

# **Evaluation of the ALAC Boating and Alcohol 1999/2000 Campaign**

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# Evaluation of the ALAC Boating and Alcohol 1999/2000 Campaign

## 1.0 Introduction

Drowning is the third cause of injury death across all age groups<sup>i</sup> and internationally and within New Zealand, alcohol has also been associated with drowning<sup>ii,iii,iv,v,vi,vii</sup>. In 1999, the Injury Prevention Research Centre (IPRC) conducted Stage I of the Boating Safety Survey in the form of a pre-intervention boating survey. Baseline data on alcohol use among boaters in the Auckland region was collected and analysed as part of preparations for developing and evaluating an interventions study that addressed alcohol use on the water during the America's Cup and millennium celebrations in Auckland. This study was jointly funded by the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) and the Maritime Safety Authority (MSA), and this report is available from the IPRC resource centre.

This study provided good evidence of the role of alcohol in drowning and boating incidents. Key findings from the study show that 27% of boating deaths among 15-64 years old had a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) over 80mg/100 ml, which is the legal limit for driving a car in New Zealand and 43% had evidence of drinking (or had positive BAC). This would indicate that alcohol use is as much of a problem for boating fatalities as it is on the roads. This is especially so for falls from recreational boats<sup>ii</sup>.

These findings indicated a need to inform the boating public of the risks of alcohol use while boating and the need to avoid heavy drinking when on or near the water, both for operators and passengers. As a result, ALAC developed a campaign that targeted different individuals (skippers, passengers, small boat users, etc), with safe alcohol and safe boating messages.

This campaign will be evaluated in the first of the two phases that constitute Stage II of this programme of research. The evaluation, on which this report is based, focuses on the immediate effect of the messages contained in the ALAC campaign "Don't go overboard with the booze", and is funded by ALAC. The second phase, which will be conducted in the summer of 2001, will assess changes in boaters' attitudes and behaviours with regard to alcohol and boating.

Phase one has three distinct but interrelated activities: 1) a brief description of the 1999/2000 ALAC boating campaign; 2) an evaluation of the effects of this ALAC campaign on the policies and practices of targeted organisations; and 3) an evaluation of the effects of this campaign on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of members of boating clubs.

In addition, although not included in the contract, the IPRC, in conjunction with Watersafe Auckland, undertook to evaluate the effects of the Safe Summer 2000 water safety campaign. As ALAC were an integral part of the Safe Summer 2000 campaign and boating and alcohol were a focus of the Safe Summer 2000 campaign, IPRC decided to incorporate this evaluation into this report. The rationale for this was to place the ALAC boating and alcohol campaign within the wider context of water safety.

Consequently, this report is divided into six sections. Section one is the introductory section. Section two describes the 1999/2000 ALAC boating campaign. Included in this description is an outline of how the ALAC campaign related to the Safe Summer 2000 campaign. Section three relates to the effects of the ALAC campaign on policies and practices of target organisations. This section includes methods, findings, concluding comments and recommendations. Section four relates to the effects of the ALAC campaign on members of boating clubs. This section also covers: methods, findings, concluding comments and recommendations. Section five relates to the evaluation of the Safe Summer 2000 Campaign. This section includes background, methods, findings, concluding comments and recommendations. The final section (six) draws together the themes from all the previous sections and briefly comments on the short-term impact of the ALAC boating and alcohol campaign.

## 2.0 Campaign description

Staff at ALAC developed a series of eye-catching graphics and associated safer alcohol use messages that targeted different individuals (skippers, passengers, small boat users, etc.), but delivered the same basic message “Don’t go overboard with the booze”. Other safety messages which were incorporated in the ALAC campaign included:

- Alcohol is a major factor in drownings, especially in falls overboard from small boats.
- The combination of sun, wind and sea can dehydrate your body. When you’re contemplating a drink remember that alcohol will further contribute to dehydration, and affect your judgement and coordination.
- Take it easy if you’re drinking on the water. Make sure you have some food and non-alcoholic drinks on board.
- Alcohol affects your balance, judgement and coordination.
- As skipper, you are at all times legally responsible for the safety of your crew and passengers.
- If you should fall overboard, alcohol reduces your swimming ability and increases the risks of hypothermia and drowning. It may also cause disorientation, affecting your ability to distinguish up from down.

These graphics and the associated safety messages were used extensively by ALAC on billboards, posters, flash cards, tee-shirts, newspapers, magazines and television news items. The “Don’t go overboard with the booze” slogan was also used for advertising on radio. Campaign resources were distributed through a wide range of organisations including all Auckland boat clubs and marinas, Coastguard Search and Rescue, Auckland Water Safety Association, Watersafe Auckland, Auckland City Council, Auckland Regional Authority and a number of key boating retailers. In addition, ALAC held meetings with health promotion professionals throughout New Zealand to inform people about the campaign. This resulted in boating and alcohol safety messages being promoted in many parts of New Zealand.

Safe Summer 2000 provided an umbrella for the safety campaigns of the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA), WaterSafe Auckland, Police, Coastguard, Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC), Auckland City and Regional Councils, Department of Conservation and St John Ambulance, to address the potential risk of increased deaths and injuries during the Millennium America's Cup and other events over the 1999/2000 summer. Many of the organisations associated with Safe Summer 2000 incorporated the ALAC campaign slogan and messages in their water safety activities. Support for the campaign was also received from the Maritime Police, Yachting New Zealand and the Maritime Transport Association.

Further information on the ALAC campaign is available from the ALAC Auckland office.

## **3.0 Evaluation of ALAC Campaign on targeted organisations**

### **3.1 Methods**

Following review of campaign materials, a list of key informants was drawn up. These key informants were selected because of their involvement in: 1) the Safe Summer 2000 campaign; and/or 2) their decision making roles and responsibilities in water safety.

Letters were sent to each key informant advising them of the evaluation and requesting their co-operation. A format for an interview was developed and piloted. Each key informant was then contacted by telephone by a member of the evaluation team. All key informants contacted agreed to be interviewed over the telephone.

Only two of the suggested informants, despite numerous calls, could not be contacted. One was a Member of Parliament and the other was heading a Government enquiry. Informants included representatives from: the Auckland Regional Authority; the Coastguard; the Auckland Maritime Police; the Maritime Safety Authority; the Land Transport Safety Authority; the Police; Water Safety Auckland; Northland Health; a boating magazine; Yachting New Zealand; the Boating Industries Association; the Maritime Transport Association; a marina; the Auckland Yachting and Boating Association; the America's Cup project co-ordination team; and a harbourmaster from outside Auckland.

The same staff member conducted all telephone interviews and analysed the data. Data was analysed manually. Any direct quotes used in this report are in italics.

### **3.2 Findings**

Eighteen interviews were conducted. Informants were first asked if they were aware of the ALAC campaign and how they had heard of it. All of the informants had heard of the campaign; most had been invited to, and attended, the campaign launch; all had seen some of the promotional material, cards, posters and tee-shirts; many had read about the campaign in the newspaper; many were involved in, or aware of, the Safe Summer 2000 campaign in Auckland, some had read the article in the boat magazine "Propeller", some had seen the billboards, a few had seen messages on TV3 and the TV1 report, and only one had visited the ALAC website.

Many of the informants had incorporated the ALAC information into their own safety promotion activities, for some, it was beyond the brief of their organisation to do so, while a few considered that *“there wasn’t a problem with alcohol and boating in the first place”*. Most of those that had used the information considered that the ALAC messages *“reinforced the safety messages we promote”*. Many of the informants stated that they had always promoted safe alcohol use. However they stated that they found the “don’t go overboard with the booze” slogan was a very catchy way to get a significant message across which *“enhanced everything we did”*.

*“We had never used ALAC messages before, although we always mentioned alcohol use in our safety promotion”.*

*“The cartoon approach was very effective as an education tool. Great pitch, ‘thou shalt not is useless’. Safe alcohol use has always been part of our message but it was good to have a complementary message”.*

Three of the informants stated that they would not have included safer alcohol use in their safety campaigns if they had not been informed by the ALAC safer alcohol use and boating campaign. Within this group was the harbourmaster from the Auckland Regional Authority. This organisation worked closely with ALAC and others to produce a ‘Boaties’ Guide’. The ALAC messages were included in this booklet and 20,000 copies were distributed on the water, at marinas and at tourist centres in Auckland during the America’s Cup campaign.

*“The public education programme worked well”.*

Participants were asked to compare the priority they gave the promotion of safer alcohol use last year compared with the priority they give it now. Many of them had increased the priority but there were still some who did not consider that this should be a high priority, *“alcohol is only one of many safety aspects we focus on”*. Some considered that the America’s Cup was a major contributor to receptivity of the evidence. *“People are much more interested in boating this year.”*

**Most of the participants considered that the ALAC campaign had increased general awareness of the issues surrounding alcohol use and boating, and some considered that there**

**had been a slight improvement in changing the behaviour of boaters towards general boating safety and their behaviour towards safer alcohol use when boating. Perhaps this could best be summed up by**

*“Excellent start, we have a long way to go yet, resource needs to be escalated”.*

*“Need to stress importance, people don’t think about it like they do with cars and alcohol”.*

Many spoke of the effectiveness of the message.

*“Like the way they do it, gets away from the teetotaler mode. More modern, more in keeping with the user base”.*

*“I’ve observed ALAC campaigns in the past, this was a much more effective campaign than any previous ones”.*

*“As people’s attitudes to alcohol use and driving have improved this is spinning off into safe alcohol use on the water. There is a greater respect to the effects of alcohol now than before. Much healthier attitude, going in the right direction”.*

However, there were some that did not agree.

*“We didn’t believe that there was a problem in the first place, this campaign was not necessary”.*

*“Alcohol is only one of many safety aspects that we focus on. We endorse the Government Pleasure Boat Association report and its findings. There is a reasonable amount of doubt on the figures used by ALAC which has led to a lack of credibility”.*

Most of the participants supported the concept of an umbrella group to promote safer boating and/or alcohol use and the development of healthy public policy. There was a general impression that the Safe Summer 2000 forum had worked well.

*“Pleased with informal getting together, needs to be regular though. Event driven probably works best”.*

*“We don’t need more agencies. A co-ordination of existing agencies is a must. Would like to see ALAC come into a forum, their presence working with existing agencies rather than creating anymore agencies”.*

*“It takes time to build a safety culture, look how long it took for the seat belt campaign. Needs to be done slowly, it will take time to build a water safety culture”.*

*“There is a need for organisations involved in water safety to work together more closely. The Maritime Safety Authority intends setting up regional and national forums for this”.*

*“The collaboration for the America’s Cup campaign was excellent and should be continued. The ALAC message got across and the Maritime Police were good ambassadors, the life-jacket info was good too. Should be maintained”.*

However there were those who did not support this idea,

*“there are already sufficient safety organisations, we don’t need anything new. The Small Boats’ Safety Committee is an excellent forum”.*

The issue of regulatory measures was raised by some of the informants, and opinions were divided between those that were keen for legislative measures and those who supported an educational campaign.

*“Boating and booze will always be there, there is a need to get the message across, boaters should be fined, not just at boat ramps, there needs to be teeth on the water. Same as road ‘give me your keys, have more muscle”.*

*“We still don’t have the tools necessary to make meaningful impact on alcohol abuse on the water. There is no legal authority to test BAC”.*

*“It is a difficult area to legislate, it’s not always the operator, often involves the passengers and the boats not moving. That’s why the ALAC message has been good. There is more success with education than legislation.”*

*“Legislation doesn’t change people’s attitudes, education will. The moderation message contained in the ALAC campaign good but reinforcement of the message would help”.*

*“The public education programme was effective. Booze was not the problem that was expected, but then neither were the other problems like gridlocks on the ramps and collisions on water”.*

The harbourmaster from outside Auckland expressed interest in, and support for, the campaign and suggested that the campaign could be extended to cover the Taupo, Rotorua and Queenstown lakes. A health promotion advocate in Northland also stated that she incorporated the “Don’t go overboard with the booze” campaign into her water safety programme.

### **3.3 Concluding comments and recommendations**

This evaluation provided promising findings for the “Don’t go overboard with the booze” campaign conducted by ALAC. However, it also showed that there is still a perception amongst many that alcohol abuse and boating is not a problem.

Health education strategies based on improving awareness have often been criticised as there is a large body of literature that suggests there is no automatic connection between increased knowledge and behaviour change <sup>viii, ix</sup>. Nevertheless this evaluation has provided some evidence that the ALAC campaign has resulted in a raised awareness of the issues surrounding safe alcohol use and boating and a slight improvement in safety behaviours with regard to the drinking of alcohol on the water. In addition, where appropriate, policy changes have been made. The evaluation has also demonstrated there is a wide range of opinions regarding the need for a focus on alcohol use on the water that would suggest that the campaign should be strengthened and repeated.

The America’s Cup obviously provided a catalyst for those interested in safety on the water and the formation of the Safe Summer 2000 forum created an environment where these agencies could work collaboratively together. The input that ALAC provided to this forum in the form of a catchy slogan “Don’t go overboard with the booze” and the accompanying graphics was obviously appreciated.

It is therefore recommended that the ALAC “Don’t go overboard with the booze” campaign be continued and that the possibility of being involved in a forum with others involved in boating safety is strenuously pursued.

## **4.0 Evaluation of the campaign – Boating Clubs**

### **4.1 Methods**

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the ALAC campaign carried out in boating clubs, a questionnaire was prepared to survey members of different boating clubs. In the first instance, the questionnaire tried to create an image of the boating club members that were being surveyed: their age group and gender, their main boating activities and the frequency at which they went boating. The questionnaire also sought to determine the reach of the campaign, the media that were most effective in delivering the messages and the impact of the ALAC campaign on the attitudes and practices of boating club members with regard to drinking alcohol while boating. Finally, the questionnaire tried to ascertain whether the campaign had resulted in boating club members doing any boating education courses.

Eight boating clubs were randomly selected from *The Boaties Book*. The first six clubs contacted agreed to participate. Injury Prevention Research Centre staff contacted boating clubs and asked if they would be able to meet with their members to administer the questionnaires. Questionnaires were personally administered to members of four boating clubs in Auckland.

Data from the completed questionnaires were entered into EPI version 6, and were analysed using PC SAS Version 6.12. Only frequency tables were used and no weighting or tests of significance were conducted.

### **4.2 Findings**

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed to various boating clubs. Of these 198 were completed, a response rate of 66%. Of the 198 boating club members who completed the questionnaires, 81% were male and 19% were female. The largest number (44%) were in the age group 36-50 years, followed by 22% in the group 20-35, 21% in the age group 51-65, and 3% in the group < 20 years. Two percent were in the group > 65%. Most of the respondents (90%) participated in boating for fishing and

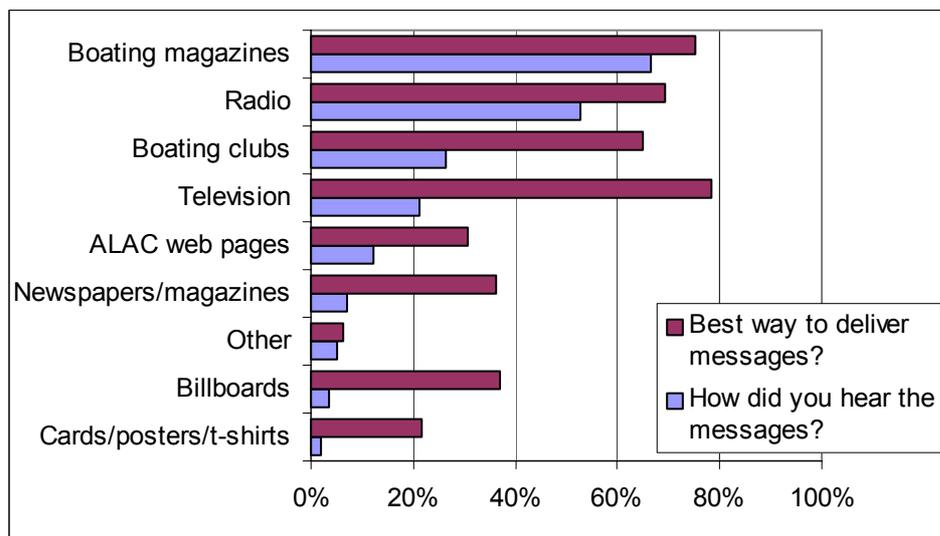
26% boated for pleasure. They also went sailing (13%) and participated in other boating activities (7%) such as diving (multiple response option).

More than half (59%) of the respondents had heard of the ALAC campaign “*don’t go overboard with the booze*”. People under the age of 35 were less likely to have heard about the ALAC campaign (46%) compared to those 36 years and over (63%).

The largest number had read about the campaign in boating club magazines (67%) or heard the messages on radio (53%). Twenty six percent had heard the messages at their boating clubs and 21% had heard information about boating and alcohol on television, 12% had read them on the ALAC web page and 7% had read the campaign messages in newspapers or magazines. Smaller numbers had seen them on billboards (4%), or on cards/poster/tee-shirts (2%). In addition, 5% had heard the messages from other sources, mainly by word of mouth (Table 1).

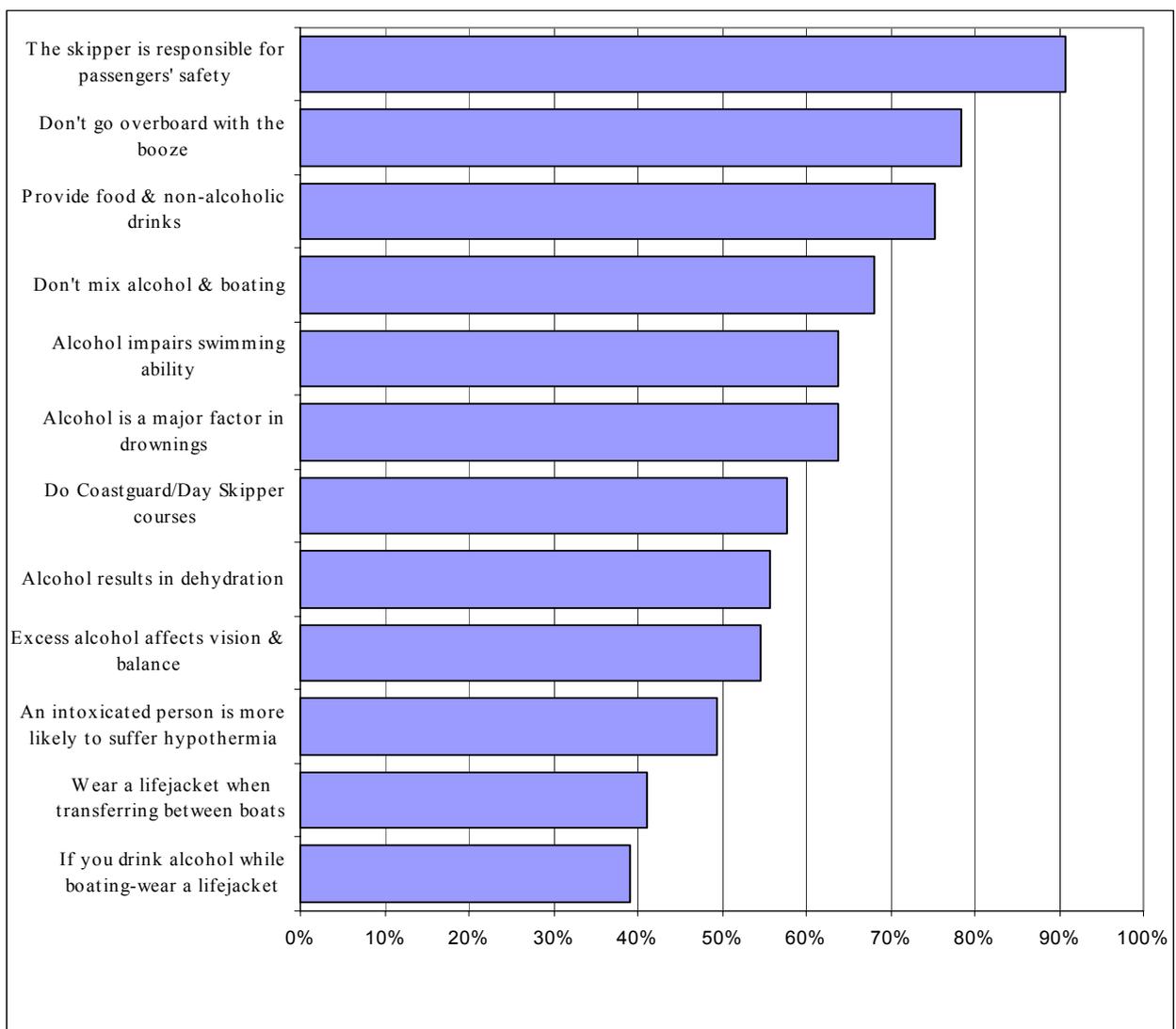
Asked what was the most effective way to deliver messages, the largest number said television (78%), through boating club magazines (75%), through radio advertising (69%) or through their boating clubs (65%). They also mentioned delivering messages in newspapers and magazines (36%), billboards (37%), and the ALAC web page (31%). Cards/poster/tee-shirts (22%) were also considered effective media by which to deliver the messages (Table 1).

Table 1: How were messages heard and the best way to deliver them



This evaluation also tried to determine the precise messages that boating club members recalled hearing. It was found that the majority had heard the message *the skipper is responsible for the safety of crew and passengers* (91%). Many also recalled the messages, *don't go overboard with the booze* (78%), *provide food and non-alcoholic drinks on board* (75%), *don't mix alcohol and boating* (68%) *alcohol is a major factor in drowning, especially in falls overboard* (64%), and *alcohol impairs swimming ability* (64%). Fewer, though still a majority, had heard the messages, *do coastguard/day skipper courses* (58%), *alcohol results in dehydration* (56%), *excess alcohol affects vision, co-ordination and balance* (55%), and *an intoxicated person is more likely to suffer hypothermia and disorientation* (50%). Forty one percent had heard the message *wear a life jacket when transferring from one boat to another* and 39% had heard *if you drink alcohol while boating, wear a life jacket* (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of boating club members who heard the ALAC campaign messages



These messages also appeared to have had a positive impact on a number of boaters, with 30% saying they had made changes in their boating and alcohol practices. However, 48% said the messages had resulted in no changes and 22% said the question was not applicable to them as they did not drink alcohol while boating. Of those who said they had made changes (n=58), 86% said they *now monitored or had reduced the amount of alcohol consumed on board*, and 59% *provided food and non-alcoholic drinks on board*. As a result of hearing the ALAC messages, 17% said they *no longer mixed alcohol and boating* and a number of boaters *now wore a life jacket if drinking alcohol while boating* (14%) or *while transferring from one boat to another* (10%). However, it was also found that people under the age of 35 were slightly less likely to make changes (25%) compared to people over the age of 35 years (32%).

With regard to the impact of the campaign on encouraging people to do boating education courses, it was found that the messages had not had much impact. Only 3% had done a course as a result of hearing the campaign messages. However, 47% had already done courses previous to the campaign. Fifty percent of respondents stated that they had not done any boating education courses. A few respondents made comments relating to the high cost of day skipper and similar courses.

Analysis of the comments made by the respondents found that a large number appreciated the campaign and asked that it be continued in future years, "*keep up the good work*", that it was important that these messages be delivered to more young people and that the messages be delivered all year round as boating is not only a summer activity. Most respondents commented that there was a need to continue to emphasise boating and alcohol safety messages.

A number of respondents also felt that advertising should be more frequent and more graphic so that the effects of alcohol are further emphasised. A number of respondents mentioned the drink-driving advertisements on television and felt that similar advertising would have more impact.

There was acknowledgement from a number of respondents that alcohol and boating did not mix and that too many boating injuries were alcohol related. A few respondents stated that that drink-driving laws should apply to boating as well. Some mentioned that they and their friends had cut down their alcohol intake drastically as they had grown older, and some commented that they did not "*invite boozers*".

#### **4.3 Discussion**

Analysis of the findings of the survey finds that the ALAC campaign had mixed results among members of boating clubs. In the first instance, the survey met with refusal to complete the questionnaire from 34% of those initially approached. However, it would appear that, the campaign itself was far-reaching and caught the attention of many of the boating fraternity, even though it did not achieve its aim of bringing about behaviour change in these respondents. This finding is not surprising given the body of evidence that suggests that there is no automatic connection between increased knowledge and behaviour change<sup>viii,ix,x</sup>.

The campaign was very effective in delivering water safety messages among members of boating clubs with more than half the respondents having heard of the campaign itself. The majority had heard messages through boating club magazines (67%) and on the radio (53%) A large percentage had heard the messages on television (26%) and at their boating clubs (26%). Similar results were found when respondents were asked their preferred media for receiving messages. They felt that television (78%), boating club magazines (75%) and radio advertising (69%) were the most effective means to deliver water safety messages. The ALAC web page was fairly effective with 12% having seen water safety messages posted on the site and 31% saying they felt it would be an effective medium.

It was found that people under the age of 35 were less likely to have heard about the ALAC campaign (46%) compared to those older than 35 years (63%). It was also found that people under the age of 35 were slightly less likely to make changes (25%) compared to people over the age of 35 years (32%). This is an important finding, as younger people are the high-risk group that need to be made more aware of water safety and the risk of drinking alcohol while boating. This finding emphasises the need to target this age group (under 35 years) in future campaigns.

A very large number of respondents (more than 60%) recalled the key messages of the campaign, and the majority had heard almost all the messages. The two messages that did not reach the majority of the respondents were the ones with respect to wearing life jackets (*wear a life jacket when transferring from one boat to another* and *if you drink alcohol while boating, wear a life jacket*). However, nearly 40% of respondents had heard these messages as well.

The messages had a positive impact on a smaller number of respondents with just one out of three saying they had made changes to their boating and alcohol practices. Most of those who reported making changes stated that they had reduced the amount of alcohol being consumed

on board and now provided food and non-alcoholic beverages on board. Of those who previously mixed alcohol and boating, and as a result of the ALAC campaign, about one in six now no longer drank alcohol while boating. It should be noted though that just over a fifth of the respondents (22%) did not mix alcohol and boating even prior to the ALAC campaign. Smaller numbers now wore life jackets when transferring from one boat to another or if drinking alcohol while boating. However, though these changes appear to be small, one would hope that these numbers will continue to improve and that the survey to be conducted in Summer 2001 will show substantial improvements in behaviour and practices among boaters with regard to drinking alcohol while boating.

It is disappointing that some of the respondents commented that they thought boating courses were too expensive. Day skipper courses and boat master courses are run throughout New Zealand by community colleges, the New Zealand Coastguards Federation and polytechnics. Charges at the community colleges are slightly lower as they are subsidized but the overall charge for the course, manual and exam certification is less than \$100 at all sites. Perhaps more publicity could be given to the availability of these courses and the relative costs compared with the cost of lives lost and the value of boats and boating/fishing equipment.

A very significant finding has been the reach and effect of the campaign among boaters who were 35 years and under. They were less likely to have either heard of the campaign or made changes as a result of the campaign, when compared to people over the age of 35 years. No doubt, this is a group that should be more actively targeted in future campaigns as it is here that the need for change is most required. Another important finding was the high number of males in the respondents surveyed and thus in the target audience. This fact should be noted when planning future campaigns.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

- ALAC should continue to advertise in boating club magazines in order to reach larger numbers in the boating fraternity.
- ALAC should develop or refine its future campaign so that it reaches more young people (those under 35 years of age).
- There is a need to emphasise the importance of life jackets while boating more aggressively in future campaigns.
- More graphic advertising, like the drink driving advertisements, to increase effectiveness and impact.

- Water safety campaigns among boaters must be continued if the gains made in this campaign are to be retained and improved.

## 5.1

Backgr

The campaign was conducted over a four-month period from October 1999 to February 2000. The organisations involved in the Safe Summer 2000 campaign developed a number of ways to deliver water safety messages. For example, the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) developed the message “Don’t go overboard with the booze” and produced the related graphics. WaterSafe Auckland developed a campaign using television and radio media to broadcast water safety messages. They also distributed pamphlets and advertised on billboards and street banners. Volunteer Coastguard patrol boats conducted an education campaign on boat ramps and WaterSafe Auckland took the campaign to primary, intermediate and secondary schools in the form of advisory group meetings, resources and competitions.

The primary aim of this evaluation was to assess the impact and effectiveness of the water safety campaign that was part of the *Safe Summer 2000* campaign, carried out over the summer months of 1999-2000. An important part of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the water safety campaign in actually changing behaviour.

The Safe Summer campaign was officially launched at the America’s Cup village and attracted media attention (television, radio and print media). All agencies involved in this campaign also undertook on-going advocacy with a range of community agencies and the general public to ensure that the messages were heard and acted upon. Safe Summer 2000 was thus the result of the concerted effort of several organisations using different means to deliver the messages of water safety.

## 5.2

Method

The main focus of the evaluation was to assess which water safety messages actually reached the people; the effectiveness of various media in capturing the attention of their

viewers or listeners; and the success of the campaign in actually bringing about changes in behaviour and attitudes in relation to water safety among people at the beaches and among boaters.

To assess the effectiveness of the campaign a survey was carried out at beaches and boat ramps in March 2000. Over a six-day period, people were surveyed at six different beaches: Bucklands Beach, Eastern Beach, Mission Bay, Muruwai, Piha, and Takapuna. Over a four-day period people were surveyed at five boat ramps: Bucklands Beach, Half Moon Bay, Stanmore Bay, Takapuna, and Westhaven. Two different questionnaires were used to survey people i) at beaches and ii) at boat ramps. The questionnaires were similar in their focus in that they both aimed to evaluate the reach and impact of the water safety campaign among the people targeted during the campaign. However, since the surveys targeted different groups of people, they asked different questions. The questionnaire used to survey people at the beach asked water safety questions that were related to safety at the beach. It included questions about supervision of children, swimming between flags, awareness of rips and currents and the dangers of swimming after drinking alcohol. The questionnaire used for the survey at boat ramps asked specific questions related to safety out on the water and in boats. Questions about life jackets, alcohol use on the water and boating education courses were included in this questionnaire.

The questionnaires gave people the opportunity to write in their comments and remarks. In addition, some interviewers spoke at length with people at the beaches to gauge their reactions to the water safety campaign and obtain more feedback about what they considered to be useful and worthwhile.

Data from the completed questionnaires were entered into EPI Info version 6, and were analysed using PC SAS Version 6.12. Only frequency tables were used and no weighting or tests of significance were conducted.

The findings are presented in four sections. The first section gives results of the survey carried out at the beaches; the second section gives the results of the survey at boat ramps; the third survey gives an overall picture of both surveys in relation to overall awareness of the key messages of the campaign; and the fourth and final section presents findings from the qualitative comments made by respondents of both the surveys.

### **5.3.1 Beaches**                      **5.3 Findings**

967 people were surveyed at the six beaches in and around Auckland. Of these, 516 (53%) were male and 451 (47%) were female. 857 (89%) were residents of the greater Auckland Region and 105 (11%) were visitors (five respondents did not answer this question). 17%

were in the age group < 20 years, 46% between 20 and 35 years, 26% between 36 and 50 years and 12% were over 50 years.

#### **5.3.1.1 Awareness**

Analysis of the data gathered at the six beaches showed an excellent awareness of the water safety campaign. Of those surveyed, 84% had heard some messages relating to water safety. However, a much smaller number 46% had heard of the branding *Safe Summer 2000*.

Radio and television were the main media that took the messages to the public with 67% having heard these messages on television and 51% of them having heard these water safety messages on the radio. Smaller numbers recalled reading newspaper advertisements (18%) and seeing the water safety messages advertised on billboards (17%). Relatively fewer people saw posters (9%), pamphlets (7%) and street banners (4%). Three percent had heard or seen water safety messages from other sources, such as friends, plane banners and the internet (Table 3).

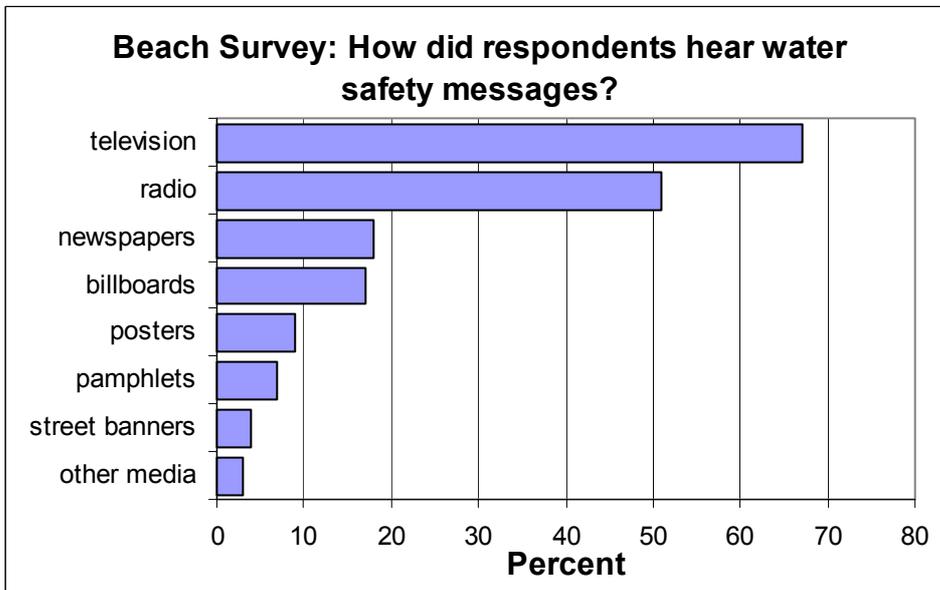


Table 3: How respondents at beaches heard water safety messages

In analysing the messages that people noticed or recalled, it was found that the largest number (78%), of all those were surveyed, recalled the message “*Swim between the flags*”. This was followed closely by messages asking people to “*watch for rips and currents*” (64%); “*Don’t go overboard with the booze*” (51%); “*always supervise kids*” (44%); “*listen to the advice of lifeguards*” (32%); 28% recalled messages that said “*know your limits*”; and 24% recalled the message “*if in doubt stay out*” (Table 4).

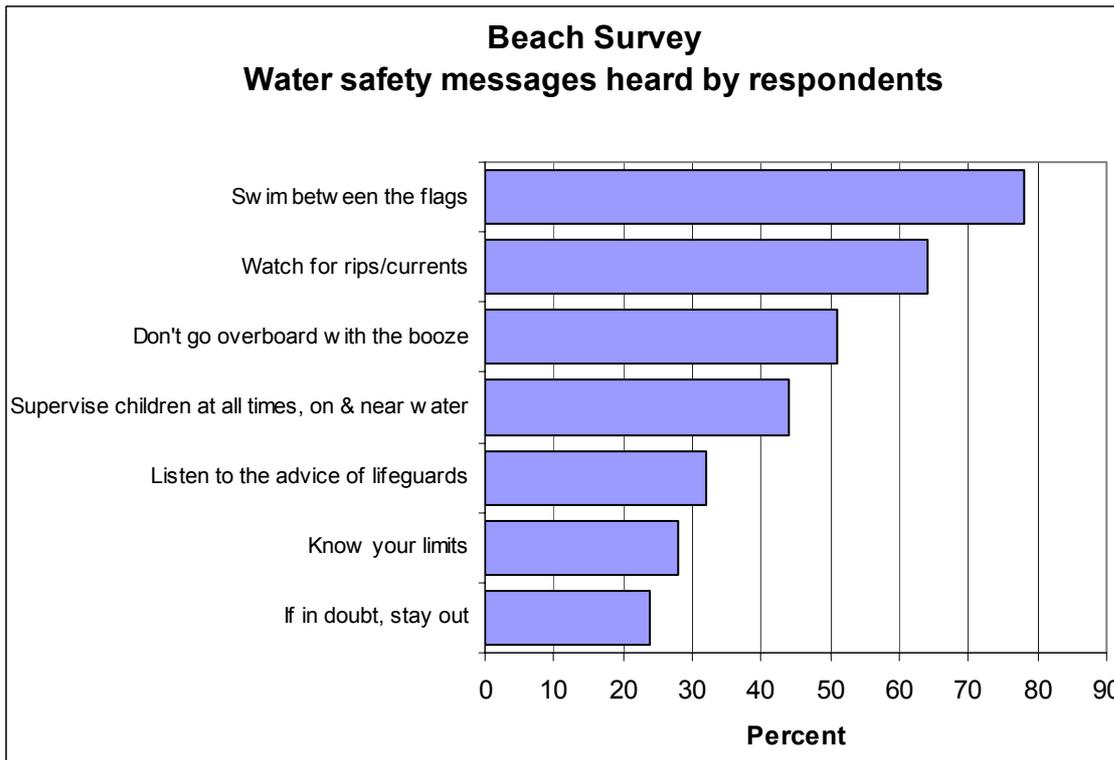


Table 4: Water safety messages heard by respondents at beaches

It was also found that, in the past six months, 59% had heard messages related to alcohol and water safety. Another 48% had heard that too much alcohol caused poor judgement; 33% that too much alcohol affected vision, co-ordination and balance; 25% had heard that an intoxicated person was more likely to suffer hypothermia and disorientation; and 20% that too much alcohol resulted in dehydration.

When asked about other safety messages they might have heard of over the summer, the highest number mentioned alcohol and boating (61%) and sun safety (55%). Fewer mentioned road safety (18%) and safety at home (8%).

### 5.3.1.2 Behaviour changes

The main purpose of this evaluation was to determine how the campaign had changed people's behaviours and practices with regard to water safety. Seven percent said that they already practised safe behaviour in and around the water. Of those that were not already practising safe behaviour, 49% said that the campaign had made them change their water safety behaviours.

Of those who had changed their behaviour and practices, it was found that, as a result of the messages they had heard over the summer of 2000, 56% of people now remember to always swim between the flags. 53% now watch for rips and currents; 39% always supervise kids

around and in the water; 34% no longer swim after drinking alcohol; 32% listen to the advice of lifeguards; and 3% mentioned making “other” changes such as not swimming too far out.

Seven percent claimed they did not need to make any changes in their water safety practices as they were already well aware of dangers, had grown up on the beaches of New Zealand and were already safety conscious. Nevertheless, these respondents agreed that they had become more vigilant about water safety and the messages had reinforced thoughts of safety in and around the water.

### **5.3.1.3 Options for Water Safety**

Asked about the best method by which water safety messages could be delivered, the largest number (87%) felt that television was the best medium. Other preferred media were radio (65%); newspapers and magazines (42%); billboards (40%); local papers (33%); posters (25%); street banners (20%) and pamphlets (19%). Three percent suggested ‘other’ media, such as advertising on incoming flights and websites.

## **5.3.2**

## **Boat Ra**

As previously mentioned, a similar survey was carried out at five boat ramps in and around Auckland. 455 people were surveyed of which 301 (66%) were male and 154 (34%) were female. 402 (88%) were residents of the greater Auckland region and 52 (11%) were visitors. (1 respondent did not answer the question). 19% were in the age group < 20 years, 39% between 20 and 35 years, 33% between 36 and 50 years and 9% were over 50 years. Most of those interviewed were boating operators.

Fifty-two percent were going out for boating/fishing; 5% for boating/pleasure; 28% windsurfing; 11% jet skiing and 4% for *other* activities such as sailing, and kayaking.

Thirty seven percent described themselves as frequent boaters (once a week); 37% as infrequent (3-6 times a year); 13% as occasional (once a month), and 13% rare (once or twice a year).

### **5.3.2.1 General Awareness**

Analysis of the data gathered at the five boat ramps showed a high awareness of the water safety campaign. Eighty-seven percent of those surveyed had heard some

messages relating to water safety. However, a smaller number (43%) had heard of the branding Safe Summer 2000.

Radio and television were the main media that took the message to the public with 65%, of those who heard the messages, having heard water safety messages on television and 58% having heard these messages on the radio. A smaller number (24%) recalled seeing the water safety messages in newspaper advertisements; on billboards (20%); and 20% had read these messages in boating magazines. Fewer numbers saw these messages on posters (12%), pamphlets (9%) and street banners (6%). Eleven percent had read water safety messages at boating clubs. 2% had heard water safety messages from *other* sources (Table 5).

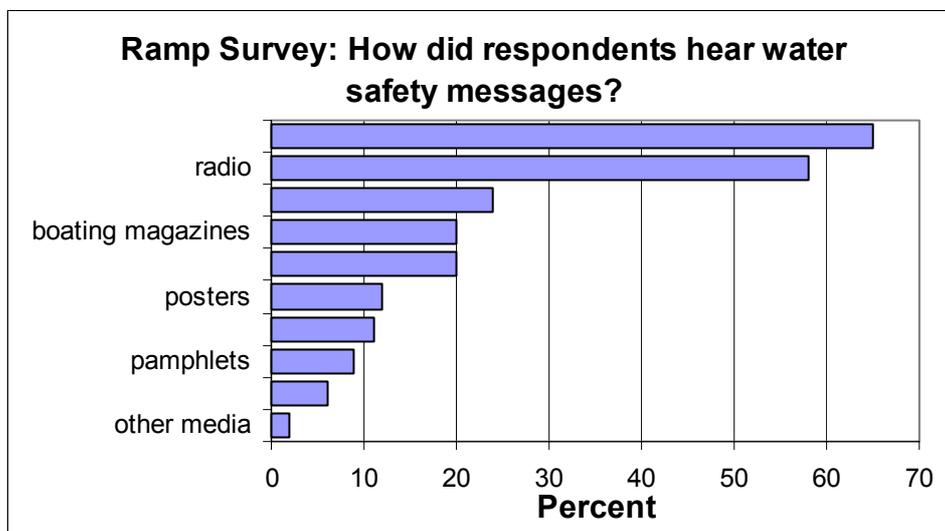


Table 5: How respondents at boat ramps heard water safety messages

When asked about other safety messages they might have heard of over the summer, the highest numbers, of those that had heard any message, mentioned alcohol and boating (49%) and sun safety (41%). A further 23% mentioned road safety, and 9% safety at home.

In analysing the actual messages that all the people surveyed noticed or recalled, it was found that the largest number (70%) recalled the message *“Don’t go overboard with the booze”*. This was followed closely by messages asking people to *“always get the latest weather report”* (58%); *“tell someone where you are going”* (54%); and *“the law states that you must carry a life jacket for each person on board”* (50%). The message to *“supervise children at all times”* was recalled by 46%; and *“Don’t overload the boat”* by 44%. Thirty-seven percent recalled the message *“your boat should be equipped with recognised safety equipment”*; 35% recalled messages that suggested they *“do Coastguard/Day Skipper courses”*; 33% that *“the skipper is totally responsible for everyone’s safety”*; and 24% had heard information on the basics of avoiding collisions (Table 6).

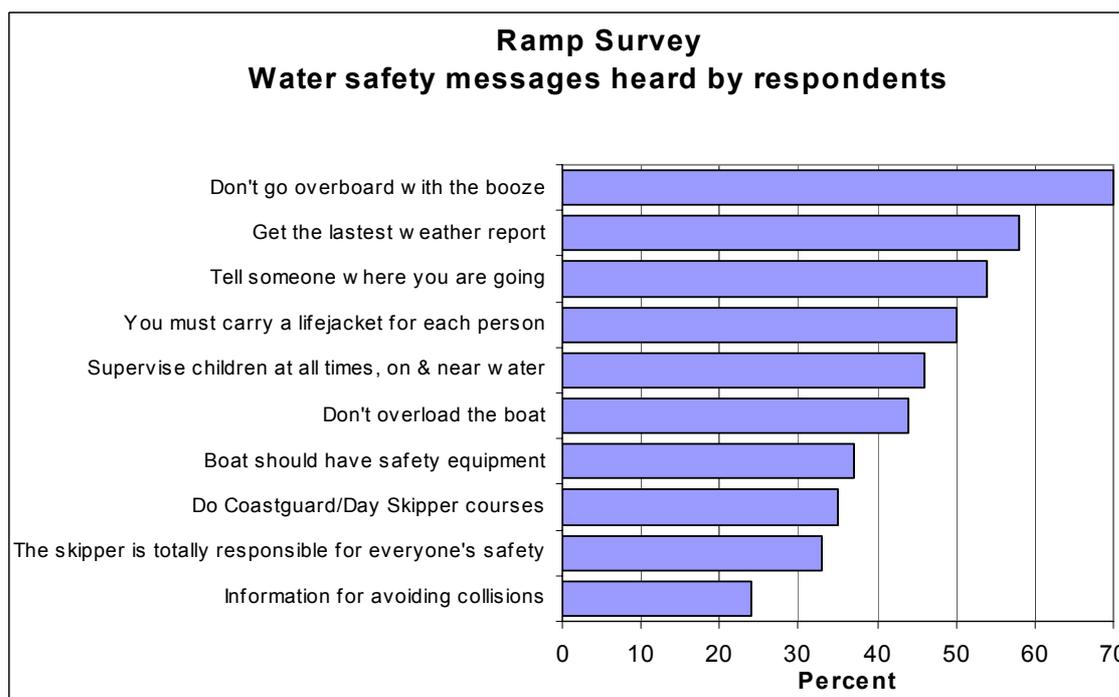


Table 6: Water safety messages heard by respondents at ramps

### 5.3.2.2 Awareness – Alcohol messages

With regard to awareness of the effect of alcohol on drownings, 78% said that they had heard messages stating that alcohol was a major factor in drownings especially in falls overboard.

Analysing the reach of specific messages about alcohol in relation to boating, the message that reached the maximum number of those surveyed was “*Don’t go over board with the booze*” (72%). A further 49% had heard the message “*don’t mix alcohol and boating*”; 35% had heard that alcohol impaired swimming ability; 34% had heard the message that the skipper was responsible for the safety of passengers on board; 33% had heard of the need to provide food and non-alcoholic drinks on board and the same proportion (33%) had heard that excess alcohol affected vision, co-ordination and balance. In addition, 30% had heard that an intoxicated person was more likely to suffer hypothermia and disorientation and 27% were made aware that too much alcohol resulted in dehydration (Table 7).

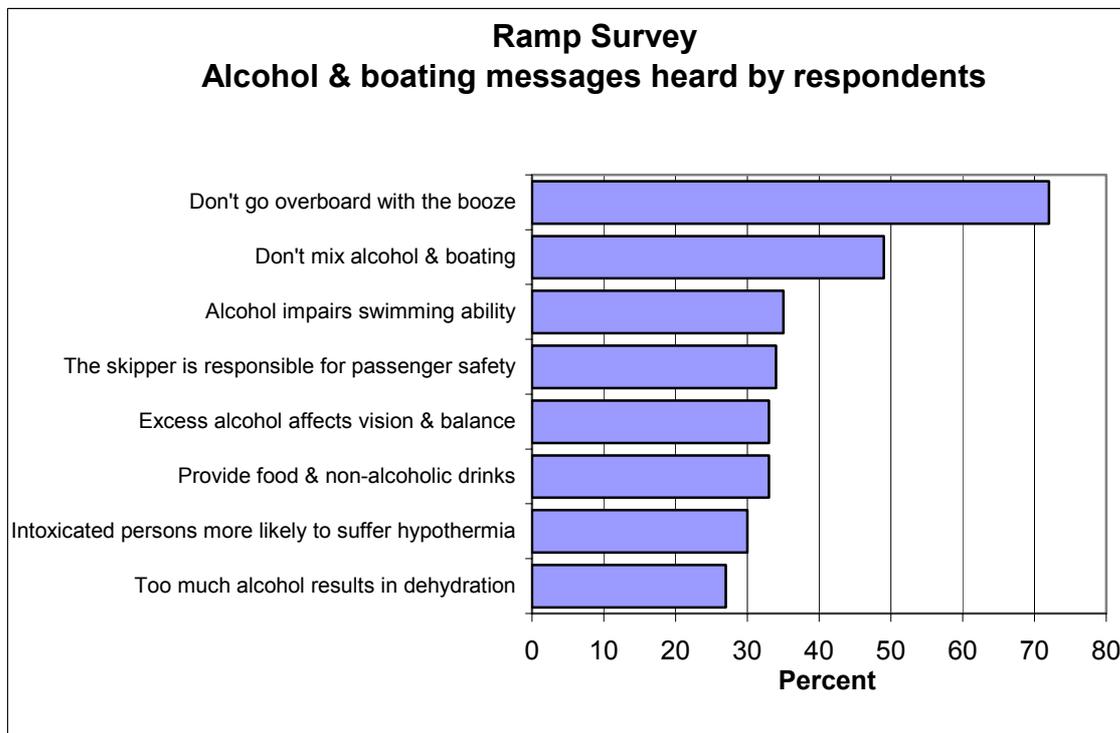


Table 7: Alcohol and boating messages heard by respondents

### 5.3.2.3 Behaviour changes

The survey at boat ramps sought to determine changes in behaviour and practices among boaters with regard to the use of life jackets, alcohol and boating and boating courses.

#### Life Jackets

It was found that 84% of boaters surveyed said they had a life jacket for every person on board. Moreover, 62% reported that they had always complied with rules relating to life jackets. Of those who had not earlier complied, 22% said that, as a result of the water safety campaign, they now acted in accordance with life jacket regulations. However, 57% of those that did not earlier comply reported no change in behaviour.

A large majority (90%) of those who carried children on board, said they *always* had life jackets that fit children, 8% said they *occasionally* had life jackets of correct size, and 2% *never* had life jackets that fitted children (the children just wore adult sized jackets).

The water safety campaign had alerted 24% of respondents to the fact that life jackets could be hired from the Auckland Volunteer Coastguard; 57% said they were not alerted to the fact; and 12% already knew of this service (7% of the respondents did not answer this question).

#### Alcohol and Boating

Asked if the safety messages had resulted in any changes in their boating and alcohol practices, 22% said they had, 31% said it had not resulted in their making any changes and 39% said that the question did not apply as they did not drink alcohol while boating. This represents an actual behavioural change of 37% for those who reported needing to change their behaviour with regard to alcohol and boating.

Of those who responded that they had made changes in their behaviour, 63% had reduced the level of alcohol consumption for the skipper and 40% now provided extra food for passengers. In addition, 38% had reduced the level of alcohol consumption for passengers; 36% no longer drank alcohol while boating and 35% now provided non-alcoholic drinks. Three percent had made other changes.

### Boating education courses

It was found that 25% of respondents had done some boating education courses. Of these, 51% had done day skipper; 40% boat masters; 14% radio operator and 11% 'other' such as "Waterwise" at school.

#### **5.3.2.4 Options for promoting water safety**

Asked about the best method by which water safety messages could be delivered, the largest number (88%) felt that television was the best medium. Other preferred media were radio (68%); newspapers and magazines (38%); billboards (36%); local papers (33%); pamphlets (24%); posters (22%); and street banners (15%). A large number (35%) felt advertising in boating magazines and (34%) at boating clubs would capture their attention. Four percent suggested 'other' media, such as signs on beaches; plane banners; and teaching water safety in schools.

#### **5.4 Overall awareness- beaches and ramps**

An analysis was done of all the completed questionnaires from people surveyed at beaches and boat ramps to gauge the overall awareness of the key water safety messages, the chief means by which these messages were delivered and the other messages people had heard over the summer of 2000.

When assessing the overall awareness of water safety messages delivered over summer, it was found that 85% had heard the messages, and 45% were aware of the Safe Summer 2000 water safety campaign. Overall, 66% heard these messages on television and 53% had heard water safety messages on the radio. When asked about other safety messages they might have heard of over the summer, the highest number mentioned alcohol and boating (57%), followed by sun safety (50%).

Queried about the best way in which water safety messages could be delivered to them, the largest number of respondents (88%) mentioned television and 66% mentioned the radio. Other preferred media were newspaper (41%); billboards (39%) and boating magazines (35%) (Table 8).

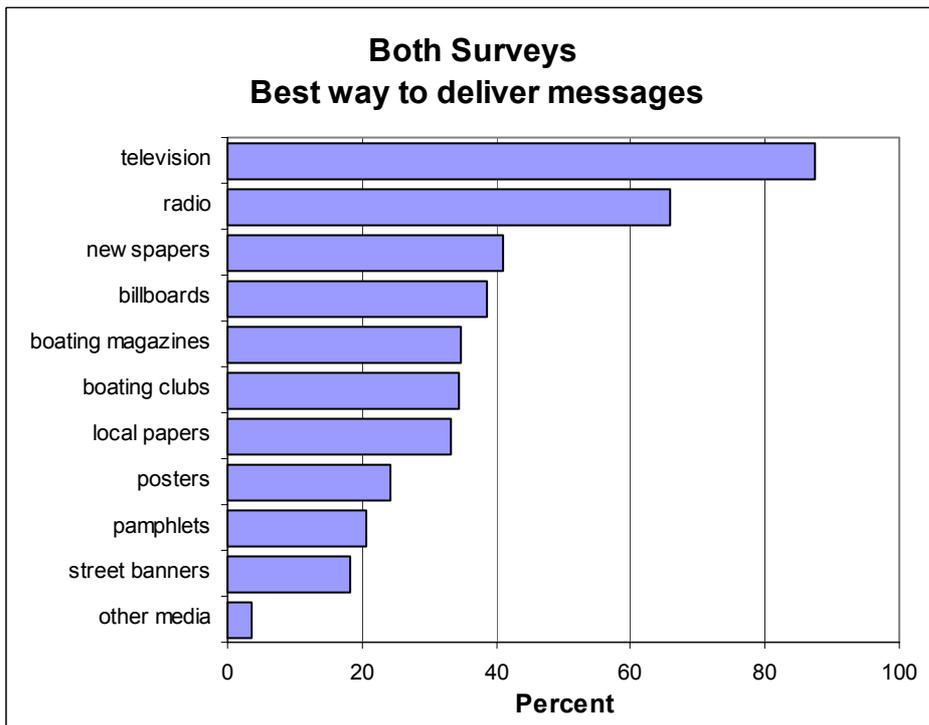


Table 8: The best way to deliver messages

## 5.5

## Qualita

Included in this section is a qualitative analysis of the responses made to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires.

Analysis of the qualitative data gathered at the six beaches showed an excellent awareness of the water safety campaign, and also indicated that respondents had a very positive attitude towards the entire campaign and many were willing to express their satisfaction with the good work done by organisations in this regard. Many respondents made it a point to also specifically write that advertising of water safety messages should be continued and be increased. *“An important issue to focus on every year. Keep going hard!”* Many people made the effort to write *“excellent campaign and very important campaign”* and *“keep up the good work”* or remarks to that effect. The effectiveness of newspaper stories about drownings was apparent and respondents have commented that *“drownings mentioned on news (were) important for getting the*

*message out*" and *"cold hard facts on deaths in water (should be used) to educate people"* and that *"horrific ads like drink driving one"* were effective.

Some respondents also reported that having heard these messages over summer reinforced their safety consciousness and made them more aware *"Good campaign, more awareness now"*.

Though many said that some beaches were safe, they were now aware of how dangerous Piha Beach was because of the events that had occurred over summer. In the words of one respondent: *"It is ridiculous!"* (referring to the number of people who had drowned at that beach).

A very useful suggestion was that dangerous beaches should be listed on visitor information guides. A couple from England who had been in New Zealand for 18 months did not know that Piha was such a dangerous beach till they read of the events and tragedies that occurred over the summer.

Another suggested option was that the matter of dangerous beaches should be discussed at length in the information book given to all immigrants when they obtained their visas. If this was done or a pamphlet included about dangerous beaches, the message would get across to almost every immigrant. Many countries did not have a beach culture and these people needed to be made aware that beaches could be dangerous places. Information also needs to be provided on matters such as rips and currents and the significance of the flags.

Another recurring suggestion was that if water safety was taught to children, right at the primary school level, it would have long term effects on them. Moreover, it was felt that by doing so, these messages would be taken home to the parents and caregivers in the form of school notices and projects. This would make adults more aware and more responsible. Another very important benefit would be that even adults, who did not have English as a first language, would receive these messages, as children would be both the medium and the translators. It was also felt that children should actually be taken to the beaches, shown the flags and have their significance explained; taught to identify areas having rips and currents; and given similar practical knowledge and training.

Many also felt that having signs at the beaches and at boat ramps would be very effective. However, when mentioning the difficulty of getting the message to people who did not have

English as a first language, many felt that if the message was given graphically (a drowning man; a shark -to signify danger), most people would understand. It was even mentioned that New Zealanders should not try to re-invent the wheel. There were dangerous beaches all over the world and, even in countries with high immigrant populations, there was not such a high fatality rate. This respondent felt that authorities should correspond with these countries and ascertain the signs they were using and adopt them instead of trying to make up new ones. If a uniformity of signage could be achieved throughout the world, then a stranger from any part of the world would be able to understand the message no matter which beach he was on.

Many respondents commented on the issue of lifeguards. They felt that there should be more lifeguards, their hours at the beach should be extended and they should be a paid workforce rather than a volunteer corps.

Many also felt that more people should be taught to swim. There were many people who just did not know how to swim, and they should be taught in a way that would not be embarrassing. This would prevent many drowning deaths.

Speaking of effective ways to deliver messages, many felt that having a plane fly overhead giving UV readings and asking people to cover up had been very effective, and this medium of advertising should be used much more. Many felt that schools and local papers were other avenues to get water safety messages across to people. The local papers were delivered free and so everyone was able to read them.

Finally, there was a suggestion that advertising on cereal boxes should be increased, as *“all kids read cereal boxes”*. It was also suggested that more people be put on beaches to promote and further water safety messages. There should be more *“visual activities on the beach”* and that water safety officers should *“stay visible at beaches – good to see people out and about”*. The *“personal touch always works wonders”*.

## 5.6

## Conclu

It is apparent that WaterSafe Auckland and ALAC carried out a very effective safety campaign over the summer of 2000. The use of different media to deliver messages resulted in an effective coverage of the population with the result that the messages about water safety reached 85% of those surveyed. This represents an excellent reach of the campaign. The effectiveness of the campaign was in large measure due to the involvement of several organisations.

A very impressive 72% recalled the "Don't go overboard with the booze" slogan. Nearly 8 out of 10 respondents had heard the message to "*swim between the flags*". A further 7 out of 10 had heard the warning "*watch for rips and currents*".

The water safety campaign resulted in self-reported behaviour changes among just under half the beach respondents. For example, just over half of the respondents reported always swimming between the flags and taking into account rips and currents. The campaign also resulted in changes in behaviour among boaters with more people conscious of the dangers of combining alcohol consumption and boating and in changing behaviour in this regard. For example, a third of the boat ramp respondents reported making positive changes to their boating and alcohol practices. Respondents also reported making changes to their practices with regard to ensuring that the correct number and size of life jackets were carried on boats. The water safety campaign also appears to have increased awareness of the need to take some boating education courses.

Though about seven percent claimed they did not need to make any changes in their water safety practices as they were already well aware of dangers, had grown up on the beaches of New Zealand and were already safety conscious, a very large number admitted that the campaign had raised awareness and made them more safety conscious. For this reason alone the campaign could be considered worthwhile and organisers and sponsors should continue to promote these messages in future years.

The effectiveness of the campaign was in large measure due to the involvement of several organisations. It is also apparent that the public would welcome and support a continuation of such safety campaigns so that the message reaches even more people. There seems to be consensus that future campaigns should continue to stress safety messages like "*swim between the flags*" and "*don't go overboard with the booze*". People also felt that more monies should be committed to better signage and more life guard patrols. They also felt that advertising of water safety messages should be continued. In addition, some respondents felt that these messages should be delivered directly at beaches and boat ramps, in the form of pamphlets or personal contact by field staff.

## 5.7

- Funding should be provided so that the water safety campaign can be continued in future years.
- Funding should be provided so that the ALAC campaign on boating and alcohol may be continued and extended.
- A forum of those involved in water safety be created to meet on a regular basis to further consolidate the synergy generated through the conduct of Safe Summer 2000.

*Consideration could also be given to:*

- Regular reporting of drowning deaths in local newspapers.
- Development of resources, warning people about dangerous beaches, danger signs and safety rules. These could be included in visitor information brochures and immigrant guidebooks.
- Advocacy around the development of international signage, with regard to water safety that is graphic and prominent.

## 6.0 Overall impact of ALAC boating and alcohol campaign

This evaluation focussed on the immediate effect of the messages contained in the “Don’t go overboard with the booze” campaign conducted by ALAC in the summer of 1999/2000. The report contains the findings from three separate evaluations covering different aspects of the campaign. These were: 1) the evaluation of the campaign on targeted organisations; 2) the evaluation of Safe Summer 2000; and 3) the evaluation of the campaign on boating club members.

The conduct of the ALAC boating and alcohol campaign evaluation provided promising findings for the “Don’t go overboard with the booze” campaign. Although health education strategies, based on improving awareness, have often been criticised, this evaluation has provided some evidence that the ALAC campaign has resulted in a raised awareness of the issues surrounding safe alcohol use and boating and a slight improvement in safety behaviours with regard to drinking alcohol on the water. However, analysis of the key informant interviews showed that there is still a perception amongst many that alcohol abuse and boating is not a problem. This wide range of opinions regarding the need for a focus on alcohol use on the water would suggest that the campaign should be strengthened and repeated.

The America’s Cup obviously provided a catalyst for those interested in safety on the water and the formation of the Safe Summer 2000 forum created an environment where these agencies could work collaboratively together. The surveys conducted at beaches and boat ramps indicated that the messages about safe alcohol use on the water were widely received.

Evaluation of the campaign among boating club members also indicated that these messages reached many boaters. There were also some behavioural changes, but there was some resistance to the campaign and a possible explanation for this could be that some of these adults were not comfortable with being told how much alcohol they should drink. Future campaigns planned by ALAC need to find ways to address this resistance.

It is clear from the findings of the three surveys, that one of the strengths of the ALAC “*Don’t go overboard with the booze*” campaign was the catchy slogan. Of all the safety messages delivered, this was the slogan that respondents remembered and agreed with. As the previous survey undertaken by IPRC found that 27% of drowning deaths in the Auckland region involved alcohol, it was appropriate for ALAC to have used this as the key message of the campaign, especially at the time of the America’s Cup and the millennium celebrations.

It was beyond the scope of the evaluation for the IPRC team to determine whether the ALAC campaign would result in changes in behaviour in the long term. The repeat boating safety survey due to be undertaken over the summer of 2001 will provide additional information on alcohol awareness and behaviour among boaters.

The findings provide a strong indication that incorporating the ALAC campaign within the wider Safe Summer 2000 campaign was extremely effective. The messages of the campaign were taken on board by various organisations and the reach of the campaign extended well beyond what would have been otherwise possible.

The conduct of this evaluation has shown many positive effects of the ALAC campaign. It is therefore recommended that the ALAC "Don't go overboard with the booze" campaign be strengthened and continued and that the possibility of being involved in a forum with others involved in boating safety is strenuously pursued.

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