

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

May 2021 update

16 June 2021

65



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 May 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: 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.

Note: this report includes new tables presenting year-to-date data from 2017 – 2021 for frequency by age group and sex and frequency by location of fatal incident.

Monthly data update

1. Year to date frequency by sex

Table 1 shows the frequency of Victorian suicides by deceased sex as at 31 May each year for the period 2017-2021.

Table 1: Year to date (31 May) suicide frequency by deceased sex, Victoria 2017-2021.

Sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	206	207	234	239	215
Female	75	67	76	76	61
Total	281	274	310	315	276

2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly¹ frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2017 through to May 2021.

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2017 to May 2021.

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	60	45	73	66	56	60	45	73	66	56
February	51	51	61	63	51	111	96	134	129	107
March	69	65	54	74	67	180	161	188	203	174
April	50	63	57	54	48	230	224	245	257	222
May	51	50	65	58	54	281	274	310	315	276
June	52	52	54	57		333	326	364	372	
July	67	68	54	63		400	394	418	435	
August	59	56	62	57		459	450	480	492	
September	40	55	55	50		499	505	535	542	
October	62	64	65	51		561	569	600	593	
November	60	71	55	68		621	640	655	661	
December	67	60	65	52		688	700	720	713	

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 3a shows the Victorian suicide frequency by deceased sex and age group as at 31 May each year, for the period 2017-2021.

Table 3a: Year to date (31 May) suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2017-2021.

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	206	207	234	239	215
Under 18	3	3	2	9	4
18 to 24	16	23	27	26	23
25 to 34	45	42	61	41	42
35 to 44	46	42	49	46	37
45 to 54	31	42	36	43	34
55 to 64	30	30	32	43	36
65 and over	35	25	27	31	39
Female	75	67	76	76	61
Under 18	3	4	1	1	5
18 to 24	6	7	9	6	8
25 to 34	17	16	9	12	17
35 to 44	10	12	16	17	10
45 to 54	18	8	14	14	11
55 to 64	5	13	11	10	8
65 and over	16	7	16	16	2
Total	281	274	310	315	276
Under 18	6	7	3	10	9
18 to 24	22	30	36	32	31
25 to 34	62	58	70	53	59
35 to 44	56	54	65	63	47
45 to 54	49	50	50	57	45
55 to 64	35	43	43	53	44
65 and over	51	32	43	47	41

To assist in interpreting this data, Table 3b was collated (over page) showing Victoria's annual suicide frequency by sex and age group for the complete years 2017-2020. Table 3b illustrates that, while there may be quite substantial short-term fluctuations in suicide frequencies within particular groups, these usually even out over time.

Table 3b: Annual suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2017-2020.

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020
Male	504	518	544	532
Under 18	11	10	13	17
18 to 24	43	62	64	62
25 to 34	100	99	110	93
35 to 44	96	90	113	97
45 to 54	106	104	94	92
55 to 64	70	77	79	90
65 and over	78	76	71	81
Female	184	182	176	181
Under 18	5	5	8	2
18 to 24	18	20	19	16
25 to 34	35	42	27	44
35 to 44	33	33	29	35
45 to 54	39	24	32	28
55 to 64	24	31	27	27
65 and over	30	27	34	29
Total	688	700	720	713
Under 18	16	15	21	19
18 to 24	61	82	83	78
25 to 34	135	141	137	137
35 to 44	129	123	142	132
45 to 54	145	128	126	120
55 to 64	94	108	106	117
65 and over	108	103	105	110

4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the year to date suicide frequency as at 31 May in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, for the years 2017 to 2021. Table 4b (over page) shows the same data but represented as proportions of all suicides rather than as frequencies.

Table 4a: Year to date (31 May) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	191	185	193	211	177
Regional Victoria	90	89	117	104	99
Total	281	274	310	315	276

Table 4b: Year to date (31 May) suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	68%	68%	62%	67%	64%
Regional Victoria	32%	32%	38%	33%	36%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

To assist in interpreting this data, Tables 4c and 4d show the annual suicide frequency and proportion in Metropolitan Melbourne compared to Regional Victoria for the complete years 2017-2020.

Table 4c: Annual suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2020.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020
Metropolitan Melbourne	470	465	460	472
Regional Victoria	218	235	260	241
Total	688	700	720	713

Table 4d: Annual suicide frequency proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020
Metropolitan Melbourne	68%	66%	64%	66%
Regional Victoria	32%	34%	36%	34%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%