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A central orange circle contains the text "Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Sports". It is surrounded by several other circles of different colors (yellow, grey, purple, red, green, blue) containing icons: a hiker, a building, a boat, a map of Australia, a cyclist, and waves.

## Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Sports

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SAFETY TOOLKIT

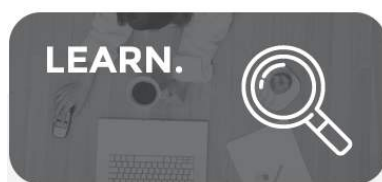
# INJURY PREVENTION

## What role do Local Governments have in injury prevention?

Western Australia's climate and natural resources encourage locals and visitors alike to enjoy outdoor recreation and leisure sports.

There are many individual and community level benefits from these recreational activities and they are an important part of healthy local government policy. However, it is also important to acknowledge that risky participant behaviours and hazardous recreational environments can result in injury and death in our communities.

Local Governments are influential in raising awareness, changing behaviour and building safer communities to prevent and reduce injuries, through professional partnerships, community networks and governing structures.



## How can you use this toolkit?

This toolkit provides information and strategies to help Local Governments plan and implement injury prevention activities in their community. It includes state and national injury data on outdoor recreation and leisure sports, suggestions on actions your local government can take, as well as media templates and resources for a range of activities.

## For further information

Please contact these organisations and governing bodies for additional resources and advice regarding preventing injuries during outdoor recreation and leisure sports.

[Australasian Injury Prevention Network](#)

[Bureau of Meteorology](#)

[DLGSC](#)

[Department of Transport](#)

[Healthy WA](#)

[Kidsafe WA](#)

[Parks and Wildlife service](#)

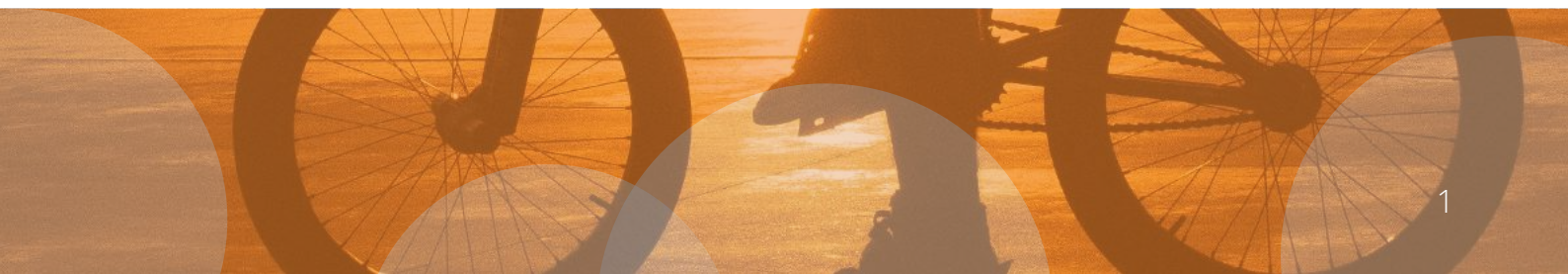
[Recfishwest](#)

[Road Safety Commission](#)

[Royal Life Saving Society of Western Australia](#)

[Trails WA](#)

[WALGA](#)

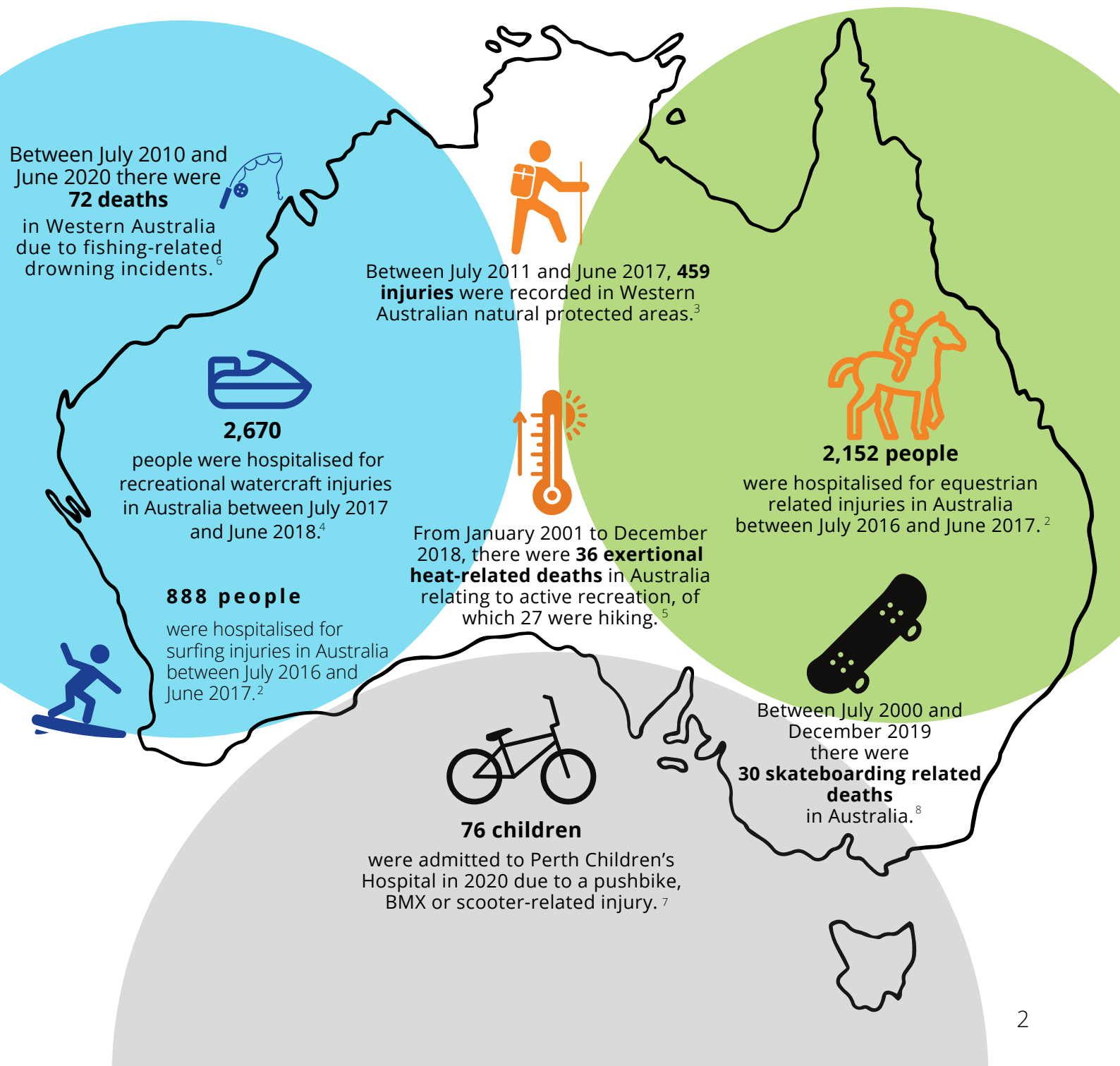




# BACKGROUND

## What are Outdoor Recreation & Leisure Sports?

Outdoor recreation and leisure sports refer to activities not organised by a club or recreation association.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this toolkit these recreational activities are unstructured outdoor activities occurring along coastlines and waterways, in parks and nature reserves and on urban pathways.



# Coastlines and Waterways - Injury Prevention Messages and Actions

## Boating

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Strong winds and tides.
- Waves and swell.
- Submerged objects.
- Other water users.
- Defective safety equipment.
- Carbon Monoxide poisoning.
- Not wearing a lifejacket.
- Alcohol consumption.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Service boats regularly.
- Always check the weather conditions.
- Check safety equipment and ensure all passengers know how to use it.
- Go boating with other people.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Always wear a lifejacket.
- Avoid alcohol consumption when boating.

### Local Government Action

- Complete an audit of boating facilities to test compliance with relevant Australian Standards.
- Complete upgrades and maintenance of boat ramps and facilities.
- Promote [Royal Life Saving](#) and [Department of Transport](#) water safety campaigns.
- Promote the [BOM](#) - 5 vital weather safety checks.
- Partner with the Department of Transport to run a local '[Make a Difference](#)' [lifejacket clinic](#).
- Communicate any phone coverage blackspot areas to boaters so they know to bring additional communication devices.

## Personal watercraft and towed water sports

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Submerged objects.
- Excessive speed.
- Poor vessel handling.
- Towing activities.
- Not designating a proper look out.
- Alcohol consumption.
- Not wearing a lifejacket.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Make sure skippers are licensed.
- Know the rules and speed restrictions.
- Keep a safe distance from shore and from other people.
- Designate a proper look out.
- Wear a lifejacket.
- Avoid alcohol consumption when boating.

### Local Government Action

- Partner with Department of Transport to review local waterway speed zones and no wash zones.
- Investigate the use of real time messaging signs, at select sites, to convey safety issues.
- Review existing signage to ensure it is clear and does not distract waterway users.
- Promote the Lookout safety campaign (posters available [here](#) from the Department of Transport).

## Rock fishing

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Tides.
- Large waves.
- Strong winds.
- Uneven and sharp surfaces.
- Black algae.
- Poor decision making.
- Lack of swimming ability.
- Alcohol consumption.

### Key behaviour change messages:

- Check weather, tide and surf conditions.
- Go fishing with other people.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Wear non-slip footwear and lightweight clothing.
- Wear a life jacket.
- Know how to use rock anchor points.
- Know where public safety equipment is and how to use it.
- Plan an escape route in case you are washed into the water.
- Do not step on black rocks (black algae).

### Local Government Action

- Install angel rings and anchor points at high risk rock fishing locations.
- Partner with Recfishwest and local retailers to offer free loan lifejackets to recreational fishers.
- Develop a local fishing safety ambassador campaign in partnership with Recfishwest to assist in disseminating safety messages via social media and local media networks.
- Partner with Royal Life Saving WA to promote the [Old4New Lifejacket Upgrade Program](#).

# Parks and Nature Reserves - Injury Prevention Messages and Actions

## Bushwalking and trail running

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Unstable and slippery surfaces.
- Cliff edges.
- Bush fires and prescribed burns.
- Falling rocks and tree limbs.
- Wildlife.
- Leaving the trail or track.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Check the trail classification is suitable for your physical ability.
- Check weather conditions and the fire rating.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Allow enough time to complete the trail during daylight.
- Carry sufficient water and food.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Wear appropriate footwear and clothing.
- Stick to the trail and carry a map in case you lose GPS signal.
- In remote areas, carry a personal locator beacon.

### Local Government Action

- Conduct an audit of existing trails and associated infrastructure to identify maintenance and upgrade requirements.
- Review existing trail guides (or develop new materials) to ensure trail users are provided with relevant information, appropriate advice and safety tips.
- Partner with relevant stakeholders to offer guided tours of local trails to a range of ages and physical abilities.
- Communicate sun safety and heat stress prevention messages to trail visitors (heat stress information can be found at [Healthy WA](#)).

## Horse trail riding

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Bushfires and prescribed burns.
- Uncontrolled horses.
- Inexperienced riders.
- Unsuitable equipment.
- Wildlife.
- Leaving the trail or track.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Check weather conditions and fire rating.
- Check trail rating is suitable for horse and rider abilities.
- Don't ride alone.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Keep emergency equipment and first aid kit in backpacks not saddlebags.
- Carry a lead rope.
- Wear a helmet.
- Always keep control of the horse.
- Stay on the trail.

### Local Government Action

- Conduct an audit of existing trails and associated infrastructure to identify maintenance and upgrade requirements.
- Work with local equestrian clubs to develop a code of conduct for horse trail riders in the area.
- Promote safe horse trail riding practices via social media and with signage at relevant trails and tracks.

## Abseiling and rock climbing

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Cliff edges.
- Falling objects.
- Wildlife.
- Excessive speed while descending.
- Inexperienced participants.
- Poor fitting and insufficient equipment.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Check weather conditions and fire rating.
- Don't climb alone.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Ensure you have adequate skills and knowledge for the activity.
- Wear a helmet and suitable clothing and footwear.
- Ensure climbing equipment is in good working condition.
- Have an emergency response plan.
- Take navigation equipment and stick to a planned route.
- Take sufficient water and food.
- Do not enter gorges or caves when it is raining.

### Local Government Action

- Conduct an audit of climbing sites to identify hazards and opportunities to improve safety.
- Install safety signage at climbing sites to communicate key safety messages.
- Partner with local climbing clubs to promote safe climbing practices and techniques in the community.

# Urban Pathways- Injury Prevention Messages and Actions

## Cycling and skateboarding

### Key Hazards

- Weather.
- Uneven and slippery surfaces.
- Road crossings.
- Other pathway users.
- Obstacles across and along pathways.
- Vision and hearing impairments or distractions.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Check weather and visibility conditions.
- Tell someone your intended route and when you plan to return.
- Check equipment before leaving.
- Wear a helmet.
- Wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing.
- Have lights fitted to your bike.
- Carry water.
- Use hand signals when turning.
- Use a bell or voice to alert others using shared paths.
- Use bike lanes when they are available.
- Make eye contact with road drivers before crossing intersections.
- Brake smoothly.
- Do not wear headphones or use mobile devices.

### Local Government Action

- Complete an audit of facilities for skateboarding and cycling, including clear signage, drink fountains, shaded areas and bike racks (you can complete the Heart Foundation's Healthy Active by Design Network [Checklist](#)).
- Develop direct and continuous bicycle lanes between key local places.
- Provide children's bike and skate clinics to build skills and safety awareness in the local community.

## Walking

### Key Hazards

- Uneven and slippery surfaces.
- Road crossings.
- Vision and hearing impairments or distractions.
- Poor health and ageing.
- Walking alone.
- Obstacles across and along pathways.

### Key behaviour change messages

- Check the weather.
- Let someone know your intended route and when you plan to return.
- Choose a route appropriate for fitness level and age.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Take water.
- Warm up before the walk.
- Do not wear headphones or use mobile devices.

### Local Government Action

- Audit pathways and associated infrastructure for potential hazards and review them against the Australian Standards for access and inclusion.
- Invite local people to complete a community walkability checklist to suggest environmental improvements and identify priorities. [Checklist](#) resources are offered by the Heart Foundation.
- Raise awareness of the risks associated with walking while distracted by wearing head phones and using mobile phones.



# SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES

## Twitter and Facebook posts:

### Coastlines and Waterways

- Alcohol and water don't mix. Whether you're boating, jet skiing or surfing the risk of drowning and injury increases with every sip, so it's best to avoid alcohol around the water.  
@royallifesavingwa #MakeTheRightCall
- Take note of Beach Emergency Number (BEN) signs when you get to the beach. In an emergency knowing the BEN will guide emergency services to your closest beach access point. Signs are also located at some harbours, estuaries, boat ramps, fishing platforms and jetties.  
@SLSWA
- Download the Deckee app to help plan your day on the water! It has information on safety equipment, ski area boundaries, boat ramp locations, location-based weather checks, navigation aids, speed zones, webcams and more. Visit [www.transport.wa.gov.au/Deckee](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/Deckee) to find out more.  
#SafeBoatingWA

### Parks and Nature Reserves

- Are you planning a day or overnight trip on one of our nature trails? It's important to research the track before you arrive to ensure everyone in your group can complete it safely. Check the latest track conditions at the Department of Parks and Wildlife [website](#).  
@ExploreParksWA #BePreparedCheckTrackConditions
- Going for a bushwalk or trail run? It's a good idea to take a customised first aid kit. Healthdirect Australia suggests adding heavy crepe bandages, instant cold packs, a disposable poncho, plastic bags, whistle, compass, torch and glow stick.  
@healthdirectAU #OutdoorFirstAid

### Urban Pathways

- If you skate in the [insert location] make sure you ride in areas away from roads and at skate parks. Wear a helmet, knee and elbow pads for protection!  
#SkateBoardSafety #WearAHelmet
- Before you ride check your bike. It's as simple as ABC – Air, Brakes, Chain. If you find any issues, or are unsure of anything, we recommend you visit a local bike shop for advice.  
@TransportWA @Westcycle #BikeSafety #SimpleAsABC





# SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES

## Sample news posts:

### **Coastlines and Waterways**

Title: Don't Put Your Life on the Line – Rock Fish Safely!

Rock fishing is one of the most dangerous recreational activities in Australia. In Western Australia 37 people died while fishing from rocks between July 2004 and June 2019.

Recfishwest recommend you keep the sand between your toes and fish from the beach. But if you are going to fish from rocks;

- Always check the weather before heading out,
- Tell someone where you are going,
- Never fish alone,
- Watch and observe the conditions before fishing,
- Wear the right gear,
- Be familiar with public safety equipment, and
- Wear a lifejacket!

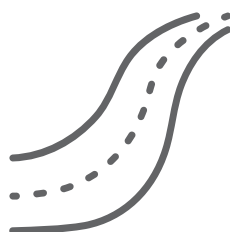
If you're planning a rock fishing trip in WA then [click here](#) to view where life buoys are installed and where you can loan a free lifejacket.

### **Urban Pathways**

Title: How walkable is your local community?

Did you know that the built environment, such as footpaths, parks and shelter, impact how people can safely get enough physical activity each day?

Use the Heart Foundation's Community Walkability Checklist to rate your local neighbourhood walk. Find out more by following this [link](#).





# SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES

## Sample news posts:

**Title:** Planning to explore one of our many bush tracks and trails on the weekend?

It is important to be aware of the risk of heat stress and dehydration when bush walking and trail running.

Heat stress occurs when your body cannot cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. When it is very hot, you may be at increased risk of heat stress. Some people are more at risk of heat stress, including babies and young children, the elderly and people with some health conditions or on certain medications.

What are the signs and symptoms of heat stress?

- tiredness and lethargy,
- headache,
- dizziness,
- feeling faint,
- muscle cramps,
- feeling thirsty,
- urinating less often,
- pale skin,
- excess sweating or no sweating, and
- dark urine.

Some tips for keeping cool on the trail:

- Don't go bushwalking or trail running during the hottest summer months.
- Avoid the midday heat by going in the morning and staying in the shade.
- Wear light-coloured, loose clothing and take a hat.
- Apply sunscreen and reapply regularly.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after your walk or run.

If someone in your group develops heat stress while on a trail, encourage them to:

- rest in a cool shaded area,
- remove excess clothing,
- drink plenty of water,
- apply a wet cloth or cold water to the skin, and
- if symptoms are severe, dial triple zero (000). If you are travelling in a remote area consider carrying a Personal Locator Beacon.

For more information on heat stress visit [HealthyWA](#) or call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222.





# WHAT SUPPORT CAN INJURY MATTERS PROVIDE?

Injury Matters can assist in communicating key safety and wellbeing messages for non-organised sport and physical recreational activities in your local area by:

- Providing relevant data on state and national hospitalisations and deaths due to recreational activities occurring in water, land and pathway network environments.
- Providing social media templates and e-news stories that can be used to address local community needs.
- Offering networking opportunities with organisations who lead the way in reducing recreational injuries in WA.
- Provide advice to Local Governments to support strategic health and community development planning.

If you are interested in partnering with WA organisations to prevent recreational injury in your community or if you would like to know more about initiatives other local governments are conducting, please contact us.

The [Know Injury website](http://www.knowinjury.org.au) also offers several resources on WA regional injury information and prevention actions. These tools can assist Local Government workers in developing their public health initiatives.

## CONNECT WITH US

-  [www.knowinjury.org.au](http://www.knowinjury.org.au)
-  [info@knowinjury.org.au](mailto:info@knowinjury.org.au)
-  [@KnowInjury](https://twitter.com/KnowInjury)

Know Injury is provided by Injury Matters and funded by the Western Australian Department of Health.

Partner:



Department of  
Health



Injury Matters acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.



# REFERENCES

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3. Gstaettner, A. M. Visitor Incidents in Western Australian Protected Areas, 2011–2017. *Wilderness Environ. Med.* 31, 303–311 (2020).
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