

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

March 2022 update

20 April 2022

65





WARNING: This following report includes information on suicides.

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Purpose

This report presents the March 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 March each year, for the period 2018-2022.

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

Sex	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	126	137	163	140	119
Female	36	46	40	41	57
Total	162	183	203	181	176

2. Monthly frequency

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

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

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	46	72	65	59	58	46	72	65	59	58
February	50	61	66	52	54	96	133	131	111	112
March	66	50	72	70	64	162	183	203	181	176
April	64	50	53	50		226	233	256	231	
May	55	68	56	54		281	301	312	285	
June	50	53	57	56		331	354	369	341	
July	66	56	62	54		397	410	431	395	
August	57	56	59	54		454	466	490	449	
September	54	56	49	51		508	522	539	500	
October	65	64	51	73		573	586	590	573	
November	71	50	68	62		644	636	658	635	
December	62	65	53	59		706	701	711	694	

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 March each year, for the period 2018-2022.

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

Age group by sex	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male					
Under 18	3	1	5	2	0
18 to 24	14	20	19	9	10
25 to 34	25	33	23	29	17
35 to 44	28	27	31	23	22
45 to 54	28	21	33	26	33
55 to 64	16	19	33	28	9
65 and over	12	16	19	23	28
Total	126	137	163	140	119
Female					
Under 18	1	2	1	4	2
18 to 24	6	6	3	5	5
25 to 34	6	5	9	12	12
35 to 44	6	7	6	7	10
45 to 54	5	12	7	6	8
55 to 64	7	6	4	6	9
65 and over	5	8	10	1	11
Total	36	46	40	41	57
All people					
Under 18	4	3	6	6	2
18 to 24	20	26	22	14	15
25 to 34	31	38	32	41	29
35 to 44	34	34	37	30	32
45 to 54	33	33	40	32	41
55 to 64	23	25	37	34	18
65 and over	17	24	29	24	39
Total	162	183	203	181	176

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	13	14	16	10
18 to 24	62	64	62	51
25 to 34	99	110	93	95
35 to 44	89	107	96	91
45 to 54	106	89	89	105
55 to 64	76	78	90	73
65 and over	76	68	83	97
Total	521	530	529	522
Female				
Under 18	5	9	3	13
18 to 24	20	17	15	27
25 to 34	41	27	45	38
35 to 44	36	28	35	28
45 to 54	25	33	28	25
55 to 64	31	26	26	22
65 and over	27	31	30	19
Total	185	171	182	172
All people				
Under 18	18	23	19	23
18 to 24	82	81	77	78
25 to 34	140	137	138	133
35 to 44	125	135	131	119
45 to 54	131	122	117	130
55 to 64	107	104	116	95
65 and over	103	99	113	116
Total	706	701	711	694

4. Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Table 4a shows the year to date suicide frequency as at the end of March 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 March) suicide frequency by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2018-2022.

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Metropolitan Melbourne	115	115	139	113	112
Regional Victoria	47	68	64	68	64
Total	162	183	203	181	176

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

Location of fatal incident	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Metropolitan Melbourne	71%	63%	68%	62%	64%
Regional Victoria	29%	37%	32%	38%	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 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	468	449	473	443
Regional Victoria	238	252	238	251
Total	706	701	711	694

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%