

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

February 2022 update

17 March 2022



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 February 2022 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 the end of February each year, for the period 2018-2022.

Table 1: Year to date (month end February) suicide frequency by sex, Victoria 2018-2022.

Sex	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	77	100	107	85	79
Female	19	33	24	25	33
Total	96	133	131	110	112

2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly¹ frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2018 through to February 2022.

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2018 to January 2022.

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	46	72	65	58	58	46	72	65	58	58
February	50	61	66	52	54	96	133	131	110	112
March	65	50	72	70		161	183	203	180	
April	62	50	53	50		223	233	256	230	
May	55	67	56	54		278	300	312	284	
June	50	53	57	56		328	353	369	340	
July	66	56	61	53		394	409	430	393	
August	57	56	58	54		451	465	488	447	
September	54	56	49	51		505	521	537	498	
October	65	64	51	71		570	585	588	569	
November	71	50	68	62		641	635	656	631	
December	62	65	53	59		703	700	709	690	

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 the end of February each year, for the period 2018-2022.

Table 3a: Year to date (month end February) suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2018-2022.

Age group by sex	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male					
Under 18	2	0	4	2	0
18 to 24	8	16	11	4	9
25 to 34	13	25	16	17	12
35 to 44	18	21	20	18	13
45 to 54	22	14	20	19	19
55 to 64	8	13	24	13	7
65 and over	6	11	12	12	19
Total	77	100	107	85	79
Female					
Under 18	1	2	0	3	0
18 to 24	4	4	1	3	2
25 to 34	4	4	6	7	9
35 to 44	3	4	4	6	6
45 to 54	2	8	7	3	4
55 to 64	4	4	1	3	4
65 and over	1	7	5	0	8
Total	19	33	24	25	33
All people					
Under 18	3	2	4	5	0
18 to 24	12	20	12	7	11
25 to 34	17	29	22	24	21
35 to 44	21	25	24	24	19
45 to 54	24	22	27	22	23
55 to 64	12	17	25	16	11
65 and over	7	18	17	12	27
Total	96	133	131	110	112

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 2018-2021. 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 2018-2021.

Age group by sex	2018	2019	2020	2021
Male				
Under 18	11	13	16	10
18 to 24	62	64	62	51
25 to 34	99	110	92	95
35 to 44	89	107	96	91
45 to 54	106	89	89	104
55 to 64	76	78	90	73
65 and over	76	68	83	95
Total	519	529	528	519
Female				
Under 18	5	9	3	13
18 to 24	20	17	16	27
25 to 34	41	27	44	37
35 to 44	36	28	35	28
45 to 54	24	33	27	25
55 to 64	31	26	26	22
65 and over	27	31	30	19
Total	184	171	181	171
All people				
Under 18	16	22	19	23
18 to 24	82	81	78	78
25 to 34	140	137	136	132
35 to 44	125	135	131	119
45 to 54	130	122	116	129
55 to 64	107	104	116	95
65 and over	103	99	113	114
Total	703	700	709	690

4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the year to date suicide frequency as at the end of February in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, for the years 2018 to 2022. Table 4b (over page) shows the same data but represented as proportions of all suicides rather than as frequencies.

Table 4a: Year to date (month end February) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2018-2022.

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Metropolitan Melbourne	69	83	83	69	78
Regional Victoria	27	50	48	41	34
Total	96	133	131	110	112

Table 4b: Year to date (month end February) suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2018-2022.

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Metropolitan Melbourne	72%	62%	63%	63%	70%
Regional Victoria	28%	38%	37%	37%	30%
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 2018-2021.

Table 4c: Annual suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2018-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	466	449	472	441
Regional Victoria	237	251	237	249
Total	703	700	709	690

Table 4d: Annual suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2018-2021.

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021
Metropolitan Melbourne	66%	64%	67%	64%
Regional Victoria	34%	36%	33%	36%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%