



Drowning prevention for people over 60

Changing exposures
Complex vulnerabilities

Justin Scarr, PhD

Chief Executive Officer

Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

Presentation objectives

01

OUTLINE DROWNING
IN OLDER PEOPLE IN
AUSTRALIA

02

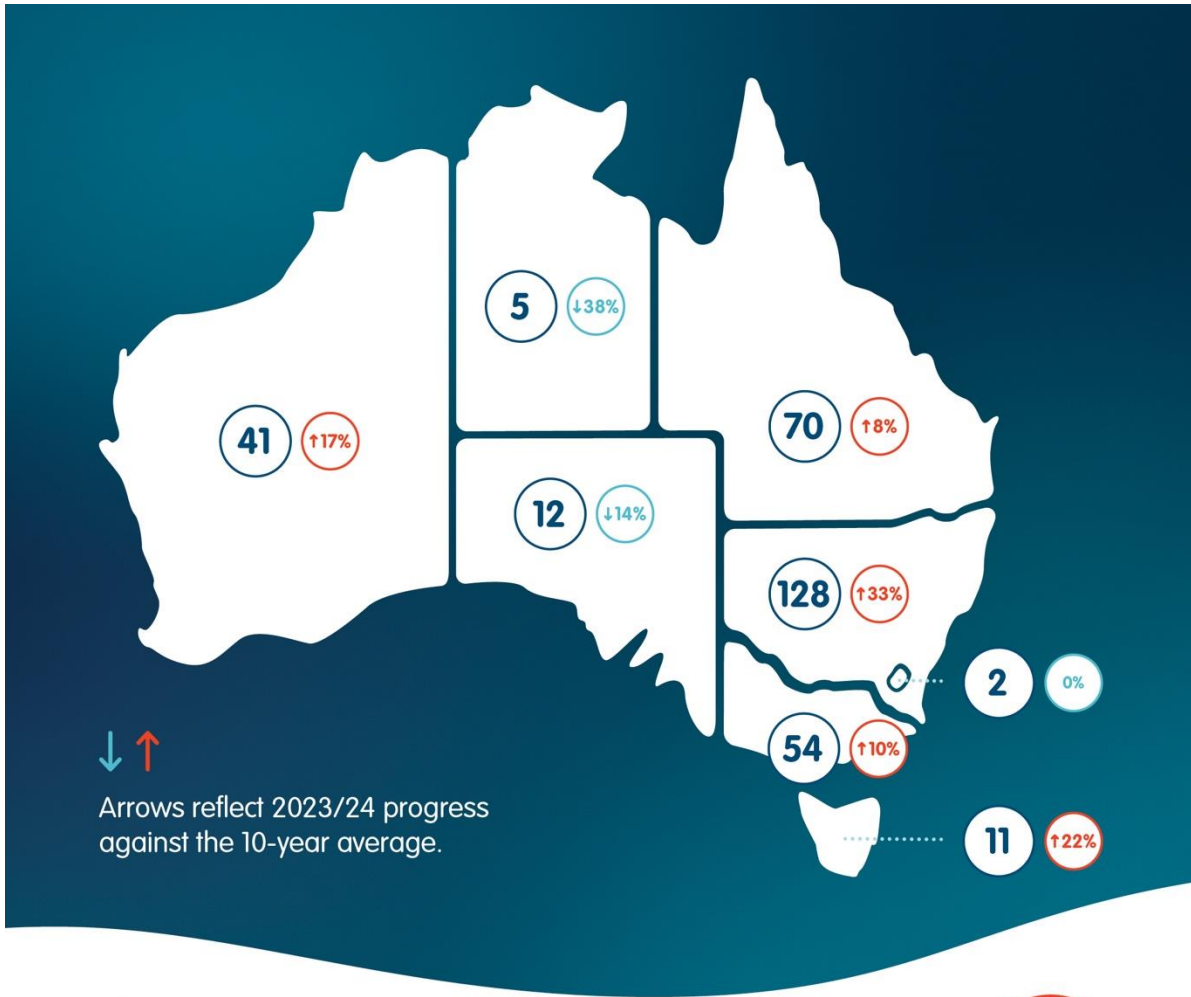
FRAME THE ISSUE IN
TERMS OF
VULNERABILITIES,
EXPOSURES,
HAZARDS

03

PRESENT SOLUTIONS
IN TERMS OF
BUILDING
DROWNING
PREVENTION
RESILIENCE

04

PROVIDE SOME
EXAMPLES



323

people drowned in Australian waterways

NATIONAL DROWNING REPORT 2024



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



TOP 3 ACTIVITIES

33%

Swimming & Recreating



11%

Fall



9%

Boating



TOP 3 LOCATIONS

26%

Beach



25%

River/Creek



14%

Ocean/Harbour



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



82%

of all drowning deaths
were males

NATIONAL DROWNING REPORT 2024



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
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IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



40%

of all drowning deaths were
adults ages 55 years & older

NATIONAL DROWNING REPORT 2024



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
AUSTRALIA

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



More facts

40% people aged 55 years and older

28% people aged 65 years and older

Highest numbers (65+), proportions and rates of drowning in most states/territories, except Victoria

Steadily increasing since 2017/18

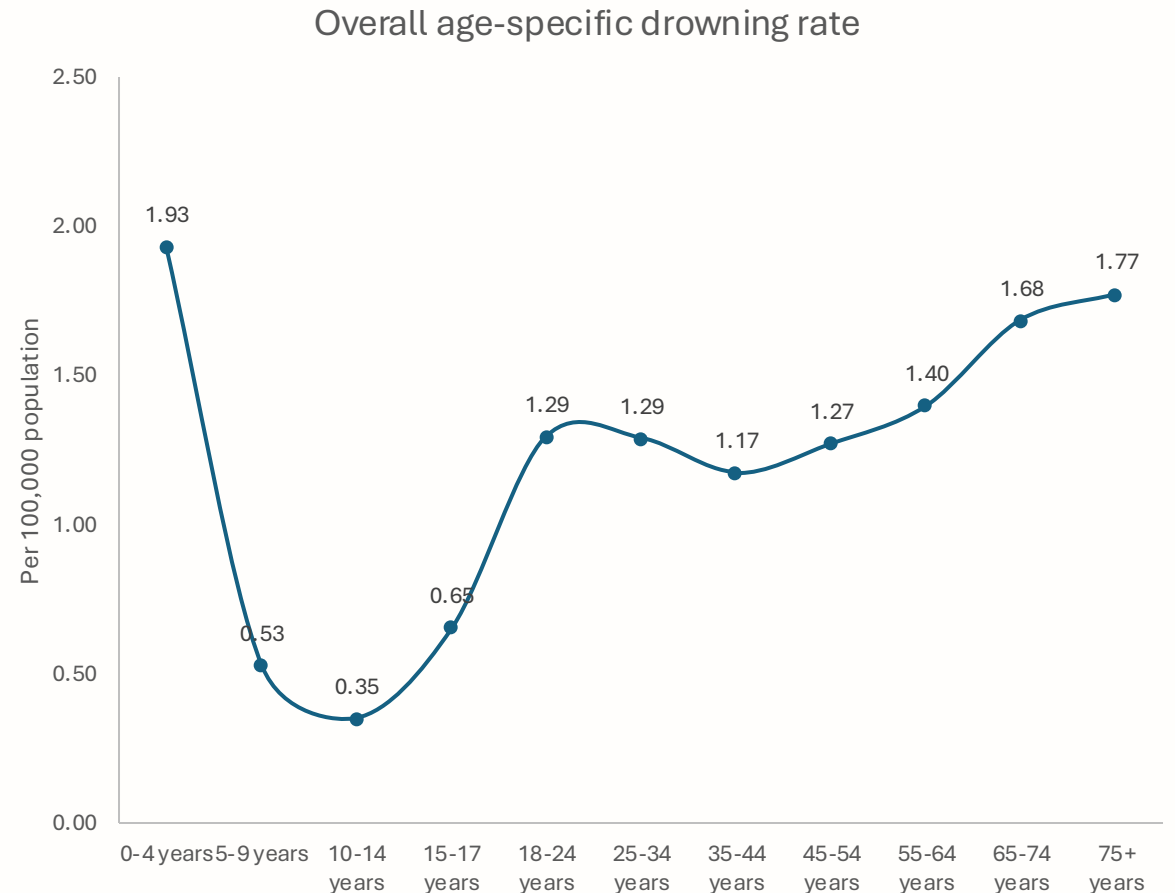
In 2023/24 those aged 75+ years recorded the highest drowning rate of 2.17 per 100,000 of all age groups

An increase of 26% on the 10-year average.

Key contributing factors include an unintentional fall into water, pre-existing medical conditions, the presence of alcohol and/or medications.

Some context

- Children 0-4 years had the highest drowning rate
 - 60.6% were **males**
 - Age-specific rate of **1.93 per 100,000 population**
 - Drowning location: **Swimming pools (51%)**
 - **Falls (76.8%)**
- Second highest drowning rate was in the 75+ age group
 - 70.1% were **males**
 - Age-specific rate of **1.77 per 100,000 population**
 - Drowning location: **Rivers/Creeks (28.5%)**
 - **Falls (30%)**



Trends over the past 20 years



- Children (0-4yrs) had a **59% decrease** in drowning rates between 2002/07 and 2017/22
- In comparison**
- 65–74-year age group had the **lowest reduction in drowning (7% decrease)**
 - **Unintentional falls** - more frequently in **females** and in the **0-4 and 75+ year age groups**
 - Falls a concern in older age groups (65+ years) particularly around private pools

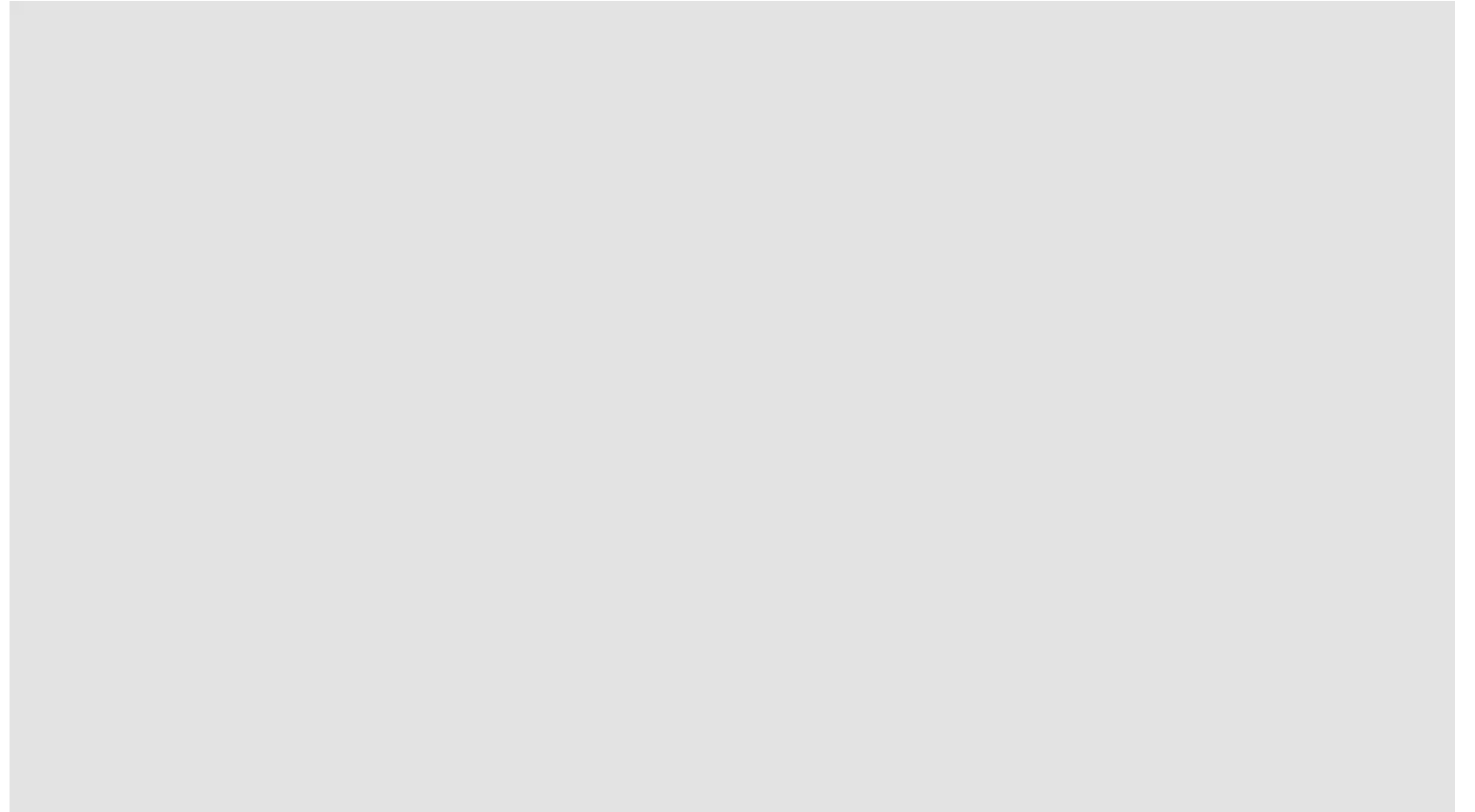
OLDER PEOPLE (65+ YEARS)

Key activities

- Investigate the role of specific pre-existing medical conditions and medications in drowning
- Promote aquatic recreation in supervised locations for people with limited mobility and pre-existing injuries
- Develop pathways to re-engaging with aquatic activities
- Deliver targeted water safety and lifesaving programs to encourage safe aquatic recreation



Some
examples
(Both
recreational)



THE GREY MEDALLION

Royal Life Saving's Grey Medallion program is a water safety and lifesaving skills initiative for adults to encourage a healthy, independent and active lifestyle through safe aquatic recreation.

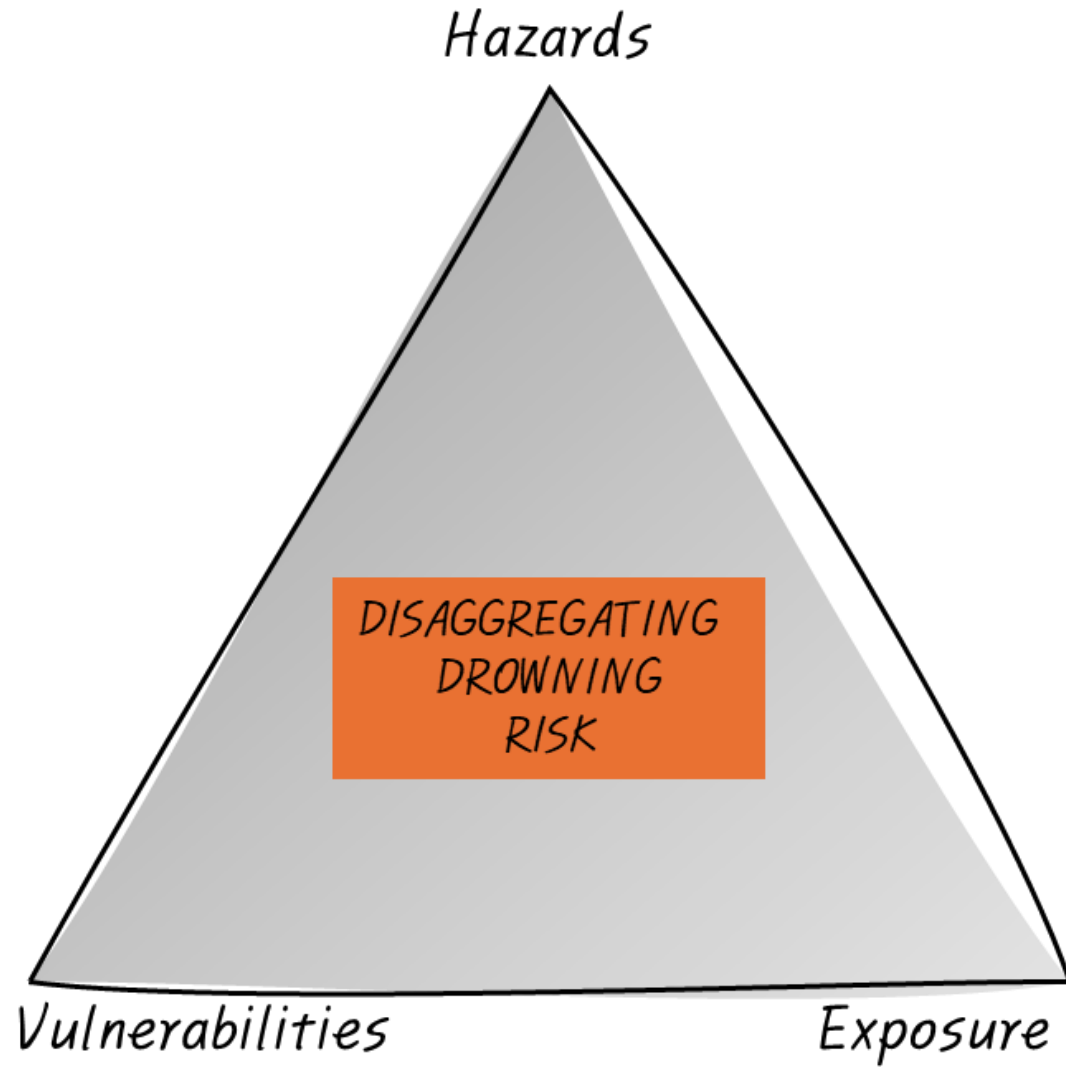
The program is organised at aquatic centres and focuses on:

- Water safety knowledge
- Resuscitation and emergency care
- Aquatic exercise
- Personal survival and lifesaving skills





*DISAGGREGATING
DROWNING
RISK*



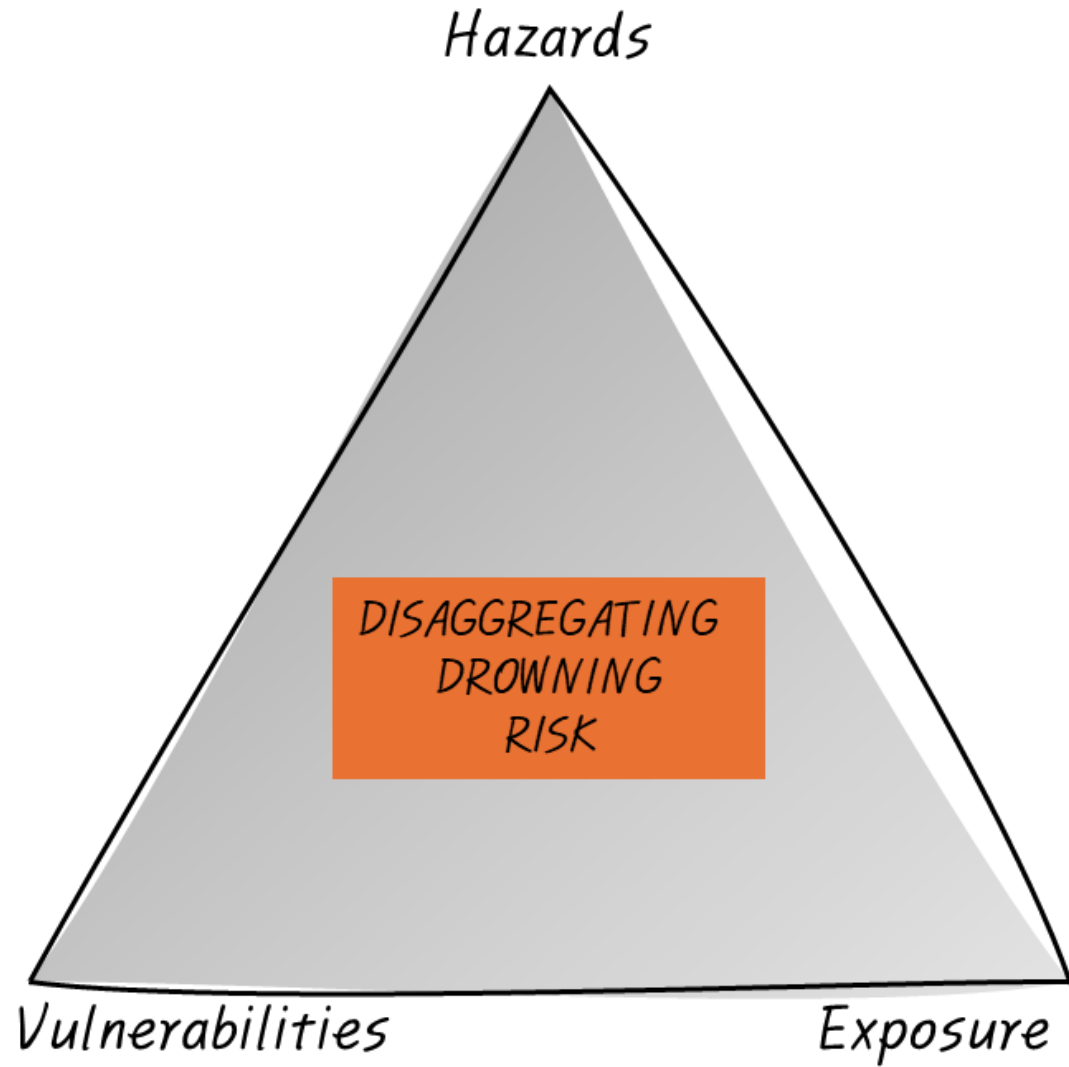
HAZARDS

HOME - BATHS/POOLS

BOATING / WATERCRAFT

SWIMMING POOL

FLOODING



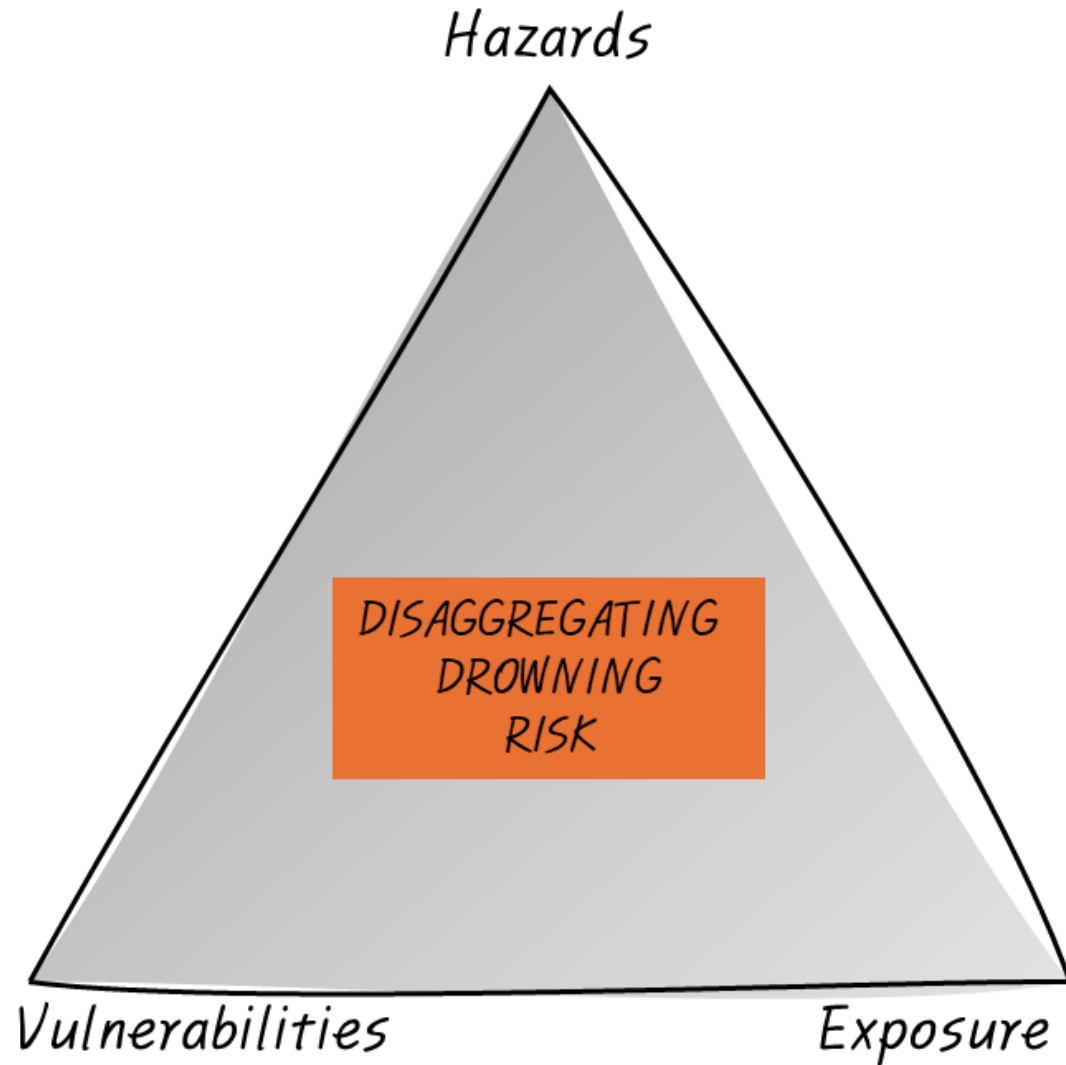
EXPOSURE

RECREATIONAL

FALLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

OCCUPATIONAL

DISASTER



VULNERABILITIES

DECLINING HEALTH

LEISURE CHOICES

ACCESS TO SERVICES

STAGE OF RETIREMENT

RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

BUILDING LAYERS OF RESILIENCE

AWARENESS OF MEDICAL IMPACTS

MAINTAINANCE OF SKILLS

ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES

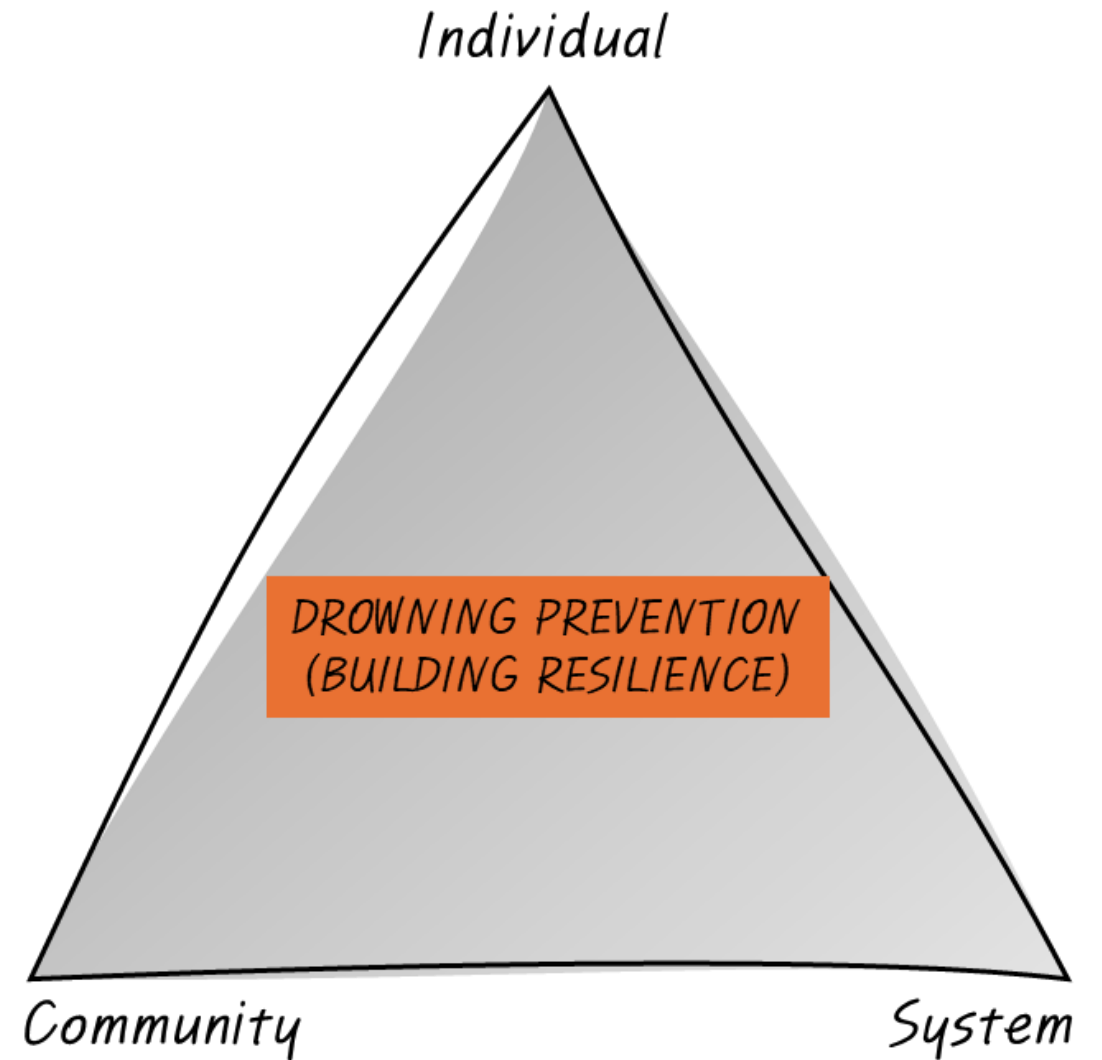
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

TAILORED INFRASTRUCTURE

HEALTH SECTOR

POSITIVE / HEALTH AGEING

FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE



HAZARDS

EXPOSURE

VULNERABILITIES

HOME - BATHS

FALLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

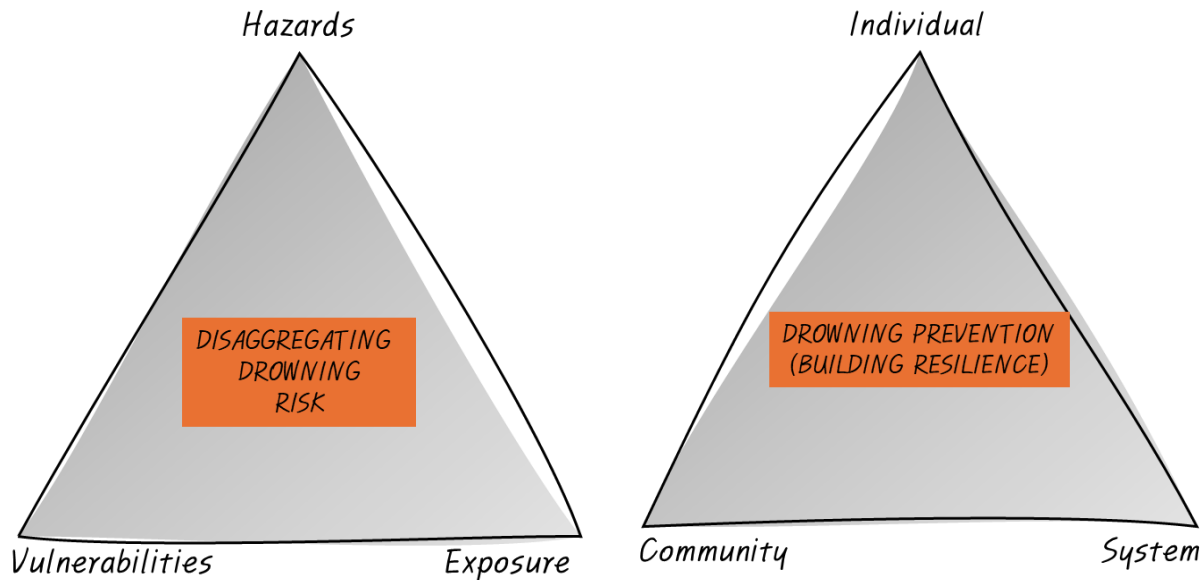
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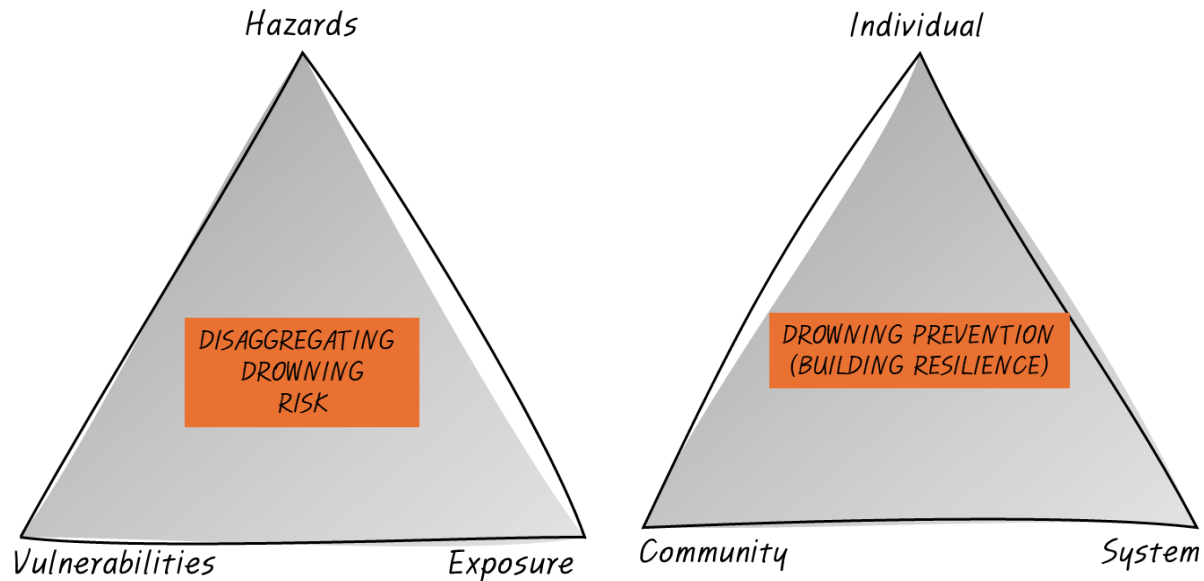
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SWIMMING POOL

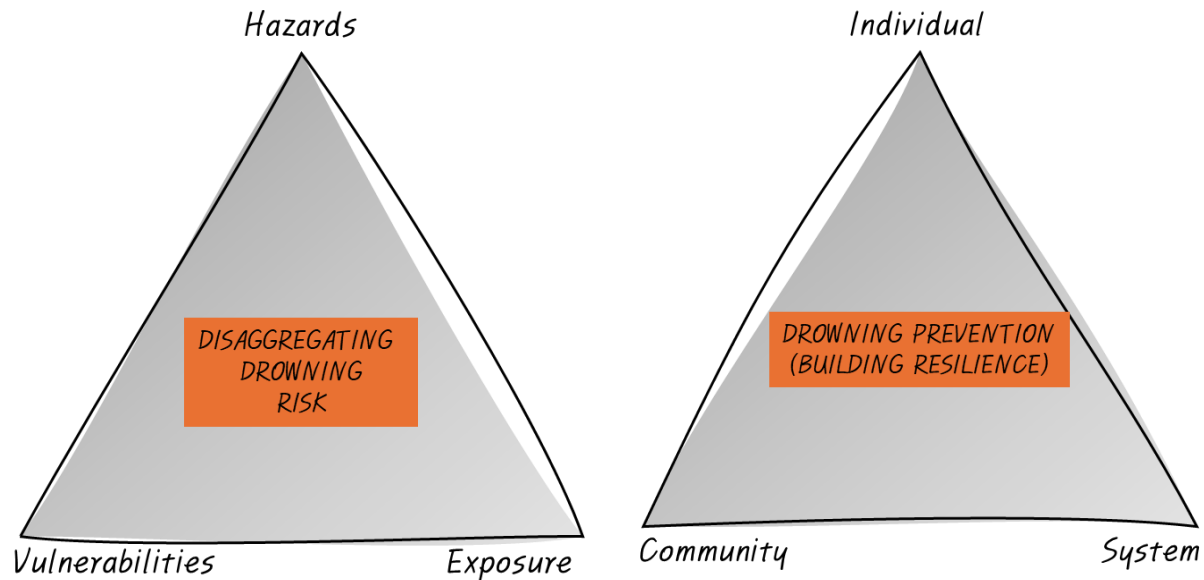
RECREATIONAL

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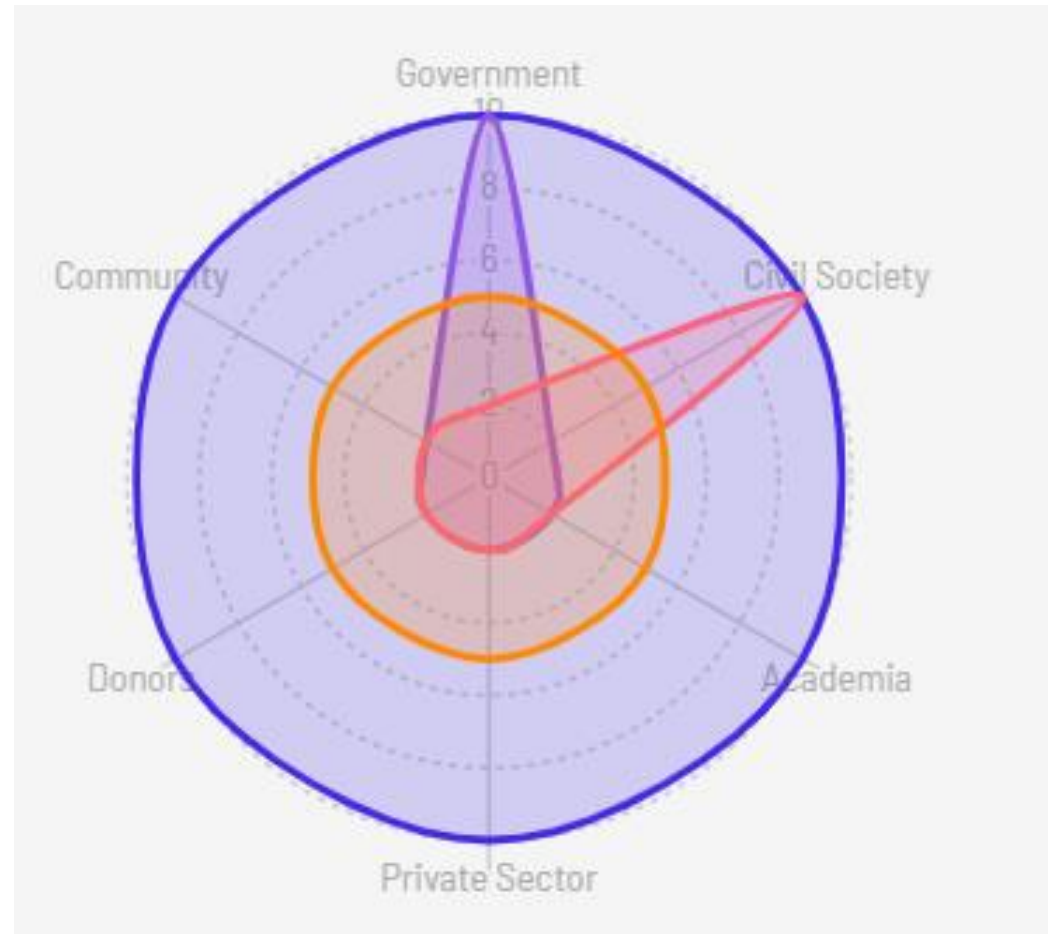
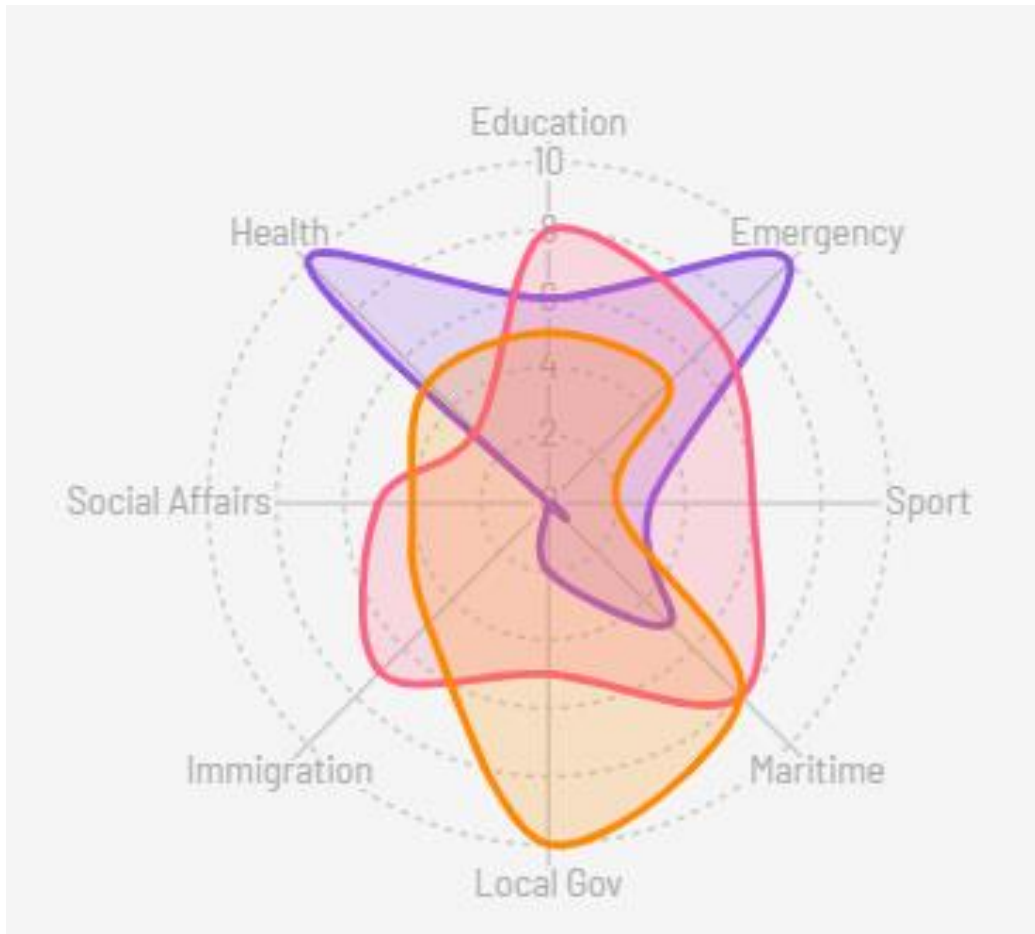
LEISURE CHOICES

ACCESS TO SERVICES

STAGE OF RETIREMENT



Multisectoral is also multistakeholder



The future



POSITION

Drowning prevention within healthy ageing agendas



ADD

A dose of drowning prevention to falls prevention programs, health screening services, recreational boating – licencing and education



REACH

Partner with senior citizen groups, recreational clubs, health and home care sector



REFRAME

Drowning prevention links to health ageing, falls prevention, and active leisure.



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