



SUICIDE PREVENTION AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY TRACKER

The Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker is a quarterly survey that sheds 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 activities across Australia.

About the survey

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1038 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th -17th May 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults (aged 18+).

Distress levels and experience of suicide

- 75% of Australians reported experiencing elevated distress in June 2023 compared with the same time last year – a 1% increase on the previous quarter (March 2023).
- Close to four in ten (38%) Australians say they know someone in their personal life or networks, who has died by or attempted suicide in the past 12 months – an 8% increase from March 2023 (30%).
- One in five (21%) Australians report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months – a 2% increase from March 2023.

Australians impacted by suicide	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Change
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	31%	38%	30%	38%	+8%
Yes, directly	19%	24%	19%	22%	+3%
Yes, indirectly	15%	21%	15%	20%	+5%
No	66%	60%	66%	60%	-6%
Don't know/prefer not to say	3%	2%	2%	2%	-

Risk factors

- Cost-of-living and personal debt remained the number one issue driving this elevated distress in June 2023 for the fourth quarter running (40%) – down 6%, while family and relationships breakdown (23%) regained second place (+1%) compared with March 2023. Social isolation and loneliness (20%) fell one spot to third (-6%).
- Increased distress levels with respect to cost of living and personal was primarily driven by Australians aged 18-24 (48%, -10%) and 50-64 (43%, -5%) the past three months, as well as Australians in TAS/NT/ACT (44%, +5%) and those who identified as not working (52%, -12%).

- Increased distress levels with respect to unemployment and job security was primarily driven by Australians aged 18-24 (29%, -8%) the past three months, as well as Australians in Victoria (25%, +1%).

Causes of elevated distress	Mar-23	Jun-23	Change
Cost of living and personal debt	46%	40%	-6%
Family and relationship breakdowns	24%	23%	-1%
Social isolation and loneliness	26%	20%	-6%
Housing access and affordability	23%	19%	-4%
Unemployment and job security	21%	19%	-2%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	16%	14%	-2%
Social media, self-image & bullying	13%	13%	-
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	13%	11%	-2%
New technology and social change	12%	11%	-1%
Exposure to suicide in others	8%	9%	+1%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	74%	75%	+1%

Help-seeking

- One in four (25%) of Australians say they have visited, sought help or searched for advice from a suicide prevention service in the past 12 months – up 5% compared to March 2023.
- Around eight in ten (78%) 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 – up 10% compared to March 2023.
- 82% of those that report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months, have also visited, sought help or search for advice from a suicide prevention service in the past 12 months – up 12% compared to March 2023.

Demographic breakdowns

- Women remain to be more likely than men to say that cost of living and personal debt are circumstances causing elevated distress (42% compared to 37%) and family and relationship breakdowns (25% compared to 20%) and housing access and affordability (19% compared to 18%). Unlike last quarter, women are now more likely than men to say that unemployment and job security (20% compared to 17%) are causing elevated distress. Men are more likely than women to say that social media, self-image & bullying (15% compared to 12%) and new technology and social change (13% compared to 9%) are causing elevated distress.
- Younger Australians (18 to 34 years) are more likely than their older counterparts (50 years +) to say they have experienced elevated distress (beyond normal levels) due to various circumstances, compared with this time last year (80% compared to 74%), which is down 2% since March 2023.
- Men are more likely than women to report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months (27% compared to 14%). The gap between male and female has widened compared to March 2023 (20% compared to 17%).

- Australians under the age of 50 years are more than twice as likely than those over 50 years to report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months (28% compared to 11%). The difference has increased compared to March 2023 (24% compared to 12%)

State and Territory Breakdown

Australians impacted by suicide	NSW Mar 23	NSW Jun 23	VIC Mar 23	VIC Jun 23	QLD Mar 23	QLD Jun 23	SA Mar 23	SA Jun 23	WA Mar 23	WA Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Mar 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	31%	33% (+2%)	30%	40% (+10%)	30%	45% (+15%)	23%	39% (+16%)	30%	41% (+11%)	38%	32% (-6%)
Yes, directly	22%	20%	16%	24%	18%	20%	15%	26%	17%	22%	27%	20%
Yes, indirectly	13%	16%	18%	20%	15%	29%	13%	17%	20%	22%	11%	18%
No	66%	65%	66%	57%	63%	54%	72%	61%	67%	57%	60%	64%
Don't know/prefer not to say	3%	2%	4%	3%	7%	1%	5%	-	4%	2%	2%	3%

Australians feeling distress	NSW Mar 23	NSW Jun 23	VIC Mar 23	VIC Jun 23	QLD Mar 23	QLD Jun 23	SA Mar 23	SA Jun 23	WA Mar 23	WA Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Mar 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23
Circumstances have caused elevated levels of distress in the past 12 months	77%	74%	74%	76%	66%	78%	76%	74%	79%	70%	73%	79%
Suicidal behaviour (thoughts, plans, attempts)	NSW Mar 23	NSW Jun 23	VIC Mar 23	VIC Jun 23	QLD Mar 23	QLD Jun 23	SA Mar 23	SA Jun 23	WA Mar 23	WA Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Mar 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23
% of individuals experiencing suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months	17%	18%	19%	19%	18%	22%	23%	30%	22%	25%	18%	16%

Causes of elevated distress – March 2023	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Cost of living and personal debt	47%	47%	43%	58%	42%	39%	39%	39%
Family and relationship breakdowns	24%	26%	22%	27%	28%	19%	19%	19%
Social isolation and loneliness	25%	29%	24%	19%	25%	29%	29%	29%
Housing access and affordability	23%	24%	26%	17%	27%	20%	20%	20%
Unemployment and job security	24%	18%	20%	25%	19%	16%	16%	16%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	18%	17%	12%	6%	20%	16%	16%	16%
Social media, self-image & bullying	15%	15%	12%	11%	14%	5%	5%	5%
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	12%	11%	12%	18%	20%	13%	13%	13%
New technology and social change	15%	11%	11%	13%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Exposure to suicide in others	7%	11%	7%	3%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	77%	74%	66%	76%	79%	73%	73%	73%

Causes of elevated distress – June 2023	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Cost of living and personal debt	40%	37%	43%	43%	38%	44%	44%	44%
Family and relationship breakdowns	25%	20%	22%	29%	20%	22%	22%	22%
Social isolation and loneliness	20%	22%	23%	18%	15%	13%	13%	13%
Housing access and affordability	15%	21%	24%	16%	14%	16%	16%	16%
Unemployment and job security	16%	24%	19%	22%	13%	18%	18%	18%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	14%	14%	13%	13%	15%	18%	18%	18%
Social media, self-image & bullying	9%	17%	18%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	11%	11%	12%	14%	9%	13%	13%	13%
New technology and social change	10%	14%	11%	6%	14%	5%	5%	5%
Exposure to suicide in others	7%	8%	9%	8%	16%	7%	7%	7%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	74%	76%	78%	74%	70%	79%	79%	79%

Note: TAS/NT/ACT figures combined in survey sample