Queensland Child Death Register
Key findings 2022–23
Child deaths in Queensland

Child deaths in 2022–23

In the 12-month period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, the deaths of 446 children aged 0–17 years were registered in Queensland. The child mortality rate was 34.2 deaths per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years and the infant mortality rate was 4.0 deaths per 1,000 births (rates are averaged over the last 5 years).

- Deaths from natural causes (diseases and morbid conditions) accounted for most child deaths (327—or 73%) (Table 1).
- External (non-natural) causes of death accounted for 67 deaths (15%).
- Transport was the leading external cause of death, with 28 deaths. Thirteen of these were in motor vehicle crashes and 10 were pedestrian incidents.
- Suicide was the second leading external cause of death with 20 deaths.
- Ten children and young people drowned.
- Six deaths were from unexplained causes. This includes deaths categorised as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and undetermined causes.
- Five children died as a result of assault or neglect.
- Four children died from other non-intentional injuries.[i]
- Forty-six deaths were pending a cause of death at the time of reporting.

Table 1: Child deaths in Queensland, 2022–23[a]

	Number	Rate[b]
Deaths of children 0–17 years	446	*34.2*
Cause of death		
Natural causes	**327**	***23.8***
External causes	**67**	***7.0***
Transport	28	*2.3*
Drowning	10	*1.0*
Other non-intentional injury	4	*0.9*
Suicide	20	*2.2*
Fatal assault and neglect	5	*0.6*
Unexplained causes	**6**	***2.3***
SIDS and undetermined causes	6	*2.3*
Cause of death pending	**46**	***1.1***
Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI)		
Sudden unexpected infant deaths	40	*0.6*
Sex[c]		
Female	193	*30.6*
Male	252	*37.4*
Age category		
Under 1 year	279	*4.0*
1–4 years	52	*18.5*
5–9 years	37	*7.4*
10–14 years	37	*10.0*
15–17 years	41	*27.2*
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status		
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	94	*75.4*
Non-Indigenous	352	*30.5*
Known to the child protection system		
Known to Child Safety[d]	72	*63.8*

a By date of death registration.
b Five-year average rate per 100,000 population or per 1,000 births for under 1 year and SUDI.
c Excludes indeterminate sex.
d In the 12 months prior to death.

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Queensland
Government

Vulnerable groups

Some children are more vulnerable to experiencing adversity—including experiences that increase risk of death—than others. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children who are known to the child protection system (Child Safety) are consistently and significantly over-represented in child mortality statistics.

Ninety-four **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** died in 2022–23. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rate was 2.5 times the rate for non-Indigenous children.

Seventy-two **children known to Child Safety** died in 2022–23.
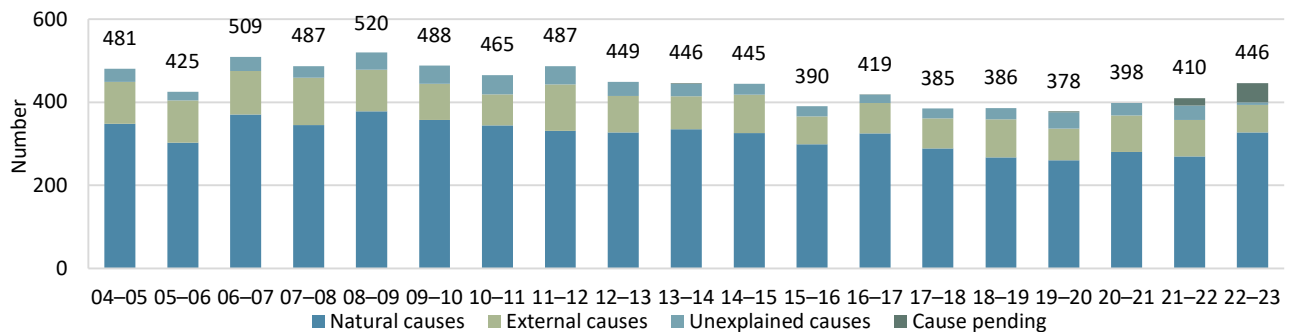
Trends from 2004 to 2023

Notwithstanding an increased number of child deaths in the last 2 years, the number of child deaths and mortality rates have generally declined over the 19 years in which the register has existed, driven largely by decreases in deaths from natural causes (Figure 1). The overall child mortality rate has decreased 2.2% per year on average.[ii]

The rate of transport-related deaths has decreased 3.6% per year on average, notwithstanding the increased numbers of transport deaths in the last 3 years.

Child mortality from suicide showed a slow increasing trend of 1.9% per year on average.

There were decreases in rates of deaths from drowning, other non-intentional injuries, unexplained causes and fatal assault and neglect.

Figure 1: Deaths of children by major cause group, 2004–05 to 2022–23

Leading causes of death

The leading causes of death changes with age, largely in line with the risks faced at each development stage (Table 2).

The leading causes of death for infants 0–27 days were perinatal conditions followed by congenital anomalies. For infants 28–364 days the leading cause was SIDS and undetermined causes (as a group).

Young children aged 1–4 years are more vulnerable to external causes of death. Drowning was the leading cause in this age group and transport was the third leading cause after cancers and tumours.

Cancers and tumours (neoplasms) were among the top 3 leading causes for each age category from 1–17 years.

Suicide and transport were leading causes of death for children aged 15–17 years and for those aged 10–14 years.

Table 2: Leading causes of death by age, 5-year summary

Age category	Leading causes*		
	1	2	3
0–27 days	Perinatal conditions	Congenital anomalies	SIDS and undetermined causes
28–364 days	SIDS and undetermined causes	Congenital anomalies	Perinatal conditions
1–4 years	Drowning	Cancers and tumours	Transport
5–9 years	Cancers and tumours	Transport	Nervous system diseases
10–14 years	Suicide	Cancers and tumours	Transport
15–17 years	Suicide	Transport	Cancers and tumours

Notes: Cause of death data have been averaged over the 5-year period 2018–19 to 2022–23.

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 2022–2*3, 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**

[i] Unintentional injury deaths that fall outside the scope of transport or drowning e.g., threats to breathing, falls and poisoning.
[ii] Calculated using 5-year rolling rates.