

Victorian suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

2020 end-of-year update

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Coroners Court
of Victoria



Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully warned that the following report includes information associated with deceased persons from events that have occurred in Victoria.

No names, voices or direct events are recorded within this report; however, the sensitive nature of the information is associated with the commencement of dreaming for many Aboriginal people and may impact some readers.

Acknowledgement

The Coroners Court of Victoria (CCOV) acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which it is located, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung Peoples. Furthermore, the CCOV respectfully acknowledges all traditional owners across Victoria and pay respect to all Elders, past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge all families and communities who have been impacted by the loss of a loved one and provide our deepest of condolences and respect at this time.



Purpose

This report provides an overview of suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria during 2019 and 2020.

This report supplements the socio-demographic data in the "Suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People" report released by the Coroners Court of Victoria (CCOV) on 30 June 2020. It has been compiled to update organisations in Victoria about the frequency and demography of suicides within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities across the state.

Accurately recording and reporting on suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria is critical to inform program development and other initiatives which aim to reduce suicide rates across Victorian Aboriginal Communities.

The Victorian Suicide Register (VSR) was the data source for the material presented here. Please see the 30 June 2020 report for an overview of the VSR, its case inclusion criteria, the method for compiling the data, and caveats when interpreting the data. The Coroners Prevention Unit, a business unit within the CCOV, extracted the relevant data for this report from the VSR on 11 January 2021.

Data update

The following data pertains to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who passed by suicide, and whose passing was reported to CCOV between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2020.

1. Annual frequency

Table 1 shows the annual suicide frequency among Aboriginal people and all people in Victoria during the period 2019-2020. There were 21 suicides of Aboriginal people reported during each year.

Table 1: Annual suicide frequency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all Victorians, Victoria 2019-2020.

Population	2019	2020
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	21	21
All Victorians	718	698



2. Monthly frequency

Table 2a and 2b show the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly¹ frequency of suicides among Aboriginal people in Victoria respectively.

Table 2a: Monthly suicide frequency among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Victoria 2019-2020.

Month	2019	2020
January	1	2
February	1	3
March	2	3
April	1	-
May	3	2
June	5	1
July	1	1
August	-	5
September	2	-
October	2	2
November	2	1
December	1	1

Table 2b: Monthly aggregate suicide frequency among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Victoria 2019-2020.

Month	2019	2020
January	1	2
February	2	5
March	4	8
April	5	8
May	8	10
June	13	11
July	14	12
August	14	17
September	16	17
October	18	19
November	20	20
December	21	21

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. Sex and age group

Table 3 shows sociodemographic breakdown (sex and age group) among Aboriginal people who passed by suicide in Victoria in 2019 and 2020.

Table 3: Annual suicide frequency by sex and age group among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Victoria 2019-2020.

Sex and age group	2019	2020
Male	13	13
Under 18	1	1
18 to 24	2	-
25 to 34	3	4
35 to 44	3	1
45 to 54	4	4
55 to 64	-	3
65 and over	-	-
Female	8	8
Under 18	-	-
18 to 24	3	4
25 to 34	3	3
35 to 44	-	-
45 to 54	1	1
55 to 64	1	-
65 and over	-	-
Total	21	21

4. Location

Table 4 shows the annual suicide frequency based on location of where the fatal incident occurred. The Coroners Court of Victoria respectfully acknowledges the footprint impact of passings in multiple communities.

Table 4: Annual suicide frequency and proportion by location among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Victoria 2019-2020.

Location	2019	2020
Metropolitan Melbourne	10	8
Regional Victoria	11	13
Total	21	21