



Friday 14 October 2022

### **New report focuses on suicides in LGBTIQ+ communities**

Today, the Coroners Court of Victoria has released a new report containing suicide data for LGBTIQ+ communities in Victoria from 2012 to 2021, to better understand suicide in these groups.

The report was developed in consultation with the Office of the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, the Victorian Department of Health and Switchboard following requests for data to help identify prevention opportunities.

Studies show that LGBTIQ+ people are at higher risk of suicidal behaviours than the general population in Australia.

Access to coronial information can play an important role in informing public policy and facilitate safer conversations about suicide within communities.

The report reveals that 208 LGBTIQ+ people died by suicide in Victoria between 2012 and 2021.

Caution is urged in interpreting this data as it likely represents an undercount due to challenges in identifying LGBTIQ+ people among deaths investigated by Victorian coroners including:

- witnesses being unaware of the deceased's LGBTIQ+ status
- witnesses seeking to protect the privacy of the deceased
- the information is omitted from evidence in the belief it is not relevant to an investigation.

Historically, the Court has been cautious about publishing incomplete data as it may offer limited insights and hinder prevention efforts. This report represents a step towards open dialogue with relevant organisations to improve data collection for LGBTIQ+ communities.

In Victoria, all deaths from suspected non-natural causes, including suspected suicides, are required to be reported to the Coroners Court of Victoria. These deaths are recorded by the Court in the Victorian Suicide Register (VSR), which is the data source for this report.

The Court also shares data from the VSR with State and Commonwealth governments and organisations engaged in prevention initiatives to inform their work in reducing suicides.

#### **Quotes attributable to State Coroner Judge Cain:**

*"This report represents an important step towards improving our understanding of suicides in LGBTIQ+ communities in Victoria."*

*"Through sharing coronial information we can support safe, transparent discussions about how community and government can work to develop targeted health initiatives for LGBTIQ+ Victorians."*

*"We will continue to make our data available to support communities and organisations working in the prevention sector to help save Victorian lives."*

A copy of the report can be accessed at: <https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/coroners-court-victoria-suicide-among-lgbtqi-people-2022>