



Wednesday 3 February 2021

Increasing public data to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

To support ongoing prevention initiatives, the Coroners Court of Victoria has today released a new report presenting comparative, end-of-year data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides.

The report, *Victorian suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – 2020 end-of-year update*, presents full year comparative data for 2019 and 2020. It was produced in response to requests from the Indigenous-led suicide prevention sector and community and sits alongside the Court's inaugural mid-year data report – *Victorian suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report 2009-2020* – released in June 2020.

Timely access to accurate information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide frequencies empowers organisations working in suicide prevention to better target programs and track the progress of initiatives – leading to the implementation of stronger, more responsive prevention strategies in the community.

Key findings in the report include:

- The annual rate of suicides of Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders was consistent across 2019 and 2020, with 21 passings in both years.
- Suicide frequencies remain higher amongst males than females (61.9% male, 38.1% female).
- Males between 45–54 (30.8%), 25–34 (26.9%) and 35–44 (15.4%) continue to be most at risk.
- Amongst females, those aged 18–24 (43.8%) and 25–34 (37.5%) are the highest risk groups.
- As seen in the previous report, frequencies of suicides are higher in regional areas (57.1%) compared to metropolitan areas (42.9%).

The end-of-year comparative reports will be published annually in January and the mid-year systemic data reports will be released in June each year.

Both reports were developed by the Coroners Koori Engagement Unit (CKEU) and Coroners Prevention Unit (CPU) using data drawn from the Victorian Suicide Register - a real-time database containing information on all suicides reported to and investigated by Victorian coroners since 1 January 2000.

Since the establishment of the Koori led CKEU in 2019, the Court has enhanced identification and accuracy of information regarding current and historic reportable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander passings.

Quotes from State Coroner, Judge John Cain

“Worryingly, suicide frequencies amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria remain twice that of the state’s non-Indigenous population.”

“Providing timely access to data that informs and supports communities is vital – suicide is a complex issue and effective prevention requires action at every level.”



Quotes from Troy Williamson, Manager, Coroners Koori Engagement Unit

“Our communities have requested more public data, to put agency back in their hands and guide culturally safe responses to Aboriginal health and wellbeing.”

“We have worked hard to improve Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides and it is crucial that this information is given back to our people in support of self-determination.”

“In 2020, Victoria had one of the country’s highest suicide rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. More needs to be done and I hope this report can assist in the development of programs to improve outcomes for our people.”

The report can be read here: <https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/victorian-suicides-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-2020-end-year-update>

Media contact:

Claudia Hodgens
Strategic Communications Manager
T: 0407 403 371
E: mediaenquiries@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au