Patterns of Injuries among 0-19 year olds in the Great Southern, 2001-2011

The Great Southern is WA's second smallest region covering only 40,000 square kilometres and located on the southern coast.\(^1\) Albany is the region’s major population center, with other main towns including Katanning, Denmark, Mt Barker, Kojonup, Gnowangerup and Ravensthorpe.\(^1\) The region has a milder climate than most of WA, with main industries including agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining, tourism and viticulture.\(^1,2\) The Great Southern's population has steadily increased over the past ten years, particularly in coastal areas. It also has sizable Aboriginal and ethnic community.\(^1\) Isolation is a factor within the Great Southern, with often long distances between towns.\(^1\)

There are ten hospital services throughout the Great Southern region, with major facilities located in Albany.\(^2\) Aboriginal Health Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service play a vital role in the regions health care.

**Demographics\(^3\)**

16,122

Children reside in the Great Southern region on average per year

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>Non-Aboriginal</th>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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**Child Injury Stats**

About 1 in 30 WA child injury deaths occur in the Great Southern

3,042

Great Southern children treated each year for an injury

336

Great Southern children hospitalised each year for an injury
The Great Southern region recorded the lowest injury death rate (16.9 deaths per 100,000) and the second lowest hospitalisation rate (2,084.6 per 100,000) outside the metropolitan area among 0 to 19 year olds when compared to all other regions in WA. The Great Southern also recorded the fourth highest injury hospitalisation rate of Aboriginal children in WA with 3,300.1 per 100,000 compared to 2,002.6 per 100,000 for non-Aboriginal children.

When child injury hospitalisations are broken down by gender, males aged 0-19 years were more likely to be hospitalised for an injury in the Great Southern region accounting for 2,557.4 per 100,000 compared to females with a rate of 1,560.2 per 100,000.

The majority of hospitalisations (89.9%, n=2,838) were due to unintentional circumstances. Causes of unintentional injury resulting in hospitalisation in the Great Southern include:

- **Falls (26%)**
- **Transport Accidents (22%)**
- **Poisoning (5%)**
- **Burns & Scalds (4%)**

### PRIORITIES FOR PREVENTION

- Raise awareness within the community of the causes of childhood injury and the extent of the problem.
- Convey to the community that childhood injuries are largely preventable.
- Involve key community stakeholders such as parents, carers, child care services, educators, health professionals and sporting organisations.
- Provide culturally appropriate information with a specific focus on injuries to Aboriginal children, children of low-socio economic status and those living in remote communities.
- Encourage supervision as the most important method in the prevention of childhood injuries.
- Promote the use of child car restraints and direct parents and carers to qualified type 2 child car restraint installers.
- Encourage community members to keep children away from hot items that could burn or scald such as camp fires, hot tap water and hot food and drink.
- Educate community members on substances that can be poisonous to children, such as medications, alcohol, cleaning products and other chemicals and encourage them to store poisons locked away and up high.

For further information on childhood injury prevention and resources that may be useful in your region please visit the Kidsafe WA website: [www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

### REFERENCES
