

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

September 2023 update

25 Oct 2023

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WARNING: This following report includes information on suicides.

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Purpose

This report presents the September 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 September each year, for the years 2019-2023.

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

Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Male	387	377	377	407	414
Female	133	130	121	145	156
Total	520	507	498	552	570

2. Monthly frequency

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

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2019 to September 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	59	51	54	62	131	120	112	110	133
March	50	67	68	64	56	181	187	180	174	189
April	51	52	49	57	70	232	239	229	231	259
May	68	51	55	55	65	300	290	284	286	324
June	51	52	57	66	44	351	342	341	352	368
July	56	57	55	56	67	407	399	396	408	435
August	57	59	52	72	62	464	458	448	480	497
September	56	49	50	72	73	520	507	498	552	570
October	64	51	73	77		584	558	571	629	
November	48	68	60	65		632	626	631	694	
December	65	53	54	70		697	679	685	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 September each year, for the years 2019-2023.

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

Age group by sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Male					
Under 18	8	12	9	5	13
18 to 24	46	43	34	36	37
25 to 34	88	67	69	79	78
35 to 44	80	65	69	67	86
45 to 54	57	59	71	89	81
55 to 64	61	62	53	52	61
65 and over	47	69	72	79	57
To be confirmed	0	0	0	0	1
Total	387	377	377	407	414
Female					
Under 18	5	2	9	2	9
18 to 24	14	11	15	11	16
25 to 34	18	36	27	22	33
35 to 44	20	24	19	25	36
45 to 54	30	14	20	31	26
55 to 64	20	18	16	21	14
65 and over	26	25	15	33	22
To be confirmed	0	0	0	0	0
Total	133	130	121	145	156
All people					
Under 18	13	14	18	7	22
18 to 24	60	54	49	47	53
25 to 34	106	103	96	101	111
35 to 44	100	89	88	92	122
45 to 54	87	73	91	120	107
55 to 64	81	80	69	73	75
65 and over	73	94	87	112	79
To be confirmed	0	0	0	0	1
Total	520	507	498	552	570

4. Year to date frequency by location of fatal incident

Table 4a shows the suicide frequency as at the end of September 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 September) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2019-2023.

Location of fatal incident	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Metropolitan	333	335	315	364	382
Regional	187	172	183	188	188
Total	520	507	498	552	570

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

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