

# Media Release



ASTHMA ATTACK WARNING AS CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA AT GREATEST RISK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, 30 January 12

## **Parents and carers are being warned that school and preschool aged children are at an increased risk of having an asthma attack as they return to school this week.**

Research from the *Asthma in Australia Report 2011* shows that Emergency Department visits typically peak in late summer (February), particularly among children under the age of 15 (see appendices).

Further to this, the report suggests the peaks in ED visits among children are strongly related to the timing of returning to school, which is consistent with international studies.<sup>1</sup>

While the reasons for this cannot be fully explained, Asthma Foundation SA Chief Executive David Bedson says "the current evidence suggests respiratory viral infections and allergen exposure contributes to the increase in hospital visits in children."

"From a South Australian perspective, what is particularly alarming about the *Asthma in Australia 2011* report is that South Australia has the highest rate of hospitalisation for asthma – significantly higher than any other state or territory."

"We cannot be sure as to why this is the case, however the evidence is there. Parents and carers should be particularly vigilant at this time of year." (See Appendix 1)

Leyla, 9, of Seaford has been into the emergency department 4 times and admitted twice as a result of asthma in the last 6 months alone. Beginning year 4 this year, Leyla's mother Karina has made certain she is prepared for school this year by ensuring her asthma plan is up-to-date and with the assistance of the Flinders Medical Centre's *Paediatric Rapid Response Asthma Program* it is hoped Leyla will now avoid any hospital presentations.

"The program has provided us with continuous support and practical advice in managing Leyla's condition, while educating her in her own self-management, particularly within the school environment," according to Karina.

Asthma Foundation SA urges families to have a check-up with their doctor, ensure they have an up-to-date asthma plan for their child's return to school and check that staff at their child's school or childcare service have current asthma training.

Asthma Foundation SA provides FREE asthma training for school and preschool staff. It also facilitates the mandatory asthma and anaphylaxis training for childcare services.

For more information contact the Asthma Foundation SA Information Line on 1800 645 130 or visit [asthmasa.org.au](http://asthmasa.org.au)

For media enquiries, please contact:

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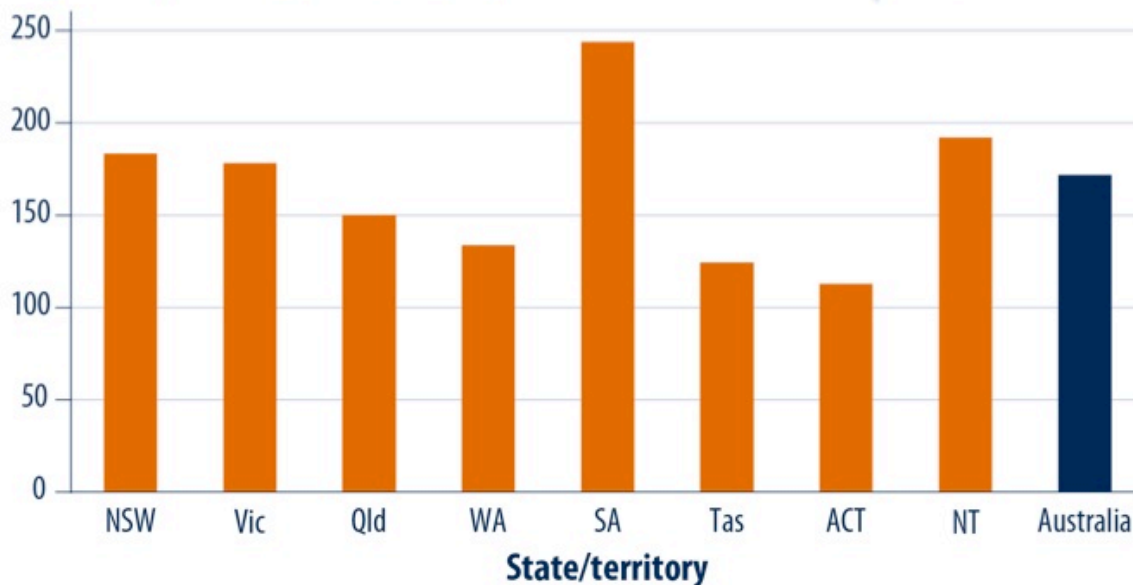
E [tom@asthmasa.org.au](mailto:tom@asthmasa.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> *Asthma In Australia 2011*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, p 85

## Hospital separations for asthma by state/territory



Hospital separations per 100,000 population



Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database 2008–2009



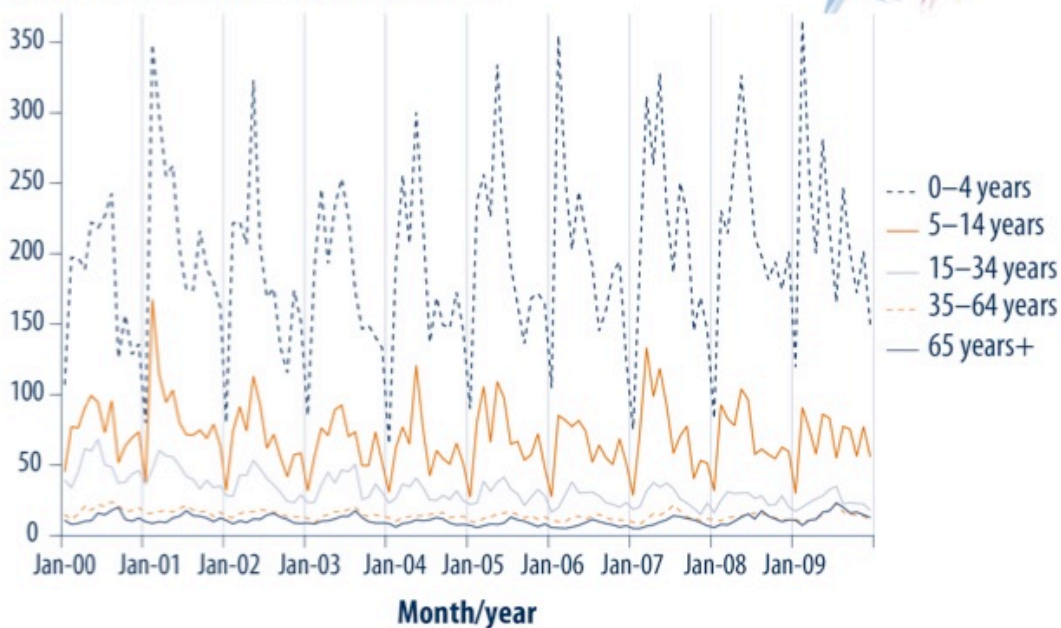
Australian Government  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare



## ED visits for asthma, by age and month



ED visits for asthma per 100,000 population



Source: NSW Emergency Department Data Collection



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