

# CHILD DEATH REGISTER KEY FINDINGS 2020–21

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Queensland  
Family & Child  
Commission

In 2020–21, 71 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years died in Queensland (18% of all 398 child deaths).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over-represented in child deaths. The mortality rate for Indigenous children was 69.6 deaths per 100,000, which was 2.3 times the non-Indigenous rate of 29.6 deaths per 100,000.<sup>i</sup>

The Indigenous infant mortality rate was 6.5 per 1,000 births compared to non-Indigenous mortality rate of 3.5 per 1,000 births.<sup>ii</sup>

### Cause of death

Of the 71 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child deaths, 41 died from natural causes, 16 from external causes, 3 were from unexplained causes and 11 were pending a cause at the time of reporting (Table 1).

Over the last 5 years, the Indigenous child mortality rates were more than 3 times the non-Indigenous child mortality rates for:

- suicide
- other non-intentional injury.

Indigenous infants were over-represented in Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI). The SUDI mortality rate was 3 times the non-Indigenous SUDI rate.

### Trends

Indigenous child mortality rates have decreased over the 17-year period (Figures 1 and 2). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality, however, continues to be close to twice the non-Indigenous rate as decreases in Indigenous mortality have been matched by similar decreases in non-Indigenous child mortality.

**Table 1: Child deaths in Queensland by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2020–21<sup>a</sup>**

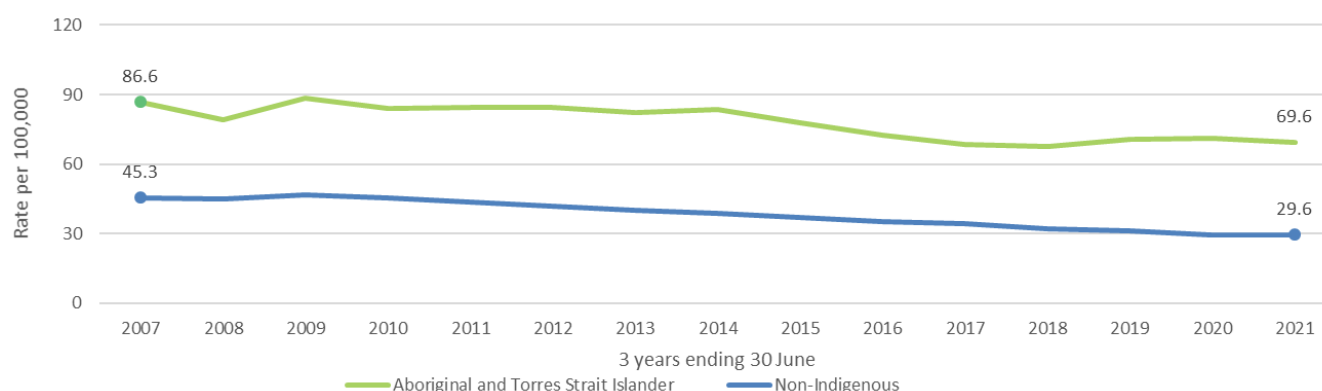
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	Number	Number
<b>All deaths</b>		
Deaths of children 0–17 years	71	314
<b>Cause of death</b>		
<b>Natural causes</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>External causes</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>70</b>
Transport	3	28
Drowning	4	6
Other non-intentional injury-related death	4	8
Suicide	4	26
Fatal assault and neglect	1	2
<b>Unexplained deaths</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>
SIDS and undetermined causes	3	14
<b>Cause of death pending</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI)</b>		
Sudden unexpected infant deaths	11	23

<sup>a</sup> By date of death registration.

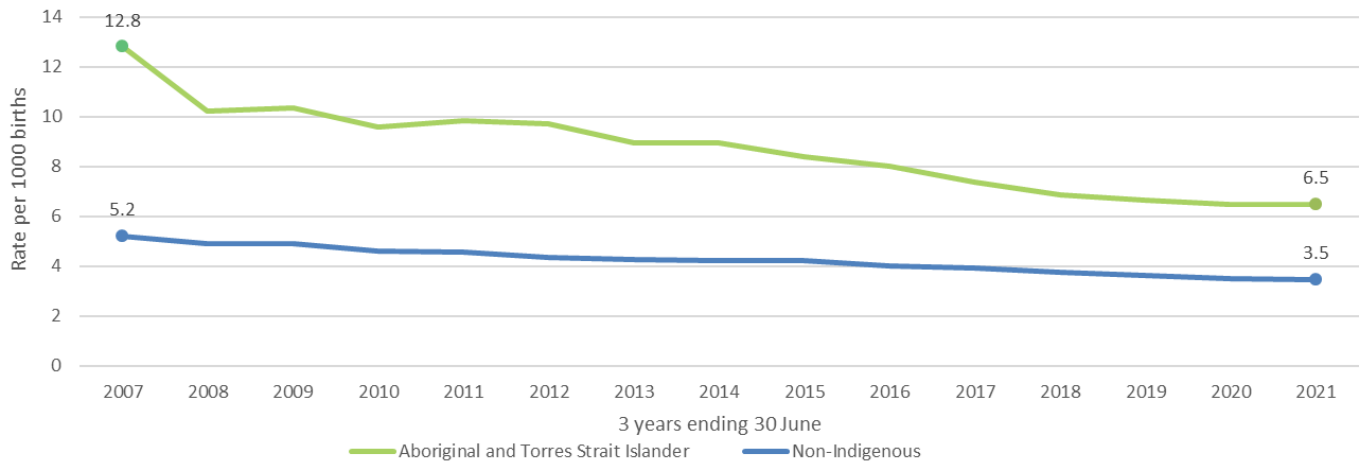
The mortality rate for Indigenous children aged 0–17 years decreased on average 1.4% per year while the non-Indigenous rate decreased 3.2% on average.

There was a greater reduction in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant mortality rate. The Indigenous infant mortality rate decreased 4.6% per year on average compared to the non-Indigenous rate which decreased 2.9% per year over the same period.

**Figure 1: Child deaths by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (3-year rolling rate), 2004–07 to 2018–21**



**Figure 2: Infant deaths by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (3-year rolling rate), 2004–07 to 2018–21**



### More information

This fact sheet provides summary information from the *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2020–21*. Information on methodology, sources and definitions can be found in the report.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission’s (QFCC) annual reports on child deaths, 17-year data tables and the latest Australian states and territories and New Zealand child death statistics can be found at <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/keeping-kids-more-safe/preventing-child-injury-death/child-death-reports-data>

### Data for prevention activities

The QFCC works with researchers and government agencies to raise community awareness and develop prevention programs and policies, by identifying risk factors, trends and emerging safety hazards.

The QFCC can provide detailed child death data to genuine researchers and organisations at no cost.

Email [child\\_death\\_prevention@qfcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:child_death_prevention@qfcc.qld.gov.au)

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<sup>i</sup> Rates are averaged over 3 years and calculated per 100,000 Indigenous/non-Indigenous population aged 0–17 years.

<sup>ii</sup> Rates are averaged over 3 years and calculated per 1,000 Indigenous/non-Indigenous live births.