



Snapshot: ABS Causes of Death data release 2021

19 October 2022

An  EVERYMIND program



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 19 October 2022.
- Resources to support reporting about suicide, including the use of accompanying images, are available at mindframe.org.au
- 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

Notes about the data

- This summary represents suicide rates and trends in the 2021 (preliminary) data, trends by age group over time and state variations.
- This release includes 2020 and 2021 preliminary data, 2019 first-revision data and 2018-2012 final data.
- Care should be taken in comparing 2021 data with:
 - Previous years' releases, as some data has been subject to quality improvement processes.
 - Pre-2006 data, as this data was not subject to the revision process.
 - Data from 2013-2016, which has been updated following a reconciliation exercise between the ABS and the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. An additional 72 suicides were identified and the data updated.



National summary

- In 2021, there were **3,144** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.0** per 100,000.
- There were **2,358** male deaths with an age-standardised rate of **18.2** per 100,000.
- There were **786** female deaths with an age-standardised rate of **6.1** per 100,000.



Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data on 19.10.2022.

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



National summary

2021

In 2021, there were **3,144** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **12.0** per 100,000.

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

There were **2,358** male deaths at an age-standardised rate of **18.2** per 100,000.

There were **786** female deaths at an age-standardised rate of **6.1** per 100,000.

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 an 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 **3,358** deaths by suicide with an age-standardised rate of **13.1** per 100,000.

This equates to an average of **9.2*** deaths by suicide in Australia each day.

There were **2,536** male deaths at an age-standardised rate of **20.1** per 100,000.

There were **822** female deaths at an age-standardised rate of **6.3** per 100,000.



General summary

- The suicide rate for males decreased by 2.3% between 2020 and 2021.
- The suicide rate for females increased by 5.0% between 2020 and 2021.
- Young and middle-aged people were more likely to die by suicide than those in older age cohorts.
- 81.9% of people who died by suicide were aged under 65 years.

Female suicide deaths



Male suicide deaths



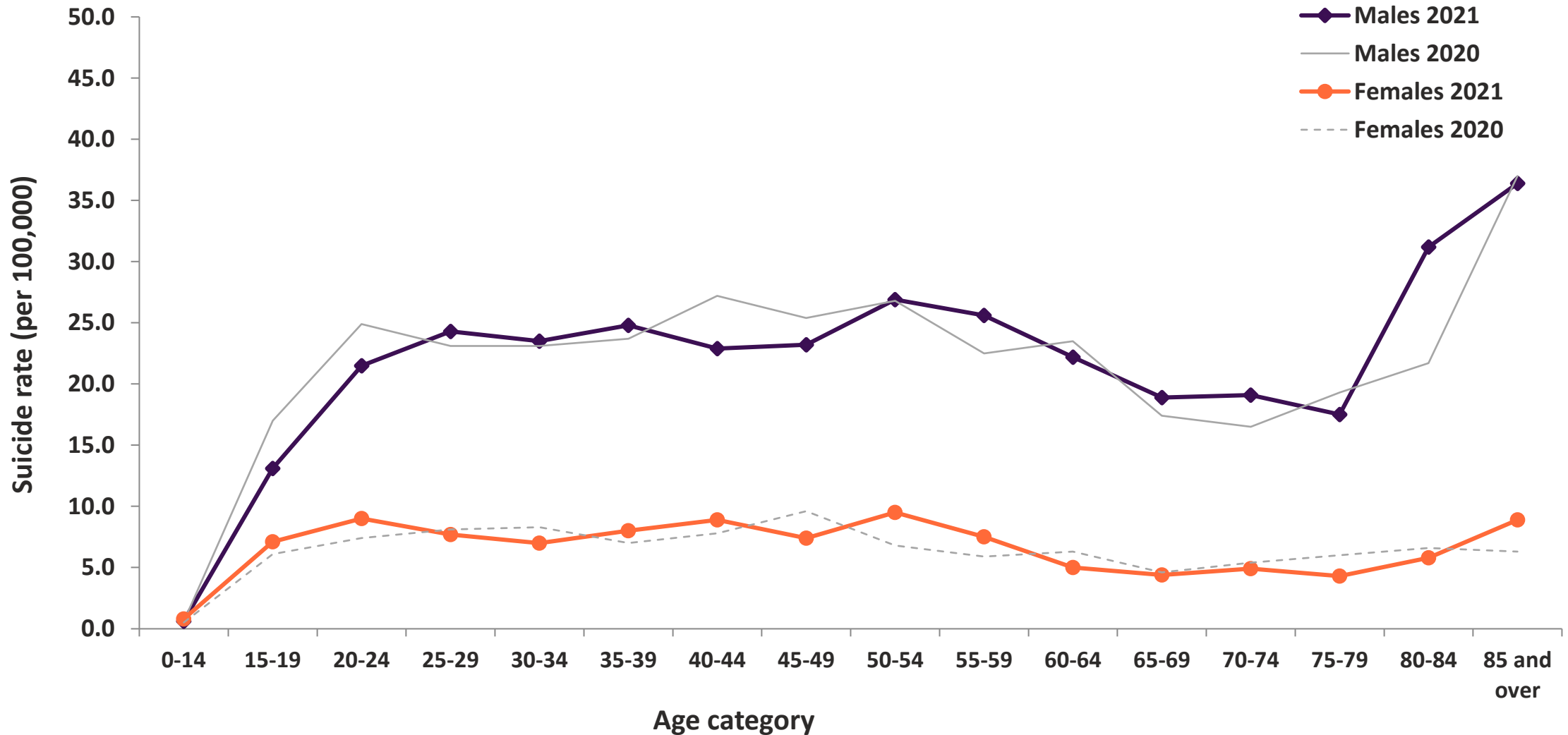
Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 19.10.2022.

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

Note: 2020 and 2021 preliminary data, 2019 revised data.



General summary: Age-specific suicide rates (2020 and 2021)

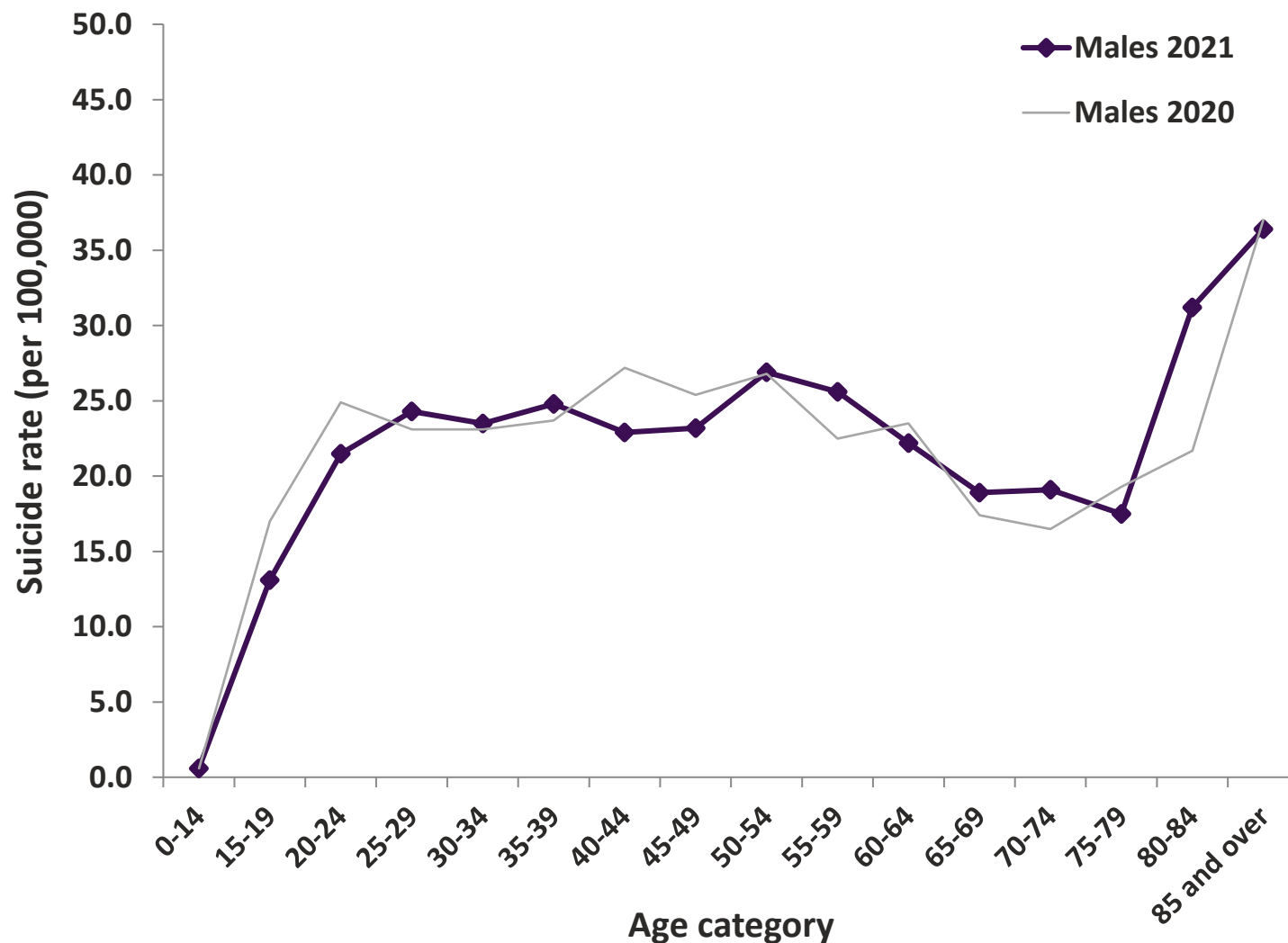


2020 and 2021 data are preliminary.



Males by age

- Men aged over 85 years had the highest male age-specific suicide rate but accounted for a small proportion (3.2%) of male suicides.
- Men aged between 50-54 years had the highest male age-specific suicide rate of those under 80 years and accounted for 9.1% of male suicides.
- Men aged 80-84 years had the largest increase in male age-specific suicide rates, from 21.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2020 to 31.2 per 100,000 in 2021.
- Males aged 15-19 years had the largest proportional decrease in their age-specific suicide rate, from 17.0 per 100,000 in 2020, to 13.1 per 100,000 in 2022.

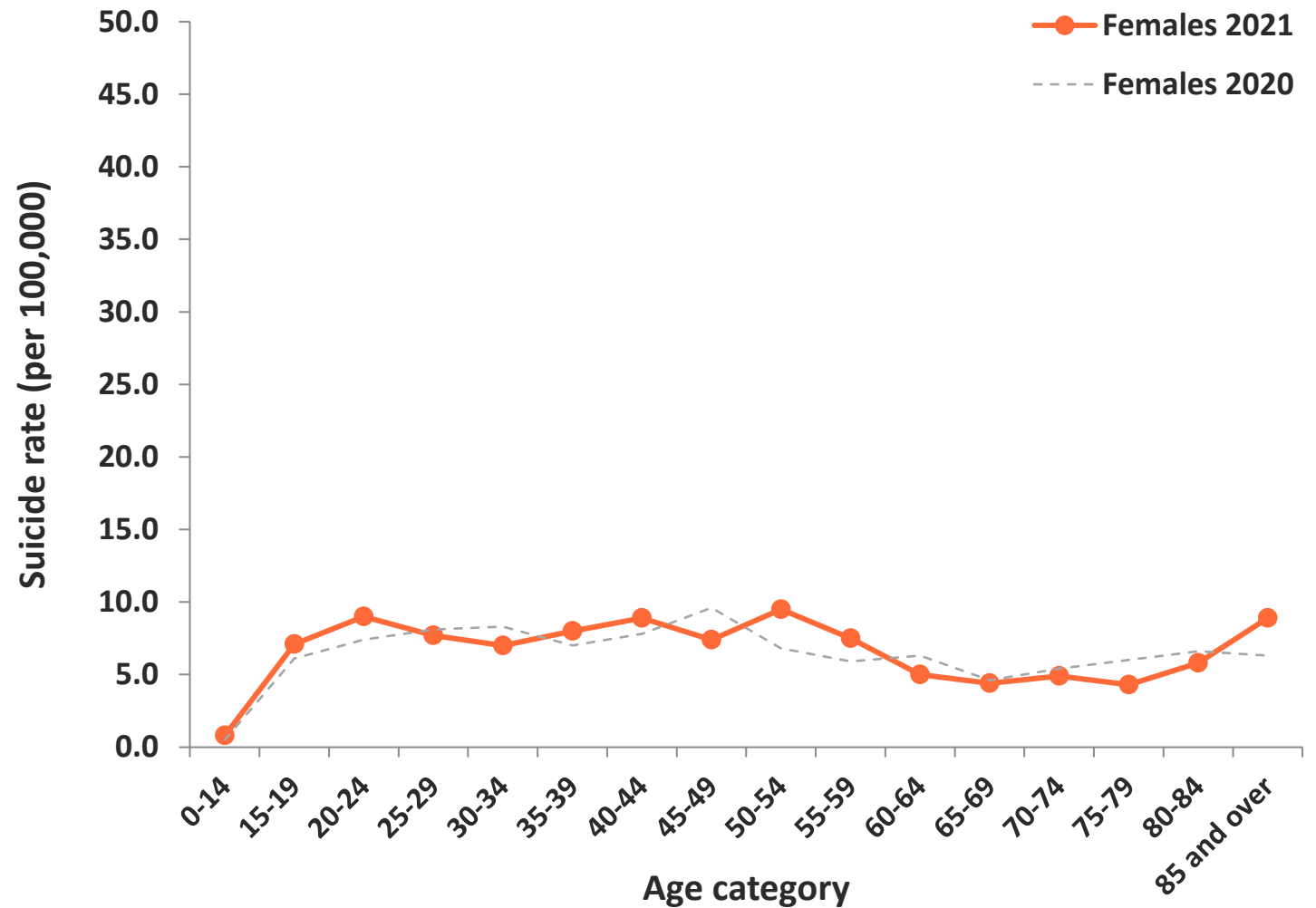


Age-specific rate per 100,000.
2020 and 2021 data are preliminary.



Females by age

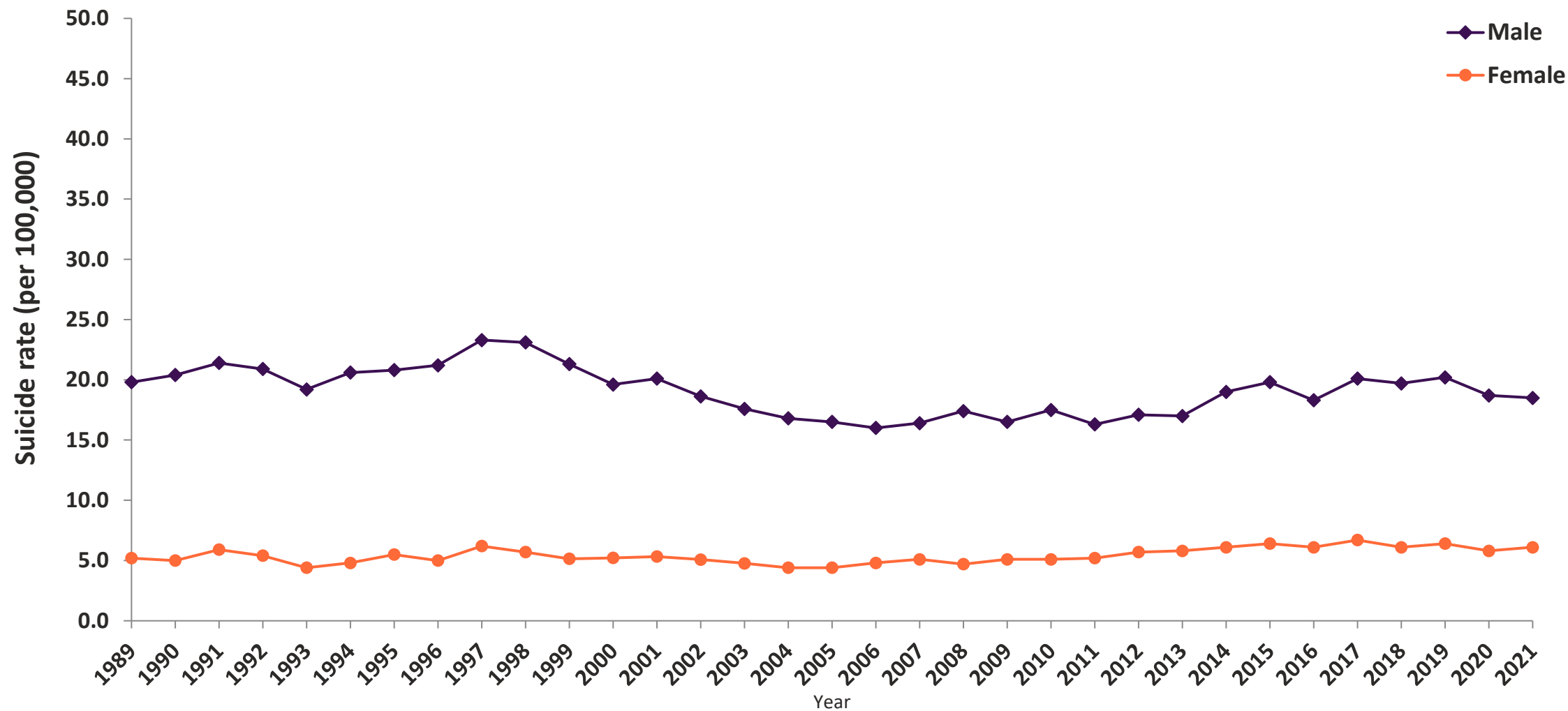
- In 2021, women aged between 50-54 years had the highest female age-specific suicide rate and accounted for the highest proportion (9.9%) of female suicides.
- Between 2020 and 2021, women aged between 50-54 years moved from the 7th to the leading age group of suicides among females.
- Between 2020 and 2021, women aged 45-49 years had the largest decrease in the female age-specific suicide rate.



Age-specific rate per 100,000.
2020 and 2021 data are preliminary.



Crude suicide rates (1989-2021)



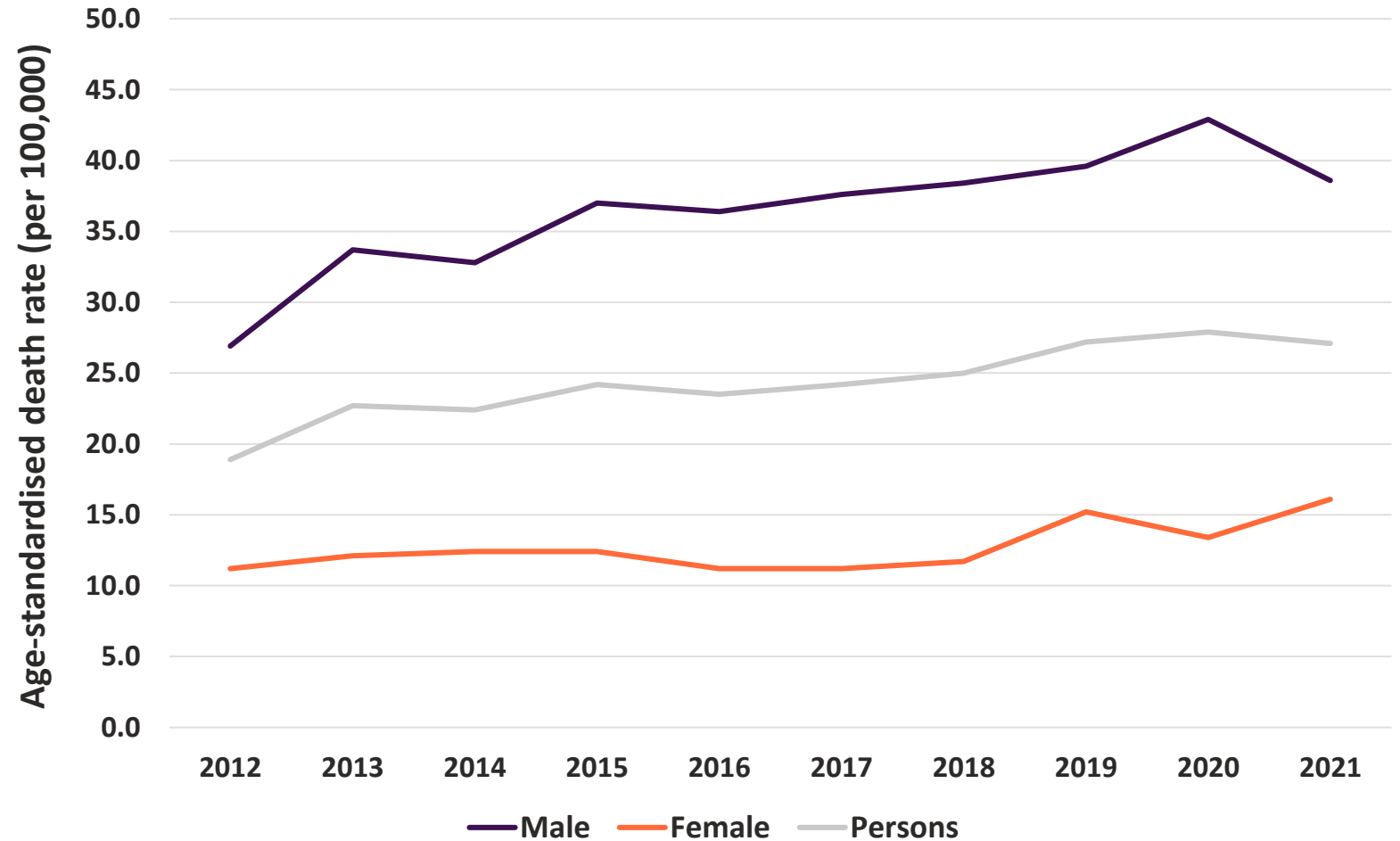
**2012 – 2018 data are final. 2019 data have been subject to revision. 2020 and 2021 data are preliminary.*

See note on changes to Victorian data from 2013 to 2016.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: National data

- In 2021, **219** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The median age at the time of death was **30.2 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 **27.1 per 100,000**.

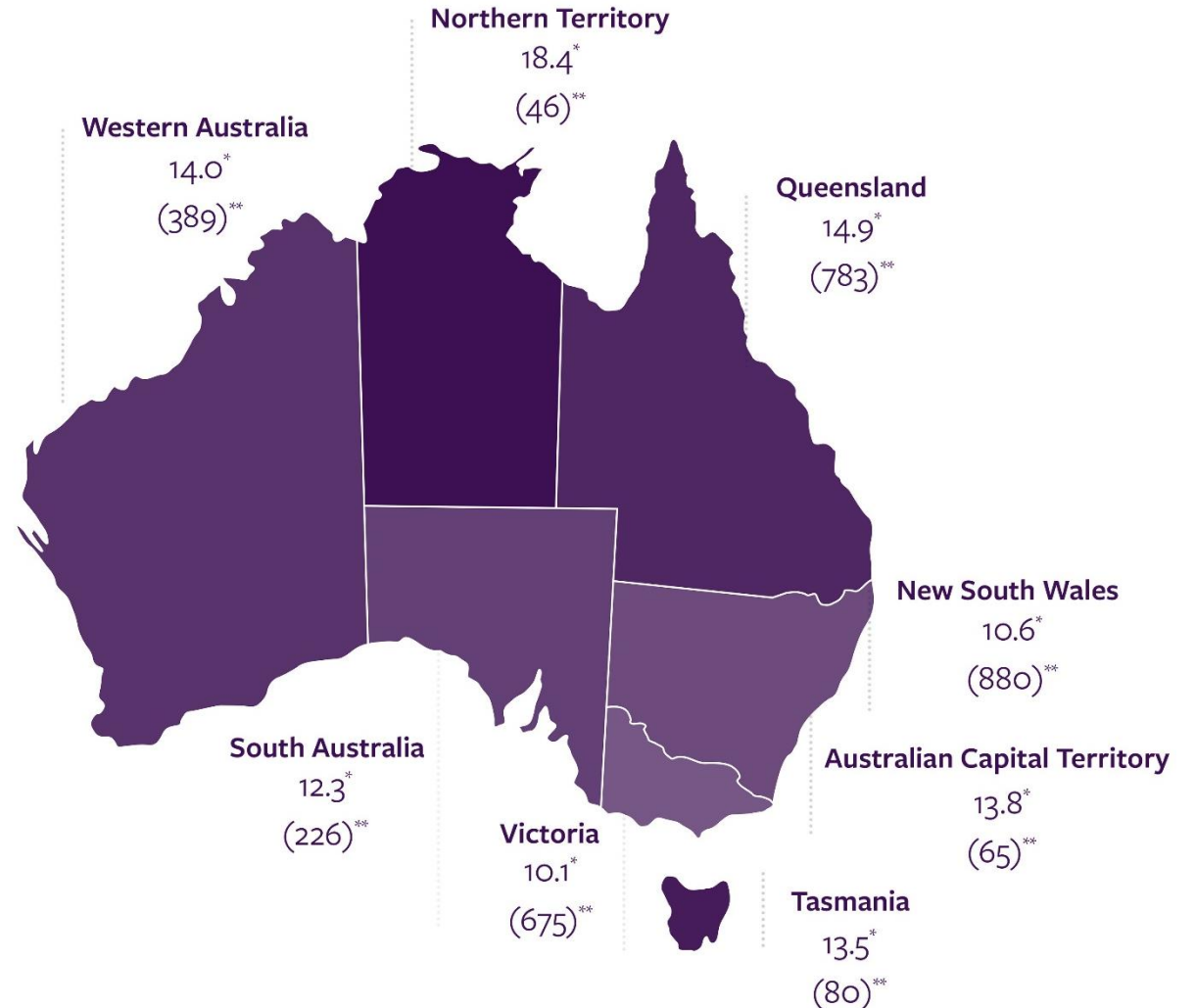


Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of New South Wales, QLD, WA, SA and NT.



State and territory summary

- Between 2020 and 2021, all jurisdictions except Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory had a decrease in the age-standardised suicide rate. Rates in New South Wales and Western Australia remained the same.
- Almost three-quarters of people who died by suicide had a usual residence in New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland.
- The highest number of suicide deaths occurred in New South Wales (880).
- The Northern Territory had the highest rate of suicide (18.4 per 100,000 people).

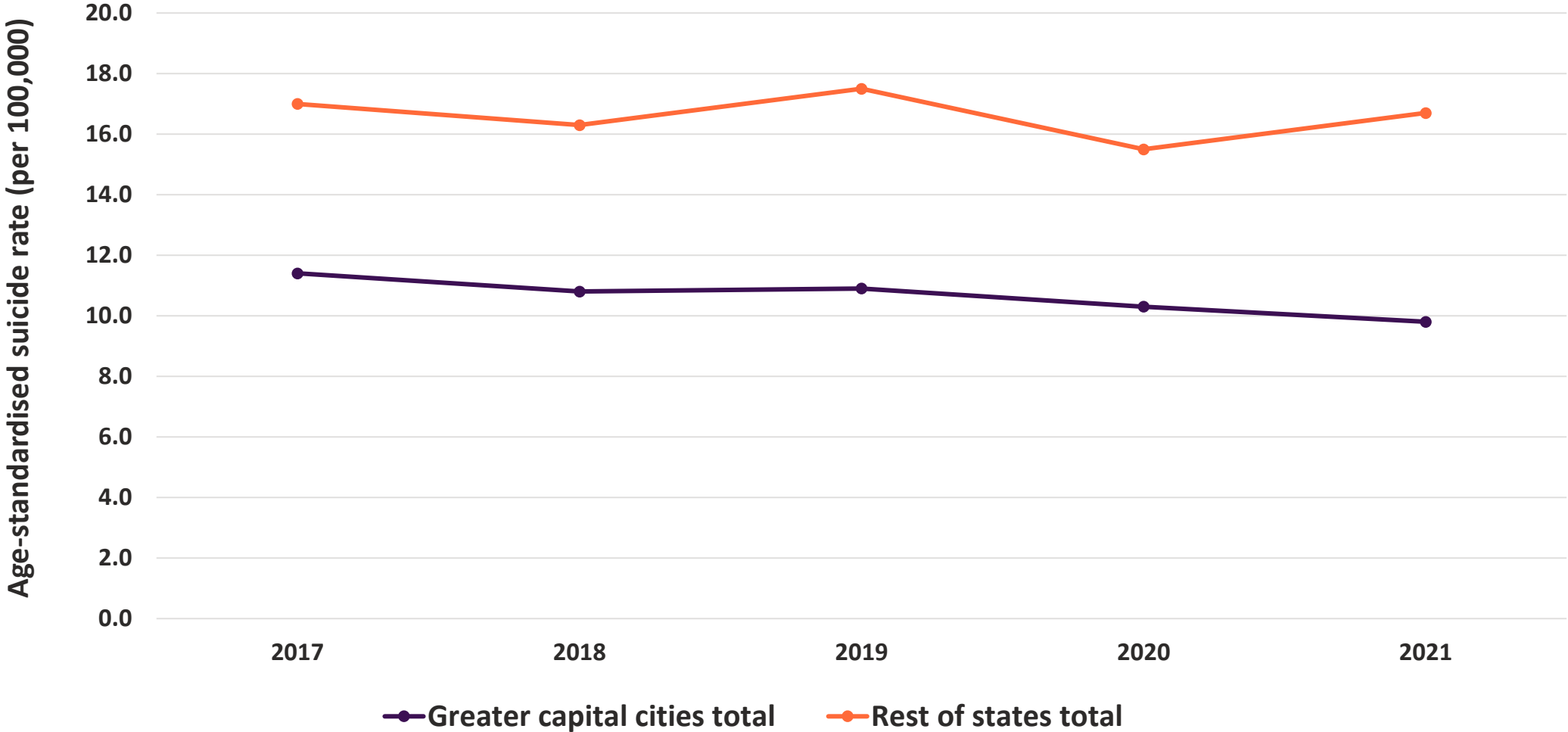


Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 19.10.2022.

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



Greater capital cities total and rest of states total



*2012 – 2018 data are final. 2019 data have been subject to revision. 2020 and 2021 data are preliminary.



Associated factors

- Almost 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.
- Mood disorders (including depression) were the most common risk factor for both males (36.2%) and females (41.6%), and across all age groups except for those aged 85 years and older.

Top five risk factors across all ages in 2021:

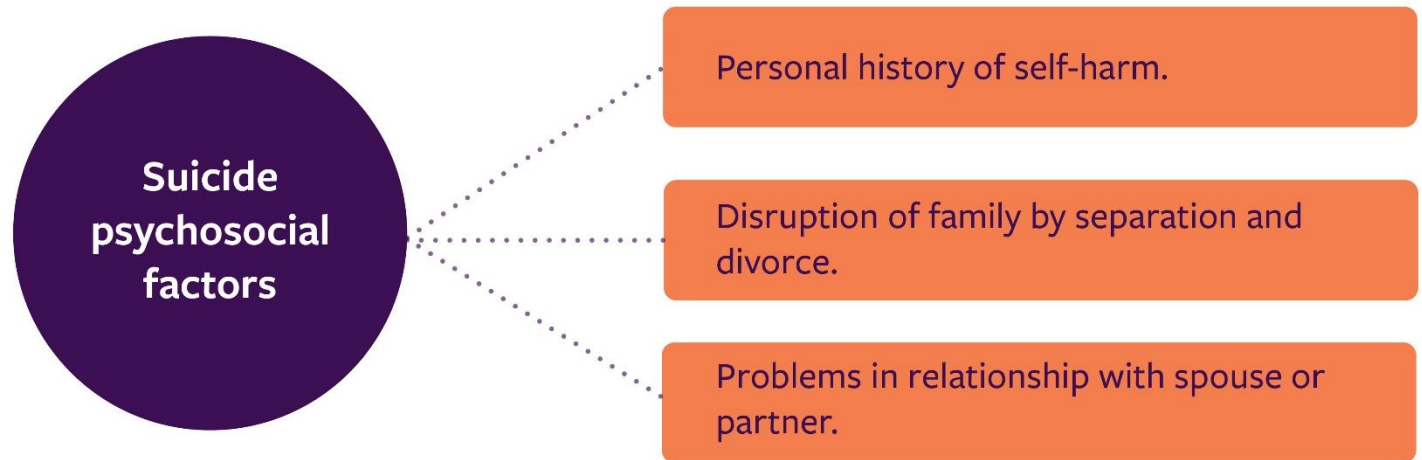
- Mood disorders, including depression (37.5%)
- Suicidal ideation (24.6%)
- Problems in spousal relationships circumstances (24.0%)
- Acute alcohol use and intoxication (20.6%)
- Personal history of self-harm (20.5%).



Psychosocial risk factors

- Psychosocial risk factors are social processes and social structures that can have an interaction with individual thought, behaviour or health.
- In 2021, 65.1% of all coroner-referred suicide deaths (63.3% for males and 70.6% for females) in Australia were found to have at least one psychosocial risk factor.
- Psychosocial risk factors associated with suicide were largely age dependent and differed throughout the lifespan.

Top three psychosocial factors (across all age groups).



Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, on 19.10.2022. 2021 total occurrences. Factors can be co-occurring.



Suicide in the COVID-19 pandemic

There were 81 people (2.6% of all suicide deaths) 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, six risk factors. This included an average of three psychosocial risk factors.

For the 81 people who died by suicide with issues relating to the COVID-19:

- 65.4% also had a mood disorder (including depression)
- 39.5% also had problems related to employment or unemployment
- 30.9% also experienced suicidal ideation
- 27.2% also had problems in spousal relationships
- 27.2% also had acute alcohol use and intoxication.



Help-seeking

Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

StandBy Support After Suicide
1300 727 247

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890
headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: 13YARN.org.au or 13 92 76

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

SANE: 1800 187 263 (10am-10pm)
online forums: saneforums.org





mindframe.org.au
mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au
[@mindframemedia](https://twitter.com/mindframemedia) 

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