

Media alert

23 October 2020

Please cascade to all media staff

Release of ABS Causes of Death data 2019

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has today released its 2019 Causes of Death data, which includes annual, national and state suicide information.

Media should note, preliminary data for 2018 and 2019 are included and will be subject to a continued revision process. The 2017 data has been subject to the first round of revision.

Key data include:

- In 2019, preliminary data showed a total of 3,318 deaths by suicide (age-standardised suicide rate 12.9 per 100,000), 2,502 males (19.8 per 100,000) and 816 females (6.3 per 100,000).
- Consistently over the past 10 years, the number of suicide deaths was approximately three times higher in males than females.
- All states and territories had an increase in numbers of suicide deaths, except for Queensland which had a decrease from 786 in 2018 to 784 in 2019.
- In 2019, there has been an increase of suicide deaths from 3,138 deaths in 2018 (12.4 per 100,000).

To view the ABS 2019 Causes of Death data, please visit: www.mindframe.org.au/absdatasummary2019

Please note: as we continue to create summary infographics to help understand this data release, we will update the *Mindframe* website – access to these updates will be via the above link.

Program Manager Sara Bartlett says it's important to remember that each of these numbers represents an individual life lost, a life which was valued and will be missed.

"The reasons individuals take their own life are often complex; there is no single reason why a person attempts or dies by suicide," said Ms Bartlett.

Ms Bartlett also says it is essential that media communicate about suicide safely and seek guidance when interpreting the data.

"Suicide and suicide prevention are both important issues of public concern, but there is also a potential risk to vulnerable audiences.

"How you choose to interpret or frame this data can influence how Australians understand the issue of suicide. Being mindful of this is a good first step for all media professionals."

Tips to safely report on the statistics

Consider the language you use

Issue	Problematic	Preferred
Presenting suicide as a desired outcome	✗ 'successful suicide' 'unsuccessful suicide'	✓ 'died by suicide' 'took their own life'
Associating suicide with crime or sin	✗ 'committed suicide' 'commit suicide'	✓ 'took their own life' 'died by suicide'
Sensationalising suicide	✗ 'suicide epidemic'	✓ 'increasing rates' 'higher rates'
Language glamourising a suicide attempt	✗ 'failed suicide' 'suicide bid'	✓ 'suicide attempt' 'non-fatal attempt'
Gratuitous use of the term 'suicide'	✗ 'political suicide' 'suicide mission'	✓ refrain from using the term suicide out of context



Mindframe

An initiative of



EVERYMIND



@MindframeMedia

mindframe.org.au

Suicide is a complex issue and sensationalist or inaccurate reporting of this subject can impact on vulnerable members of the community. Statistics can be helpful to some audiences, but harmful to others.

Inappropriate use of statistics can normalise suicide as a desired outcome, rather than encourage help-seeking behaviour. Vulnerable people always need to be considered when using statistics.

Help-seeking information

Adding help-seeking information to stories (online, print and broadcast) can provide somewhere for people who may be adversely impacted by the coverage to find professional support.

National 24/7 crisis services

Lifeline: 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

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

MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 79 www.mensline.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au

Key national resources

Head to Health: Mental health portal www.headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: Suicide prevention portal www.lifeinmind.org.au



EVERYMIND

Support services

Adult

Lifeline: 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

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890

headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal

headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal

lifeinmind.org.au

SANE: online forums saneforums.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: healthinonet.ecu.edu.au

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

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au



Mindframe

An initiative of



EVERYMIND



@MindframeMedia

mindframe.org.au

Media self-care

Reporting suicide can also impact to the welfare of journalists. To support media professionals *Mindframe*, in consultation with the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#), has developed journalism self-care resources. These resources can be found [here](#).

Contacts

For further information or advice, please visit the *Mindframe* [website](#) or contact:

Mindframe project team

Tel: 02 4924 6900

Email: mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au