



5 March 2025

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised this content includes information associated with deceased persons from events that have occurred in Victoria. Readers are warned that there are words and descriptions that may be culturally distressing.**

## **New report shows 27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people passed by suicide in 2024**

A report published by the Coroners Court of Victoria for the first time today shows 27 First Nations people passed by suicide in the state in 2024.

The report – *Suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, 2020-2024* – contains the first release of full-year data for 2024. It also includes demographic information and a contextual analysis of 95 passings that occurred in Victoria between 2020-2023.

Key insights from the report include:

- In 2024, 27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria passed by suicide compared to 22 in 2023 and 19 in 2022.
- From 2020–2024, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides occurred more frequently in regional areas (54.9%) than metropolitan areas (45.1%). For non-Indigenous people, 66% of suicides occurred in metropolitan Melbourne.
- Over 2020–2024, suicide was most prevalent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 25–34 (33%), and 35–44 and 45–54 (both 20.5%).
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, suicides most commonly occurred in those aged 18–24 (38.2%) and 25–34 (35.3%) between 2020–2024.
- Contextual information drawn from the Court’s enhanced data set shows stressors contributing to passings between 2020–2023 include diagnosed and suspected mental ill health, interpersonal concerns, substance use, exposure to family violence and recent contact with the justice system.

As outlined in the report, the average annual rate of suicides for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria remains almost three times higher than the non-Indigenous population and suicides are more prevalent in younger age groups for First Nations people compared to the non-Indigenous population. For the period 2020-2024:

- 56.6% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide passings were people aged under 35 years, compared to 30.2% of non-Indigenous suicides.
- the average age of male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who passed by suicide was 37 years, compared to 46.9 years in non-Indigenous males.
- the average age of female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who passed by suicide was 29.6 years, compared to 45.7 years for non-Indigenous females.

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In Victoria all suspected suicides must be reported to the Court for investigation.

Developed by the Yirramboi Murrup Unit - Coroners Aboriginal Engagement Unit (YMU) and the Coroners Prevention Unit, the report aims to assist program design in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention sectors by providing publicly available, accessible, accurate and culturally appropriate information on suicide.

The report utilises data from the Victorian Suicide Register, a database recording all suicides investigated by Victorian coroners since 1 January 2000. This is the sixth report on suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria – the first report was released in June 2020.

Since the Aboriginal led YMU was established in 2019, the Court has enhanced identification and accuracy of information for current and historic reportable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander passings from 1 January 2018 to the present.

### **Quotes from State Coroner Judge John Cain**

*It is deeply concerning that First Nations people in Victoria continue to pass by suicide at a rate almost three times higher than the non-Indigenous population – it is critical to ensure proper supports are in place to drive down suicides in these communities.*

*We remain committed to making this data publicly available to help facilitate conversations at all levels, from government to the community, about suicide and what can be done to save more lives.*

### **Quotes from Jessica Gobbo (Wardandi & Bibbulmun) Manager, Yirramboi Murrup Unit (Coroners Aboriginal Engagement Unit)**

*My heart goes out to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities disproportionately affected by suicide in Victoria – more work is needed to understand why and how these passings can be prevented.*

*It is vital that the community has access to accurate and up-to-date information about suicide so we can work together to develop targeted, culturally safe supports for First Nations people in Victoria.*

A copy of the *Suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, 2020-2024* can be found here: <https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/coroners-court-victoria-suicides-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-victoria-2020-2024>

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