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For immediate release

Childhood Injuries on our Roads

Children are at significant risk of road injuries in Australia, with transport-related injuries one of the leading causes of death in children under the age of 15. In the 2008/09 financial year alone, there were over 7,000 injuries to Australian children under the age of 15 caused by land transport accidents

“The road setting is not limited to traffic areas on public roads and carparks, but also settings such as driveways, farm areas, nature reserves and skate parks,” said Kidsafe WA Chief Executive Officer, Scott Phillips.

New data released by Kidsafe WA, with the support of the Western Australian Department of Health shows 14,290 road-related injury presentations were made to the PMH ED between July 2006 and June 2016. This accounts for 8.4% of all injury presentations. Other key findings from the Kidsafe WA Childhood Injury Research Report: Road Injuries show:

- Leading causes of road-related injuries to children include as a wheeled pedestrian, such as those using scooters, skateboards or rollerblades, (38.0%), cyclist (33.7%), passenger in a vehicle (13.3%), motorcyclist (6.3%) and pedestrian (5.2%).
- Males are at greater risk of sustaining a road-related injury.
- Older children aged between 10-14 years are at greater risk of sustaining an injury as a wheeled pedestrian, cyclist, pedestrian or on a motorcycle in comparison to younger children.
- The risk of injury as a passenger in a vehicle was consistent across all age groups.
- Young children under the age of 5 are at greater risk of hot car entrapment and driveway reversing run-overs.
- 19.5% of cyclists were recorded as wearing a helmet and only 4.0% of wheeled pedestrians.

“Compared to adults, children are more at risk of injury within the road setting due to a range of developmental, environmental and physical factors,” said Mr Phillips.

At a young age, children’s cognitive skills and motor function are not fully developed, resulting in them being more susceptible to injuries from transport related causes. Their vulnerability is also increased by factors such as their small stature, their inability to assess risks, lack of supervision, lack of adequate safety restraints or protective equipment, and a lack of understanding of road rules.

“Kidsafe WA is committed to ensuring West Australian children become healthy adults and are working hard to promote safety and prevent childhood injuries via education, research and advocacy,” said Mr Phillips.

For more information on how to keep your children safe visit: www.kidsafewa.com.au

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