



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

Child Presence Detection

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Agenda item 24(f)

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Australian specific data

Global temperatures have increased due to climate change. The mean surface temperature across Australia has increased by about 1.0°C since 1910 when Australia's weather records began.

Increases have been observed in all seasons across Australia, affecting both day and night temperatures. Eight of Australia's ten warmest years on record have occurred since 2005, and the summer of 2018–2019 was the hottest on record.

Children fatalities due to heat stroke from being left in locked cars are generally rare occurrences with low number of cases reported each year in comparison with other road trauma types in Australia.

However, the prevalence of such incidents tends to be underestimated as the majority of these fatalities and injuries sustained are often outside the scope of official road injury record systems which are focussed on public roads.

Australian specific data

Local research shows that there are two possible reasons why a baby or child was locked in a vehicle.

Scenario 1: Unintentional locking a baby or a child in a vehicle

Example: The driver/parent has parked their vehicle to fuel up. The driver left the keys in the vehicle but the vehicle is unlocked. The child has locked the vehicle with either the remote buttons on the keys or an internal door lock button in the vehicle. This, in most cases, is not intentional by the child but has occurred. This is preventing or delaying the driver/parent to obtain access into the vehicle.

Scenario 2: Intentionally leaving a baby or a child in a locked vehicle

Example: The driver/parent has parked their vehicle to enter a shopping center. The parent locks their vehicle with an unaccompanied baby or child left in the vehicle. This may have occurred with the parent knowing of this situation or not knowing (not a fault of the parent but a lapse of memory).

Australia Snap shot



Every year over 5,000 children are rescued after being left unattended in a vehicle



Between 1 Sept 2017 and 31 Aug 2018, Ambulance Victoria responded to 1587 callouts for people locked in cars - majority were toddlers and babies

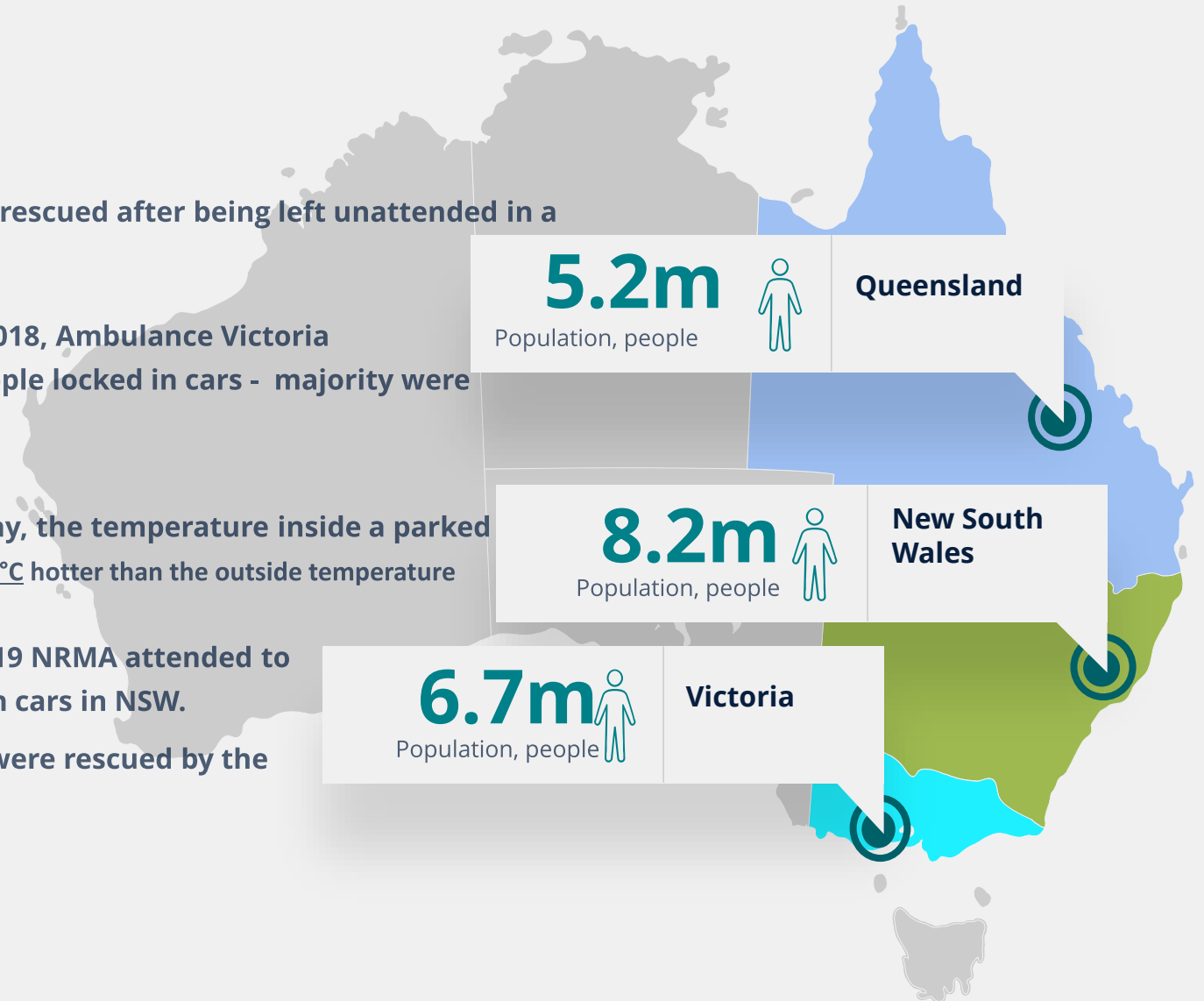


On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked vehicle can reach between 20°C-30 °C hotter than the outside temperature



Between 1 Oct 2018 and 31 Feb 2019 NRMA attended to 581 incidents for children locked in cars in NSW.

Last year 3,767 children and pets were rescued by the NRMA.



Australian specific data

Historically, heatwaves are Australia's most destructive natural hazard in terms of loss of life.

On a typical Australian summer's day, the temperature inside a parked car can be more than 30°C hotter than outside the car. That means that on a 35°C day, the temperature inside a car can reach over 65°C.

Children are particularly at risk because they can lose fluids quickly, become dehydrated and suffer from heatstroke in addition to heat related organ failure.

Over the past five years 10 children have been reported to have died after being left in hot cars, with half of those deaths taking place in Queensland with warmer climate.

From 2001 – 2018 an Australian study of Coronial investigations identified up to 25 heatwave related fatalities where children were left in cars.

Australian specific data

Leaving children unattended in a vehicle - even for a short period of time - can be fatal. As a consequence of this Australia has implemented hot car death prevention strategies as follows:

- Educating parents (Australian government online resources)
- Implementing informed childcare transportation policies
- Passing relevant laws (Currently vary between Australian states - fines and/or imprisonment)
- Encouraging the auto and child safety seat manufacturers to build in warnings and other design features through voluntary means (ANCAP)

thank you

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