

Wednesday 7 October 2026

New report shows Victorian overdose deaths increased in 2025

A new report from the Coroners Court of Victoria shows that the number of fatal overdoses in Victoria continued to increase last year, from 588 in 2024 to 632 in 2025.

The report, *Victorian Overdose Deaths 2016–2025*, is the first release of the 2025 full year Victorian overdose data and provides an analysis of demographic information and observable trends.

Illegal drugs appear to have been the biggest driver of the increase in overdose deaths. Historically, pharmaceutical drugs have contributed in around 75–80% of Victorian overdose deaths each year, and illegal drugs have played a role in around 50% of deaths. Since 2021, though, the number of overdose deaths involving illegal drugs has grown strongly every year, from 260 deaths in 2021 to 423 in 2025. Across the same five-year period, the number of overdose deaths involving pharmaceutical drugs plateaued, such that in 2025 the number of overdose deaths involving illegal drugs practically caught up to the number involving pharmaceutical drugs.

Reflecting this general trend, in 2025 the illegal drugs heroin, methamphetamine and GHB all reached a 10-year high in the number of overdose deaths to which they contributed.

Other key findings in the report include:

- As with previous years, most Victorian overdose deaths in 2025 (73.3%) involved multiple drugs. Overdose deaths involving pharmaceutical drugs in combination with illegal drugs were particularly prevalent, accounting for 39.2% of all deaths.
- Men are on average twice as likely as women to die from overdose, and the highest number of deaths occurred in people aged between 35 and 54 years.
- There was a marked increase in overdose deaths amongst men aged 45–54, from 106 in 2024 to 156 in 2025. An increase of 50 in a single cohort in one year has not been observed in any other group for the reporting period. While the cause of this sharp increase is not immediately apparent, analysis in the report shows there was an increase in the proportion of deaths involving illegal drugs in this cohort in 2025.
- Metropolitan Melbourne accounts for approximately three-quarters of overdose deaths.
- However, for the first time Greater Geelong became the local government area with the highest number of fatal overdoses (45 deaths) surpassing Melbourne where 41 fatal overdoses occurred.
- In 2025, the five top contributing drugs to Victorian overdose deaths were heroin (261 deaths), methamphetamine (249 deaths), diazepam (232 deaths), alcohol (144 deaths) and pregabalin (78 deaths).
- In 2025, heroin-involved overdose deaths increased with 261 deaths, compared to 248 in 2024. Consistent with recent years, over 80% of heroin-involved overdose deaths in Victoria occurred in Metropolitan Melbourne rather than Regional Victoria.

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- Most Victorian overdose deaths across the decade were accidental or unintentional (74.7%) rather than suicides (19.1%) or deaths where the deceased's intent could not be determined (6.2%). However, some important variations in intent were observed. For example, among males only 12.5% of overdose deaths were suicides, whereas among females the proportion was 31.6%. And for both men and women the highest number of intentional overdoses were seen amongst people 65 and over.

In Victoria, all deaths from suspected non-natural causes, including suspected overdoses, are required to be reported to the Coroners Court of Victoria. Suspected overdoses are recorded by the Court in the Victorian Overdose Deaths Register (VODR), which is the data source for this report.

Victoria's coroners regularly make use of the overdose deaths data to develop prevention-focused insights into issues as diverse as how doctors coordinate patient care; the regulation of certain prescription drugs; and the need for greater awareness around emerging illegal drugs.

The Court also shares data from the VODR with government and health agencies to inform their work in reducing drug harms.

Quotes attributable to Victorian State Coroner, Judge Liberty Sanger:

"The loss of 632 Victorian lives to overdose last year is deeply concerning and highlights the ongoing need for a strong public health response."

"Drug-related harms are complex and affect communities all across Victoria – it is vital that vulnerable people can access appropriate supports, treatment and education."

"Today's coronial data report strengthens awareness of overdose risks and offers important insights to help save lives."

The report can be accessed [here](#).

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