

# Coroners Court

## Monthly Suicide Data Report

April 2021 update

17 May 2021

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**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 April 2021 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 within particular cohorts. 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: 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. Annual frequency in year to date

Table 1 shows the annual frequency of Victorian suicides as at 30 April each year for the period 2017-2021.

**Table 1:** Year to date suicide frequency in Victoria by deceased sex, to 30 April, 2017-2021.

Sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	174	171	182	203	173
Female	56	53	63	60	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>221</b>

## 2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly<sup>1</sup> frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2017 through to April 2021.

**Table 2:** Monthly frequency and monthly aggregate frequency of Victorian suicides, 2017-2021. (\*2021 data is part-year to 30 April.)

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
January	60	45	73	67	56	60	45	73	67	56
February	51	51	61	65	51	111	96	134	132	107
March	69	65	54	76	67	180	161	188	208	174
April	50	63	57	55	47	230	224	245	263	221
May	51	50	65	58		281	274	310	321	
June	52	52	54	57		333	326	364	378	
July	67	68	54	59		400	394	418	437	
August	59	56	62	60		459	450	480	497	
September	40	55	54	50		499	505	534	547	
October	62	64	65	51		561	569	599	598	
November	62	71	55	64		623	640	654	662	
December	69	60	64	51		692	700	718	713	

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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. Frequency by age group and sex

Table 3 shows the annual Victorian suicide frequency by sex and age group for January 2017 to April 2021.

**Table 3:** Annual suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2017-2021. (\*2021 data is part-year to 30 April.)

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
<b>Male</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>173</b>
Under 18	11	10	13	17	3
18 to 24	43	62	64	62	16
25 to 34	100	99	109	94	35
35 to 44	97	90	113	96	31
45 to 54	106	104	94	92	27
55 to 64	70	77	79	88	31
65 and over	78	76	70	83	30
<b>Female</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>48</b>
Under 18	5	5	8	2	4
18 to 24	19	20	19	16	6
25 to 34	35	42	27	44	15
35 to 44	33	33	29	36	7
45 to 54	41	24	32	27	9
55 to 64	24	31	27	27	6
65 and over	30	27	34	29	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>221</b>

## 4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the annual suicide frequency by location of fatal incident (Metropolitan Melbourne or Regional Victoria) for the years 2017 to 2021. Table 4b shows the same data but represented as proportions of all suicides rather than as frequencies.

**Table 4a:** Annual suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021. (\*2021 data is part-year to 30 April.)

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Metropolitan	473	465	458	475	139
Regional	219	235	260	238	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>221</b>

**Table 4b:** Annual suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021. (\*2021 data is part-year to 30 April.)

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Metropolitan	68%	66%	64%	67%	63%
Regional	32%	34%	36%	33%	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>