



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 1007 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 10th -13th August 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

- 71% of Australians reported experiencing elevated distress in August 2023 compared with the same time last year – continuing the trend of elevated distress experienced by Australians in the previous quarter (75% in June 2023).
- Close to three in ten (29%) Australians say they know someone in their personal life or networks, who has died by or attempted suicide in the past 12 months – down 9pp from June 2023 (38%).
- One in five (18%) Australians report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months – a 3pp decrease from June 2023.

Australians impacted by suicide	Sep-22	Jun-23	Sep-23	Change
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	31%	38%	29%	-9pp
Yes, directly	19%	22%	16%	-6pp
Yes, indirectly	15%	20%	16%	-4pp
No	66%	60%	68%	+8pp
Don't know/prefer not to say	3%	2%	3%	+1pp

Risk factors

- Cost-of-living and personal debt remained the number one issue driving this elevated distress in September 2023 for the fifth quarter running (46%) – up 6pp, while housing access and affordability (24%) regained second place (+5pp) compared with June 2023. Social isolation and loneliness (24%) maintained its spot at third (+4pp).
- Increased distress levels with respect to cost of living and personal was primarily driven by Australians aged 18-24 (54%, +6pp) and 50-64 (52%, +9pp) the past three months, as well as Australians in TAS/NT/ACT (52%, +8pp) and those who identified as not working (56%, +4pp).

- Increased distress levels with respect to housing access and affordability was primarily driven by Australians aged 25-34 (34%, +14pp) the past three months, as well as Australians in South Australia (33%, +17pp).

Causes of elevated distress	Jun-23	Sept-23	Change
Cost of living and personal debt	40%	46%	+6pp
Housing access and affordability	19%	24%	+5pp
Social isolation and loneliness	20%	24%	+4pp
Family and relationship breakdowns	23%	22%	-1pp
Unemployment and job security	19%	19%	+0pp
Social media, self-image & bullying	13%	12%	-1pp
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	14%	11%	-3pp
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	11%	9%	-2pp
Exposure to suicide in others	9%	8%	-1pp
New technology and social change	11%	8%	-3pp
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	75%	71%	-4pp

Help-seeking

- One in five (20%) of Australians say they have visited, sought help or searched for advice from a suicide prevention service in the past 12 months – down 5pp compared to June 2023.
- Around seven in ten (71%) 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 – down 7pp compared to June 2023.
- 100% 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 18pp compared to June 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 (48% compared to 44%). Men are more likely than women to say that social isolation and loneliness (25% compared to 23%) 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 (84% compared to 65%), which is up 4pp since June 2023.
- Australians under the age of 50 years are twice as likely than those over 50 years to report having experienced suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months (24% compared to 12%). The difference has decreased compared to June 2023 (28% compared to 11%)

State and Territory Breakdown

Australians impacted by suicide	NSW Jun 23	NSW Sep 23	VIC Jun 23	VIC Sep 23	QLD Jun 23	QLD Sep 23	SA Jun 23	SA Sep 23	WA Jun 23	WA Sep 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Sep 23
Knows someone directly or indirectly who has died or attempted suicide	33%	31%	40%	29%	45%	24%	39%	25%	41%	29%	32%	41%
Yes, directly	20%	17%	24%	16%	20%	16%	26%	14%	22%	14%	20%	24%
Yes, indirectly	16%	18%	20%	15%	29%	12%	17%	16%	22%	18%	18%	19%
No	65%	67%	57%	67%	54%	73%	61%	71%	57%	65%	64%	57%
Don't know/prefer not to say	2%	2%	3%	4%	1%	3%	-	4%	2%	6%	3%	2%

Australians feeling distress	NSW Jun 23	NSW Sep 23	VIC Jun 23	VIC Sep 23	QLD Jun 23	QLD Sep 23	SA Jun 23	SA Sep 23	WA Jun 23	WA Sep 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Sep 23
Circumstances have caused elevated levels of distress in the past 12 months	74%	72%	76%	74%	78%	68%	74%	81%	70%	61%	79%	73%
Suicidal behaviour (thoughts, plans, attempts)	NSW Jun 23	NSW Sep 23	VIC Jun 23	VIC Sep 23	QLD Jun 23	QLD Sep 23	SA Jun 23	SA Sep 23	WA Jun 23	WA Sep 23	TAS/N T/ACT Jun 23	TAS/N T/ACT Sep 23
% of individuals experiencing suicidal behaviour in the past 12 months	18%	18%	19%	21%	22%	15%	30%	17%	25%	16%	16%	20%

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%
Housing access and affordability	15%	21%	24%	16%	14%	16%	16%	16%
Social isolation and loneliness	20%	22%	23%	18%	15%	13%	13%	13%
Family and relationship breakdowns	25%	20%	22%	29%	20%	22%	22%	22%
Unemployment and job security	16%	24%	19%	22%	13%	18%	18%	18%
Social media, self-image & bullying	9%	17%	18%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	14%	14%	13%	13%	15%	18%	18%	18%
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	11%	11%	12%	14%	9%	13%	13%	13%
Exposure to suicide in others	7%	8%	9%	8%	16%	7%	7%	7%
New technology and social change	10%	14%	11%	6%	14%	5%	5%	5%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	74%	76%	78%	74%	70%	79%	79%	79%

Causes of elevated distress – September 2023	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Cost of living and personal debt	46%	48%	42%	58%	38%	52%	52%	52%
Housing access and affordability	24%	23%	26%	33%	16%	22%	22%	22%
Social isolation and loneliness	25%	26%	19%	29%	17%	23%	23%	23%
Family and relationship breakdowns	24%	21%	20%	30%	10%	32%	32%	32%
Unemployment and job security	22%	19%	16%	16%	14%	16%	16%	16%
Social media, self-image & bullying	14%	11%	13%	18%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Environment & climate change (including drought/natural disasters)	13%	10%	12%	15%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	10%	6%	11%	10%	9%	10%	10%	10%
Exposure to suicide in others	9%	7%	6%	11%	10%	5%	5%	5%
New technology and social change	8%	8%	6%	12%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	72%	74%	68%	81%	61%	73%	73%	73%

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