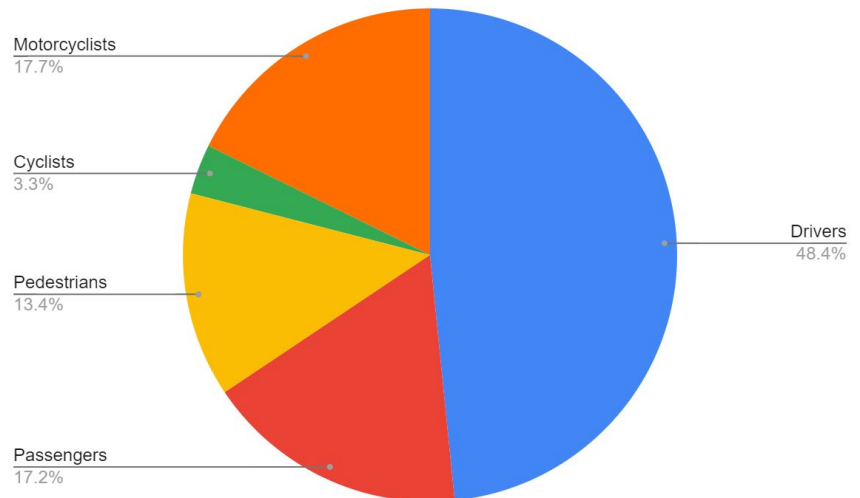
The graph below shows the number of drownings in the water since 2010. As you can see numbers have reduced since 2010 but have risen from 2018.

***Drownings In Australia Since 2010***



The roads of Australia continue to take innocent lives with over 1100 road fatalities in 2019. The innocent lives taken by our deadly roads could have been majorly reduced if several precautions were taken. The roads of Australia took 1195 lives last year which is below the 20-year average but is still very high. On average three people a day would lose their lives to dangerous driving, whether they were drivers, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.

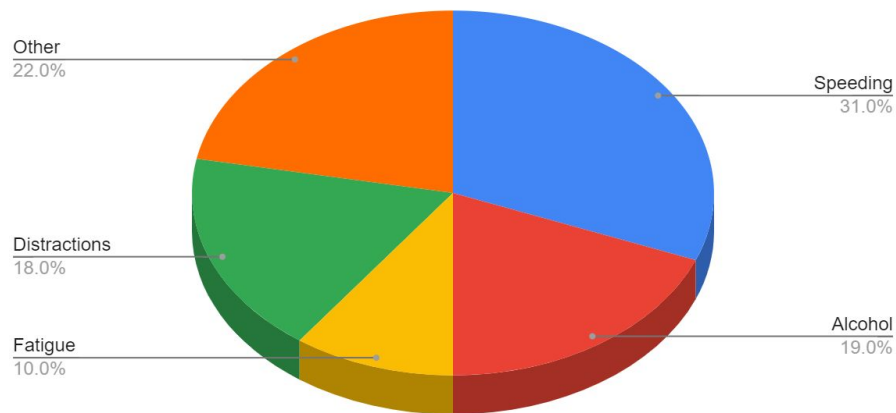
The graph shows that most common category for taking lives on our roads are drivers with over 577 fatalities on the road.



Our roads are already lethal but when you add dangerous driving and actions it turns to a deadly place. In 2019 dangerous driving and actions cause the majority of all fatalities and will continue to unless precautions are taken to reduce the risk of dangerous driving. The graph below shows that in 2019 speed claimed 31% of all road fatalities in Australia last year and over \$1.1 billion of speeding fines were issued out. When we speed it reduces our field vision and affects our reaction time to oncoming vehicles. When we travel faster there is a harder impact collision, a vehicle that is going 50km/h has an equivalent impact of fall from a three-storey building.

Speeding is not the only factor that causes dangerous driving on our roads, lots of accidents are because the driver is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol-related accidents covered 19% of all road fatalities in Australia. The current alcohol consumption limit in Australia is 0.05 which allows you to drink 2 standard drinks in the first hour and 1 every hour after that to maintain your level. There are still people who don't listen to that rule and go over the limit but there are ways to stop these people from putting their lives and the lives of others at risk. More RBT's (Random Breathe Testing) on the side of the road can stop people from drink driving. If

people know that there are going to be more RBT's than they will begin to drink less and stay under the limit.



When your parents are driving where do they keep their phone? Is it in their pocket, in their bag, in the glove compartment? You may not think it matters but this can be the difference between life and death. 18% of fatal accidents in 2019 were caused by distractions and the main distraction for us on the road is our phones. When we receive a text message we take our eyes off the road for 5 seconds but cover 100m. Think of everything that could go wrong in that hundred metres. Phones should be turned on silent when driving so that you don't feel the urge to look at it, they should be kept in a safe place but should have the screen faced down so you can't see when a text has come through. Doing these simple steps could not only save your lives but reduce the risk of losing control of your car. Recently the government has put on mobile phone cameras, as seen on the right, to stop people from using their phones on the road. The cameras can see if you are using a phone and if you are you will be issued a fine. Doing this the government reduces the action of using your phone while you are in your car.



**Whether you're in a car or near the water the best tool you can have is awareness. Being aware helps you to find danger before it happens. Next time you're in a car make sure your parents have been following road rules of Australia, and next time you're at the beach make sure you find a place near the flags because awareness costs you nothing.**