

2021

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

STATEMENT

**Children and Young People Death Review Committee
2020 Annual Report**

**Presented by
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Minister for Families and Community Services
June 2021**

The *ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee Annual Report* provides the community with information each year on the deaths of children and young people that occur in the ACT, as well as those deaths of ACT children and young people that occur outside of the ACT.

This annual report covers the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The Committee, which was established in 2012, has a number of functions including maintaining a register of deaths of children and young people in the ACT; identifying patterns and trends in relation to the deaths of children and young people; and determining research that would be valuable in this area.

The Committee is able to make recommendations about legislation, policies, practices and services for implementation by government and non-government bodies with the aim of preventing avoidable deaths, reducing the number of deaths of children and young people in the ACT and improving services.

The Annual Report provides an analysis of data on the deaths of ACT children and young people occurring in 2020 and over a five year period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020.

The report comprises a number of specific cohorts, including:

- all children and young people who have died in the ACT in the 12 month period of the report, or who normally reside in the ACT but died outside the ACT during this period;

- ACT residents only over the five year period; and
- two chapters on specific populations – neonates and infants, and vulnerable young people.

As in previous years, children under one year of age comprise the largest number of deaths across age groups, accounting for 65 per cent of all deaths of children and young people for the five year period.

The leading causes of death for infants are medically related and include ‘Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period’ and ‘Chromosomal or Congenital anomalies’.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-17 years. Deaths by suicide remain a concern for the Committee, with intentional self-harm resulting in, on average, two deaths a year in the ACT.

The Committee has recently conducted an in-depth review of children and young people who died as a result of intentional self-harm. This is an important piece of work, to which the Government responded formally in May 2021.

This year the Committee has also included a chapter on the progress of recommendations made by the Committee since its establishment.

The recommendations made by the Committee have an important role to play in helping improve service systems and service delivery through what is learnt from the tragic events associated with a death of a child or young person.

The Committee notes that they will continue to monitor changes to policy and practice which aim to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.

The death of any child or young person is devastating and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences, and I am sure the condolences of this Assembly, to all families and friends affected by the death of a child or young person.

I commend the *ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee Annual Report 2020* to the Assembly and thank the Committee for its work over the past year.

[END]