

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

August 2023 update

25 September 2023





WARNING: This following report includes information on suicides.

For help or information contact **beyondblue** on 1300 224 636, or **Lifeline** on 13 11 14.

Purpose

This report presents the August 2023 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 by sex and age group. 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 the end of August each year, for the years 2019-2023.

Table 1: Year to date (month end August) suicide frequency by sex, Victoria 2019-2023.

| Sex | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Male | 348 | 343 | 339 | 349 | 366 |
| Female | 116 | 115 | 113 | 130 | 131 |
| Total | 464 | 458 | 452 | 479 | 497 |

2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly¹ frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2019 through to August 2023.

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2019 to August 2023.

| Month | Monthly frequency | | | | | Aggregate monthly frequency | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| January | 70 | 61 | 61 | 56 | 71 | 70 | 61 | 61 | 56 | 71 |
| February | 61 | 60 | 52 | 54 | 62 | 131 | 121 | 113 | 110 | 133 |
| March | 50 | 67 | 70 | 64 | 56 | 181 | 188 | 183 | 174 | 189 |
| April | 51 | 52 | 49 | 57 | 70 | 232 | 240 | 232 | 231 | 259 |
| May | 68 | 51 | 56 | 55 | 65 | 300 | 291 | 288 | 286 | 324 |
| June | 51 | 52 | 57 | 65 | 44 | 351 | 343 | 345 | 351 | 368 |
| July | 56 | 56 | 55 | 56 | 67 | 407 | 399 | 400 | 407 | 435 |
| August | 57 | 59 | 52 | 72 | 62 | 464 | 458 | 452 | 479 | 497 |
| September | 56 | 49 | 51 | 73 | | 520 | 507 | 503 | 552 | |
| October | 64 | 51 | 73 | 77 | | 584 | 558 | 576 | 629 | |
| November | 48 | 68 | 60 | 65 | | 632 | 626 | 636 | 694 | |
| December | 65 | 53 | 54 | 70 | | 697 | 679 | 690 | 764 | |

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 3 shows the Victorian suicide frequency by deceased sex and age group as at the end of August each year, for the years 2019-2023.

Table 3: Year to date (month end August) suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2019-2023.

| Age group by sex | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Male | | | | | |
| Under 18 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 13 |
| 18 to 24 | 43 | 41 | 32 | 34 | 33 |
| 25 to 34 | 84 | 62 | 64 | 63 | 73 |
| 35 to 44 | 70 | 61 | 61 | 60 | 79 |
| 45 to 54 | 52 | 53 | 64 | 80 | 70 |
| 55 to 64 | 54 | 57 | 46 | 44 | 51 |
| 65 and over | 38 | 59 | 64 | 64 | 47 |
| Total | 348 | 343 | 339 | 349 | 366 |
| Female | | | | | |
| Under 18 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 9 |
| 18 to 24 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 12 |
| 25 to 34 | 15 | 30 | 26 | 19 | 25 |
| 35 to 44 | 18 | 21 | 19 | 23 | 33 |
| 45 to 54 | 26 | 14 | 19 | 28 | 24 |
| 55 to 64 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 19 | 12 |
| 65 and over | 24 | 23 | 13 | 29 | 16 |
| Total | 116 | 115 | 113 | 130 | 131 |
| All people | | | | | |
| Under 18 | 12 | 12 | 16 | 6 | 22 |
| 18 to 24 | 54 | 51 | 46 | 44 | 45 |
| 25 to 34 | 99 | 92 | 90 | 82 | 98 |
| 35 to 44 | 88 | 82 | 80 | 83 | 112 |
| 45 to 54 | 78 | 67 | 83 | 108 | 94 |
| 55 to 64 | 71 | 72 | 60 | 63 | 63 |
| 65 and over | 62 | 82 | 77 | 93 | 63 |
| Total | 464 | 458 | 452 | 479 | 497 |

4. Year to date frequency by location of fatal incident

Table 4a shows the suicide frequency as at the end of August in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, for the years 2019 to 2023. Table 4b shows the same data but represented as proportions of all suicides rather than as frequencies.

Table 4a: Year to date (month end August) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2019-2023.

| Location of fatal incident | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Metropolitan | 296 | 302 | 284 | 319 | 332 |
| Regional | 168 | 156 | 168 | 160 | 165 |
| Total | 464 | 458 | 452 | 479 | 497 |

Table 4b: Year to date (month end August) suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2019-2023.

| Location of fatal incident | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Metropolitan | 64% | 66% | 63% | 67% | 67% |
| Regional | 36% | 34% | 37% | 33% | 33% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |