

Queensland Child Death Register

Key findings 2023–24

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

October 2024

Ninety-one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years died in Queensland in 2023–24 (22% of all 422 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 79.8 deaths per 100,000, which was 2.7 times the non-Indigenous rate of 30.4 deaths per 100,000.¹

The infant mortality rate was 7.2 per 1,000 births, which was 1.9 times the non-Indigenous mortality rate of 3.8 per 1,000 births.¹

Cause of death

Of the 91 deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, 67 died from natural causes (diseases and morbid conditions), 11 from external causes, 2 were from unexplained causes and 11 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
- unexplained causes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants were also over-represented in sudden unexpected death in infancy with a mortality rate 4.3 times that for non-Indigenous infants.

Table 1: Child deaths in Queensland by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2023–24^a

| | Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| All deaths | | |
| Deaths of children 0–17 years | 91 | 331 |
| Rate per 100,000 ^c | 79.8 | 30.4 |
| Cause of death | | |
| Natural causes | 67 | 247 |
| External causes | 11 | 59 |
| Transport | 4 | 16 |
| Drowning | 1 | 9 |
| Other non-intentional injury | 4 | 15 |
| Suicide | 2 | 17 |
| Fatal assault and neglect | 0 | 2 |
| Unexplained causes | 2 | 6 |
| SIDS and undetermined causes | 2 | 6 |
| Cause of death pending | 11 | 19 |
| Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI) | | |
| Sudden unexpected infant deaths | 9 | 18 |

a By date of death registration.

b In the 12 months prior to death.

c Rate averaged over 5 years.

Trends from 2004 to 2024

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rates have decreased over the 20-year period. Between 2004–09 and 2019–24 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mortality rate (0–17 years) decreased 0.5% per year on average while the non-Indigenous rate decreased 2.2% 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 4 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 7.2 per 1,000 births in 2018–23 (down 2.4% per year on average). The non-Indigenous infant mortality rate decreased by 1.5% 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 2019–24

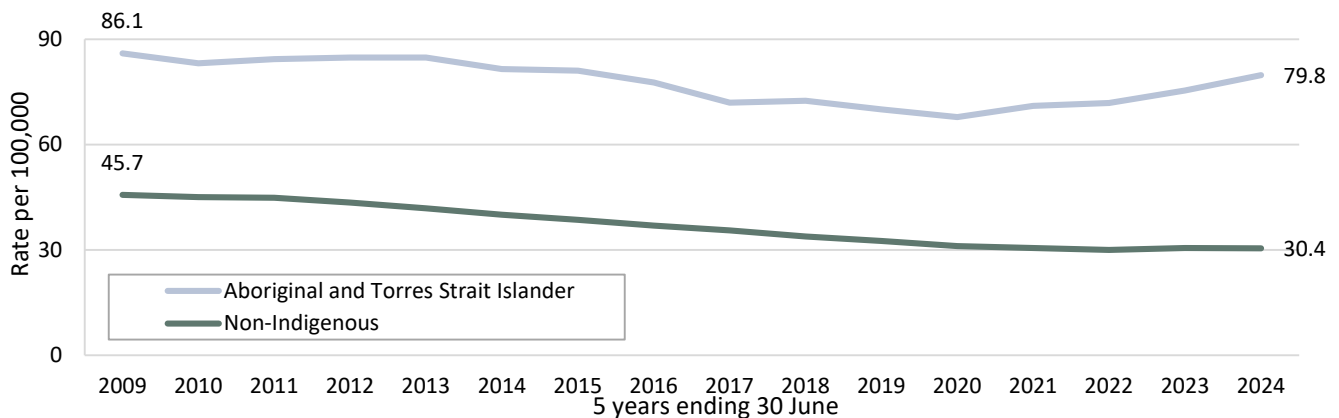
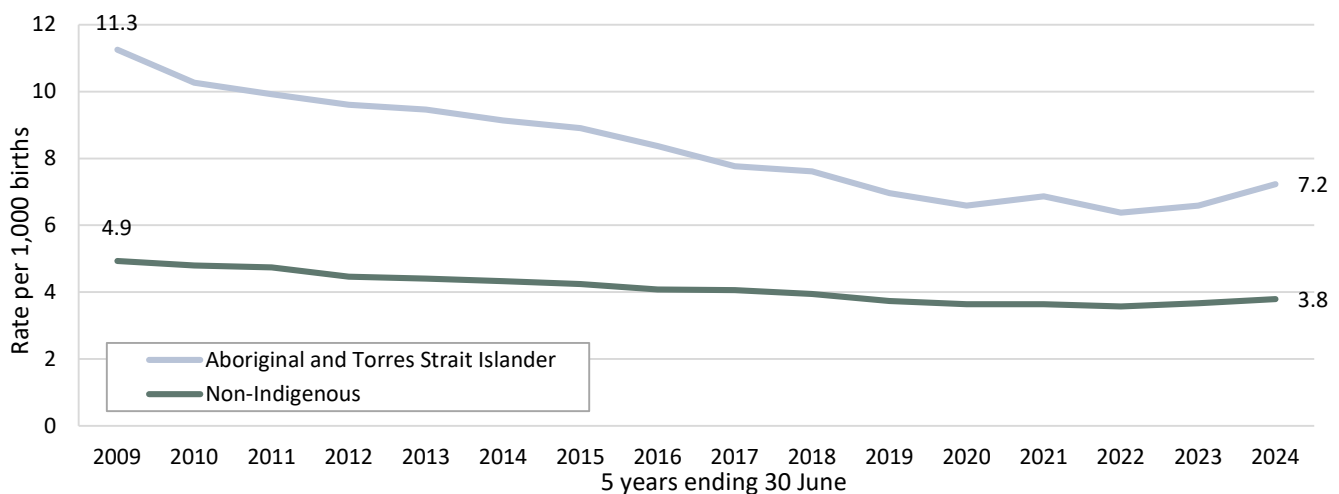


Figure 2: Infant deaths by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (5-year rolling rate), 2004–09 to 2019–24



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 2023–24*, 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