

Recreational Fishing and Coastal Safety in the South West

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Royal Life Saving

THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

What is the Issue...?

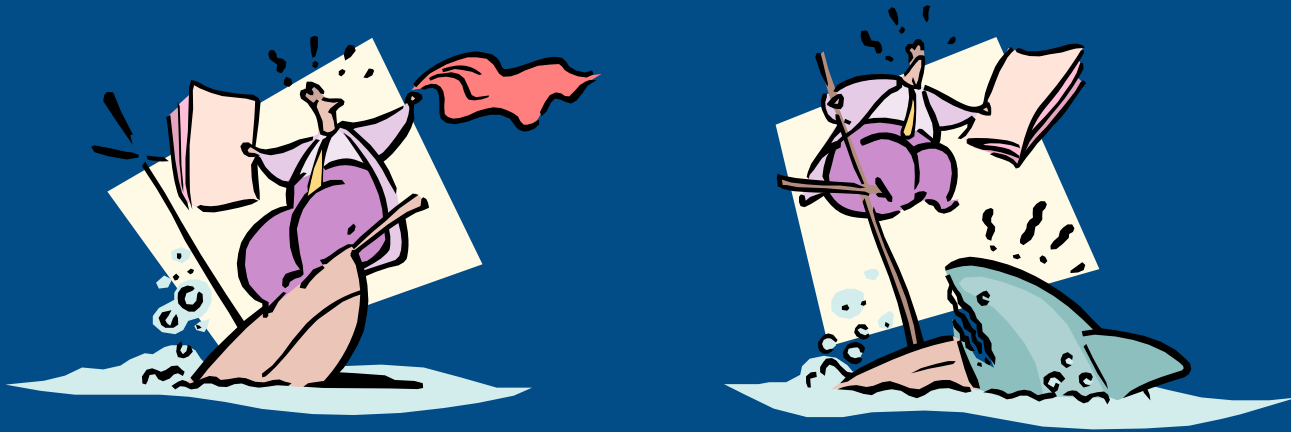
- Swimming and surfing – 3rd most popular type of physical activity
- Drowning represents 5th most common cause of ‘external cause of death’
- \$1.6 million per individual that drowns

Drowning in the SW region

- 29 drowning deaths (2000-2006)
 - Majority at coastal locations
 - Many fishing-related
- Average 4.8 drowning deaths/year
- SW coastline
 - Rocky outcrops and large swell
 - Dangers for complacent and inexperienced

The Project

‘to investigate the issue of coastal safety and reduce the number of drowning deaths and near-drowning incidents in regional WA.’



Why use a community based tool?

- Greater community ownership
- Capitalize on local knowledge
- Frees up professional time
- Heightened community awareness and support

The Survey Tool

- Implemented 2005-2006 summer period
 - Busselton
 - Dunsborough
 - Margaret River – Augusta
- Volunteer Fisheries Liaison Officers

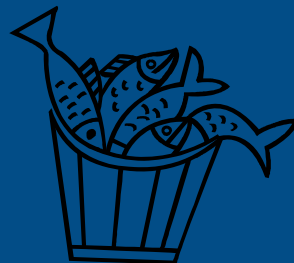
What we found...

- 231 surveys completed
 - 67% male
 - 58% aged 30-59 years
 - 29% aged under 29 years
 - 91% residents of SW region

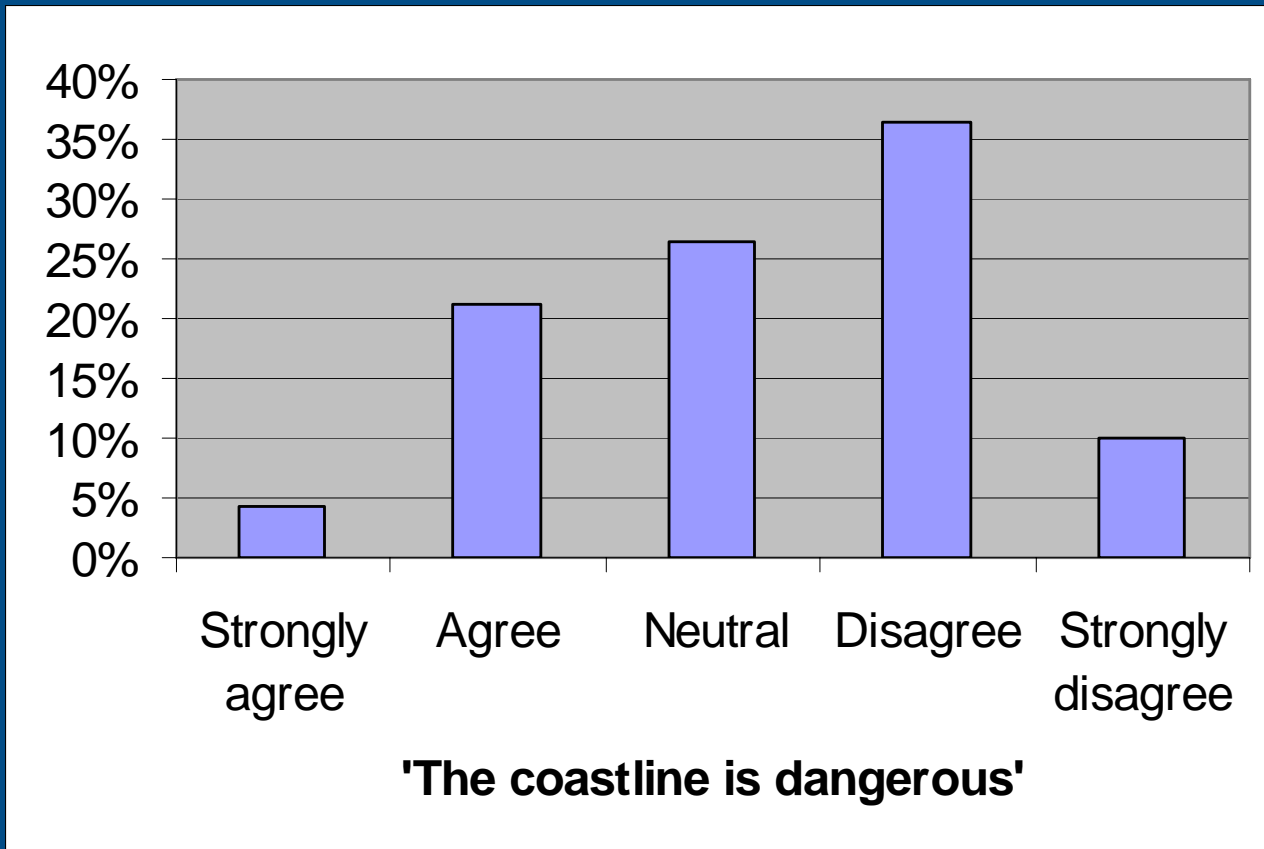


Coastal Usage Patterns

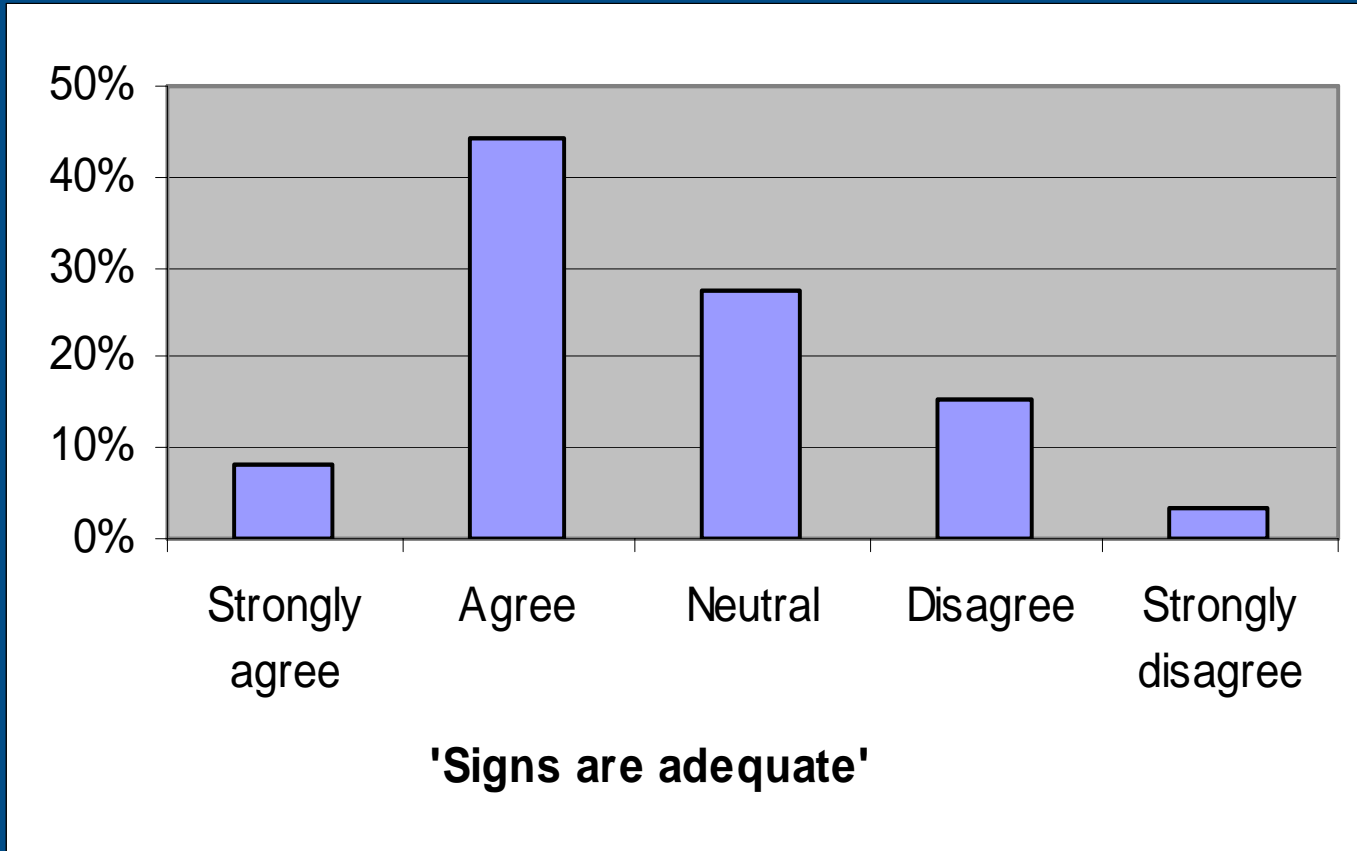
- Swimming (60%)
 - Boating (58%)
 - Beach fishing (55%)
 - Rock fishing (40%)
-
- Majority reported weekly usage of the coastline



Is the SW coastline dangerous?



Is current signage adequate?



Major Coastal Dangers

- Swell (26%)
- Rips and currents (21%)
- Boats (17%)
- Rocks (12%)
- Risky behaviour (7%)
- Environmental Factors!



Support for safety strategies

- Education programs (67%)
- Safety rescue equipment (63%)
- Improved signage (53%)



Near- Drowning Results

- 49 separate incidences reported
 - Males
 - 15-29 years
 - Local residents of the South West region
 - Rock fishing, swimming and surfing
 - Smiths Beach and Sugar Loaf Rock



Incident Events

- Swamped by a wave
- Caught in a rip
- Slipped off rocks

Contributing Factors

- Lack of awareness
- Risky behaviour
- Unexpected swell



Recommendations

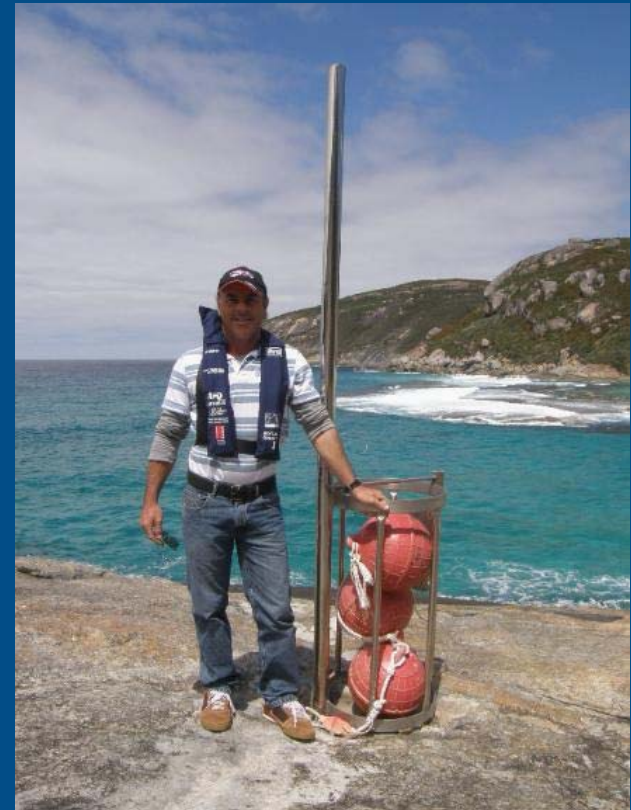
- Review signage
- Develop education and awareness program
- Conduct risk assessments at high risk locations
- Community action and involvement



What Next...?

- Expand scope of research
- Source funding
- Nathan Drew Memorial Trust

www.coastalsafety.com.au



EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER

Thank You!



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