

Queensland Child Death Register

Key findings 2022–23

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

March 2024

Ninety-four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years died in Queensland in 2022–23 (21% of all 446 child deaths in Queensland).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over-represented in child deaths. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mortality rate was 75.4 deaths per 100,000, which was 2.5 times the non-Indigenous rate of 30.5 deaths per 100,000.¹

The infant mortality rate was 6.6 per 1,000 births, which was 1.8 times the non-Indigenous mortality rate of 3.6 per 1,000 births.¹

Cause of death

Of the 94 deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, 60 died from natural causes (diseases and morbid conditions), 16 from external causes, 3 were from unexplained causes and 15 were pending a cause at the time of reporting (Table 1).

The level of over-representation was higher for certain causes of death. Mortality rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were more than 3 times higher than the non-Indigenous child mortality rates for:

- other non-intentional injury
- drowning
- suicide
- fatal assault and neglect.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants were also over-represented in sudden unexpected death in infancy with a mortality rate 3.6 times that for non-Indigenous infants.

Table 1: Child deaths in Queensland by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2022–23^a

	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
All deaths		
Deaths of children 0–17 years	94	352
Rate per 100,000 ^c	75.4	30.5
Cause of death		
Natural causes	60	267
External causes	16	51
Transport	7	21
Drowning	2	8
Other non-intentional injury	1	3
Suicide	4	16
Fatal assault and neglect	2	3
Unexplained causes	3	3
SIDS and undetermined causes	3	3
Cause of death pending	15	31
Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI)		
Sudden unexpected infant deaths	14	26

^a By date of death registration.

^b In the 12 months prior to death.

^c Rate averaged over 5 years.

Trends from 2004 to 2023

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rates have decreased over the 19-year period. Between 2004–09 and 2018–23 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mortality rate (0–17 years) decreased 0.9% per year on average while the non-Indigenous rate decreased 2.4% on average.

¹ Mortality rates are averaged over the last 5-years.

As shown in Figure 1, while decreases in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rate mirrored decreases in the non-Indigenous mortality rate over much of the period, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rate increased in the last 3 years whereas the non-Indigenous rate plateaued.

For infant deaths, there was a greater reduction in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant mortality rate, which decreased from 11.3 per 1,000 live births in 2004–09 to 6.6 per 1,000 births in 2018–23 (down 3.0% per year on average). The non-Indigenous infant mortality rate decreased by 1.9% per year on average over the same period.

Figure 1: Child deaths by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (5-year rolling rate), 2004–09 to 2018–23

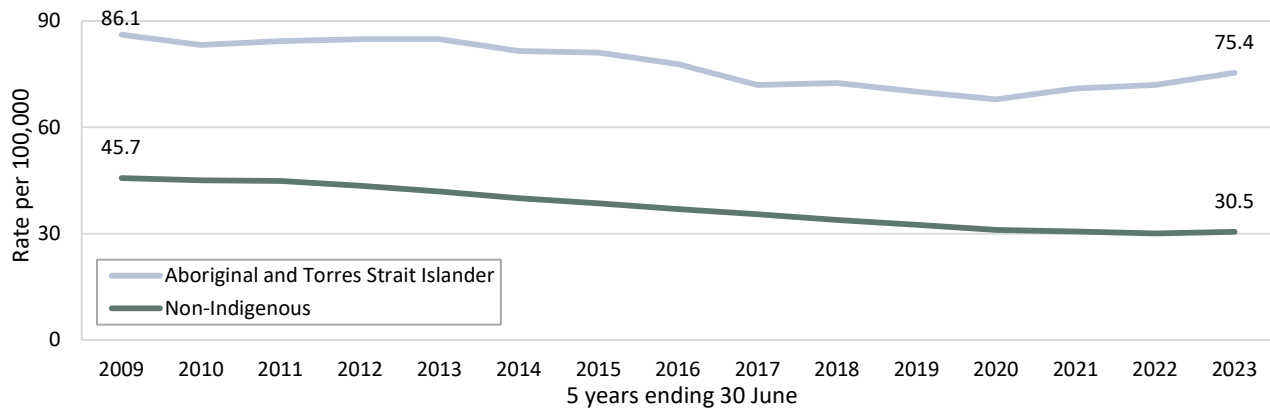
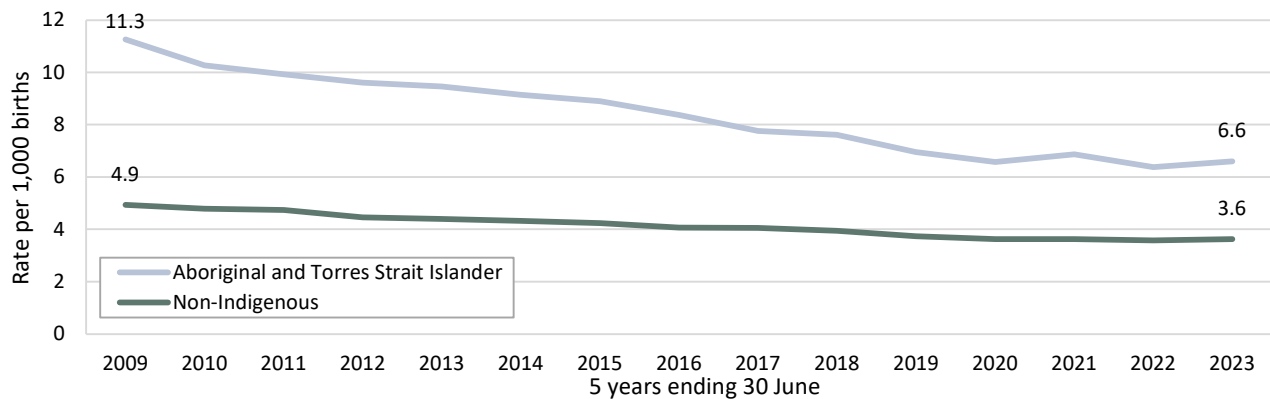


Figure 2: Infant deaths by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (5-year rolling rate), 2004–09 to 2018–23



More information

This fact sheet provides summary information from the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2022–23*, available at <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-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 Queensland child death data to researchers and organisations at no cost. Email child_death_prevention@qfcc.qld.gov.au