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# Grog assaults blight WA electorates

## EXCLUSIVE

■ **Cathy O'Leary**  
Medical Editor

The leafy riverside electorate of Bicton has emerged as one of Perth's hotspots for alcohol-fuelled serious assaults.

A study into alcohol-related harm in WA's 59 Lower House electoral districts found 415 police-recorded serious assaults in 2010-13 in the southern suburbs district, which includes Attadale and Bicton. Serious assaults are murders, manslaughter, aggravated assaults and driving causing death.

The electorate of Perth was the worst, with 1709 reports of alcohol-caused serious assaults.

There were 548 reports in Fremantle, 514 in Victoria Park and 475 in Belmont.

Bicton ranked fifth in the metropolitan area. Bassendean, Mirrabooka, Midland, Burns Beach and Armadale made up the top 10 electorates.

The worst regional electorate for alcohol-fuelled violence was the Kimberley, with 1234 serious assaults, then the Pilbara and Kalgoorlie.

The report was produced by Curtin University researchers at the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth and the National Drug Research Institute in association with the WA Alcohol and

Youth Action Coalition. It is the first time in WA and possibly Australia that estimates of alcohol-related harm have been determined by electorate.

The report shows the number of people going to hospital emergency departments with alcohol-caused injuries and harm, with the electorates of West Swan, Darling Range, Baldivis, Jandakot and Kalamunda making up the top five.

Researchers said the report would be given to State election candidates to provide a snapshot of the scale of harm in their electorates.

Causes of death and other harm linked to alcohol include cancers, stroke, falls, drowning, assault, road crashes, alcohol dependence, suicide and liver cirrhosis.

McCusker Centre executive officer Julia Stafford said it was a powerful message for political parties keen to reduce pressure on hospitals, ambulances and police resources.

Ms Stafford said assaults seemed to be a particular problem in regional WA as well as some areas of Perth.

"In many ways they are just the tip of the iceberg.

If you included minor assaults the numbers would sky-rocket," Ms Stafford said.

"A lot more people are drinking at home so the harm is happening there and not just entertainment districts."