

# Water Watcher Armband – Keeping Kids Safe

Make Prevention Everybody's Business

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Today Show segment on  
The Water Watcher Armband

## Aim

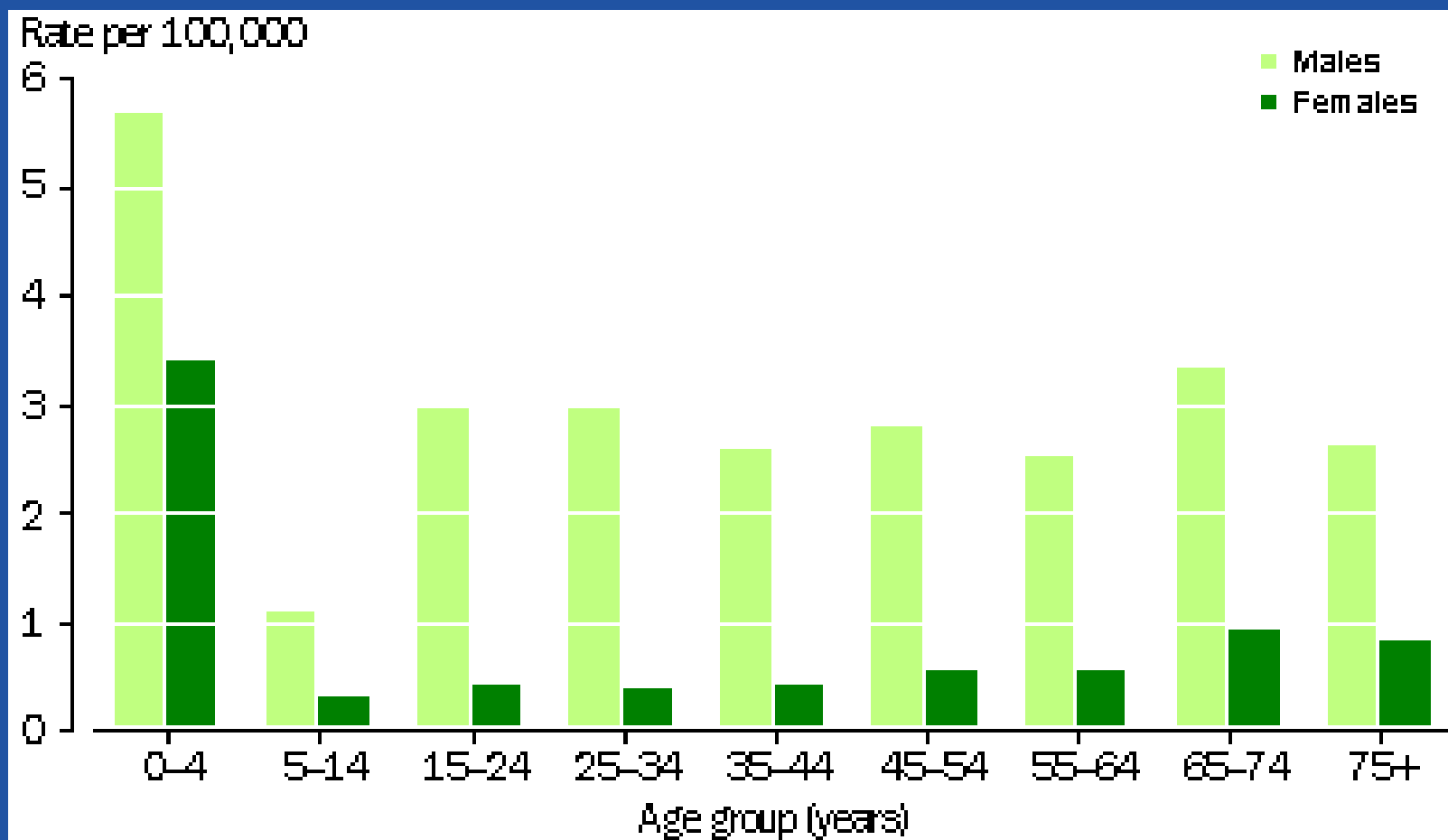
- To reduce the incidence of drowning and near drowning among children aged less than five years in NSW.



# Nature and Extent of childhood drowning

- In Australia, each year approximately 50 children aged less than five years drown (Water Safety Taskforce).
- Between 1998-2002, drowning was the leading cause of injury death in children aged less than five years (IRMRC, 2004).
- For every child death due to drowning, there were approximately 7 children hospitalised for near drowning (CHO Report, 2004).

## AVERAGE AGE-SPECIFIC ACCIDENTAL DROWNING RATES, BY SEX, 1992-1998



# Nature and Extent of childhood drowning

- Bathtubs accounted for 20% of child deaths due to drowning, most of which involved children aged less than 12 months. (Water Safety Taskforce).
- Swimming Pools accounted for 41% of child deaths due to drowning for children aged less than 5 years.

## Strategic importance

The World Health organisation predicts that injury will become the greatest single reason for loss of healthy human life-years on Earth by the year 2020.

# Planning & Implementing solutions

Development and production  
of 14,500 Water Watcher  
Armbands and accompanying  
cards.



# Planning & Implementing solutions continued...

- Media coverage, including television, print and radio.
- Mailout to all local council swimming pools and swim schools in NSW.
- Armbands were ordered over the telephone and the CHW website.
- Orders were then sent in the post to callers.
- 2,500 were distributed to individuals and 12,000 were distributed through pools and swim schools.

## Outcomes & Evaluation

- 25% response rate for the 2,000 distributed surveys.

Of those responding:

- 70% were from metropolitan NSW.
- 65% were mothers.
- 38% rated themselves as average swimmers, 12% as poor swimmers and 2% did not swim themselves.

# Outcomes & Evaluation

## Results:

- 90% identified the main message of the armband
- 96% liked the presentation of the armband
- 53% revealed that the armband had persuaded them to change their child supervision techniques in and around water.

## Sustaining Change

- Kids Health website contains a great deal of information on safety and injury prevention.
- Ongoing advocacy by the hospital each year at the start of the swimming season.



## Lessons Learned

- Connect early with partners in order for them to be able to plan their implementation of the project.
- Allow 6 months lead time for production of resources overseas.

## Future Scope

- Re-run of Water Watcher campaign each 3-4 years, pending sponsorship.
- We hope to in the future offer first aid information online to all interested parties.