

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

August 2021 update

14 September 2021





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 August 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.

Monthly data update

1. Year to date frequency by sex

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

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

Sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	325	337	361	366	335
Female	131	116	119	127	104
Total	456	453	480	493	439

2. Monthly frequency

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

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2017 to August 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	64	51	111	96	134	130	107
March	69	65	54	74	67	180	161	188	204	174
April	50	63	57	54	48	230	224	245	258	222
May	50	53	65	58	54	280	277	310	316	276
June	54	51	54	57	55	334	328	364	373	331
July	64	68	54	63	53	398	396	418	436	384
August	58	57	62	57	55	456	453	480	493	439
September	38	55	55	49		494	508	535	542	
October	63	64	65	51		557	572	600	593	
November	59	71	55	68		616	643	655	661	
December	67	60	65	52		683	703	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 August each year for the period 2017-2021.

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

Age group by sex	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male	325	337	361	366	335
Under 18	8	8	7	10	7
18 to 24	27	41	42	43	34
25 to 34	61	74	84	64	66
35 to 44	69	59	75	66	60
45 to 54	64	67	57	59	60
55 to 64	41	45	55	63	44
65 and over	55	43	41	61	64
Female	131	116	119	127	104
Under 18	5	4	5	2	8
18 to 24	13	13	12	11	14
25 to 34	26	27	16	29	26
35 to 44	19	21	19	26	17
45 to 54	30	14	25	17	19
55 to 64	14	21	18	17	10
65 and over	24	16	24	25	10
Total	456	453	480	493	439
Under 18	13	12	12	12	15
18 to 24	40	54	54	54	48
25 to 34	87	101	100	93	92
35 to 44	88	80	94	92	77
45 to 54	94	81	82	76	79
55 to 64	55	66	73	80	54
65 and over	79	59	65	86	74

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	502	520	544	531
Under 18	11	11	13	16
18 to 24	42	62	64	62
25 to 34	99	99	110	92
35 to 44	96	90	113	97
45 to 54	106	105	94	92
55 to 64	70	77	79	90
65 and over	78	76	71	82
Female	181	183	176	182
Under 18	5	5	8	3
18 to 24	18	20	19	16
25 to 34	34	42	27	44
35 to 44	33	34	29	36
45 to 54	39	24	32	28
55 to 64	23	31	27	26
65 and over	29	27	34	29
Total	683	703	720	713
Under 18	16	16	21	19
18 to 24	60	82	83	78
25 to 34	133	141	137	136
35 to 44	129	124	142	133
45 to 54	145	129	126	120
55 to 64	93	108	106	116
65 and over	107	103	105	111

4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the year to date suicide frequency as at 31 August 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 August) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2017-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	318	305	304	324	276
Regional Victoria	138	148	176	169	163
Total	456	453	480	493	439

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

Location of fatal incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	70%	67%	63%	66%	63%
Regional Victoria	30%	33%	37%	34%	37%
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	466	466	460	472
Regional Victoria	217	237	260	241
Total	683	703	720	713

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

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%