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NSW Ombudsman

Child Death Review Team – Annual Report 2012

The NSW Child Death Review Team's Annual Report for 2012 was tabled in Parliament today by the Team's Convenor, the NSW Ombudsman.

The report examines the deaths of 493 children registered in NSW in 2012. **'The rate of child deaths in 2012 – 29.10 deaths per 100,000 children – is the lowest since the Team began in 1996,'** said the Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour.

'This is positive, and we welcome the work of agencies over the past year to raise awareness and reduce deaths associated with swimming pools, low speed vehicle run-over incidents, and accidental poisoning. However, this report also demonstrates the need for further and concerted efforts to reduce the deaths of children in NSW.'

The report highlights the need for a coordinated approach and targeted strategies to prevent the deaths of children in off-road vehicle fatalities. In the 10 years to 2012, 25 children died in off-road vehicle fatalities in NSW, mainly involving off-road motorcycles and quad bikes.

'The Team has found that the risk of death or serious injury to children associated with the use of off-road vehicles is substantial, and the measures to prevent or reduce the risk are insufficient,' Mr Barbour said.

'Importantly, the report provides a sobering reminder that preventing child deaths is a whole-of-community responsibility,' said Mr Barbour. In 2012, the deaths of 20 children were intentional, including 16 deaths due to suicide.

The Team's reviews of deaths in 2012 also emphasise the importance of promoting key messages to parents and other carers about:

- reducing the risk of sudden and unexpected death in infancy, particularly in relation to safe sleeping practices
- ensuring the correct and appropriate use of child safety restraints in motor vehicles, and
- constantly supervising young children around water, including bathtubs and swimming pools.

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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