



December 2022

The Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker is a quarterly survey that shines a light on the prevalence of suicidal behaviours, what social and economic issues are driving distress, and the impact of suicide in our community. It is designed to provide real-time, community-wide insights to policy makers, practitioners and the community and to support suicide prevention across Australia.

About the survey

Total sample size was 1022 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 9th -13th November 2022. The survey was completed online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults (aged 18+).

Key data points

Distress levels

- 71% of Australians reported experiencing elevated distress in November 2022 compared with the same time last year – a 1% increase on the previous quarter (August 2022).
- More-than one-in-three (38%) Australians say they know someone in their personal life or networks, who has died by or attempted suicide in the past 12 months – a 7% increase on August (31%).
- More than one in five (22%) Australians report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months.

Risk factors

- Cost-of-living and personal debt remained the number one issue driving this elevated distress in November 2022 for the second quarter running (41%) – also up 1%, while family and relationship breakdown (25%) climbed one place into second spot (+2%) compared with August 2022. Social isolation and loneliness (24%) was ranked third.

- Distress over housing access and affordability (22%) escalated the most amongst Australians the past three months (+5%) – overtaking unemployment and job security to enter the top five.
- This was primarily driven by elevated housing distress amongst Australians aged 25-34 (28%, +6%) and 35-49 (28%, +9%) the past three months, as well as Australians earning \$100-\$149k per year (21%, +7%) and households with children (under 18) at home (25%; +6%).
- This coincided with cost-of-living and personal debt distress also growing well-above average in all of these demographics over the same period.

Help-seeking

- One in four (26%) of Australians say they have visited, sought help or searched for advice from a suicide prevention service in the past 12 months.
- Eight in ten (80%) of those that have been formally diagnosed with a mental illness in the past year, have visited, sought help or searched for advice from a suicide prevention service in the past 12 months.

State-by-state

August and November comparison

Australians impacted by suicide	NSW Aug 22	NSW Nov 22	VIC Aug 22	VIC Nov 22	QLD Aug 22	QLD Nov 22	SA Aug 22	SA Nov 22	WA Aug 22	WA Nov 22	TAS/NT /ACT Aug 22	TAS/NT /ACT Nov 22
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	30%	40% (+10%)	30%	35 (+5%)	33%	38 (+5%)	33%	42% (+9%)	35%	39% (+4%)	29%	34% (+5%)
Yes, directly	20%	26%	17%	22%	20%	23%	22%	32%	19%	22%	21%	20%
Yes, indirectly	13%	21%	17%	20%	15%	22%	12%	21%	18%	25%	8%	18%
No	67%	58%	67%	64%	65%	59%	64%	54%	61%	60%	68%	66%
Don't know/prefer not to say	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	1%	4%	0%

Australians feeling distress	NSW Aug 22	NSW Nov 22	VIC Aug 22	VIC Nov 22	QLD Aug 22	QLD Nov 22	SA Aug 22	SA Nov 22	WA Aug 22	WA Nov 22	TAS/NT /ACT Aug 22	TAS/NT /ACT Nov 22
Circumstances have caused elevated levels of distress in the past 12 months	70%	69%	70%	74%	74%	70%	76%	67%	60%	73%	60%	78%

Suicidal behaviour (thoughts, plans, attempts)	NSW Nov 22	VIC Nov 22	QLD Nov 22	SA Nov 22	WA Nov 22	TAS/NT/ACT Nov 22
Rates of suicidal behaviour in the last 12 months	21%	21%	27%	25%	19%	12%

Causes of elevated distress – November 2022	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Cost of living and personal debt	41%	45%	41%	27%	42%	42%	42%	42%
Family and relationship breakdowns	24%	27%	23%	32%	22%	20%	20%	20%
Social isolation and loneliness	24%	25%	22%	28%	23%	21%	21%	21%
Housing access and affordability	20%	22%	23%	19%	20%	27%	27%	27%
Unemployment and job security	18%	16%	15%	12%	20%	12%	12%	12%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	16%	14%	11%	17%	11%	14%	14%	14%
Social media, self-image & bullying	13%	17%	11%	13%	17%	11%	11%	11%
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	12%	11%	15%	12%	5%	10%	10%	10%

New technology and social change	8%	13%	9%	13%	16%	4%	4%	4%
Exposure to suicide in others	9%	9%	9%	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	69%	74%	70%	67%	73%	78%	78%	78%

Note: TAS/NT/ACT figures combined

Causes of elevated distress	Aug-22	Nov-22	Change
Cost of living and personal debt	40%	41%	+1%
Family and relationship breakdowns	23%	25%	+2%
Social isolation and loneliness	26%	24%	-2%
Housing access and affordability	17%	22%	+5%
Unemployment and job security	19%	16%	-3%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	14%	14%	Nil
Social media, self-image & bullying	14%	14%	Nil
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	11%	11%	Nil
New technology and social change	9%	11%	+2%
Exposure to suicide in others	8%	10%	+2%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	70%	71%	+1%

Australians impacted by suicide	Aug-21	Aug-22	Nov-22	Change
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	25%	31%	38%	+13%
Yes, directly	15%	19%	24%	+9%
Yes, indirectly	11%	15%	21%	+10%
No	70%	66%	60%	-10%
Don't know/prefer not to say	5%	3%	2%	-3%

Where to from here

Suicide Prevention Australia is calling for an urgent 'relief package' to respond to increasing rates of distress and risks of suicide.

A distress relief package would include fast-tracking delivery of recent commitments to suicide prevention services; additional support for those most at-risk of suicide; extended access to COVID-19 mental health supports such as Medicare's funded mental health sessions; strengthened investment in protective supports such as raising income support payments and whole-of-government accountability through a national Suicide Prevention Act.