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## **Child Death Review Team – Annual Report 2013**

The NSW Child Death Review Team's Annual Report for 2013 was tabled in Parliament today by the Team's Convenor, the NSW Ombudsman.

The report examines the deaths of 567 children registered in NSW in 2013. **'The rate of child deaths in 2013 – 31.70 deaths per 100,000 children – is the second lowest rate since the Team began in 1996,'** said the Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour. **'This is positive, but there are still too many children dying in circumstances that are preventable.'**

The report includes the findings of the Team's reviews of the deaths of children over a 10-year period from asthma, and in house fires:

- From 2004 to 2013, 20 children died from asthma. Half of the children died in the last two years. For two-thirds of the children, the Team found there was scope to improve their asthma care.
- From 2004 to 2013, 35 children died in house fires. The most common cause of the fires was children playing with lighters and matches. Key factors in these deaths involved inadequate supervision of young children, and easy access to matches and lighters.

**'The Team has directed 16 recommendations to government and non-government agencies to reduce preventable child deaths in relation to asthma and house fires, as well as other significant areas, such as deaths associated with off-road vehicles and drowning in backyard swimming pools,'** Mr Barbour said.

**'However, the report also emphasises the critical role that parents and carers play in preventing child deaths and serious injury, and highlights key areas for their attention.'** In particular, the report stresses the need to ensure that:

- babies sleep on their back in their own safe sleeping environment (with their head and face uncovered, and with no loose bedding or objects), and are kept smoke free
- asthma is reviewed regularly (even when it is stable and well-controlled); asthma medications are used as recommended; and children and carers are able to recognise changes in symptoms
- swimming pool barriers (including fences and gates) are child-resistant and regularly maintained, and
- young children are actively supervised – to reduce the risk of death and serious injury associated with water hazards, fire hazards, and moving vehicles.

On behalf of the Team, Mr Barbour extended condolences to the families and friends of the children and young people who died.

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