



PENINGTON
INSTITUTE

Australia's Annual Overdose Report 2016

A Penington Institute report

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This is an updated report based on Australia's Annual Overdose Report 2016, initially released on Monday 29 August 2016.

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Introduction

The number of accidental deaths due to drug overdose in Australia is rapidly growing. These deaths are a critical public health issue and deserve increased attention and investment in awareness and prevention. It's time to act on overdose deaths.

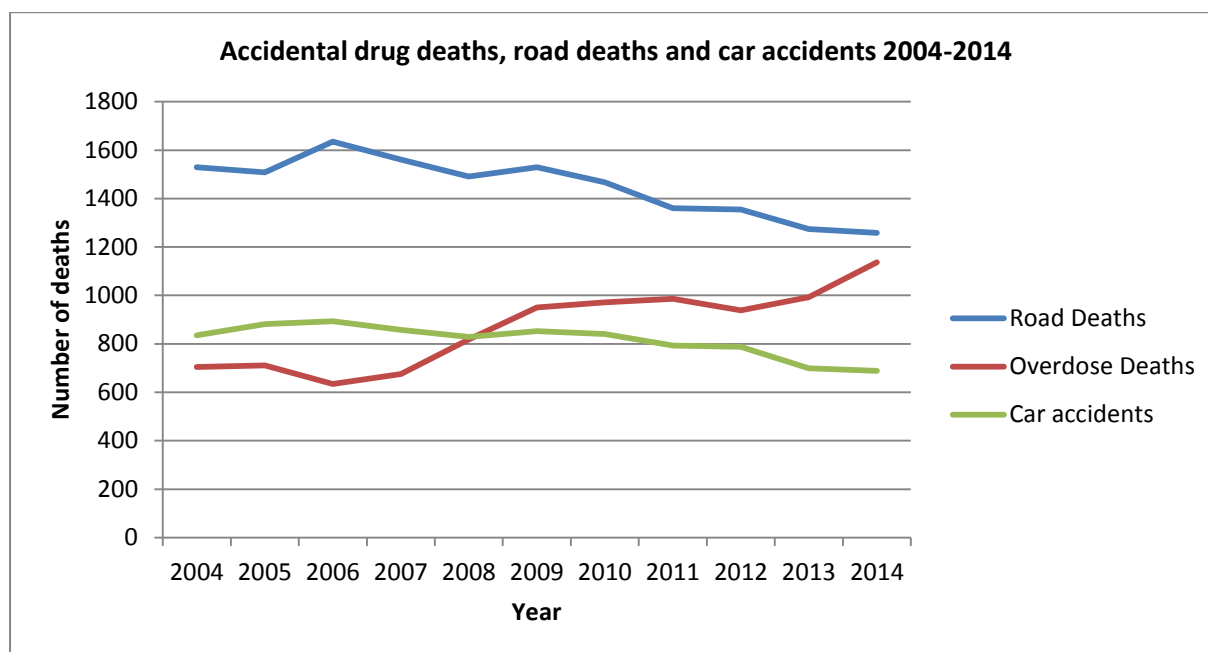
Overdose deaths are a global problem. Other countries are mobilising and acting on overdose including the US which is experiencing an overdose crisis not unlike Australia. Overdose is an increasing problem that needs to be taken seriously.

This report details some key statistics relating to overdose deaths in Australia from 2004 to 2014. The report was compiled by Penington Institute based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The principal findings are:

- Deaths due to accidental overdose grew substantially from 2004 to 2014. They reached 1,137 in 2014, a rapid rise from 705 deaths in 2004 and a 61 per cent increase in a decade. Between 2013 and 2014 overdose deaths smashed through the 1,000 deaths mark, with a rise of 14.5 per cent in one year alone, from 993 to 1,137.
- Contrary to stereotypes about the age of people who die of accidental overdose, Australians aged 40-49 are the most likely to die of a drug overdose. Deaths in this age bracket have almost doubled from 174 deaths in 2004 to 342 in 2014 – a 96 per cent rise.
 - In 2014, people aged 30-59 accounted for 78 per cent of all overdose deaths.
- Large increases in overdose deaths in rural and regional areas are driving the overall increase. Between 2008 and 2014, there was an increase from 3.1 deaths per 100,000 to 5.7 per 100,000 – an 83 per cent increase. Meanwhile, the rate per capita in metropolitan areas has moved only slightly from 4.2 per 100,000 in 2008 to 4.4 per 100,000 in 2014.
- Despite common perceptions of accidental deaths due to drugs are caused by illicit drugs, in 2014 prescription medications were responsible for more drug-related deaths (69 per cent) than illicit drugs (31 per cent). (Note: this statistic is for total drug-related deaths, not just overdose deaths).
 - Over the period 2008-2014 there was an 87 per cent increase in prescription opioid deaths in Australia, with the greatest increase occurring in rural/regional Australia which saw a 148 per cent increase.
- Accidental deaths due to drug overdose per capita for Aboriginal people has increased substantially between 2004 and 2014 with an increase of 141 per cent – from 3.9 per 100,000 in 2004 to 9.4 per 100,000 in 2014 in the five jurisdictions with Aboriginal data. In the same period, the increase among non-Aboriginal people was from 3.3 per 100,000 to 4.8 per 100,000 – an increase of 45 per cent.
- Western Australia is the worst state for overdose deaths per capita with 5.8 per 100,000 in 2014 followed by NSW with 5.1 per 100,000.
 - Since 2004 Western Australia's per capita overdose deaths have risen from the lowest to the highest in the country – an increase from 1.8 per 100,000 to 5.8 per 100,000 (a 222 per cent increase) – against a national increase over the same period of 37 per cent.

1. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose in comparison to the road toll 2004 – 2014

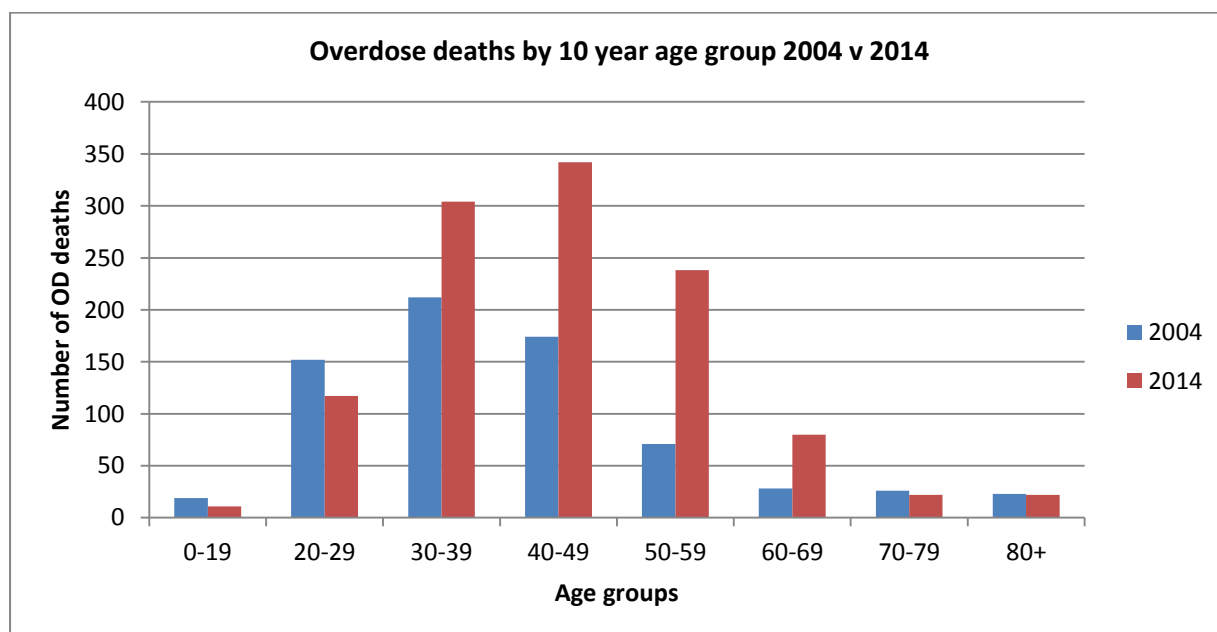


	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Road Deaths	1,530	1,508	1,635	1,561	1,491	1,529	1,468	1,360	1,355	1,274	1,259
Overdose Deaths	705	711	635	676	818	951	971	986	938	993	1,137
Car accidents	835	881	894	858	829	853	840	793	788	699	689

Key statistics:

- Deaths due to accidental overdose reached 1,137 in 2014, an increase from 705 deaths in 2004 – this is a 61 per cent increase in the past 10 years.
- Deaths due to road accidents have steadily declined over the ten years from 1,530 in 2004 to 1,259 in 2014 – a decrease of 18 per cent.
- Overdose deaths outnumbered car accidents for the first time in 2009 – and since that time, the gap has continued to grow.

2. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose by age 2004 - 2014

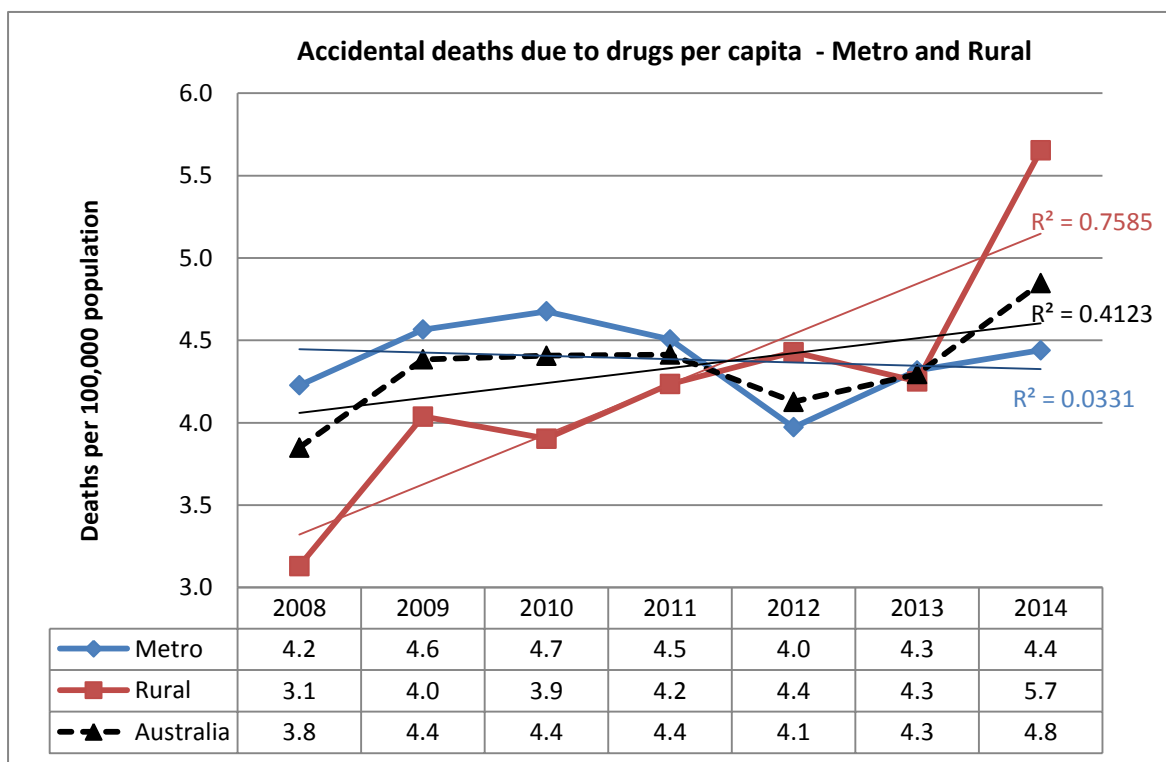
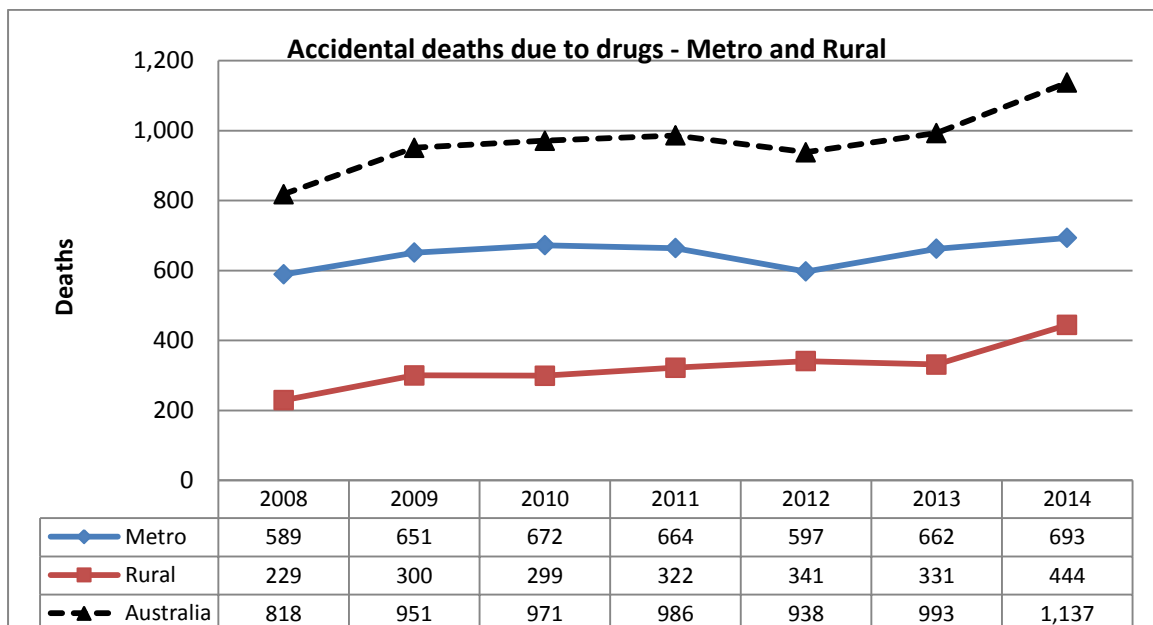


	2004	2014	% change
<i>0-19</i>	19	11	-42%
<i>20-29</i>	152	117	-23%
<i>30-39</i>	212	304	43%
<i>40-49</i>	174	342	96%
<i>50-59</i>	71	238	235%
<i>60-69</i>	28	80	185%
<i>70-79</i>	26	22	-15%
<i>80+</i>	23	22	-4%
All ages	705	1136	61%

Key statistics:

- Australians aged 40-49 are the most likely to die of a drug overdose. Second are 30-39 year olds. Third are 50-59 year olds.
- In 2014, people in their 30s, 40s and 50s accounted for 78 per cent of all overdose deaths.
- The number of people dying from overdose in their 50s and 60s in Australia has more than tripled in the past 10 years. It was less than 100, in 2014 it was 318.
- If the current trend for drug overdoses continues, in five years the age group most likely to die of overdose will become 50-59.
- Accidental deaths from drug overdose decreased 25 per cent from 2004 to 2014 for people under 30.

3. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose metro v rural 2008 – 2014



Key statistics:

Changes over the six years 2008 - 2014

- There has been a marked increase in overdose deaths throughout rural/regional Australia since 2008 - from 3.1 per 100,000 in 2008 to 5.7 per 100,000 in 2014 – an 83 per cent increase in six years.
- When we look at the raw numbers, overdoses have almost doubled in rural/regional Australia from 229 (2008) to 444 (2014) – an increase of 93 per cent in six years.

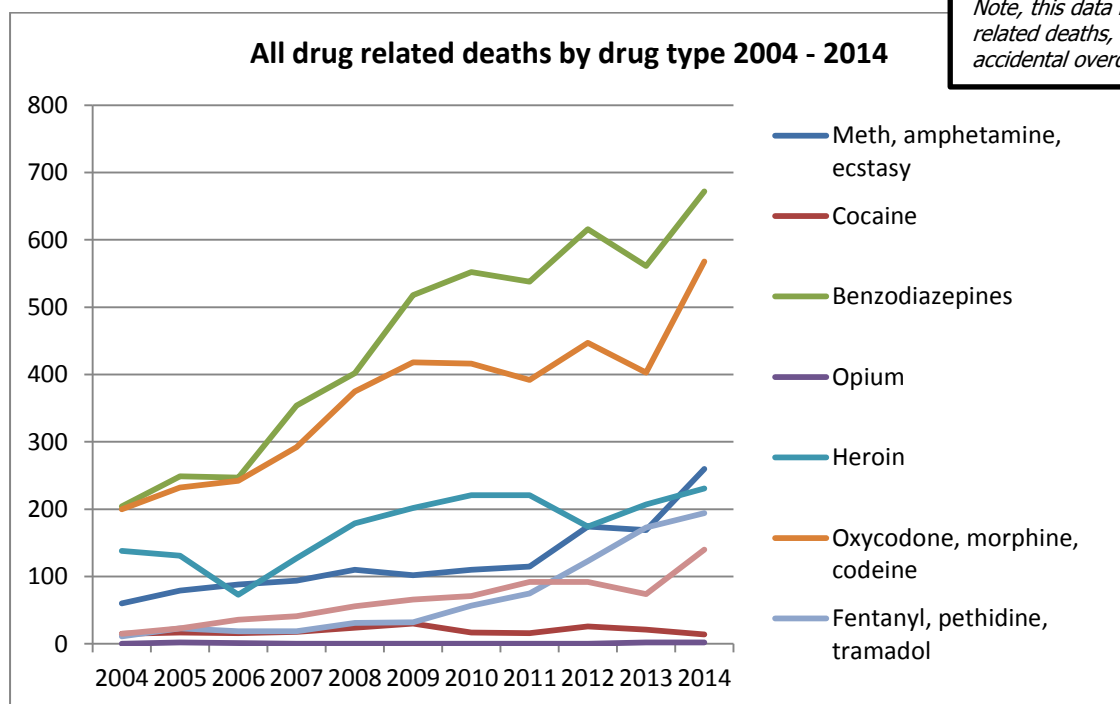
- Over the same time, overdose deaths per capita in metropolitan Australia remain relatively stable, moving only slightly from 4.2 per 100,000 in 2008 to 4.4 per 100,000 in 2014 – an increase of just 4.7 per cent in six years.
- When we look at the raw numbers, there has been a relatively modest increase in metropolitan Australia from 589 (2008) to 693 (2014) – an increase of 17 per cent.

Changes 2013 - 2014

- There has been a substantial increase of 33 per cent in overdose deaths in rural Australia from 2013 to 2014 (331-444).
- Over the same time, there was only a 4.7 per cent increase in overdose deaths in metropolitan Australia (662-693).
- The overall increase in overdose across Australia of 14.5 per cent is driven by the increases in rural and regional Australia.

4. All drug deaths in Australia by drug type 2004 – 2014

Note, this data is for all drug related deaths, not just accidental overdose



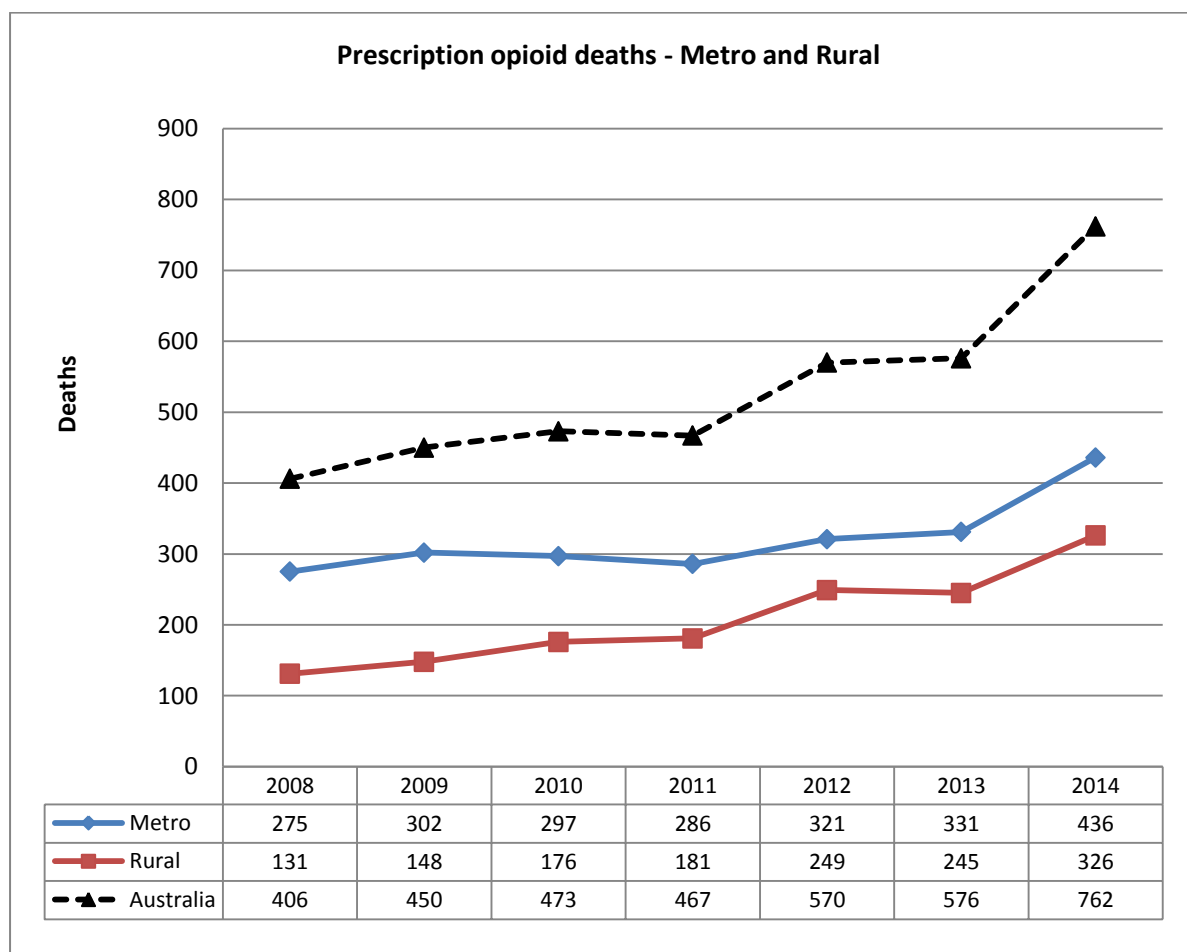
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Meth, amphetamine, ecstasy	60	79	88	94	110	102	110	115	174	169	260
Cocaine	15	17	16	18	24	30	17	16	26	21	14
Benzodiazepines	204	249	247	354	402	518	552	538	616	561	672
Opium	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Heroin	138	131	73	127	179	202	221	221	174	207	231
Oxycodone, morphine, codeine	200	232	242	292	375	418	416	392	447	403	568
Fentanyl, pethidine, tramadol	11	23	19	19	31	32	57	75	123	173	194
Cannabis and derivatives	15	23	36	41	56	66	71	92	92	74	140

N.B – the figures contained in the table above represent deaths where a drug was present. In some instances, more than one drug will have been present. In this situation, one death may appear in more than one category.

Key statistics:

- In 2014 prescription medications were present in more drug-related deaths (69 per cent) than illicit drugs (31 per cent).
- In 2004 prescription medications were present in more drug-related deaths than illicit drugs, but the gap was not as large.

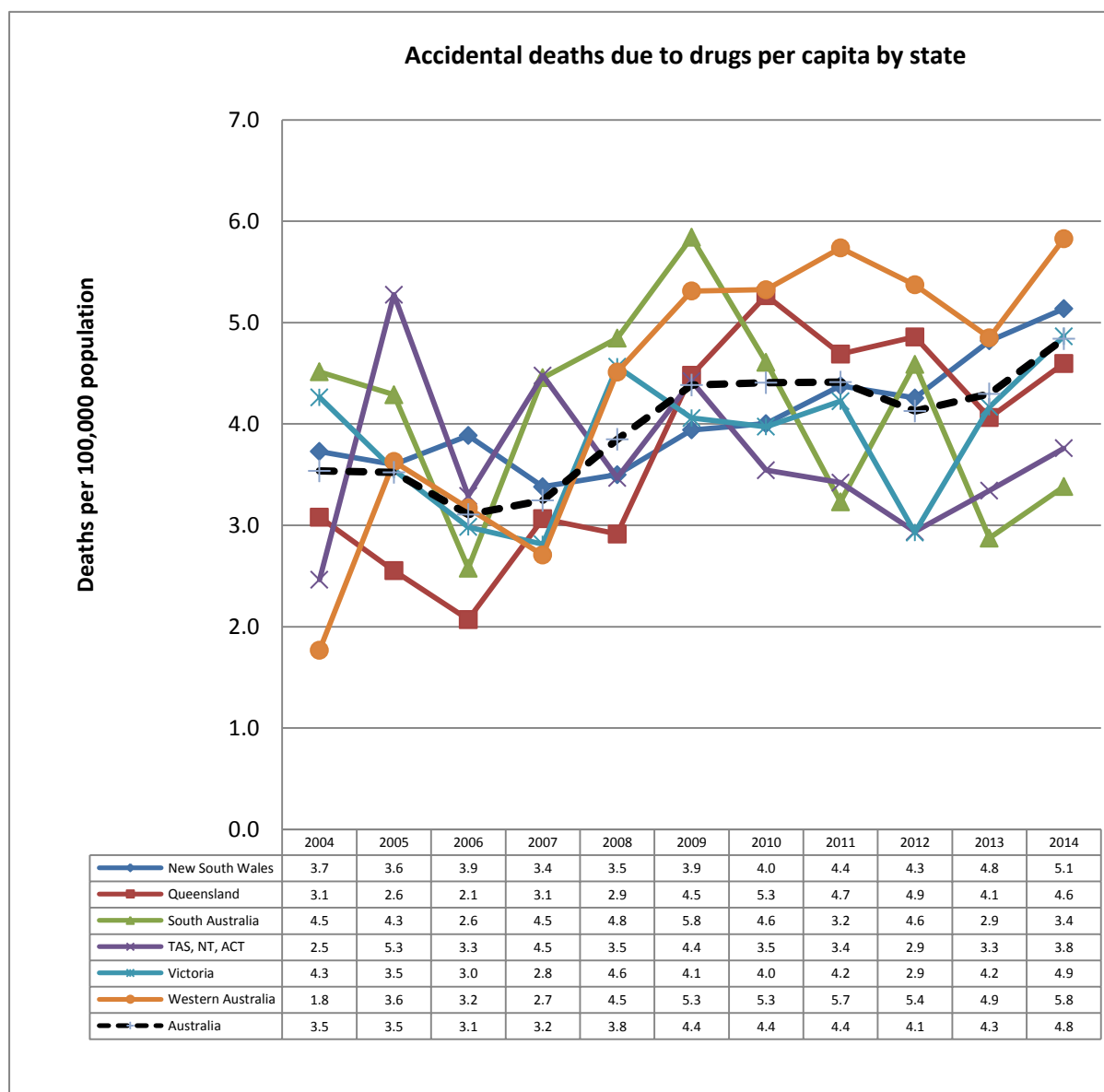
5. Prescription opioid deaths in Australia – metro and rural 2008 – 2014



Key statistics

- Prescription opioids are the primary drug for people who overdose (up 30.4 per cent from 2013-14 – including a 33 per cent increase in regional and rural Australia).
- Over the six year period 2008-2014 there was an 87 per cent increase in prescription opioid deaths in Australia with the greatest increase occurring in rural Australia with a 148 per cent increase.

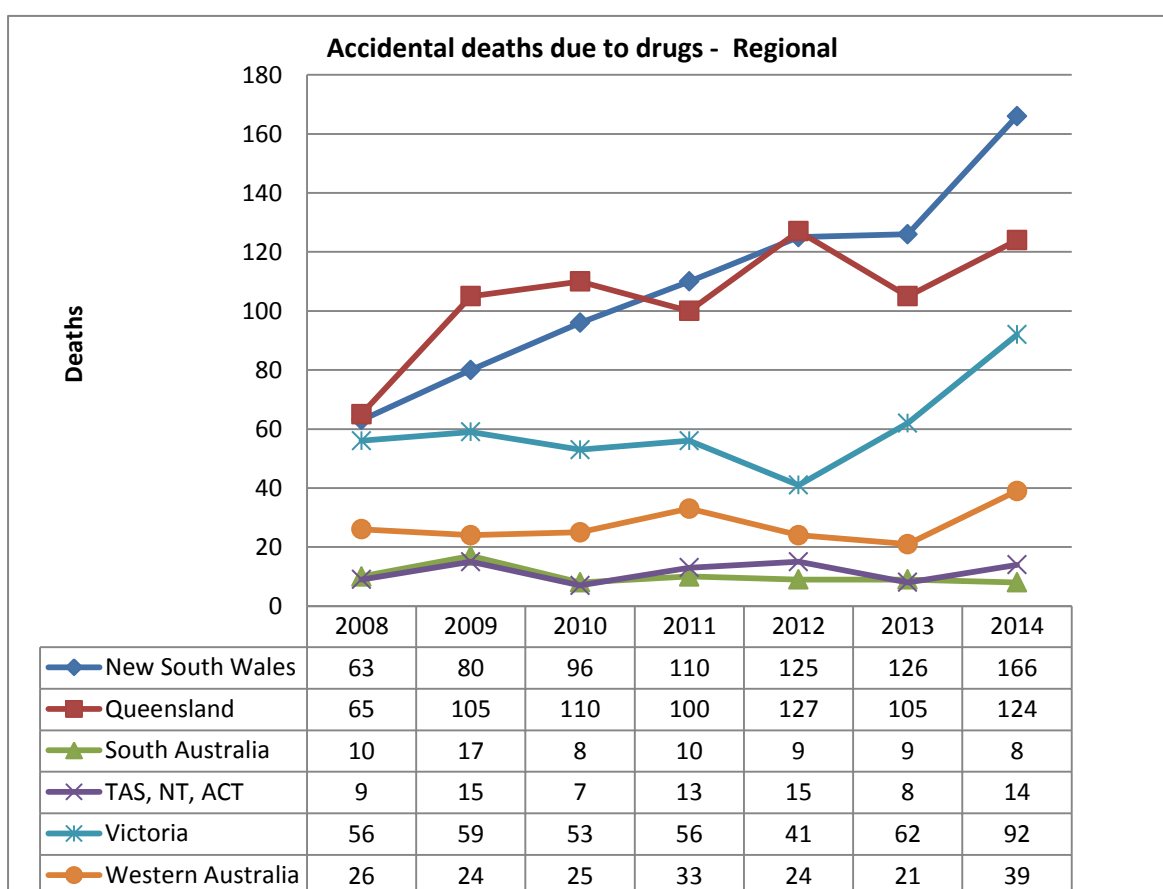
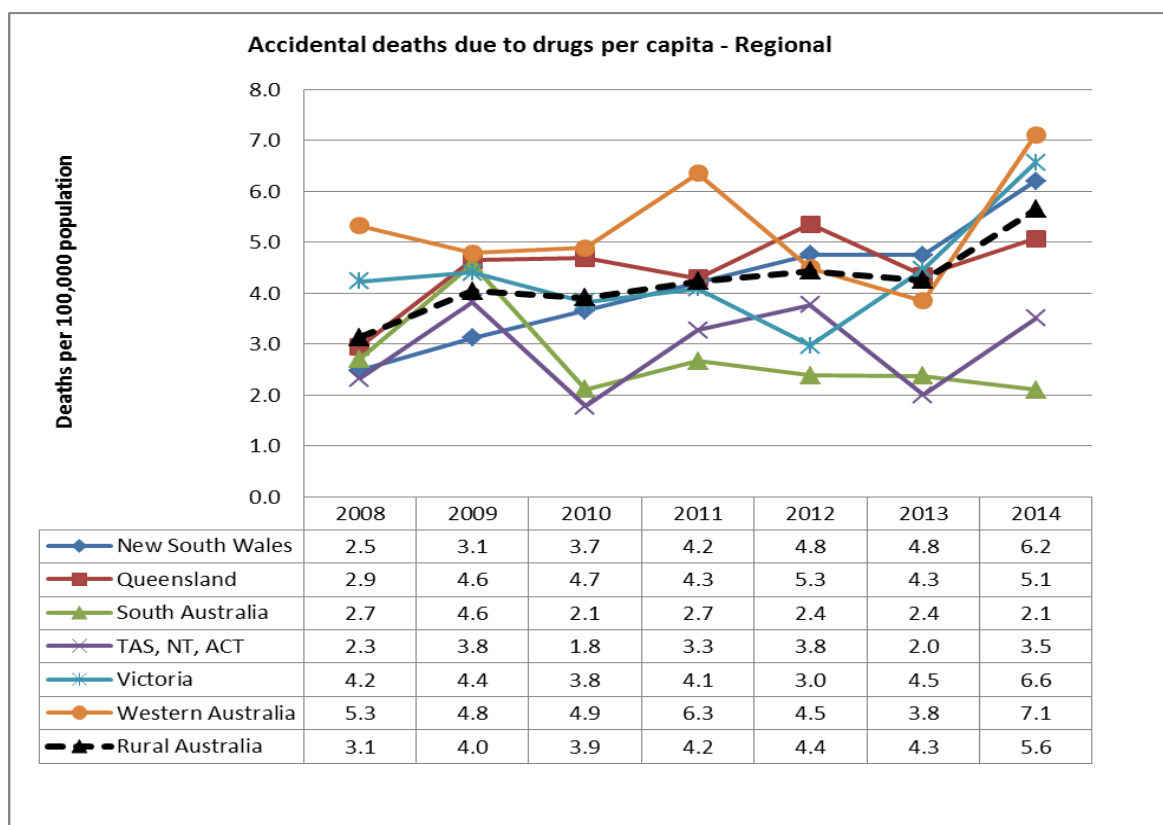
6. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose by state 2004 – 2014



Key statistics:

- When looked at per 100,000 of population, Western Australia leads the Australian league table for overdose deaths with 5.8 per 100,000 in 2014 followed by NSW with 5.1 per 100,000.
- Since 2004 Western Australia's per capita overdose deaths have risen from the lowest to the highest in the country – an increase from 1.8 per 100,000 to 5.8 per 100,000 (222 per cent increase) – against a national increase over the same period of 37 per cent.
- Every state in Australia saw an increase in overdose deaths per capita from 2013 to 2014.

7. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose in regional areas by state 2004 – 2014



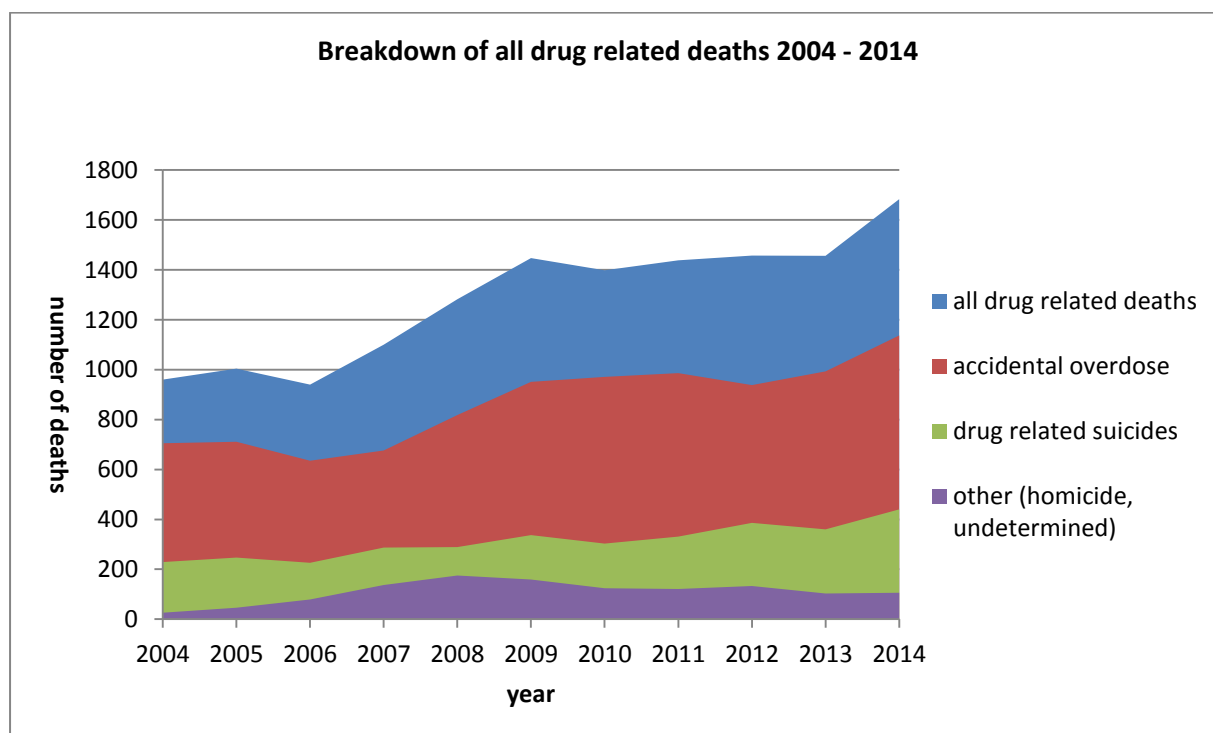
Key statistics – per capita:

- There have been increases in rural/regional NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria from 2008 to 2014.
- The largest increase in deaths due to drugs has been recorded in regional NSW, increasing from 2.5 (2008) to 6.2 (2014) per 100,000 population (63 to 166 deaths).
- While the numbers in regional Western Australia are much smaller than Eastern states there has been a noticeable increase from 5.3 (2008) to 7.1 (2014) per 100,000 population (26 to 39 deaths).

Key statistics – raw data:

- On the raw numbers of deaths, regional New South Wales leads the grim count (166 – a 31.7 per cent increase from 2013), followed by regional Queensland (124 deaths – up 18.1 per cent), country Victoria (92 deaths – up 48.4 per cent) and then regional Western Australia (39 deaths – up 85.7 per cent).

8. Cause of drug related deaths across Australia 2004 - 2014



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
all drug related deaths	960	1,004	940	1,100	1,282	1,447	1,398	1,438	1,457	1,456	1,683
accidental overdose	705	711	635	676	818	951	971	986	938	993	1,137
drug related suicides	229	247	226	287	289	337	303	331	386	360	440
other (homicide, undetermined)	26	46	79	137	175	159	124	121	133	103	106

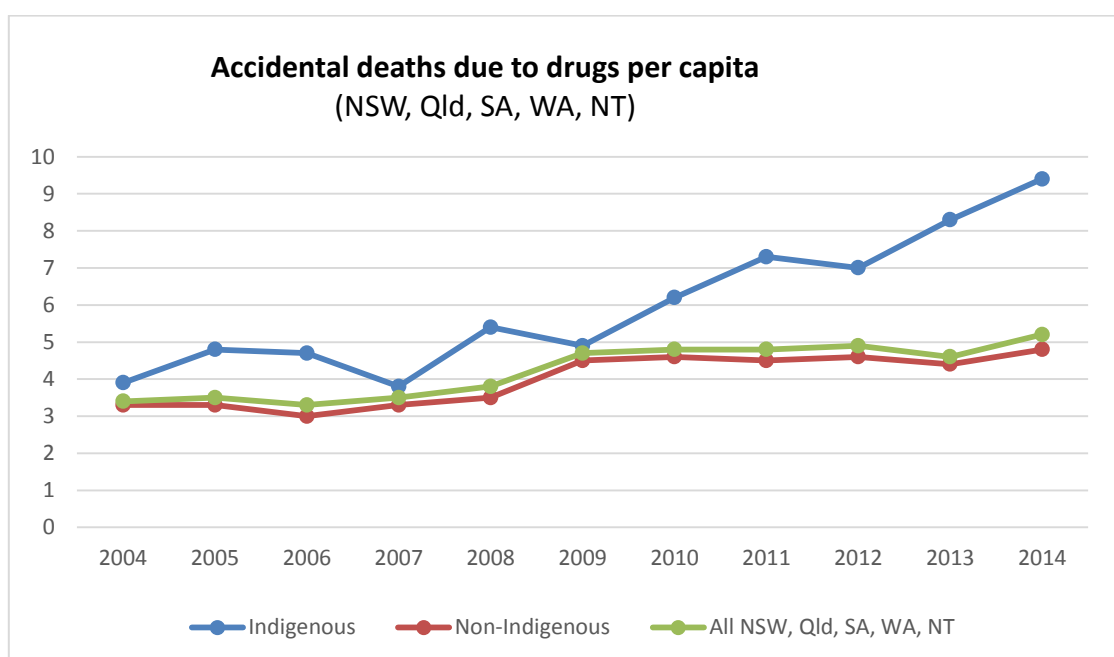
Key statistics:

- Accidental deaths due to drug overdose are consistently the key driver of all drug related deaths in Australia.
- From 2004 to 2014, accidental overdose accounted for 67 per cent of all drug related deaths.
- Drug related suicides are the second biggest cause of drug related deaths accounting for 24 per cent of all drug related deaths.
- Together, accidental overdose and suicide account for 91 per cent of all drug related deaths 2004-2014.

9. Accidental deaths due to drug overdose among Aboriginal populations 2004 – 2014 * ^

*Note, data not collected in Victoria, Tasmania and ACT

^ Note, in this report, Aboriginal is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations



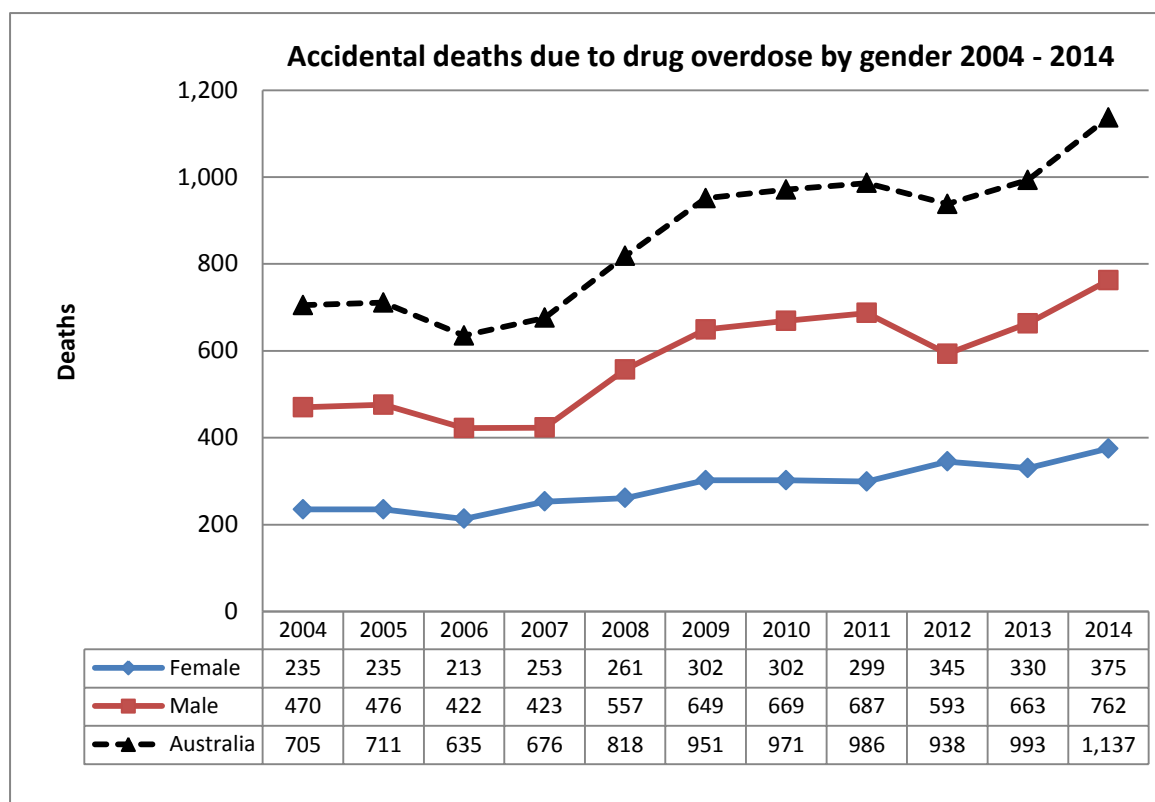
Accidental deaths due to drugs per capita

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Indigenous	3.9	4.8	4.7	3.8	5.4	4.9	6.2	7.3	7	8.3	9.4
Non-Indigenous	3.3	3.3	3	3.3	3.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.8
All NSW, Qld, SA, WA, NT	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.6	5.2

Key statistics:

- Accidental death due to drug overdose for Aboriginal population grew between 2004 and 2014 with an increase of 141 per cent – from 3.9 per 100,000 in 2004 to 9.4 per 100,000 in 2014 in the five jurisdictions with Aboriginal data.
- In the same period, the non-aboriginal increase was from 3.3 per 100,000 in 2004 to 4.8 per 100,000 in 2014 – an increase of 45 per cent.
- Overall, the increase was from 3.4 per 100,000 in 2004 to 5.2 per 100,000 in 2014 – an increase of 53 per cent.
- Across Australia, the increase was 37 per cent, from 3.5 to 4.8 deaths per 100,000 people.

10. Accidental death due to drug overdose and gender 2004 - 2014



Key statistics:

- Over the past 10 years, men have consistently died of overdose in higher numbers than women.
- Men are over-represented in this data.
- There has been a considerable increase in overdose deaths from 2012 to 2014 – from 938 to 1,137 – an increase of 21 per cent in two years.
- The 21 per cent increase in the past two years has been driven by increasing male overdose. Of the additional 199 overdose deaths in 2014 compared to 2012, 169 (85 per cent) were males.

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