

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

7 December 2012

## **NT Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee Annual Report for 2011-2012**

The Northern Territory Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee's Annual Report for 2011-12 has now been tabled in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Children and Families, the Hon Robyn Lambley MP. The report reviewed the deaths of 57 NT children in 2011 along with 253 deaths that occurred between 2007 and 2011.

The Committee is governed by Part 3.3 of the NT *Care and Protection of Children Act* in monitoring child deaths and is mindful of the human tragedy involved in each death that deeply affects parents, extended families and communities. A primary objective of the Committee is to understand the underlying causes for each death in order to help prevent other children dying in similar circumstances.

Infants generally make up a large proportion of child deaths in Australia; in the NT 56% of all deaths were of infants under 12 months of age. Nearly a quarter of infant deaths over the past five years were from 'Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy' (SUDI, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, SIDS). The Committee plans to undertake further research in this area with a view to developing recommendations aimed at reducing the number of such deaths in the NT.

Other findings of the five-year analysis include:

- Aboriginal children make up 42% of the NT child population but account for a disproportionate number of child deaths (71.5%).
- Although around 50% of NT Children reside outside the suburbs of Darwin and Palmerston, that region accounts for approximately three quarters of the child deaths.
- A relatively large number of child deaths are in the potentially preventable category of 'External causes' (including injuries and accidents). Sixty per cent of all such deaths occurred among 10 to 17 year olds.
- Suicides and other deaths from self-inflicted injury continue to be of major concern in the NT as they account for more than a quarter of deaths among 10 to 17 year olds.

The report also summarises the findings from research the Committee commissioned in 2011 (and conducted by Menzies School of Health Research) into child and youth suicide and includes the recommendations made to government.

**More Information contact: 8999 6076**

**Annual Report and the Child and Youth Suicide research are located at <http://www.childrenscommissioner.nt.gov.au/publications.html>**

