

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Nature of Problem

Injury is a recognised public health problem. Understanding the problem of injury starts with understanding the causes and circumstances in which injury occurs. The aim of this document is to use available information on injury-related deaths and hospitalisations to examine the injury problem in NSW and to assist in directing further work to reduce the incidence of injury.

### 2.2 Overview of Injury-Related Deaths and Hospitalisations in Australia

#### 2.2.1 Deaths due to Injury

Between 1979 and 1998, more than 156,000 Australians have died as a result of an injury, an average of 7,801 deaths per year. Approximately 21 percent of these cases were between 20 and 29 years of age and 23 percent were 65 years of age and older. Male Australians accounted for more than 70 percent of injury deaths between 1979 and 1999.

The following table rank Australia's states and territories by the number of deaths in 1998 resulting from injuries.

Table 1. Number of Injury Deaths: All States and Territories, 1998\*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rate/100,000</b>
NSW	2,660	40.6
VIC	1,700	35.0
QLD	1,573	45.0
WA	874	48.1
SA	651	41.6
TAS	201	40.6
NT	181	107.0
ACT	106	36.3
AUST	7,945	41.3

\* Data obtained from the National Injury Surveillance Unit. Rates have been age-adjusted using the 1991 Australian census population

#### 2.2.2 Hospitalisations due to Injury

Between 1994 and 1997, more than 1.5 million Australians have been hospitalised as a result of an injury, an average of 388,335 hospitalisations per year. Approximately 17 percent of these cases were between 20 and 29 years of age and 23 percent were 65 years of age and older. Male Australians accounted for more than 58 percent of injury hospitalisations between 1994 and 1997.

The following table rank Australia's states and territories by the number of hospitalisations in 1997 resulting from injuries.

Table 2. Number of Injury Hospitalisations: All States and Territories, 1997\*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rate/100,000</b>
NSW	128,994	2,003.1
VIC	88,510	1,877.2
QLD	87,648	2,584.4
WA	39,220	2,203.6
SA	34,966	2,312.4
TAS	9,392	1,961.2
ACT	4,456	1,568.2
NT	4,334	2,421.1
AUST	404,028	2,159.5

\* Data obtained from the National Injury Surveillance Unit. Rates have been age-adjusted using the 1991 Australian census population

As illustrated by the two tables, deaths and hospitalisations to New South Wales residents accounted for 33 and 32 percent, respectively, of all injuries recorded nationally. This is to be expected as NSW has a larger population than other states and territories, and the death and hospitalisation rates similar to Australia overall.

### **2.3 Previous report**

This report updates the *NSW Injury Profile: A review of available injury data* produced in December 2000.