



SUICIDE PREVENTION AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY TRACKER

MARCH 2024

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.

Why this data is important

Our latest data shows that a record half of all Australians nationally are now reporting elevated cost-of-living and personal debt distress (50%) which is now, for the first time, double all other economic and social issues with 'middle Australia' driving the increase.

It is critical for economic and policy decision makers to understand the human cost of the cost-of-living crisis and ensure investment in support services is targeted towards those who need it most.

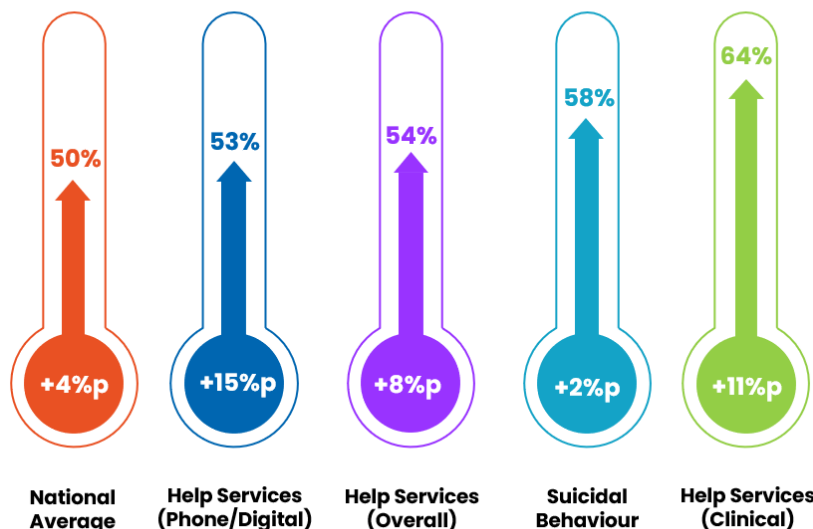
Interestingly, we are seeing cost-of-living distress continue to escalate despite a softening in inflation and interest rates. Together, we can turn evidence-based policy into action and save lives.

Key findings

- Overall, 50% of Australians reported cost-of-living and personal debt distress beyond normal levels in the March 2024 Quarter. This is an increase on the past three (46%;+4pp), 12 (46%;+4pp) and 18 (40%;+10pp) months respectively.
- Cost-of-living and personal debt was also the main cause of elevated distress amongst Australians reporting suicidal behaviours (58%), as well as from as well those seeking help from frontline suicide prevention services (54%), particularly clinical services (64%).

Cost-of-Living Distress Barometer

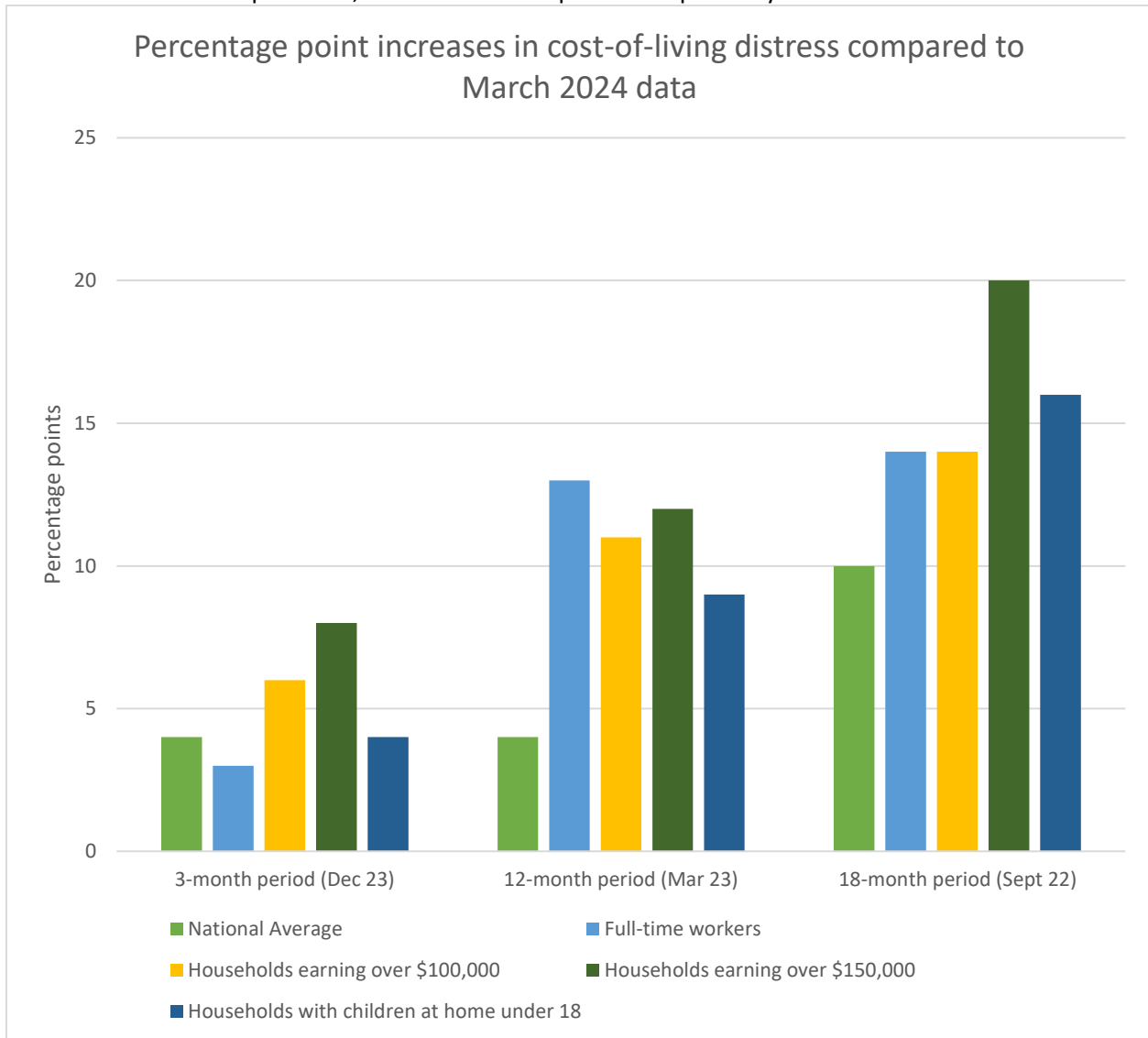
% of Australians reporting elevated distress from cost-of-living and personal debt beyond normal levels in the March 2024 Quarter of the Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker.



*12 Month Increase (Mar23 Qtr to Mar24 Qtr)

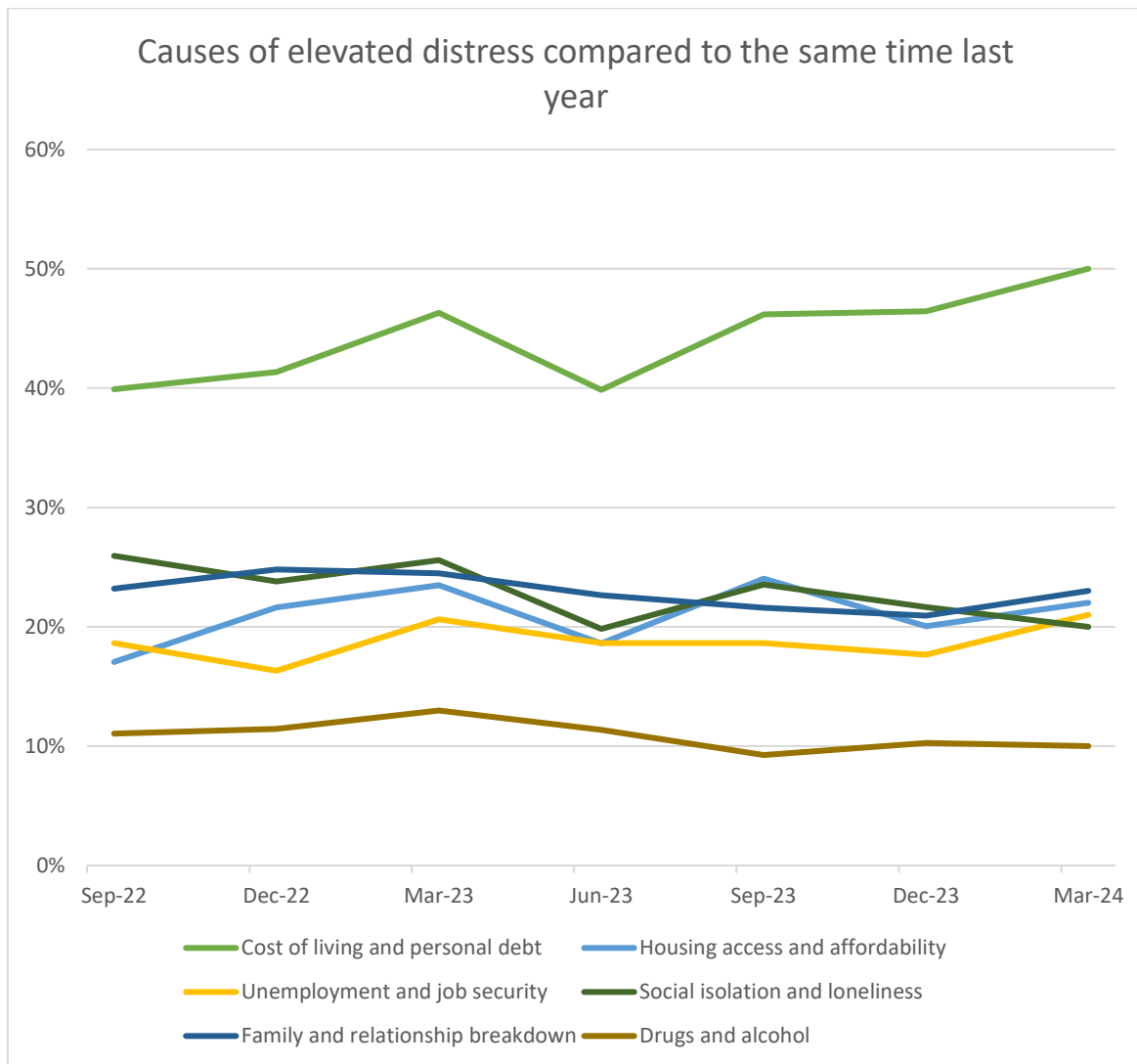
- This is despite overall community distress continuing to remain relatively flat at about 73% over the same periods.
- Some of the biggest increases were amongst full time workers (55%;+3pp,+13pp,+14pp), as well as households earning over \$100,000 (51%;+6pp,+11pp,+14pp) and \$150,000

(54%;+8pp,+12pp,+20pp), plus those with children at home under 18 (54%;+4pp,+9pp,+16pp) over the same periods 3, 12 and 18 month periods respectively.



Cost of living causing elevated distress	Sep-22	Mar-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
National Average	40%	46%	46%	50%
Full-time workers	41%	42%	52%	55%
Households earning over \$100,000	37%	40%	45%	51%
Households earning over \$150,000	34%	42%	46%	54%
Households with children at home under 18	38%	45%	50%	54%

- Cost-of-living and personal debt distress (50%) is now more-than-double all other key economic and social determinants of suicide recorded in the survey, including: housing access and affordability (22%); unemployment and job security (21%); social isolation and loneliness (20%); family and relationship breakdown (23%); and drug and alcohol (10%).



Causes of elevated distress	Dec-23	Mar-24	Change
Cost of living and personal debt	46%	50%	+4pp
Social isolation and loneliness	22%	20%	-2pp
Family and relationship breakdowns	21%	23%	+2pp
Housing access and affordability	20%	22%	+2pp
Unemployment and job security	18%	21%	+3pp
Alcohol and other drugs (including personal use/someone close)	10%	10%	-
Overall reporting levels of elevated distress	74%	73%	-1pp

About the survey

The Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker is undertaken in partnership with YouGov Australia. Total sample size was 1063 adults. The survey was undertaken online between 5th - 7th February 2024. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults (aged 18+).

Contact

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