

Coroners Court

Monthly Suicide Data Report

February 2023 update

21 March 2023





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 2023 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 by sex and age group. 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 years 2019-2023.

Table 1: Year to date (month end February) suicide frequency by sex, Victoria 2019-2023.

Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Male	99	103	85	78	97
Female	32	19	25	32	32
Total	131	122	110	110	129

2. Monthly frequency

Table 2 shows the monthly frequency and aggregate monthly¹ frequency of Victorian suicides for January 2019 through to February 2023.

Table 2: Monthly frequency and aggregate monthly frequency of Victorian suicides, January 2019 to February 2023.

Month	Monthly frequency					Aggregate monthly frequency				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
January	70	63	59	56	67	70	63	59	56	67
February	61	59	51	54	62	131	122	110	110	129
March	50	69	70	65		181	191	180	175	
April	50	55	51	56		231	246	231	231	
May	69	52	56	56		300	298	287	287	
June	53	52	58	63		353	350	345	350	
July	56	61	55	55		409	411	400	405	
August	57	59	53	70		466	470	453	475	
September	55	49	52	77		521	519	505	552	
October	64	51	74	75		585	570	579	627	
November	50	68	60	65		635	638	639	692	
December	65	53	55	66		700	691	694	758	

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 3 shows the Victorian suicide frequency by deceased sex and age group as at the end of February each year, for the years 2019-2023.

Table 3: Year to date (month end February) suicide frequency by sex and age group, Victoria 2019-2023.

Age group by sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Male					
Under 18	0	4	2	0	8
18 to 24	16	11	4	9	10
25 to 34	25	16	16	11	19
35 to 44	20	19	18	12	17
45 to 54	14	19	19	18	14
55 to 64	13	23	13	9	15
65 and over	11	11	13	19	14
Total	99	103	85	78	97
Female					
Under 18	1	0	3	0	1
18 to 24	4	1	3	2	1
25 to 34	4	6	7	8	6
35 to 44	4	3	6	6	8
45 to 54	8	5	3	4	7
55 to 64	4	1	3	3	3
65 and over	7	3	0	9	6
Total	32	19	25	32	32
All people					
Under 18	1	4	5	0	9
18 to 24	20	12	7	11	11
25 to 34	29	22	23	19	25
35 to 44	24	22	24	18	25
45 to 54	22	24	22	22	21
55 to 64	17	24	16	12	18
65 and over	18	14	13	28	20
Total	131	122	110	110	129

4. Year to date frequency by location of fatal incident

Table 4a shows the suicide frequency as at the end of February in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, for the years 2019 to 2023. Table 4b 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 2019-2023.

Location of fatal incident	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Metropolitan Melbourne	82	79	69	77	73
Regional Victoria	49	43	41	33	56
Total	131	122	110	110	129

Table 4b: Year to date (month end February) suicide proportion by location of fatal incident, Victoria 2019-2023.

Location of fatal incident	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Metropolitan Melbourne	63%	65%	63%	70%	57%
Regional Victoria	37%	35%	37%	30%	43%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%