

# Coroners Court

## Monthly Suicide Data Report

October 2021 update

15 November 2021

65



**WARNING:** This following report includes information on suicides.

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## Purpose

This report presents the October 2021 update to Victorian suicide statistics. This report was produced under the Coroners Court of Victoria's initiative to release timely and accessible data on suicide across the state.

## Victorian Suicide Register

In Victoria all deaths from suspected non-natural causes including suspected suicides are required to be reported to the Coroners Court of Victoria. The Coroners Court reviews newly reported deaths on a daily basis to identify those that occur in circumstances consistent with suicide and adds these deaths to the Victorian Suicide Register (VSR).

The VSR has been in operation since 2012 and is the most accurate and timely data source for suicide in Victoria. VSR data is regularly shared with the Victorian Department of Health, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Victoria Police, health services, and other bodies engaged in suicide prevention to inform their work.

## Considerations when interpreting the data

Victoria's suicide frequency varies quite substantially from month to month. Additionally, there can be substantial variation in the monthly and annual frequency of suicides within particular cohorts. This variation, which is not unique to Victoria but is a feature of suicide data around Australia and internationally, usually results from random factors rather than underlying systemic issues or emerging clusters. The data therefore should be interpreted cautiously, with great care taken in drawing conclusions about any apparent increase or decrease that is observed.

## Changes in reported frequencies over time

The deaths included in the VSR are regularly reviewed as coroners' investigations progress and more is learned about the circumstances in which they occurred. Deaths may be removed from the VSR if investigation establishes they are likely not to be suicides; likewise, deaths initially missed may be added to the VSR as new evidence consistent with suicide is gathered. This is why some data reported here may be different to what was reported in previous months.

However, data changes are usually minor: VSR analyses have shown that over time, there is consistently less than 5% difference between the number of suicides initially identified as suicides, and the number of deaths ultimately confirmed as suicides.

# Monthly data update

## 1. Year to date frequency by sex

Table 1 shows the frequency of Victorian suicides by deceased sex as at 31 October each year for the period 2017-2021.

**Table 1:** Year to date (31 October) suicide frequency by sex, Victoria 2017-2021.

Sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	405	417	441	435	425
Female	152	153	146	158	134
<b>Total</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>559</b>

## 2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly<sup>1</sup> frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2017 through to October 2021.

**Table 2:** Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2017 to October 2021.

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	60	46	70	66	56	60	46	70	66	56
February	51	49	61	64	52	111	95	131	130	108
March	69	65	50	74	69	180	160	181	204	177
April	50	62	49	54	49	230	222	230	258	226
May	49	55	65	58	54	279	277	295	316	280
June	53	50	54	57	55	332	327	349	373	335
July	64	66	54	63	53	396	393	403	436	388
August	59	58	62	57	54	455	451	465	493	442
September	38	54	56	49	48	493	505	521	542	490
October	64	65	66	51	69	557	570	587	593	559
November	59	71	55	68		616	641	642	661	
December	67	62	65	52		683	703	707	713	

1 The aggregate monthly frequency is the sum of frequencies for all months so far in each year. For example, the aggregate monthly frequency in March of a year is the sum of the monthly frequencies in January, February and March for that year.

### 3. Year to date frequency by age group and sex

Table 3a shows the Victorian suicide frequency by deceased sex and age group as at 31 October each year for the period 2017-2021.

**Table 3a:** Year to date (31 October) suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2017-2021.

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Male</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>425</b>
Under 18	9	9	12	12	8
18 to 24	32	47	53	51	41
25 to 34	85	86	97	74	82
35 to 44	80	73	92	77	73
45 to 54	81	89	69	73	82
55 to 64	54	58	67	74	59
65 and over	64	55	51	74	80
<b>Female</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>134</b>
Under 18	5	4	6	2	10
18 to 24	16	18	16	12	17
25 to 34	29	32	20	38	35
35 to 44	21	30	24	34	21
45 to 54	34	23	32	23	21
55 to 64	20	27	22	22	15
65 and over	27	19	26	27	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>559</b>
Under 18	14	13	18	14	18
18 to 24	48	65	69	63	58
25 to 34	114	118	117	112	117
35 to 44	101	103	116	111	94
45 to 54	115	112	101	96	103
55 to 64	74	85	89	96	74
65 and over	91	74	77	101	95

To assist in interpreting this data, Table 3b was collated (over page) showing Victoria's annual suicide frequency by sex and age group for the complete years 2017-2020. Table 3b illustrates that, while there may be quite substantial short-term fluctuations in suicide frequencies within particular groups, these usually even out over time.

**Table 3b:** Annual suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2017-2020.

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Male</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>531</b>
Under 18	11	11	13	16
18 to 24	43	62	64	62
25 to 34	99	99	109	92
35 to 44	95	89	110	97
45 to 54	106	106	90	92
55 to 64	70	76	79	90
65 and over	79	76	68	82
<b>Female</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>182</b>
Under 18	5	5	9	3
18 to 24	18	20	18	16
25 to 34	34	41	27	44
35 to 44	33	36	29	36
45 to 54	38	24	33	28
55 to 64	23	31	26	26
65 and over	29	27	32	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>713</b>
Under 18	16	16	22	19
18 to 24	61	82	82	78
25 to 34	133	140	136	136
35 to 44	128	125	139	133
45 to 54	144	130	123	120
55 to 64	93	107	105	116
65 and over	108	103	100	111

## 4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the year to date suicide frequency as at 31 October in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, for the years 2017 to 2021. Table 4b (over page) shows the same data but represented as proportions of all suicides rather than as frequencies.

**Table 4a:** Year to date (31 October) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	385	376	370	399	355
Regional Victoria	172	194	217	194	203
<b>Total</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>559*</b>

(\* Includes one suicide where incident location is currently unknown)

**Table 4b:** Year to date (31 October) suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	69%	66%	63%	67%	64%
Regional Victoria	31%	34%	37%	33%	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

To assist in interpreting this data, Tables 4c and 4d show the annual suicide frequency and proportion in Metropolitan Melbourne compared to Regional Victoria for the complete years 2017-2020.

**Table 4c:** Annual suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2020.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020
Metropolitan Melbourne	466	466	453	472
Regional Victoria	217	237	254	241
<b>Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>713</b>

**Table 4d:** Annual suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2020.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020
Metropolitan Melbourne	68%	66%	64%	66%
Regional Victoria	32%	34%	36%	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>