



## HBF warns of ambulance costs – take cover

MANDURAH came in it at ninth for the top 10 regions calling an ambulance, according to data compiled by HBF.

HBF data revealed that 2.96 per cent of HBF members needing an ambulance lived in Mandurah.

Findings also revealed that many people were unaware of the cost of an ambulance.

Toni Elliott, of Greenfields, said she refused to take an ambulance after becoming ill, because of the cost.

She is now considering signing up for ambulance cover as a result.

"I've already had HBF send me ambulance cover application

forms," she said.

"The ambulance guy told me to ring up and get cover the next day, so I don't have to refuse an ambulance again.

"I had to sign a waiver to say I refused an ambulance and their advice on being taken to hospital."

Ms Elliott said the cost would make her consider driving herself to hospital, but said ambulances should be free.

"If you're out cold you have no choice," she said.

When Sue Stone's daughter had an accident, medical costs came to nearly \$10,000.

"Tayla's accident meant we

needed two ambulances and a helicopter," she said.

"It cost \$800, but our private health covered the lot."

Mrs Stone said if the family did not have cover, they would not have been able to pay the ambulance bill.

She agrees that in an emergency an ambulance should be free of charge.

For the year, ambulance usage was highest on Mondays and lowest on Sundays.

Aged pensioners receive free ambulance services and senior citizens receive a 50 per cent subsidy.