

Media alert

29 September 2021

Release of ABS Causes of Death data 2020

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has today released its 2020 Causes of Death data, which includes annual, national and state suicide information.

Media and communications professionals reporting on this data are encouraged to be responsible and accurate, as there is a potential risk to people in the community who may be vulnerable to suicide.

The ABS data follows the release of Australian Institute of Health and Welfare suicide monitoring data on Australian Defence Force members.

Everymind Project Lead Dr Elizabeth Paton says communicators are urged to consider the impact that frequent and prolonged reporting on suicide deaths may have on the community.

“With a high volume of reporting on suicide data this week, it is even more important for communicators to follow guidelines for safe and responsible discussion of suicide,” Dr Paton says.

“This includes avoiding simplistic explanations for why a person has died by suicide, using correct terminology and non-stigmatising language and importantly, including help-seeking information.

“The *Mindframe* team asks communicators to remember that data does not show the full impact of suicide deaths. Each number represents an individual who was valued and who is missed.”

Key points in the ABS Causes of Death data 2020

- 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.
- Three-quarters of people who died by suicide were male. 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.
- All jurisdictions except the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory had a decrease in the number of suicide deaths between 2019 and 2020. The number of deaths increased in the Northern Territory but the rates decreased. Northern Territory had the highest rate of suicide (20.4 per 100,000 people).

To view more data, explanatory notes and infographics, please visit: mindframe.org.au/suicide/data-statistics

Mindframe resources for safe communication

- For general advice on safe reporting, refer to the [Mindframe media guidelines](#)
- For more guidance on communicating suicide data, visit the [Mindframe data and statistics page](#)

- The [Mindframe Expert Directory](#) has expert spokespeople who can provide context and perspective
- Reporting on suicide data can impact the wellbeing of media and communications professionals. [Journalism self-care resources are available.](#)

Media self-care

Reporting on suicide data can impact the wellbeing of media and communications professionals. To support media professionals the *Mindframe* team, in consultation with the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#), has developed journalism [self-care resources for media professionals](#).

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 | lifeline.org.au

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

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

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

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



Contacts

The *Mindframe* team is available to support media professionals to report on topics relating to suicide to ensure the quality of reporting and the portrayal of these issues is safe and accurate.

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