

# Snapshot: *ABS Causes of Death* data release 2020

29 September 2021



# Upfront

- It is important to remember that behind the numbers are individuals, families and communities impacted by suicide in Australia.
- This snapshot was prepared by Everymind using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Causes of Death (Catalogue No. 3303.0)* data, released 29 September 2021.
- Resources to support reporting about suicide are available at [mindframe.org.au/suicide](https://mindframe.org.au/suicide)
- A full summary of data will be hosted on the *Life in Mind* website at [lifeinmind.org.au/about-suicide/suicide-data/suicide-facts-and-stats](https://lifeinmind.org.au/about-suicide/suicide-data/suicide-facts-and-stats)

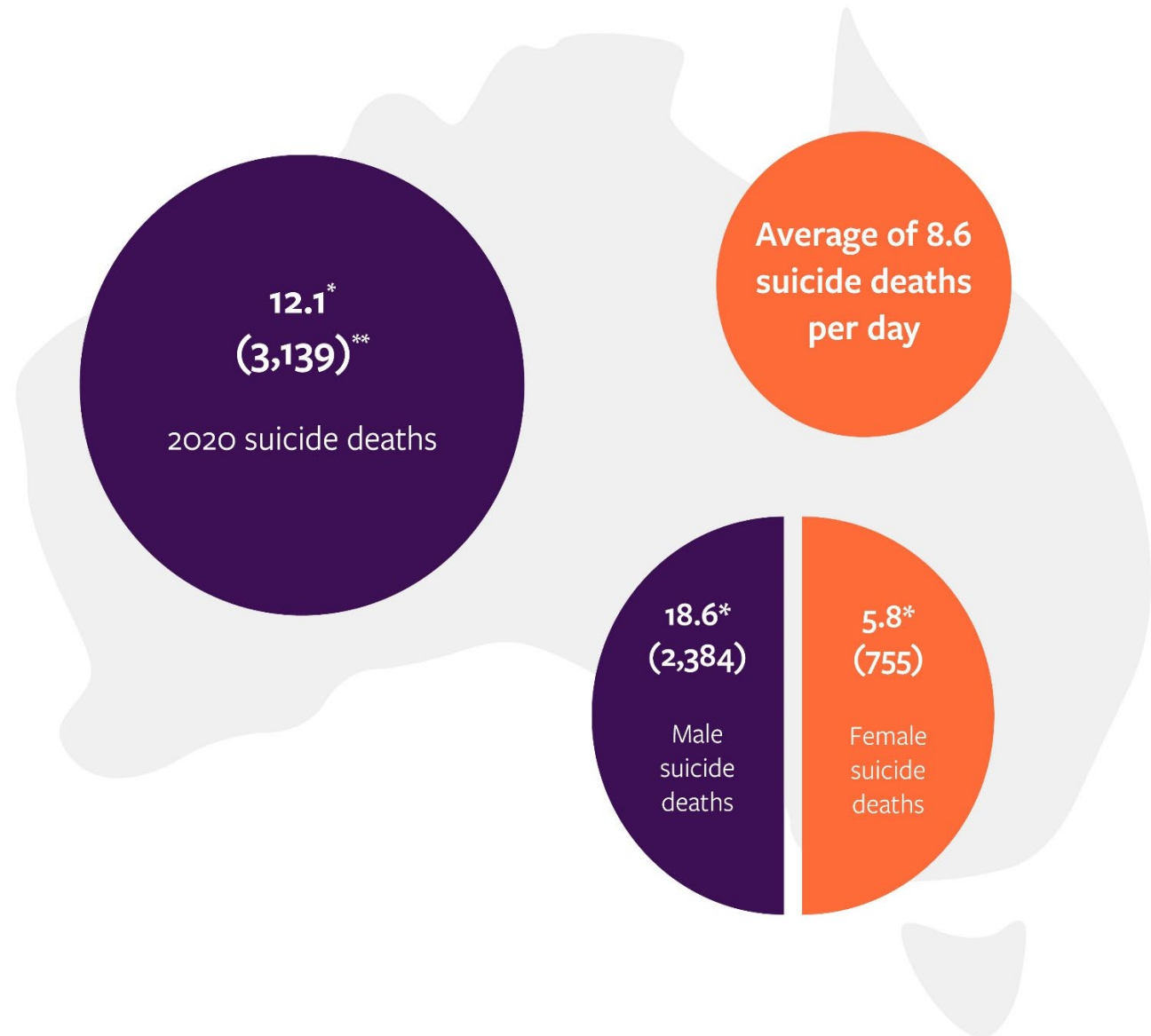
## Notes about the data

- This summary represents suicide rates and trends in the 2020 (preliminary) data, trends by age group over time and state variations.
- This release includes 2019 and 2020 preliminary data, 2018 first-revision data and 2017 final data. The second and final revision for 2018 data and the first revision for 2019 data will be released in 2022.
- Care should be taken in comparing 2020 data with:
  - Previous years, as some data has been subject to quality improvement processes; and
  - Pre-2006 data, as this data was not subject to the revision process.



# National summary

- In 2020, there were **3,139** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.1** per 100,000.
- There were **2,384** male deaths with an age-standardised rate of **18.6** per 100,000.
- There were **755** female deaths with an age-standardised rate of **5.8** per 100,000.



Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data on 29.09.2021.

\* Age-standardised rate per 100,000. \*\* Number of deaths.



# National summary

## 2020

In 2020, there were **3,139** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.1** per 100,000.

This equates to an average of **8.6\*** deaths by suicide in Australia each day.

There were **2,384** male deaths at a age-standardised rate of **18.6** per 100,000.

There were **755** female deaths at an age-standardised rate of **5.8** per 100,000.

## 2019

In 2019, there were **3,318** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.9** per 100,000.

This equates to an average of **9.1\*** deaths by suicide in Australia each day.

There were **2,502** male deaths at a age-standardised rate of **19.8** per 100,000.

There were **816** female deaths at an age-standardised rate of **6.3** per 100,000.

## 2018

In 2018, there were **3,192** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.6** per 100,000.

This equates to an average of **8.7\*** deaths by suicide in Australia each day.

There were **2,432** male deaths at a age-standardised rate of **19.5** per 100,000.

There were **760** female deaths at an age-standardised rate of **6.0** per 100,000.



# National summary

- In 2020, there was a decrease of suicide deaths from 3,318 deaths in 2019 (12.9 per 100,000) to **3,139 deaths** in 2020 (**12.1 per 100,000**).
- This is the lowest national suicide rate recorded since 2016.



Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 29.09.2021.

\* Age-standardised rate per 100,000. \*\* Number of deaths.

\*\*\* 2019 preliminary data, 2018 revised data.



# Gender

- The suicide rate for **males decreased by 6.1%** between 2019 and 2020.
- The suicide rate for **females decreased by 7.9%** between 2019 and 2020.

## Female suicide deaths



## Male suicide deaths



Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 29.09.2021.

\* Age-standardised rate per 100,000. \*\* Number of deaths.

\*\*\* 2019 preliminary data, 2018 revised data.





## Age summary

- Young and middle-aged people are more likely to die by suicide, with 83.6% of people under 65 years.
- Men over 85 years had the highest age-specific suicide rate but accounted for the smallest proportion (3.1%) of male suicides. Men aged between 40-54 years accounted for over one quarter (26.7%) of male suicides.
- Women aged between 45-49 years had the highest age-specific suicide rate and accounted for the highest proportion (10.9%) of female suicides.

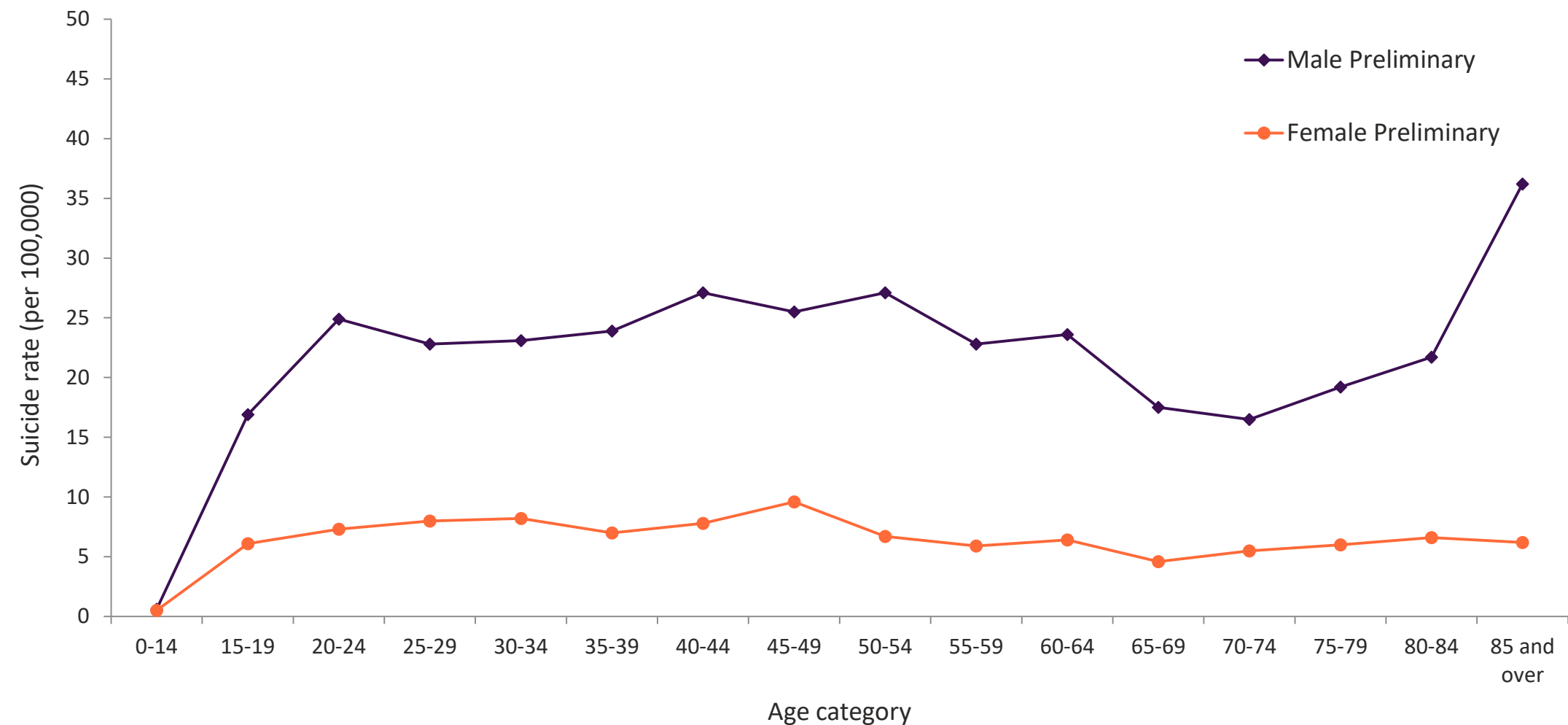


Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 29.09.2021.

\* Age-specific rate per 100,000. \*\* Number of deaths

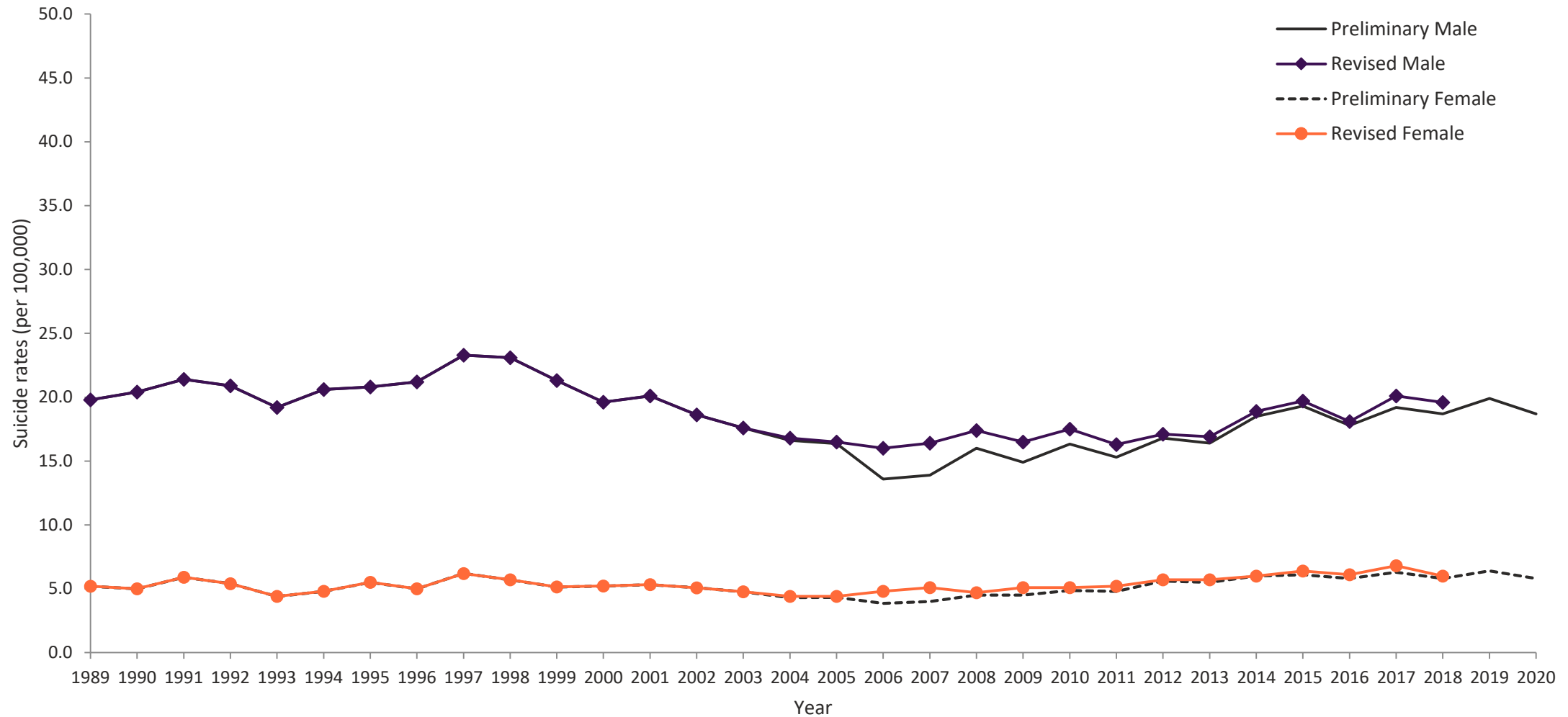


# Preliminary age-specific suicide rates (2020)





# Age-specific suicide rates (1989-2020)



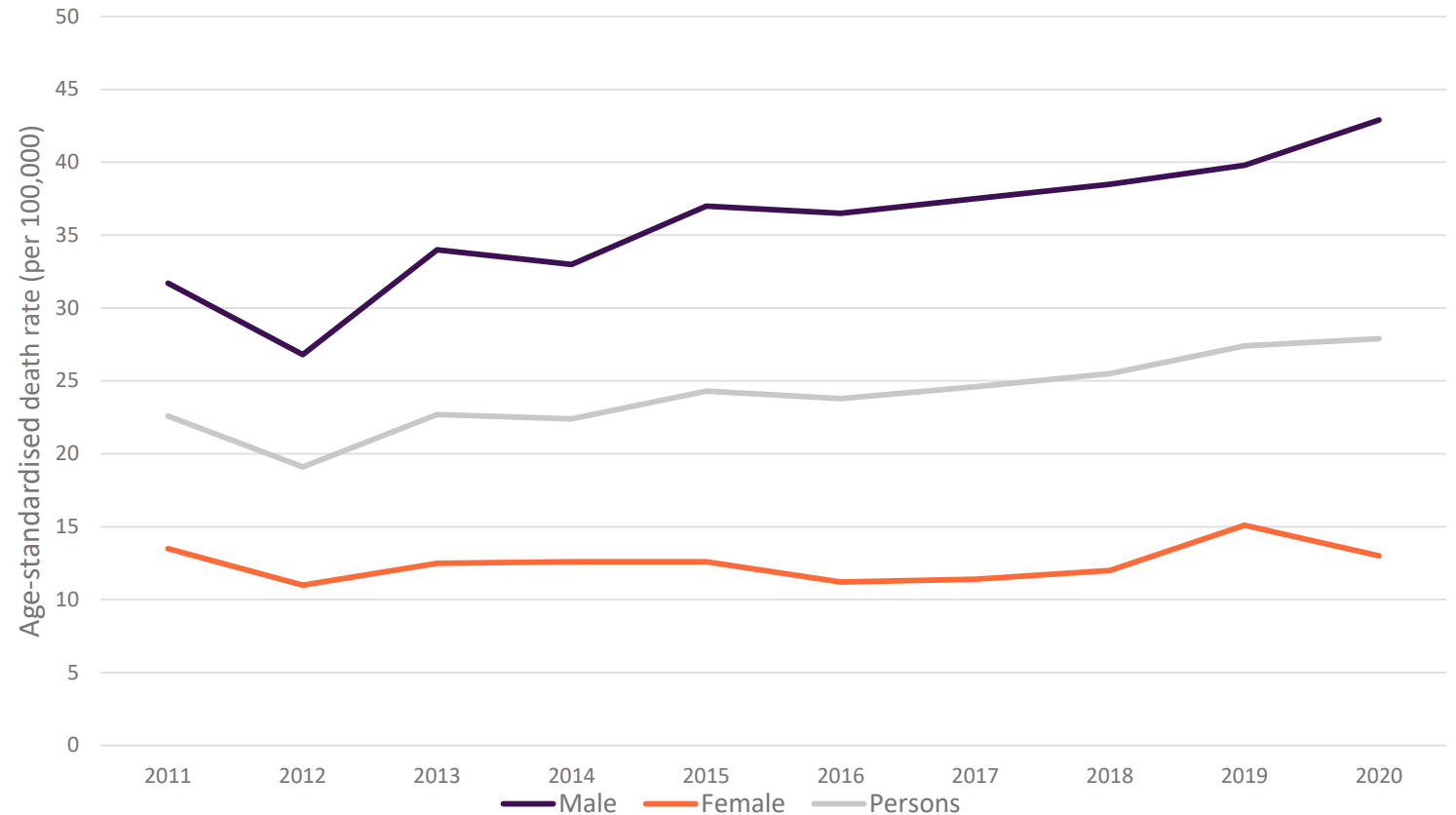
*\*2018 data have been subject to revision. 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary.*



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: National data

- In 2020, **223** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The median age of death was **31.3 years**.
- Using data from New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory, the age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was **27.9 per 100,000**.

**Note:** A more detailed summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data is available in a separate report.

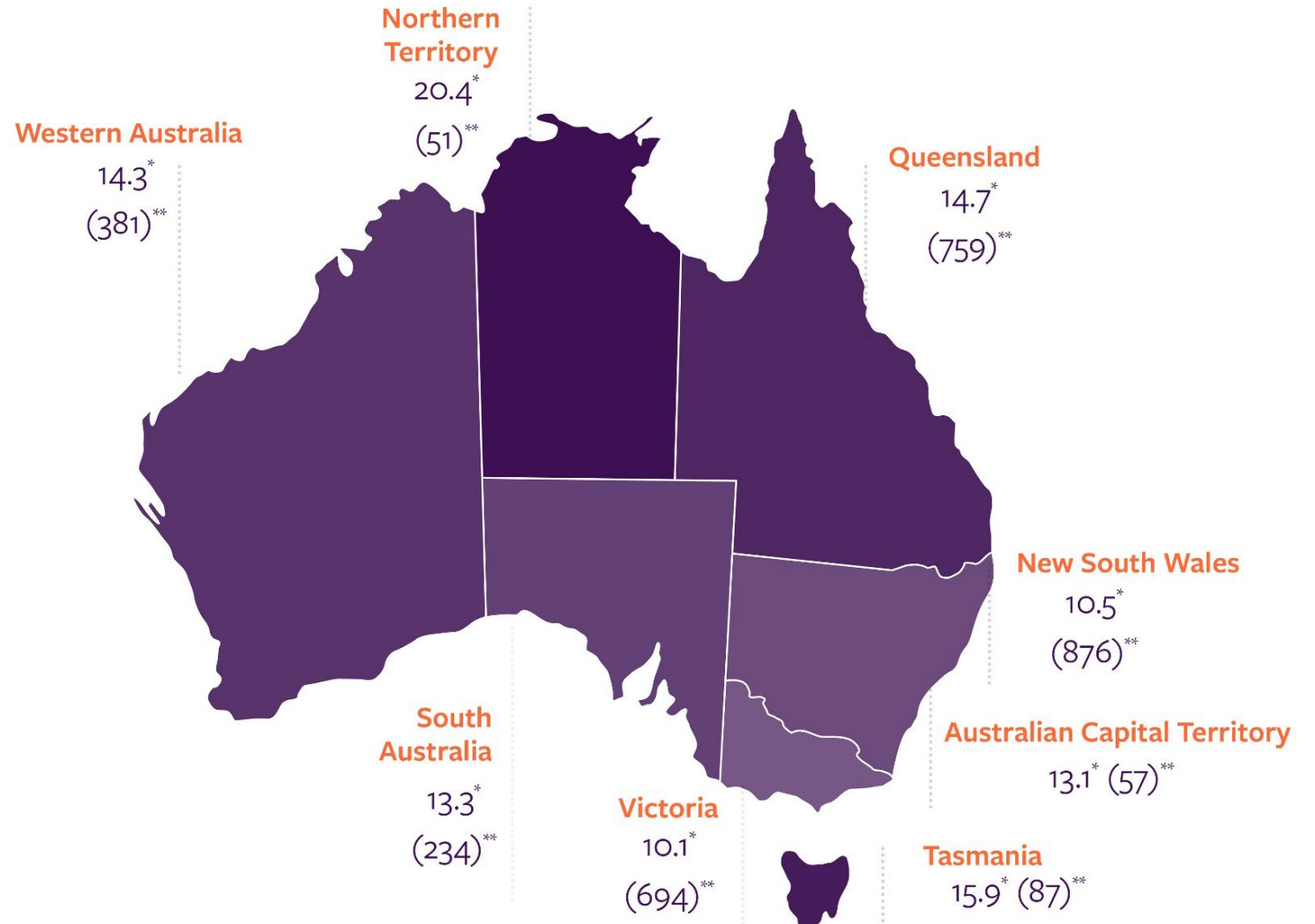


*Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, QLD, WA, SA and NT.*

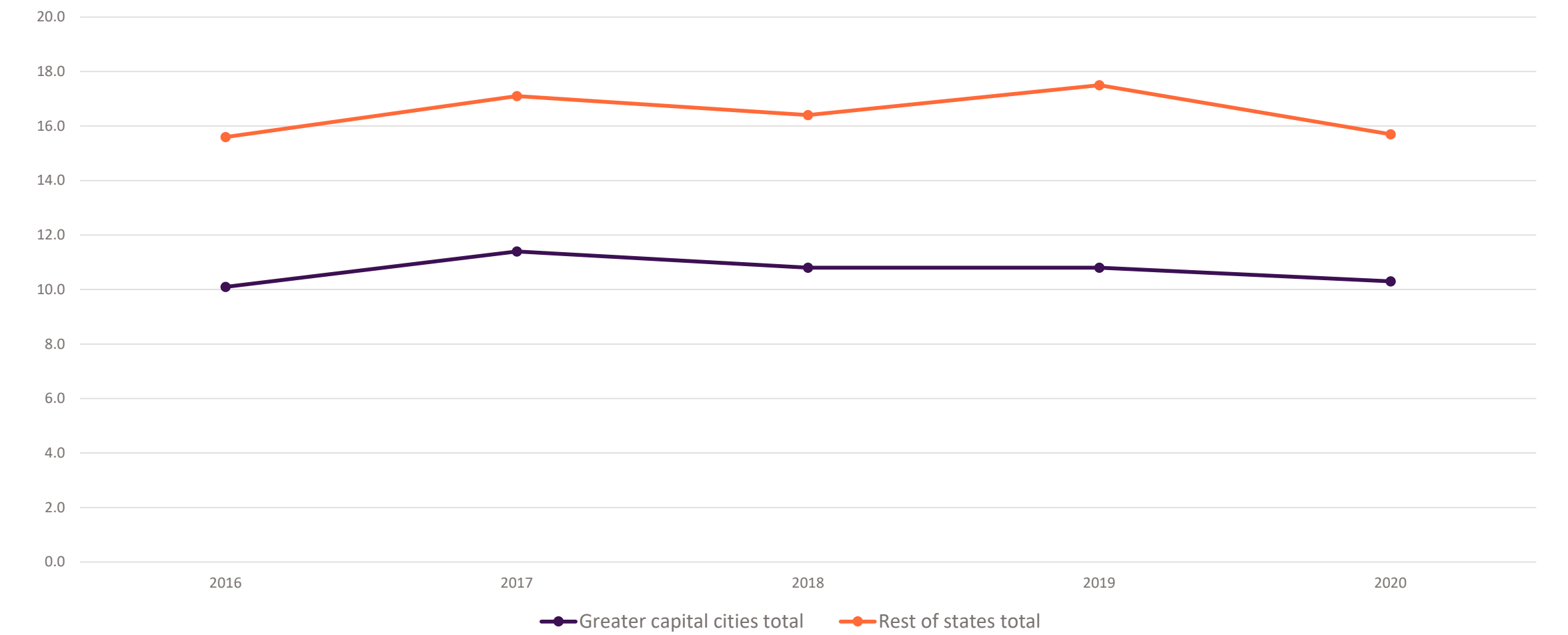


# State and territory summary

- All jurisdictions except Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory had a decrease in the number of suicide deaths between 2019 and 2020.
- Almost three-quarters of people who died by suicide had a usual residence of New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland.



# Greater capital cities total and rest of states total



## Associated factors

- Over 90% of people who died by suicide had at least one risk factor reported, with an average of three to four factors mentioned per person.
- The risk factors for suicide varied by gender and age, with mood disorders (including depression) being the most common for males (38.7%) and females (45.3%), respectively.

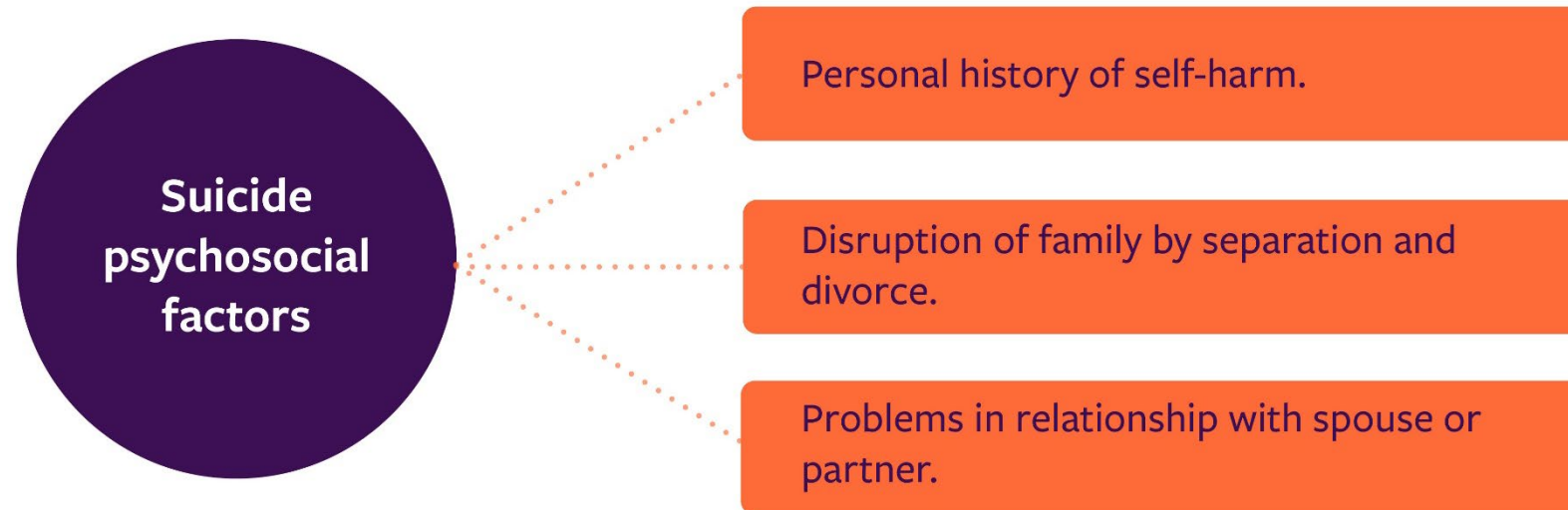
### **Top five risk factors across all ages in 2020:**

- Mood disorders, including depression (40.3%)
- Acute use, and intoxication of, psychoactive substances (29.3%)
- Suicide ideation (23.5%)
- Problems in spousal relationships (23.2%)
- Chronic psychoactive substance use disorders (23.1%).



# Psychosocial risk factors

- Psychosocial risk factors are social processes and social structures that can have an interaction with individual thought, behaviour and/or health.
- In 2020, approximately 67.1% of all coroner-referred suicide deaths (67.2% for males and 66.9% for females) in Australia were found to have one or more associated psychosocial risk factors identified.
- Psychosocial risk factors associated with suicide were largely age dependent and differed throughout the lifespan.



# Suicide in the COVID-19 pandemic

- While there was a 5.4% reduction in the number of suicides from 2019 to 2020, there were 99 people (3.2%) who had the COVID-19 pandemic mentioned in either a police, pathology or coronial finding report.
- For people with issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, it did not appear as an isolated risk factor. They had on average five risk factors, including on average three psychosocial risk factors.

## **For the 99 people who died by suicide with issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic:**

- 58.6% also had a mood disorder (including depression)
- 52.5% also had problems related to un/employment
- 27.3% also had acute substance use or intoxication
- 25.3% also had problems related to the social environments including social isolation.





# Help-seeking

## Adult

**Lifeline:** [13 11 14](tel:131114)

[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

**Suicide Call Back Service:** [1300 659 467](tel:1300659467)

[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

**Beyond Blue:** [1300 224 636](tel:1300224636)

[beyondblue.org.au/forums](http://beyondblue.org.au/forums)

**MensLine Australia:** [1300 789 978](tel:1300789978)

[mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

## Youth

**Kids Helpline:** [1800 551 800](tel:1800551800)

[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

**headspace:** [1800 650 890](tel:1800650890)

[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)

**ReachOut:** [ReachOut.com](http://ReachOut.com)

## Other resources

**Head to Health:** mental health portal

[headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)

***Life in Mind:*** suicide prevention portal

[lifeinmind.org.au](http://lifeinmind.org.au)

**SANE:** online forums [saneforums.org](http://saneforums.org)

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:** [healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au](http://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au)

**Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex:** [1800 184 527](tel:1800184527) [qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)

**Culturally and linguistically diverse:** [embracementalhealth.org.au](http://embracementalhealth.org.au)



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