

# Garden Waste and Land Burn-Offs: A Danger to Children

## Mechanism of Injury:

Burn-offs include burning garden waste, wood or tree stumps, paddocks and bushlands. These fires can retain enough heat to cause full-thickness burns to children even after one week. Children enjoy playing in the ash unaware of the danger.

## Data:

In the six years from 1997 to 2002, 1633 children were treated for burns at the Royal Children's Hospital.

- 2% of all burns were from burn-offs
- Average age: 5 years
- Male : Female = 3:1
- Area of body most affected: Feet
- 33% required skin grafting

## Prevention Message:

- Burns-offs are prohibited in most urban areas
- Garden waste fires should be cooled with water after the flames have subsided
- Landholders have a responsibility to keep an eye on where children are playing during and after a burn-off
- When possible, dampen down after a controlled burn



## PREVENTION



**Burn-offs should be doused with water after flames settle**

Royal Children's Hospital Burns Research Group.  
Brisbane, Australia.

