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## BIG KIDS URGED TO GROW UP THIS CHRISTMAS

Doctors are pleading with Queensland's adults to act their age this Christmas and keep out of the state's hectic emergency departments.

ED admissions are increasing by 3.2 per cent a year in Queensland<sup>1</sup> and typically spike over the Christmas break.

Last December Queensland ED admissions were three per cent higher than the monthly average for 2016 – meaning doctors and nurses treated an extra 3,500 patients<sup>2</sup>.

Emergency physician Dr Jennifer Williams said a dangerous combination of alcohol and immaturity was partly to blame for the December hike.

“Australians drink three times more at Christmas than they do at any other time of the year and that inevitably leads to more accidents, fights and cases of alcohol poisoning,” Dr Williams said.

“As well as drinking more, some grown-ups get as carried away at Christmas as their kids.

“They can't wait to hop on new skateboards and scooters to show the kids how it's done – and then end up in ED with fractures.

“Parents and relatives should be aware that some toys are best left to real kids, not big ones.”

Dr Williams said it was doubly important for adults to stay in control because of the risks faced by young children over summer.

“With children spending so much time in the sea or in the pool, mums and dads need to stay alert and make sure their children stay safe,” Dr Williams said.

“Toddlers are especially at risk – parents cannot take their eyes off them if they are near water.”

There were 291 drowning deaths in Australia in 2016/17, a three per cent increase on the previous 12 months<sup>3</sup>.

Seventy-three people drowned in Queensland, with December and January the peak months for fatalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Emergency department care 2016–17: Australian hospital statistics

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Government, [data.qld.gov.au/dataset/emergency-departments](http://data.qld.gov.au/dataset/emergency-departments)

<sup>3</sup> Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2017