

# Alcohol-induced deaths in Australia

NOVEMBER 2023

## Key points

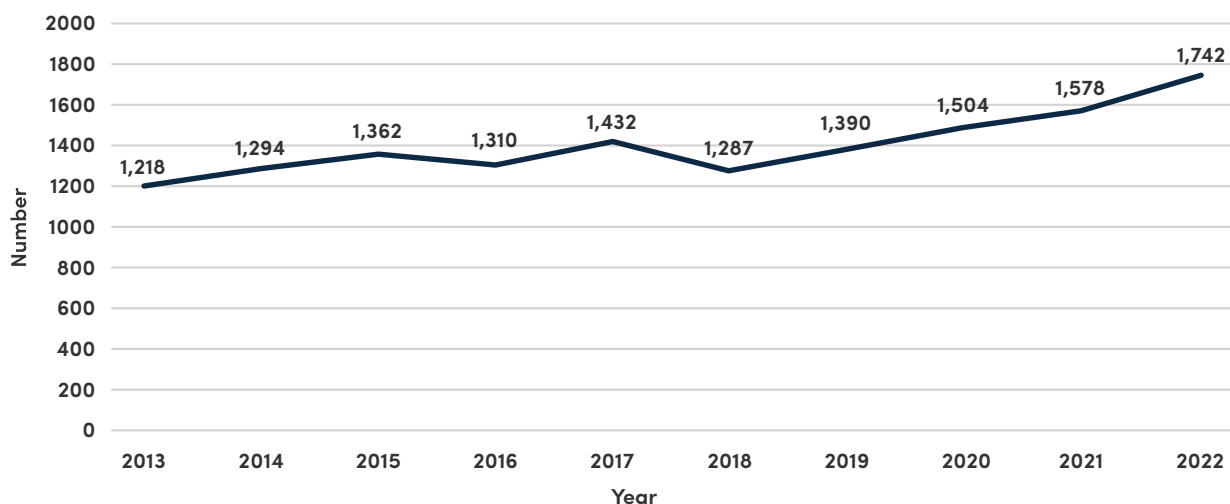
- There were 1,742 alcohol-induced deaths recorded in 2022, at a rate of 6.0 deaths for every 100,000 people living in Australia.
- Alcohol induced deaths increased between 2021 and 2022. This is the fourth consecutive year of increasing alcohol-induced death rates. The rate for 2022 is the highest reported rate of deaths in a decade.
- Between 2021 and 2022, there was a 9.1 per cent increase in the rate of deaths from 5.4 deaths per 100,000 to 6.0 deaths per 100,000. This equates to an additional 164 deaths.
- Men (8.7 deaths per 100,000) are more than twice times as likely to die from alcohol, compared to women (3.4 deaths per 100,000). For both men and women, this is the highest alcohol-induced death rate per 100,000 people in the last 10 years.
- Both men and women aged 55 to 64 years have the highest death rate at 25.0 and 10.3 per 100,00 deaths respectively.
- Alcoholic liver disease was the highest underlying cause that contributed to alcohol-induced deaths (1,046 deaths) in 2022, followed by mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol (349 deaths).
- The least socioeconomically advantaged quintile in Australia (Q1, 11.7 deaths per 100,000) is nearly three times as likely to die from alcohol, compared to the most advantaged (Q5, 3.6 deaths per 100,000).
- Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales reported higher alcohol-induced death rates than the national death rate.

## Findings

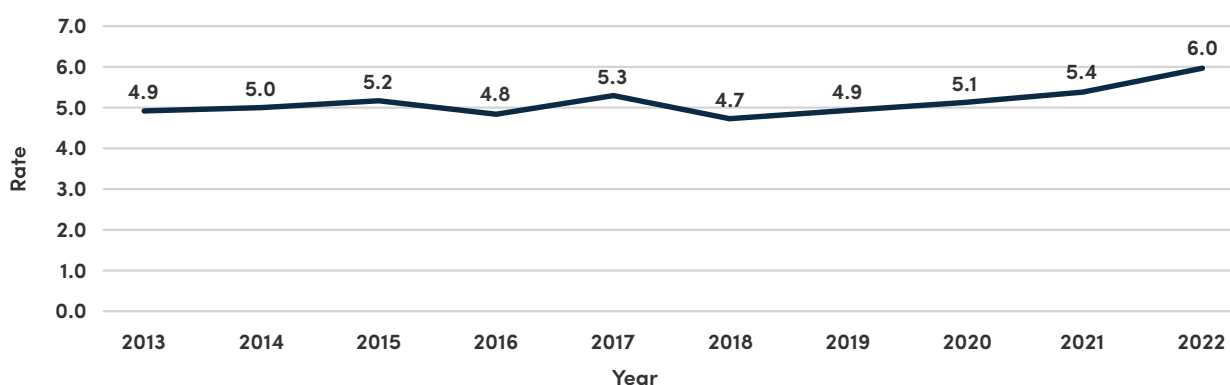
The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death report shows that in 2022, 1,742 people in Australia died of an alcohol-induced death, such as chronic conditions like liver cirrhosis or acute conditions such as alcohol poisoning (Figure 1).

In 2022, the rate of alcohol-induced deaths was 6.0 per 100,000 people – the highest it has been in the past decade (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATHS, 2013-2022**



**FIGURE 2: ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATHS (AGE-STANDARDISED RATE PER 100,000), 2013-2022**



Alcoholic liver disease was the highest underlying cause that contributed to alcohol-induced deaths (1,046 deaths) in 2022 (Table 1). This is followed by mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol use (349 deaths), accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (108 deaths), and exposure to alcohol, undetermined intent (4 deaths) and intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (1 death). The remaining 108 alcohol-induced deaths have resulted from cardiomyopathy, degeneration of nervous system, acute pancreatitis, chronic pancreatitis, myopathy, polyneuropathy, gastritis and Cushing’s syndrome.

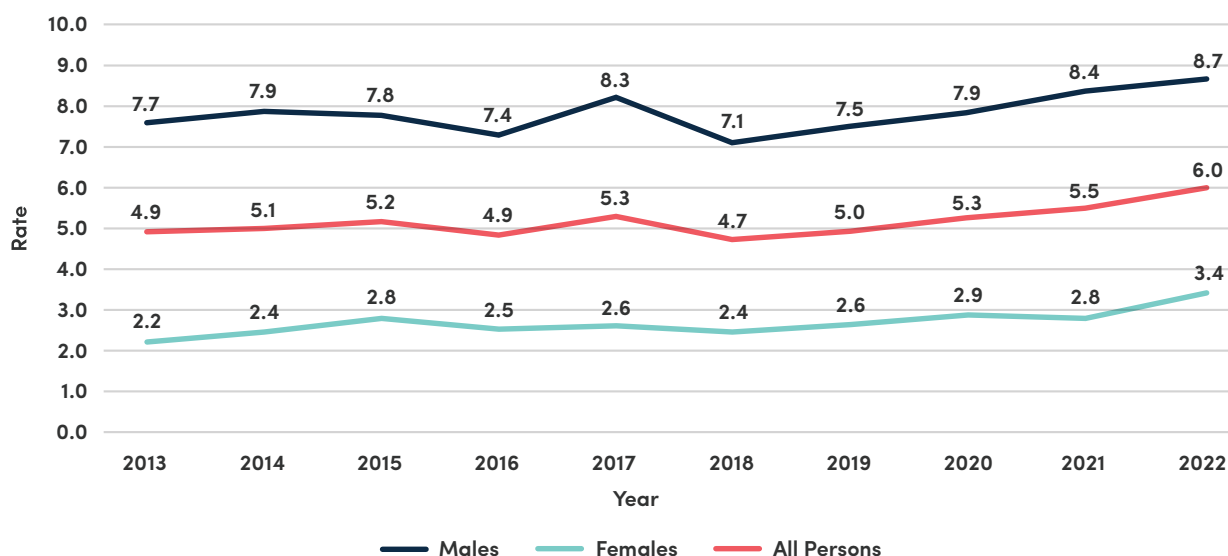
**TABLE 1: UNDERLYING CAUSES OF ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATHS IN 2022**

UNDERLYING CAUSE	NUMBER OF DEATHS
Alcoholic liver disease (K70)	1,046
Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol (F10)	349
Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (X45)	108
Other underlying causes (E24.4, G31.2, G62.1, G72.1, I42.6, K29.2, K85.2, K86.0)*	234
Poisoning by and exposure to alcohol, undetermined intent (Y15)	1
Intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (X65)	4

Other underlying causes include Alcoholic cardiomyopathy (I42.6), Degeneration of nervous system due to alcohol use (G31.2), Alcoholic-induced acute pancreatitis (K85.2), Alcohol-induced chronic pancreatitis (K86.0), Alcoholic myopathy (G72.1), Alcoholic polyneuropathy (G62.1), Alcoholic gastritis (K29.2), Alcohol-induced pseudo-Cushing’s syndrome (E24.2)

Men (8.7 deaths per 100,000) are more than twice times as likely to die from alcohol, compared to women (3.4 deaths per 100,000) (Figure 3). For both men and women, this is the highest alcohol-induced death rate per 100,000 people in the last 10 years.

**FIGURE 3: ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATHS, BY GENDER (AGE-STANDARDISED RATE PER 100,000)**



Looking at specific age groups, people aged 55 to 64 years have the highest death rate at 17.5, followed by people aged 45 to 54 and people aged 65 years and over (12.5 and 12.0 respectively). People aged 15 to 34 years have the lowest death rate at 0.8 (Table 2). Both men and women aged 55 to 64 years have the highest death rates at 25.0 and 10.3 respectively (Table 3).

**TABLE 2: AGE-SPECIFIC ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATES IN 2022**

AGE GROUPS	ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATES
15-34 years	0.8
35-44 years	5.9
45-54 years	12.5
55-64 years	17.5
65 years and over	12.0
All ages	6.7

\*Note these are age-specific death rates and differ to broader age-standardisation death rates for the full population.

**TABLE 3: AGE-SPECIFIC ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATES IN 2022, BY GENDER**

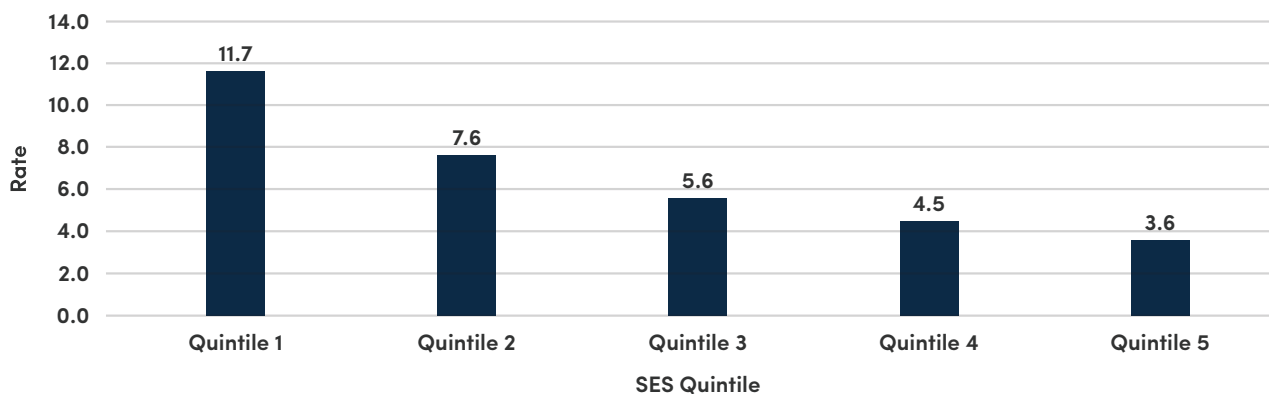
AGE GROUPS	ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATES, MALES	ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATES, FEMALES
15-34 years	1.0	0.5
35-44 years	7.9	4.0
45-54 years	17.3	7.9
55-64 years	25.0	10.3
65 years and over	20.2	4.8
All ages	9.6	3.8

\*Note these are age-specific death rates and differ to broader age-standardisation death rates for the full population.

The more socioeconomically advantaged a person is in Australia, the less likely they are to die from an alcohol-induced death (Figure 4).

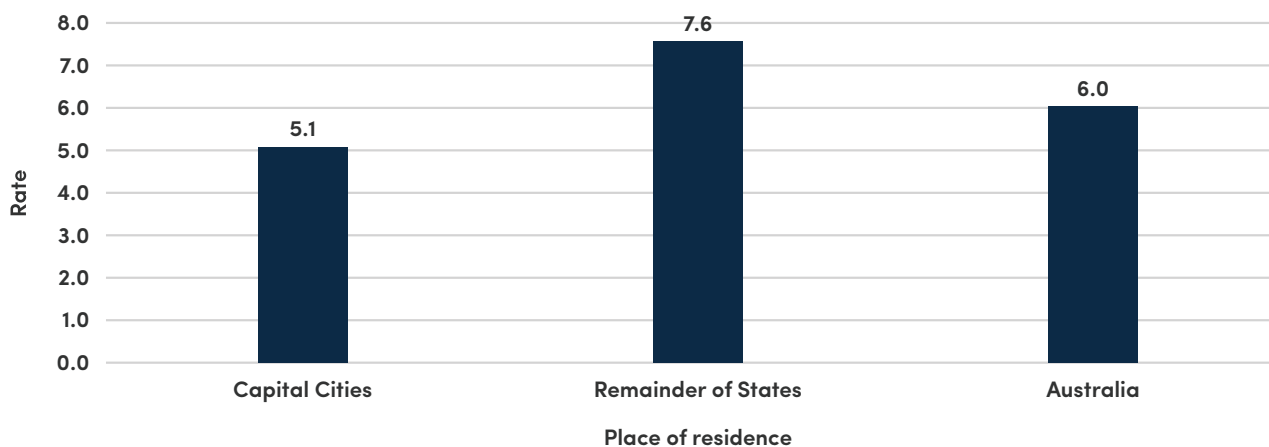
The least socioeconomically advantaged quintile in Australia (Q1, 11.7 deaths per 100,000) is over three times as likely to die from alcohol, compared to the most advantaged (Q5, 3.6 deaths per 100,000).

**FIGURE 4: ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATE, BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, 2022**



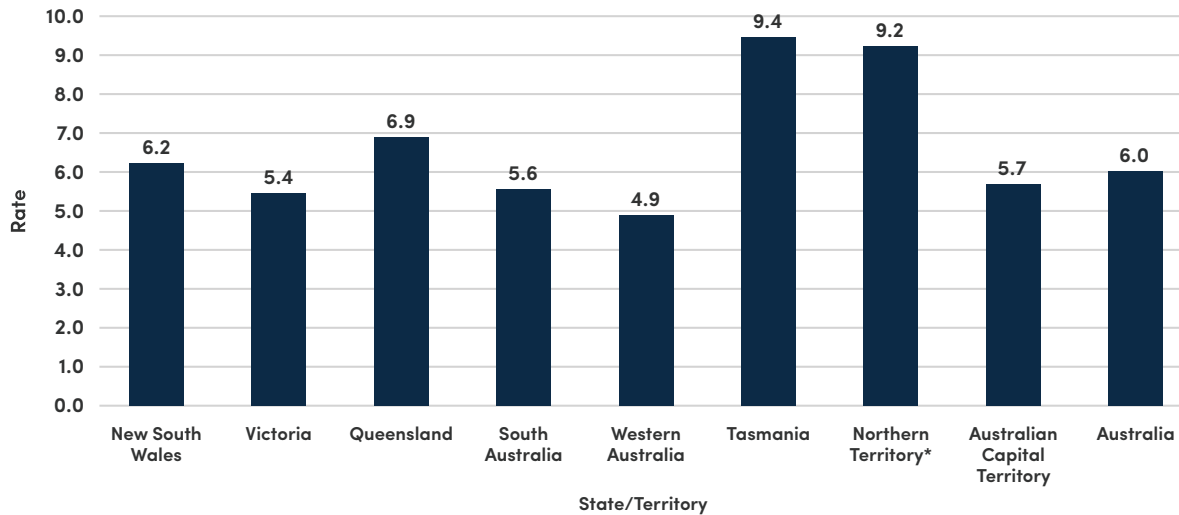
The number of alcohol-induced deaths was higher in the remainder of states (7.6, 779 deaths), compared to capital cities (5.1, 948 deaths) (Figure 5). In areas outside of capital cities, the rate is higher than the national alcohol-induced death rate (6.0).

**FIGURE 5: ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATH RATE, BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2022**



Tasmania reported the highest rate of alcohol-induced deaths (9.4, 65 deaths) (Figure 6) followed by Queensland (6.9, 407 deaths), New South Wales (6.2, 570 deaths), the Australian Capital Territory (5.7, 26 deaths), South Australia (5.6, 117 deaths), Victoria (5.4, 387 deaths) and Western Australia (4.9, 151 deaths). Victoria has reported year-on-year death rate increases since 2018. New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have reported the highest death rates since 2018. Tasmania has recorded the highest death rate increase compared to any other state or territory from 2021 (5.5, 71% increase) to 2022. Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales recorded death rates that were higher than the national rate (6.0).

**FIGURE 6: ALCOHOL-INDUCED DEATHS, BY STATE AND TERRITORY (AGE-STANDARDISED RATE PER 100,000), 2022**



\*The reported rate for the Northern Territory reflects 2021 calculations as data for 2022 was not available at time of publication.

## About the data

The Australian Bureau of Statistics regularly releases Causes of Death data. This is a collection of statistics on the number of deaths by specific causes, as classified in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

Alcohol-induced deaths are those where the underlying cause can be directly attributable to alcohol use, determined by toxicology and pathology reports. Such deaths can be directly related to alcohol use and result in a chronic condition, such as alcoholic liver cirrhosis. It can also be related to harmful alcohol use and result in an acute condition, such as alcohol poisoning.